

ARNALD OF SARRANT

CHRONICLE OF THE TWENTY-FOUR GENERALS OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

English Translation by
Noel Muscat ofm



TAU Franciscan Communications
Malta 2010

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**CHRONICLE
OF THE TWENTY-FOUR
GENERALS
OF THE ORDER
OF FRIARS MINOR
[1369-1374]**

English Translation by NOEL MUSCAT OFM
from the original Latin text

*Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,
in Analecta Franciscana ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum Spectantia,
edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae,
Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), prope Florentiam,
Tomus III,
1897*

Section 1

SAINT FRANCIS AND HIS COMPANIONS

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Franciscan Friars
MALTA, 2010

PREFACE

The history of the Order of Friars Minor during the first one and a half centuries of its existence is maybe the most studied period of the 800 years of Franciscan presence in the Church. The publication of the Sources for the lives of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi in all the main European languages has been of considerable help to spread the historical knowledge regarding Francis of Assisi and his movement and make it available to the average reader.

Among these Sources, the *Chronica XXIV Ministrorum Generalium Ordinis fratrum Minorum* by Arnald of Sarrant merits particular attention. It tells the story of the Franciscan Order from the time of Saint Francis till the beginning of the Western Schism in 1378, and therefore contains valuable information regarding the initial period of Franciscan history. Unfortunately it is not easily available in translation because of its voluminous nature. In fact, it covers a total of 712 pages of the third volume of *Analecta Franciscana*, published by the Franciscan editors of Quaracchi in 1897.

Our aim has been that of embarking on the arduous task of translating this voluminous work of history into English from the original Latin. This translation is the fruit of three years of work, and we are now happy to present it to the general public. Because of its voluminous nature we intend to divide it into 5 sections, four of which cover the 575 pages of text and one the appendixes. The whole 575 page Chronicle is here available in 4 sections covering respectively the following historical periods: (1) Saint Francis and the early Franciscan fraternity; (2) The Generals from brother Elias as vicar (1227) to Saint Bonaventure (1274); (3) The Generals from Jerome of Ascoli

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Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order

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(1274) to Michael of Cesena (1328); (4) The Generals from Gerard Eudes (1329) to Leonard of Giffoni (1378). A last section will be the translation of the appendixes. The translation is enriched by footnotes and explanations on the various historical events narrated and on the personages of the Chronicle. Our aim has been simply that of providing a readable translation, without pretending to be scholars of mediaeval Latin. We hope that the service we are offering at such an enormous cost of time and personal effort will be of benefit both to students of Franciscan history as well as to those who are qualified to correct its inaccuracies, and who we gratefully thank for their eventual advice and corrections.

Noel Muscat ofm
Bethlehem, 25th December 2009

ABBREVIATIONS

- AF III *Analecta Franciscana ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum spectantia*, Tomus III: *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis fratrum Minorum*, Edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), prope Florentiam, 1897.
- AFH *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*.
- BF *Bullarium Franciscanum*.
- FAED *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents*. Vol. I: *The Saint*, Vol. II: *The Founder*, Vol. III: *The Prophet*, edited by Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short, New City Press, New York – London – Manila, 1999-2003.

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**CHRONICLE OF
THE TWENTY-FOUR GENERALS
OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR**
1369-1374

INTRODUCTION

The *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* is a voluminous history of the Franciscan Order from the time of its foundation by Saint Francis to the Minister General Leonard Giffoni (1373-1378). The year 1378 marked the beginning of the Great Schism (which lasted till 1417), when two popes were elected, Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon.

The author of the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals of the Order of Friars Minor* is today considered to be brother Arnald of Sarrant. No manuscript, however, bears his name. The Franciscan scholars of Quaracchi who edited this work in the third volume of *Analecta Franciscana*, say that he came from France and was a member of the Franciscan Province of Aquitaine, since he includes his own name in the list of Ministers of that Province. Arnald of Sarrant is also considered to be the author of the *De Cognatione S. Francisci*, which paved the way for the famous *De Conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Iesu*, published at the very end of the 14th century by Bartholomew of Pisa.¹ In the *Book of Conformities*, brother Bartholomew of Pisa says that Arnald came from Sarrant, that he was Minister of his province for a long time (circa 1361-1383), and that he collected and wrote whatever information he found regarding Saint

¹ For an introduction and English translation of *De Cognatione*, cfr. *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents*, edited by R.J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, W.J. Short, New City Press, New York – London – Manila 1999-2001, Vol. III [FAED III], 673-733.

Francis.² Luke Wadding explicitly indicates Arnald of Sarrant as the author of the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals*. Wadding also says that Pope Gregory XI sent Arnald to Spain in 1273, together with the lectors brother Didacus of Palencia from the convent of Toulouse, Juan Gonsalvo of the monastery of Huete Cuenca, and Juan of the convent of Ubeda, in order to reform the friaries of the Friars Minor and the monasteries of the Poor Clares in Castile.³

Regarding the time of composition of the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals*, scholars indicate the year 1374, since the author mentions the Cardinal Protector Guillaume of Limoges, who died during that year. The greater part of the work, however, seems to have been written before 1369. In that year Arnald mentions the canonisation of Elzearius and his wife Delphina, who were members of the Franciscan Third Order of Penitents. He had already expressed his wish that they would be canonised as early as 1360.

The sources used by Arnald of Sarrant include the two Lives written by brother Thomas of Celano, as well as the *Legend of Three Companions* and the *Major Life of Saint Francis* by Saint Bonaventure. The Quaracchi scholars also state that Arnald knew the Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam of Parma, and the *Adventu Fratrum Minorum in*

2 Bartholomew of Pisa, *De Conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu, Analecta Franciscana* IV-V, Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1906, 537: "In the Province of Aquitaine, there is a place called Sarano that claimed Master Arnald of Sarano, who was Minister of Aquitaine for a long while. He was a man of praiseworthy life and talent, who transcribed everything he could find about blessed Francis."

3 Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1376, 8: "The complexion of religious life has been greatly tarnished in Castile due to the tumult of the wars between Pedro, the former king, and the nobles of the kingdom, and between Pedro and his brother, Enrique. The brothers had been expelled from many convents and were wandering about without definite residences. Irregular customs and abnormalities were introduced into the communities of religious because of the very liberal lifestyle of Pedro and of many of the aristocrats and patrons who invited the superiors of the Order into their territory. Therefore, the Pontiff thought it was his duty to fight against these evils. From France he sent Br. Arnald of Serrano, Master of Theology and Minister of the Province of Aquitaine, together with his companions from Spain, Br. Didacus of Palencia from the friary of Toledo and John Gonsalvo Opta from Cuenca, both of whom were lectors. And later he sent John of Ubeda. The Pope exempted these three from all obedience to religious superiors except to Arnald. The Pope did this by the letter: *Cum nos cupientes* which was sent from Villeneuve in the diocese of Avignon on the 29th of August 1373."

Angliam by Thomas of Eccleston. There is a striking resemblance between the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals* and the *Speculum vitae beati Francisci et sociorum eius*. Another source is the *Chronicon breve fr. Peregrini de Bononia*, which was written in the year 1305 during the time of the Minister General Gonsalvus of Valboa. The author also seems to have known the *Verba Fr. Leonis*, which are a common source for information regarding Saint Francis and the primitive fraternity, particularly in the Spiritual writings of the early 14th century. Regarding the question of the tension between the friars of the Community of the Order and the Spiritual friars, which was very strong in the first half of the 14th century, Arnald of Sarrant seems to be decidedly siding for the majority of the brothers of the Order, namely for the *Communitas Ordinis*.

The *Chronicle of the 24 Generals* has been extensively used by other Franciscan scholars and chroniclers, particularly by brother Mark of Florence, brother Mark of Lisbon, Luke Wadding, Nicholas Glassberger, and Rodolfo de Tossignano, author of *Historiarum Seraphicae Religionis libri tres* (Venice 1586).

The manuscripts studies by the Quaracchi scholars who edited the *Chronica XXIV Generalium* include the following: (1) Ms. Msc. 329 of the Biblioteca Comunale of Assisi (end 14th century); (2) Cod. 53 of the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurentiana of Florence (second half 15th century); (3) Cod. 279 of the Biblioteca Riccardiana of Florence (end 15th century); (4) Cod. P. 37. F. of the convent of Saint Mary of the Angels of the Reformed Friars Minor in Hall of Tyrol (1491); (5) Cod. I. G. 17 of the University of Leopoldstadt in Austria (end 15th century); (6) Cod. VIII. C. 7 of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples (15th century); (7) Codex (*sine signature*) of the convent of the Santissima Annunziata of Parma (1453); (8) another Codex (*sine signature*) of the same friary (15th century); (9) Cod. 9. L. of the convent of Saint Peter the Apostle of the Reformed Friars Minor in Rezzato, Lombardy (end 14th century); (10) Cod. Lt. 1756 of the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome (end 14th century); (11) Codex (*sine signature*) of the convent of San Bernardino of the Observant Friars Minor in Siena, Tuscany (1451); (12) Cod. G. XIV. 21 of the convent of Saint Bernardine of the Reformed Friars Minor of Trent, Tyrol (17th century); (13) Cod. 3417 (before n. 442) of the Palace Library of Vienna, Austria (1470).

The list of the 24 Ministers General of the Order of Minors, including Saint Francis, who is considered to be the first Minister Gen-

eral, until brother Leonard Giffoni (1378), is the following:

- 1) Saint Francis of Assisi (†1226)
- 2) Elias of Assisi (1232-1239; considered as General 1226-1227)
- 3) John Parenti (1227-1232)
- 4) Albert of Pisa (1239-1240)
- 5) Haymo of Faversham (1240-1244)
- 6) Crescentius of Iesi (1244-1247)
- 7) John of Parma (1247-1257)
- 8) Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1257-1274)
- 9) Jerome of Ascoli (1274-1279)
- 10) Bonagratia of San Giovanni in Persiceto (1279-1285)
- 11) Arlotto of Prato (1285-1287)
- 12) Matthew of Acquasparta (1287-1288)
- 13) Raymond Godefroy (1289-1295)
- 14) John Minio of Murrovalle (1296-1304)
- 15) Gonsalvus of Valboa (1304-1313)
- 16) Alexander of Alessandria (1313-1314)
- 17) Michael of Cesena (1316-1328)
- 18) Gerard Eudes (1329-1342)
- 19) Fortanerius Vassalli (1343-1348)
- 20) William Farinier of Aquitaine (1348-1357)
- 21) John Bouchier (1357)
- 22) Mark of Viterbo (1359-1366)
- 23) Thomas Frignano of Bologna (1367-1372)
- 24) Leonard Rossi di Giffoni (1373-1378)

The section regarding Saint Francis is followed by a list of brothers and sisters who formed part of the primitive fraternity of Friars Minor and Poor Ladies. These brothers include Bernard of Quintavalle, Rufino, Juniper, Leo, Giles, Masseo, Saint Anthony of Padova, Simon of Assisi, Christopher of Romagna, Saint Agnes of Assisi, Saint Clare of Assisi. This section can be considered as being the first part of the *Chronicle of 24 Generals*. It includes information about many other brothers and martyrs of the Order, and has detailed information regarding miracles, which occurred through the intercession of Saint Francis, Saint Anthony, and many of the other saintly brothers of the Order.

This translation will divide the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals* into five sections. The first section, as we have seen, regards Saint Francis

and the early Franciscan fraternity. The second section covers the period between brother Elias as vicar (1227) and Saint Bonaventure (1274). The third section concerns the period between Jerome of Ascoli (1274) and Michael of Cesena (1328). The fourth section studies the period between Gerard Eudes (1329) and Leonard Giffoni (1378). The period following St. Francis and his companions would roughly correspond to the first development of the Order of Minors during the troubled times of Elias, the clericalisation of the Order by Haymo of Faversham, and the juridical organisation of the Order by Bonaventure. The other periods would include the rise and downfall of the Spirituals, their conflict with the Community of the Order, and the great crisis of the Order during the pontificate of John XXII regarding the question of poverty, the development of Conventualism in the Order, the first attempts at reform by the Italian Observant movement, the effects of the Black Death, and the initial stages of the Great Schism. A last section will comprise the Appendixes at the end of the *Chronicle*.

In the translation we shall indicate the original page numbers of the Quaracchi edition in square parenthesis.

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[1] Since this narrative is useful, among other things, for erudition of the present and the future, I have gathered in the volume which follows those well-known positive and negative facts, which I have found dispersed here and there in the holy Order of friars Minor, in diverse legends, treatises, processes and chronicles which refer to various periods under different Ministers General, as well as to the lives of the holy brothers, and to the best of my ability I have tried to verify their truthfulness.

The First General of the Order was our glorious Father Saint Francis

The first one among all the Ministers General was our most glorious Father Francis, who was not elected to this office, but was installed in a most holy way by papal decision. This most holy Father was first engaged in the lucrative art of a merchant, but later on, through the revelations of the Holy Spirit and driven by an interior force, he let himself be inflamed as if by the power of fire, and after having received the blows of multiple tribulations, [2] he finally became transformed into a perfect man. For two years he chose the garb and life of a hermit, with a staff in his hands, a belt round his waist, and shoes in his feet, going through Assisi as a beggar, and finding shelter in solitary places, particularly in the churches which he devoutly restored. According to Vincent of Beauvais⁴ Francis began to

⁴ Vincent of Beauvais OP (c.1190 - 1264), author of the *Speculum Maius*, the main encyclopaedia that was used in the Middle Ages. The year of St. Fran-

lead this way of life in the year of the Lord 1206, during the fourteenth year of the pontificate of the lord Innocent III, when he was twenty-five years of age.

In the year of the Lord 1209, while he was assisting devoutly at Mass in the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, Francis heard the Gospel text being read, in which the evangelical rule of the Apostles is described, namely, that they should not possess *gold or silver in their wallets, nor keep a staff or two tunics or wear shoes* (cfr. Mt 10:9-10). That very moment he took off his shoes, he abandoned his purse and money, he cast aside his staff, and being content to have just one tunic, he changed his belt into a cord, and with all his energy decided upon observing the evangelical life. According to a truthful opinion, this was the moment, which marked the beginning and foundation of the Order of friars Minor.

[3] Once he withdrew from the world, many considered him to be insane. During those two years he served only the Lord in the greatest austerity, poverty and patience. A certain venerable man, among the most noble, rich and prudent citizens of Assisi, whose name was Bernard, governed the whole town by his counsels. When he was prudently considering how Francis showed contempt for the world and so much patience in adversity, by divine inspiration he was led to invite him to his house to dine in his company and sleep there. His aim was that of understanding better whether Francis was showing a true holiness or vainglory. After dinner, he prepared a bed in his own room for Francis to sleep in. When both had gone to sleep, the lord Bernard pretended to snore heavily, as if he were sound asleep. Saint Francis woke up and, with heart and gaze fixed upon God, raising his arms he became inflamed inwardly and with many tears and devout compunction he was repeating these words in continuation: “My God and my all, my God and my all.” In the light of the lamps that burned in that room, the lord Bernard saw everything. The following morning he woke up, and filled with devotion he said to Saint Francis:

cis’s conversion is normally considered to have been 1207. The fact that the author of the *Chronicle of 24 Ministers General* mentions 1206 might have depended on the calendar he followed. In the 14th century there were those who began the new year on Easter or on 25th March, feast of the Annunciation. In this way, there could be a slight variation in dates, e.g. 1206/07 for Francis’s conversion. Pope Innocent III was elected on 8th January 1198 and was crowned on 22nd February of the same year.

“Brother Francis, I have resolved to abandon the world and to follow you and go wherever you send me.” The Saint joyfully replied: “Lord Bernard, what you ask for is very hard, and we need to ask for God’s counsel; therefore, let us go to the bishop’s house, and there God will show us what we have to do.” When they had gone there, after having assisted at Mass and prayed for a short while, the Saint asked the devout priest who was in that place, to open the Missal. After having made the sign of the cross, he consulted the book and found the following words: *If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you own and give the money to the poor* (Mt 19:21). The second time he opened the book he found these words: *If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me* (Mt 16:24). The third time he opened the book he read: *Take nothing for your journey* (Mk 6:8). When he saw these words, Saint Francis said: “This is the Lord’s counsel; go therefore and accomplish what you have heard.” That very moment the lord Bernard distributed all his property, which had a great value, and together with Saint Francis he went to the square of Saint George and gave everything to the poor. That same year 1209, on 16th April, [4] he accepted the habit and the life of the apostolic Religion. As one finds in other documents, the Order of friars Minor had its beginnings on 16th April.⁵

During those same days, the lord Peter Catanio, who was a canon of the church of Saint Rufino in Assisi, entered the Order after having distributed all his property to the poor. After eight days, a certain man from Assisi, whose name was Giles, led by their example, on the feast day of Saint George, distributed his goods to the poor, and joined the holy Father by taking the habit and entering the Order. After another eight days, other men were received in the Order, namely brother Sabbatinus, brother Moricus the short, brother John of Capella, who was the first one to enter the Order with a hat over his hood, brother Philip the tall, who was the first visitor of the Poor Ladies, brother John of San Costanzo, brother Barbarus, brother Bernard Vigilante de Vida, and brother Angelo Tancredi from Rieti, who was the first knight to enter the Order.

5 This traditional date of the founding of the Order of friars Minor is given to us by Arnald of Sarrant, and is not present in the older biographies of the saint. On 16th April the Friars Minor celebrate their annual renewal of profession of the Franciscan Rule.

Blessed Francis gave these brothers his first instructions, namely that they were bound at least to recite the canonical hours, by praying the *Our Father* three times for each hour. They also had to assist at Mass. Brother Giles said that the reason for this was that there would be no norms regarding the spirit of devotion, but that each and every brother would still be able to respect his spontaneous way of praying devoutly. These are the first twelve brothers who, like the twelve Apostles, were the foundation of the Order and who chose to observe the evangelical and apostolic life with all their strength. They were all holy men, except one, namely brother John of Capella, who like another Judas became a leper in the Order, and filled with anger, he left the Order and was handed over by God in the hands of the devils, and went and hanged himself, so that Francis would be conformed to Christ in having his own perverse disciple.

In the year of the Lord 1210, the lord Jean, son of the knight of Brienne, who was a valiant warrior, was elected as king of Jerusalem and was solemnly crowned.⁶ [5] As Brother Bernard of Besse from the Province of Aquitaine refers in one of his books, when Jean had won many victories on the Saracens and had given his daughter as a wife to Frederick, the Roman emperor, at last after some years, having succeeded in his good fortune, he was made emperor of Constantinople. Towards the end of his life he was thinking with devotion about the favours which God had given him while he was living, and one believes that he was filled with a great desire for heaven, as happens every time a person is dying. He remained for some time cherishing this desire and persisted in supplication to God, when one night there appeared to him while sleeping a venerable man with the habit of the Minors, who was wearing a cord and sandals, and who told him that it was the divine will that he would die in that habit. The emperor was terrified and he woke up his entire household with his cries, but he would not recount to them the vision he had. The second night there appeared to him two men with the same habit, cord and sandals, announcing to him the same profound things. He was again terrified and cried

6 Jean de Brienne (c.1148-1237), king of Jerusalem (1210-1225) and emperor of Constantinople (1228-1237). Wadding states that Jean was count of Vienne, son of Erardus II, count of Brienne le Chateau in Gaul. Towards the end of his life he became a member of the Franciscan Order of Penitents. He contributed lavish gifts to the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, and was buried there in 1237 in the habit of the Franciscan Order.

out loudly, but when the members of his household ran to his aid, he would not reveal that vision to them. The third night he had the same vision, this time with three men wearing the habit, cord and sandals, who told him that it was the divine will that he would die wearing that habit. After this revelation the emperor called brother Angelo, from the Order of Minors, who was his confessor, and revealed to him those profound visions. After having taken his counsel, he left his earthly reign, accepted the habit of the friars Minor and with all humility and great devotion he ended his days wearing their habit.

Returning to our argument, the blessed Francis with all his first brothers retreated to a certain abandoned hut, in a place called Rivo Torto. They began to live in this place and dedicated themselves to fasting and prayer. [6] In that very place, with the divine help of the Holy Spirit, he wrote a certain rule, in which he inserted all the commandments, which Christ gave to his Apostles. He called all those who would profess it, both prelates as well as subjects, to observe these evangelical norms. He called the prelates by the name of *ministers*, according to the words: *The greatest among you must be your servant* (Mt 23:11); and he called all by the name of *friars minor* according to the words: *Insofar as you did this to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me* (Mt 25:40.45). This is how he called them, instructed by a divine revelation.

When therefore Francis had these eleven brothers, himself being the twelfth, according to the number of the college of Apostles, he went to present himself to the lord Pope Innocent III, and he humbly asked for the approval of the same rule, [7] which he and his followers wanted to offer as a sign that they totally left the world. The lord Pope had received a divine revelation some time before, and he was persuaded to accept the brothers by the lord John of Saint Paul, Cardinal and bishop of Sabina. This prelate offered himself as a procurator and Protector for Francis and his brothers in the Curia. The Pope approved the rule, and after having given small tonsures to all the brothers present, both clerics and lay, he gave them permission to preach penance. It was then that blessed Francis was installed as the Minister General of the entire Order. He immediately knelt down and promised obedience to the lord Pope, and according to the command of the same Pope, the other friars promised to faithfully obey Francis.

Francis therefore returned with the brothers in the Spoleto valley, and he started to preach in the towns and castles. His preaching

and that of his brothers inflamed many persons to do penance and they were welcomed in the Order. Among these was brother Sylvester, who was the first priest to enter the Order. When he saw brother Bernard distributing his possessions to the poor, he was filled with avarice and said to Saint Francis: "You have not paid me satisfactorily for the stones which you have bought from me to repair the churches." The saint was astonished at such avarice, and placing his hand in the bag dangling from the chest of the lord Bernard he filled it with coins, took it out and gave the money to the lord Sylvester, saying: "If this is not sufficient, I will give you more." The priest was happy to receive the money and he withdrew. But that same night he began to think about the fervour of blessed Francis who was still a young man and who had shown such contempt for worldly things. Sylvester began to scold himself, considering that he was an elderly man, and yet he was prey to such avarice. After some time, during three nights he had the vision of a large and shining cross, which came out of the mouth of blessed Francis. At the sight of this cross, a horrendous dragon, which was encircling the town of Assisi in order to destroy it, was soon put to flight. This vision led Sylvester to enter the Order with great devotion, after having distributed all his property to the poor. He was lifted up to such great spiritual elevations that, according to the words of brother Bernard of Besse in his Legend on Saint Francis, it seemed that he could speak to God face to face. The blessed Francis used to send him to ask God in prayer, whenever he was in doubt and wanted to know God's will.

The other brothers who entered the Order included: brother Pacificus, the *king of verses* who was crowned by the emperor, and who saw the Saint marked [8] by two swords in the form of a cross, when he was preaching in a certain monastery. During his lifetime Pacificus lived a most holy life in the Order, and merited to see the sign of a multicoloured *Tau* marking the forehead of Saint Francis. Brother Leo, who had the simplicity of a dove, was the confessor of Saint Francis. On account of his simple life, the Saint frequently used to call him *brother lamb of God*. Brother Rufino was a noble cousin of Saint Clare. Brother Masseo was known for his eloquence and courtesy. Brother Juniper was a most humble and patient man, whose acts will be noted further on. Brother Morico was a member of the Order of Crosiers and was noted for his simplicity. Brother John, whom Saint Francis nicknamed *the simple*, was working the land with his oxen

just like another Elisah, when Saint Francis led him to the perfection of the Gospel. He was so innocent and pure of heart that, as brother Thomas of Celano says in the old Legend of Saint Francis, he would imitate the saint when he would pray and in all his other bodily actions. Thus, when the saint was praying, brother John would continually gaze at him with curiosity, and when Francis would kneel down, and lift up his arms and eyes to heaven, or when he would spit, sigh or cough, Brother John would try to repeat all his actions. When the Saint noticed this he was overjoyed and gently reproached him. But John answered him: "Brother, I have promised to do whatever I see you doing; therefore it is necessary for me to act in the same way I see you acting." For this and other similar reasons, blessed Francis used to call him brother John *the simple*. He began to grow so much in simplicity and in all the other virtues, that the Saint and the other brothers greatly admired him. After his death Saint Francis would recall with joy brother John's acts and deeds and tell everybody that he was not only a brother, rather that he merited the name of saint John the simple.

In the year of the Lord 1212, when he was still General, blessed Francis founded the Order of Poor Ladies. Six years before he had prophesied its foundation in the Church of God, when he was enthusiastically repairing the church of Saint Damian. The first small plant of this Order was the most holy virgin Clare. She went during the night to the church of Saint Mary of Portiuncula, [9] where she received the tonsure and the habit of Religion. For her safety Francis sent her to the monastery of Saint Paul of the black nuns⁷ and afterwards to the church of Saint Michael of Panzo close to Assisi. Finally he sent her to the church of Saint Damiano outside the walls of Assisi, together with her sister Agnes, where she lived a cloistered life after having won over many tribulations.

In that same year, full of fervour with the desire for martyrdom, Francis tried to go to the Holy Land, but the divine will made him turn back home. After some time he tried to journey to Morocco, to preach the catholic faith to king Miramolin and his people. But when he arrived in Spain, he fell gravely ill; nonetheless he devoutly visited

⁷ This was the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo delle Abbadesse, near Bastia Umbra.

the sanctuary of the Apostle James.⁸ When he was praying fervently in front of this saint's altar, it was revealed to him by the Lord that, on his way back, he should acquire some decent dwelling place for the brothers and fortify that tender family in the Lord. On his way back, he passed from Montpellier, where he preached in a hospice and prophesied the founding of the venerable friary of the friars Minor in that town.

In the year of the Lord 1215, during the time of the general Council, blessed Francis went to Rome, where he found Saint Dominic who was also present for the approval of his Order, and where he was shown God's favour to him through a vision.⁹

In the year of the Lord 1217, which was the eleventh year from the founding of the Order, counting from [10] the first conversion of Saint Francis, when the lord Pope Honorius III was ruling the Church, in the general Chapter celebrated at the Portiuncula the Provinces were assigned and the Ministers elected, and many brothers were sent in all the provinces of the world, so that they would spread the Catholic faith. The blessed Francis chose for himself the province of France. Before leaving he visited the tombs of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul together with brother Masseo. There the holy Apostles Peter and Paul appeared to him and embraced him in familiar way, giving thanks for Francis, in whose rule the Gospel way of life was being renewed by his brothers, since it had nearly been left in oblivion and was erased in the hearts of many.

Francis therefore left on his journey to France. He arrived at Florence where he found the lord Hugolino, Cardinal and bishop of Ostia, who had been sent as a Legate by above-mentioned lord Honorius. Hugolino compelled blessed Francis to turn back and said to him: "Brother, I do not want you to go far away from the Curia, since

8 The name of the king of Morocco, Miramolin, is the Latin version of the Arab name "Amir-al-Mu'minin", literally, "the commander of the believers". His real name was Muhammad al Nasir (1199-1213). He lost his foothold in Spain during the battle of Las Navas in 1212. During this time Morocco was governed by the "al-Muwahhidun", or the Almohads. Francis probably followed the pilgrim road to Compostella in Spain. There is no proof that he actually arrived at Santiago de Compostella. The strong tradition of this journey is taken from this account.

9 The Fourth Lateran Council (November 1215). The tradition that St. Francis met St. Dominic during this Council cannot be proved historically.

in this way the lord Pope and the lord Cardinals can better protect you from those who oppose your Religion, and take care of you if you are present." Therefore the Saint was compelled to return, and he sent to France the most perfect man brother Pacificus, who was the first brother to hold the office of minister and provident leader of that Province.

After this, Francis sent many brothers in Spain, so that according to the command given to him by God, they would establish friaries in the Province of Saint James, and by living there they would control the heretics who were numerous in Spain, and would fortify the faithful in the Catholic faith by their preaching. When these brothers arrived in the kingdom of Portugal, the people saw them wearing their strange habits, and heard them speak a foreign language. They were afraid that they were heretics, and did not welcome them courteously and did not permit them to live among them. The brothers therefore [11] went to the lady Orraca, who was the pious queen of Portugal, a very humble and devout woman.¹⁰ They informed her about the tribulations they had to endure, and prayed her to provide an opportune remedy for their situation. When she diligently examined their way of life, the reason why they came and their intentions, and realized that they were servants of God, she acquired for them permission from her husband, king Alphonso, so that they would build two friaries in Lisbon and Guimarães in the diocese of Braga. In both places the brothers served the Lord, and considered the queen to be their mother. The sister of king Alphonso, whose name was Sancha, and who was perfect in sanctity, had a profound love for the servants of God. When she heard about the fame of these brothers she summoned them to her to listen to their words, in the castle of Alenquer, where she was living at that time. She became so fond of them that she kept some habits in her house, to give to the brothers, whenever they would arrive drenched in the rain. With the help of the same lady Sancha, a friary was built to house the brothers. Among the brothers who were sent there by blessed Francis, there was one who was most devout, and who lived like a hermit, dedicating his time to prayer and being very careful to avoid the company of women. A certain lady whose name was Maria Gracia used to come frequently out of devotion to the small

10 Orraca was the daughter of Alphonso IX, king of Castile, and wife of Alphonso II (1211-1223).

house of the brothers. That brother did not want to look upon her or to speak to her, but used to run away from her. One day she came to him when it was not opportune, and he told her: "Bring me fire and straw, and I will tell you why I do not speak to you." She brought him the straw and, at his word, set fire to it. The man of God then told her: "In the same way this straw gains nothing in the fire, so the servant of God gains nothing when he speaks to a woman." She therefore retreated from him embarrassed. When this virtuous brother was going to die, he was shining with such heavenly radiance, although his body was weakening, that all those who saw him were astonished. At that same moment Saint Anthony of Lisbon, who was still a canon in the monastery of Santa Cruz of Coimbra, and whose name was Fernando of Martino, while he was celebrating Mass, saw the soul of that same brother flying like a bird, passing directly through purgatory and going up straight into heaven.

[12] There was also, among others, brother Zacharias from Rome, who was sent by Francis to the same friary of Alenquer, and who was held with great esteem by the lady Sancha. While he was serving the Lord with prayers, vigils and holy works, he often prayed in front of the image of the Crucifix, which was found in the chapter hall of the brothers. It was evident that that image spoke to him with a human voice regarding the state of his soul. This brother Zacharias was so inflamed with divine consolation that he could not go away from that crucifix without great suffering. One day, being Guardian of that place, he could not acquire more than two loaves to offer to the brothers during the meal, and since there were many friars living there, after having said the prayer and the brothers were sitting at table, he commanded that these loaves be brought before them. In the meantime Christ, the supreme father of that religious family, through the merits of brother Zacharias showed his concern for it by sending his Angel under the guise of a handsome young man, who brought as many loaves as there were brothers in that friary. He went and knocked at the friary door, and handed over to Zacharias the Guardian a white and delicious loaf for each and every brother. Brother Zacharias took those loaves and that young man went back to the place from which he came from, but he could not be found any more, so that nobody doubted that he was, in fact, the Angel of the Lord. When the lady queen Sancha or the king's daughter heard this story, she asked the friars to give her one of those loaves to keep it as a relic.

Once brother Zacharias was preaching fervently, and a certain man was touched to compunction by his words and wanted to confess his sins. Since he often asserted that he had doubts regarding the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and the words of brother Zacharias could not take away that doubt from him, brother Zacharias commanded him that the following morning he would come to assist with devotion at his Mass. After having fervently prayed for him who had strayed from the truth, brother Zacharias began to celebrate Mass early in the morning. That man who doubted was present and he was attending the Mass. During the consecration that man looked and saw that the host which brother Zacharias was holding had changed into human flesh, and remained thus until he wanted to receive communion. At that moment the host changed its appearance to what it had been before. That man was astonished to see this miracle, and was freed from all doubt. Brother Zacharias progressed in sanctity, and finally died in union with God the Father. He was buried with honour in the friary of Alenquer and many miracles were wrought through his intercession.

[13] In the friary of Guimarães, among the first brothers who were sent by Saint Francis, there was brother Walter who was most devout and perfect, and who shone with such a clear and famous sanctity that he attracted people to show devotion to the Order from afar, and perfected his exemplary life. When this brother died, it was said that oil with miraculous properties used to come out of his tomb, until his body had been translated. This oil used to cure many sick people. It happened that the brothers moved from this friary to a new friary in the village. The canons who ministered in that fortified village, who saw how brother Walter shone with so many miracles, one night went to exhume the bodily remains of the servant of God and to transfer them to their church. But try as they might to lift the slab over the tomb, those clerics who were standing all around it could not move it in any way. By divine power that slab remained stuck in its place. The canons returned, admiring the power of God present in his saintly brother. The following morning the brothers became aware of that fraudulent attempt and they hurried to the holy bodily remains in order to transfer them to their new friary. A marvellous thing happened! As soon as those few brothers tried to lift up that stone slab, it could be lifted easily, whereas before it could not be moved by oxen or by a multitude of men. The brothers carried

the sacred bodily remains and gave them a honourable burial in their new friary.

The brothers were sent in nearly the entire world, and in the provinces where they arrived they were welcomed as poor men, but they did not know how to build friaries. From other places they were thrown out with many threats as if they were suspected of falsehood, also because they carried no letter of authentication with them. Their rule had not yet received papal confirmation, but it had received oral approval by the lord Innocent III. After some time the brothers returned full of affliction to blessed Francis from the diverse provinces where they had been sent. The brothers immediately notified the lord Hugolino, Cardinal and bishop of Ostia. He called blessed Francis to his presence, and presented him to Pope Honorius, who showed himself very favourable and kind to the Order. Blessed Francis preached before the Pope and Cardinals with such fervour and recommended to them the Order with such devotion, that he inflamed all with admiration and esteem towards the Order, so that every one of the Cardinals wanted to give shelter to the friars in his own house.

[14] After the death of the lord John of Saint Paul, Cardinal and bishop of Sabina, who had been a friend to blessed Francis and his Order, as well as procurator and special Protector, the lord Hugolino showed himself very devoted towards blessed Francis and his Order, and offered himself to be procurator and Protector of the Order, while asking, at the same time, the brothers to consider him as one of them.

At the same time the blessed Francis, moved by God through a vision, asked the lord Pope to give him this Cardinal as the Protector of the Order. Hugolino was the first Protector of the Order who was requested according to the form contained in the rule.

In the year of the Lord 1219, which was the thirteenth year from the conversion of Saint Francis, in the general Chapter celebrated at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, the Ministers were chosen once again, and according to God's will the brothers were sent throughout the world with letters of recommendation written by the Pope and sent to the prelates of the universal Church. The letters contained the following words:

"Honorius, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, etc. Our beloved sons, brother Francis and his companions of the life and Religion of the Minors, have rejected the vanities of this world and have chosen a way of life deservedly approved by the Roman Church; after

the example of the Apostles they go throughout different regions sowing the seed of the word of God. We therefore beseech and exhort all of you in the Lord, and by these apostolic letters command you, when members of the aforesaid brotherhood present themselves to you bearing these letters, to receive them as Catholic faithful, showing yourselves favourable and kind to them out of reverence for God and us."¹¹

This same lord Hugolino, Cardinal and Protector of the Order, together with many other Cardinals, also sent similar letters. Therefore, when the brothers, during the following Chapter celebrated in that same year, were sent throughout the world to the prelates, as soon as these read their letters of recommendation, they welcomed them charitably, and in this way the Order spread far and wide.

[15] When many friars came on this side of the mountains, owing to the intense heat while travelling through the mountains, they were afflicted with thirst. When they encountered water, with the command of a brother who presided over the group, they all blessed it. When they were drinking that water, through the merits of their obedience, God gave such a good taste to that water, that it seemed to them more precious and sweeter than wine. The brothers were refreshed more by that miracle than by the taste of the water.

In those days blessed Francis, according to God's will, sent six among the most perfect of the brothers to the kingdom of Morocco, so that they would constantly preach the catholic faith to the infidels. [16] These brothers were Vitalis, Berard, Peter, Adiutus, Accursius and Otho. Francis wanted them to have brother Vitalis as their prelate, and the other five brothers were to obey him. When the group arrived in the kingdom of Aragon, brother Vitalis fell gravely ill. Since his illness was prolonged, he did not want that his corporal infirmities hinder the Lord's service. Therefore he commanded the other five brothers to follow the precept of God and of brother Francis and continue on their journey to Morocco. These obedient brothers, leaving behind them their sick brother Vitalis, arrived at Coimbra. The

¹¹ This is the first known official document of the Papal Curia concerning the Order of friars Minor, and bears the title *Cum dilecti*. Latin text in *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 2. Our text is taken from the English translation in *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents*, edited by R.J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, W.J. Short, New City Press, New York – London – Manila, Vol. I, 1999 [FAED I], 558.

lady Orraca, queen of Portugal, who happened to be there, called the brothers to her presence to speak to her about God. She saw that they had so much contempt for the world, and such great fervour of will to die for Christ, that she considered them to be most perfect servants of God. Praying to God she asked them to reveal to her how her life would end. The brothers humbly excused themselves, since they considered themselves to be sinners, and were not worthy to reveal the mysteries of God. But the queen continued in insisting with many tears in her request to the brothers, and these finally agreed to answer her request. After they had all prayed that the divine will would be revealed to them regarding the future life of the queen, they said: "Lady, do not be sad because God has shown mercy towards you. Through us he is telling you that after some time you will leave this life and your lord the king. And, the fact that your death will not be long in coming, will be proved by this sign: you are to know for sure that we will shortly be killed for our faith in Christ. We are full of joy to know this, since the Lord wants to count us in the number of his Martyrs. When we will be killed in Morocco, the Christians will carry our bodies to this city, to bury us here, and you together with all the people will welcome our mortal remains with honour and devotion. And thus, as you will see, the words which we are now announcing to you, will come true."

The Saints proceeded on their journey and arrived at the castle of Alenquer, where they revealed their intentions to the lady Sancha, sister of the king of Portugal. She approved their most holy plans and gave them secular clothes over their habits. Otherwise they would not have been able to cross over to the Saracens. Thus disguised in their attire they went over to Spain and arrived at Seville, which in those days was a Saracen town. For eight days they stayed in a Christian hospice, and hid there while taking off their secular clothes. [17] One day, full of spiritual fervour, they went to the main mosque, or the oratory of the Saracens, without being led there by anybody. When they tried to enter, the Saracens were full of anger, and with shouts, blows and beatings they did not permit them to enter into the mosque. They then proceeded to the entrance of the palace, and presented themselves to the king as ambassadors sent by the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. They preached in front of the king about the Catholic faith, and tried to convince him to convert and accept baptism,

while they also spoke about the falsehood of Mohammed¹² and of his abominable law. The king was so angry that he wanted to cut off their heads there and then. But the king was calmed down by his son, and sent the brothers into prison at the top of a tower. From the height of the tower the brothers continued to preach the faith of Christ to all those who entered and exited from the palace, and declared that all those who observed the law of Mohammed were doomed to damnation. When the king heard this he commanded them to be imprisoned at the very bottom of the tower. After listening to the counsel of the elders, he sent them to Morocco, just as they had requested, together with the lord Pedro Fernando, a Spanish Catholic nobleman, and other Christians. They entered a hospice, in which this lord Pedro *Infante*¹³ used to live. He welcomed the brothers with great devotion and provided them with food. Wherever they saw the Saracens assembled, the brothers preached to them with great fervour. One day brother Berard went on a cart and started to preach to the people. King Miramolin happened to pass by to venerate the tombs of the kings, which lay outside the city walls. When he saw the brothers preaching he remained surprised. In fact, he considered them to be insane. But since the brothers did not want to desist from preaching also in front of him, he ordered that the five of them be expelled from the town and sent back immediately to the Christian lands. Then the lord Pedro *Infante* ordered some of his servants to accompany them to Ceuta, and from there see them off to Christian lands. But when the brothers were alone on their journey, they returned to Morocco and entered the town and began to preach to the Saracens in the main square. When the king heard that they were preaching, he ordered that they be imprisoned in a dungeon where they remained for twenty days without food and drink, refreshed only by divine consolation.

12 All references to Mohammed and the Saracens, who were also called "infidels", are the translation of the Latin expressions of the author of the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General*. They have to be read in the historical context of the Crusader mentality of the Middle Ages in which they were written, and should not be interpreted as referring in any way to any contemporary derogatory evaluations of Islam.

13 The adjective *infans* (the young one) with the name Pedro, refers to the fact that, in Spain, all the other sons of the king who were born after the firstborn were called *Infante*. Pedro was the younger brother of Alphonso II, king of Portugal.

It happened that the region fell into the grips of an intense heat wave and afterwards of violent storms. Since the king thought that stormy weather to be the result of the fact that the holy brothers were closed in prison, [18] after heeding the counsel of Ababoturin, who loved the Christians, he freed them from prison and commanded the other Christians to send them back to Christian lands with haste. The king was astonished, as were the other Saracens, when he saw that their bodies had suffered no harm and that their mind was sane, although they had been in prison for twenty days without food. As soon as they were freed they immediately wanted to preach the word of God to the Saracens. The Christians, however, out of fear of the king, did not permit them to do this, but gave them guides in order to see to it that they would return to the Christian lands. But the brothers, as soon as they were sent, returned to Morocco. With the counsel of the other Christians, the lord Pedro *Infante* kept them in his hospice and did not permit them to go out in public, but kept them under surveillance of guards. Some time after, the lord Pedro *Infante* together with many other Christians and Saracens, assembled an army, and set out for battle against some Saracens who did not want to obey the king. After a three-day journey he could not find any water for himself and his knights. When they were all in danger of losing their lives because of thirst, brother Berard, after spending some time in prayer, took a tent peg and drilled with it a hole in the ground. That very moment a spring of water gushed out, so that the men and beasts could all drink their fill and replenish their water skins. When they had satisfied their thirst that spring of water dried up. All of them, when they saw that miracle, began to show great reverence and devotion to brother Berard, and many of them kissed his habit and feet. When they returned to Morocco, the brothers were kept under surveillance, as before. But on a certain Friday they managed to go out unnoticed from the house and went to present themselves to king Miramolin, who was visiting the tombs of the kings. Brother Berard went upon a cart and began to preach with courage to the king. The king was very angry and commanded a Saracen prince, who had witnessed the miracle of the water, to punish them by the death penalty. All the Christians were afraid of dying and ran into the shelter of their homes, locked the doors and hid themselves. In the meantime the Saracens were encircling them from outside. Then the king sent his heralds and commanded the brothers to come to his presence. When these were brought to the king's house

for the second time, since the king was absent, the ministers of the devil began to strike their faces and hit them with blows, and closed them up in the great dungeon. But even there the holy brothers continued to preach the word of God to the Christians and the heretics. The king then commanded the brothers to be brought to his presence. Since he found them to confess with constant faithfulness the Catholic faith and to strongly renounce with strong arguments the evil law of Mohammed, the king was enkindled with fury, and commanded that they be separated from one another and cruelly beaten and tortured in separate houses.

Those wicked ministers bound the hands and feet of the Saints, passed ropes round their necks, and started to drag them back and forth on the naked earth. [19] They treated them so harshly that their internal organs could be seen. On their wounds they poured boiling oil and vinegar, and breaking glass they made them lie on the broken pieces as if they were straw, and they rolled them upon them back and forth. Thus they were cruelly tortured all night by thirty Saracens who were keeping guard and afflicting them. That same night these guards saw a great light coming down from heaven and, while the holy brothers were looking up to heaven, they were lifted up high together with an innumerable multitude. The guards were astonished and terrified, and ran to the dungeon, where they found the brothers absorbed in devout prayer. The king of Morocco, when he heard this account, full of anger commanded that the brothers be brought in his presence. The Saints, with their hands and feet tied, barefoot and naked, with blood gushing from their open wounds and under continual beatings, were brought before the king. Since he realised that they were still firm in their faith, the king commanded that all exit, and after having introduced some women, told the brothers: "Convert to our faith, and I will give you these women as your wives and a great sum of money, and you will be honoured in my kingdom." But the holy martyrs answered him: "We do not want your women or your money, but we despise everything for the sake of Christ." The king became furious, and he took the sword, and separated the Saints. With his own hand he dealt three blows on their heads with his sword and thus killed them with great cruelty. They completed their martyrdom in the year of the Lord 1220, on the 16th January, which was the fourth year of the lord Pope Honorius III, and the seventh year before the death of Saint Francis.

Afterwards their bodies and heads were carried outside by the women, while the wicked populace tied their feet and arms with ropes, and carried them outside the walls of the town and began to parade with their heads and their other members, going round the town with great screaming and howling. Since the night was approaching they dispersed their lacerated bodies in the fields. While some Christians lifted up their hands to heaven and praised God for their triumphant martyrdom, other Christians went to gather secretly their relics. The innumerable Saracens were so full of anger that they began to throw a great quantity of stones at the Christians, so much so that it resembled a hailstorm. But through the merits of the Saints all the Christians managed to escape unhurt and return home. Full of fear they remained in hiding in their houses for three days. In those days, Pedro Fernando and Martin Alphonso, who were the shield-bearers of the lord *Infante*, were killed in the square by a Saracen mob. Afterwards the Saracens lit a great fire in an open field, and threw the remains of the bodies of the holy brothers into the flames, so that they would be totally burned. But by the divine power the flames seemed not to touch the saints' remains [20] as if they were unable to burn them, and the fire soon extinguished itself. The heads of the martyrs could be seen in the flames and no sign of burning appeared upon them, and upon their hair or skin. One can still admire these relics, which were untouched by the flames in the monastery of the Holy Cross at Coimbra. The Saracens, partly out of friendship and partly out of love for gain by the money, which the lord *Infante* had offered, allowed the Christians to carry the relics of the Saints. They received them with great devotion, and left them under the care of a holy man, the lord John Robert, a canon of the Holy Cross monastery of Coimbra, and of three innocent servants. No one had the courage to enter the place where the holy relics were kept in veneration, if he considered himself to be a criminal or if had remorse of conscience. In that time, a certain knight, whose name was Pedro Rosario, had a concubine called Rosaria. He tried to enter alone in the place where the holy relics were kept, and he remained immobile and began to shout and cry out loudly: "Help me, help me, I want to confess my sins." As soon as he had confessed to the aforementioned canon and had sent away his concubine, he came down free from the steps leading to the place, and regained his physical strength. But he could not speak, until the lord *Infante* commanded the canon to place one of the martyrs' heads upon Pedro's bosom, and then he could speak fluently and regained his former health.

A shield-bearer was devoutly touching the shield on which the relics of the Saints were drying, but he had once committed the sin of fornication. When he wanted to reorder those relics on the shield, as they had been before, this shield was immediately lifted up high, and he could not reach it in any way. He was moved to do penance, and in a short time confessed his sin with contrition, and the relics descended to their usual place and this shield-bearer was able to touch them.

After these events the lord *Infante* commissioned two silver arks. In an ark he placed the heads and the dried bodies, and in another ark he placed the bones of the martyrs. Everyday he would pray before the relics of the Saints in his chapel, so that they would gain the grace from God that he would go back to his homeland, since he had remained so long in that place against his will. It came about that king Miramolin gave him permission to return. This permission was against what the king had originally intended, since he had sought counsel about how to kill him. When *Infante* went back with his leave permit, after a day and a night he arrived in a place where one could hear the roaring of lions and terrible howls. He and his men were terrified and placed the holy relics between themselves and the place from where they saw the lions approaching. From that moment they did not see the lions nor did they hear them roaring anymore. [21] Since they arrived in a place where they could not know how to proceed, since various roads branched off from it, they doubted as to which one to choose. The lord *Infante* commanded that the mule, which was carrying the relics of the martyrs should go before all the knights, and they would follow the road, which the beast would choose. With the Lord directing it, the mule immediately diverted from the road in which the Saracens had prepared a trap for *Infante*, as he came to know afterwards, and chose to follow a road which was off the track and very hard to follow, because it was a winding way among mountains and valleys. In this way the mule led them through a more secure way until they arrived at Ceuta, and after boarding the ships, which the Lord had prepared for them, they set sail. When it became dark during the first night, the sailors were afraid of hitting some rocks. Therefore everybody knelt before the relics and prayed the holy martyrs that they would free them from such danger. In that very moment the sky cleared and the sailors could gaze clearly to the open sea where they were directing the ship. At that moment they realized that the ship was, in fact, heading for those rocks, but by that

light they could divert its course, and therefore all arrived safe and sound to the shores of Gibraltar, and hence proceeded to Tarifa and to Seville. When they landed they came to know through some Christian messengers of *Infante*, that the king of Morocco was sending his own messengers to capture him. All were afraid and they tried to direct their ship's course as hurriedly as possible towards Castile. As soon as the sailors had raised the sails the soldiers of the king of Morocco came in a hurry, in order to capture *Infante* and lead him back to have him beheaded. But through the merits of the Saints they escaped and arrived safe and sound in Spain. Arriving in Astorga they were given shelter in a hospice. There was, in that house, a paralytic man who had been afflicted for thirty years by his illness. He could not speak or move his limbs. He listened to the accounts of the miracles of the Saints, and prostrating himself in front of the ark, where the Saints' relics were preserved, he prayed with many tears that the holy friars would cure his illness. There and then he regained speech and health in all the members of his body.

When they arrived at Coimbra, to where the fame of the holy martyrs had already spread, the lady Orraca, queen of Portugal, with all the people came hurriedly to venerate with great devotion the holy relics. With great solemnity they were carried to the monastery of the Holy Cross in Coimbra and placed there with honours. When blessed Francis heard about their martyrdom, he rejoiced in his spirit and said: "Today, I can truly say that I have five friars minor."¹⁴

In that same year in which the Saints were martyred, the wrath of God was enkindled against the king of Morocco and his kingdom, as a vengeance for his crime against the Saints. The king's right hand and arm, which he had used to kill the holy brothers, as well as all

¹⁴ These words attributed by Arnald of Sarrant to St. Francis were written in the second half of the 14th century. In his *Chronicle*, 8, written at least 100 years earlier, in 1260, Jordan of Giano also recounts the martyrdom of Berard and his companions. But the reaction of St. Francis to the news of their death was different: "When the life and history of these aforementioned martyrs were brought to Blessed Francis, hearing that he himself was praised in them and seeing that the other brothers were taking pride in the sufferings of these brothers, in as much as he held himself in the greatest contempt and despised praise and glory, he spurned the accounts and forbade them to be read, and said: 'Everyone should glory in his own suffering and not in that of another.'" (*13th Century Chronicles*, Translated by P. Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 24).

the other members of his body including his right foot, became rigid. In his land no rain fell for three consecutive years. There was such a drought in the land and people succumbed to the plague for five consecutive years, that the great part of the population [22] was annihilated by death. These years of pestilence corresponded to the number of friars who had been killed.

The prophecy of the holy brothers was also fulfilled. Queen Orraca, some time after the burial of the holy martyrs, filled with virtues, departed from this life. In that same hour in the middle of the night, the lord Pedro Nunho, canon and sacristan, who shone with sanctity and was the confessor of the queen, saw a great multitude of friars Minor who were entering the choir. Among them there was one who was leading them with great solemnity, and behind him another five who had a singular honour and were more excellent than the others. As soon as those brothers had entered in a procession in the choir, they began chanting Matins with an indescribable melody of voices. The lord Pedro, who was astonished, asked one of them the reason why the brothers entered the choir in that hour, when all the doors of the monastery were closed. That brother answered: "All of us, whom you behold, are friars Minor and we are now reigning gloriously with Christ. The one who entered with such solemnity is Saint Francis, whom you so ardently wished to see in this life. The other five who were more honoured among the brothers are the brothers who were killed in Morocco for the sake of Christ, and who are buried in this monastery. And you should know that the lady queen Orraca has also departed from this life. And since she loved our Order with all her heart, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us all to come here and sing Matins in her honour. Since you have been her confessor, God has willed that you see this vision. Do not have doubts regarding the death of the queen because certainly, as soon as we go away, you will hear the news of her passing." The procession then went out of that monastery, although the doors were closed. That very moment servants arrived from the queen's household and knocked upon the door of the monastery, and announced that the queen had paid the debt of human nature and passed away. After that the Saints began to work many miracles. Their account is to be found in a more abundant and detailed manner in their Legend.

Following the example of these Saints, blessed Anthony, who was then a canon in the same monastery of the Holy Cross, and who

had been named Fernando of Martino, full of zeal for martyrdom, entered the Order of friars Minor, when he was twenty-five years old. He remained in the Order for ten years, after which he died full of holiness and resplendent doctrine and miracles. Regarding him we shall note those facts, which are not found in the major Legend.

In that expedition of the brothers, the blessed Francis, full of fervour for martyrdom, went to the regions of Syria together with twelve brothers. Taking with him brother Illuminato he crossed over to meet the Sultan. The Saracens caught them, they bound them in chains and cruelly beat them, but finally they led them to the Sultan. The Cardinal Jacques de Vitry in his history [23] of Jerusalem says: "We have seen the founder and master of this Order of friars Minor, brother Francis, a simple, uneducated man beloved by God and man, whom all the others obey as their highest superior. He was so moved by spiritual fervour and exhilaration that, after he reached the army of Christians before Damietta in Egypt, he boldly set out for the camp of the Sultan of Egypt, fortified only with the shield of faith. When the Saracens captured him on the road, he said: "I am a Christian. Take me to your master." They dragged him before the Sultan. When that cruel beast saw Francis, he recognized him as a man of God and changed his attitude into one of gentleness, and for some days he listened very attentively to Francis as he preached the faith of Christ to him and his followers. But ultimately, fearing that some of his soldiers would be converted to the Lord by the efficacy of his words and pass over to the Christian army, he ordered that Francis be returned to our camp with all reverence and security. At the end he said to Francis: "Pray for me, that God may deign to reveal to me the law and the faith which is more pleasing to Him.""¹⁵

In another document we read that, the Sultan converted to the Christian faith by the help of two brothers after the death of Saint Francis, who had foretold that he would send him the brothers so that he would receive baptism at the end of his life.

In the same historical account, Jacques of Vitry says that the Saracens willingly listened to the friars Minor when they preached to them the faith of Christ and the doctrine of the Gospel. But when the brothers started to preach that Mohammed was perfidious against the

¹⁵ Quoted from FAED I, 584. The document is chapter 32 of the *Historia Occidentalis*.

truth, they would openly contradict them. On those occasions they would impiously beat the brothers and, if God did not miraculously protect them, they would have killed them and expelled them from their towns. After this blessed Francis, enlightened by divine wisdom, returned to the Christian lands.

During that same expedition, brother Giovanni Bonelli of Florence was sent to the province of Provence. He was a perfect man, full of zeal, whom Francis called *the bailiff of Florence*. He became Minister in that province, during the provincial chapter of Arles, [24] in which Saint Anthony was preaching on the cross, and Saint Francis appeared and filled all the friars present with a great spirit of consolation.

Brother Christopher was sent to the Province of Aquitaine. He was famous for his holy life and miracles, since he had a dove-like simplicity. He was buried with honour in the friary of Cahors, as we shall note further down.

Blessed Francis sent brother Agnellus of Pisa to the Province of England. This brother had founded the friary of Paris and had been custodian there. He left together with brother Albert of Pisa, who later on became Minister General, and other three brothers, who founded this Order in the kingdom of England. The same brother Agnellus was also Minister Provincial of England. They landed in England on the third of May.¹⁶ They arrived in Canterbury, and were charitably welcomed by the friars Preachers, who had a friary in that town. From there they proceeded to Oxford [25] and went to live in the property of the black monks (Benedictines) of Abington, which is situated in the great forest between London and Oxford. That evening they could not proceed on their journey because of the rain, and fearing their health would be endangered because of the cold, they asked the monks to offer them shelter for the love of God. When the porter saw their emaciated faces, their tattered habits and heard them speak in a foreign language, he reckoned they were minstrels. So he went to tell the Prior, who was there during recreation with three other monks, namely with the sacristan, the cellar-keeper and another young monk. When the friars were introduced in order to entertain them, the brothers hum-

¹⁶ The expedition of the friars Minor to England did not take place in 1219, but in 1224. The first brothers landed at Dover on 10th September 1224, according to the historical account of Thomas of Eccleston, *Tractatus de adventu fratrum Minorum in Angliam*. Many of the details given here are not exact and have to be verified with the help of Eccleston's chronicle.

bly answered that they were not minstrels, but religious who were professing the apostolic life. The Prior and the other monks thought they were false religious, and they harshly drove them out of the door. But the younger monk had compassion on them, and asked the porter that, after the Prior would go to bed, he would make the poor brothers go into the barn to sleep, and that he personally would provide for their needs.

The brothers were led into the barn to sleep on the straw. This monk brought bread and beer to them and recommended himself to their prayers. Then he went to bed. In his dreams he saw Christ sitting on a splendid throne and calling everybody to his judgment. With a terrible voice he shouted: "I want the owners of this place to come in my presence." When all the monks living in that place were brought before him, a certain poor and despicable man wearing the habit of those brothers entered and with a loud voice said: "O most just judge, the blood of the friars Minor is crying out to you. It has been shed this night by the hands of these monks, when they saw them in such danger and denied them lodging and food. These are the brothers who left everything out of your love and came here to search for the souls, which you have redeemed when you died. The monks have denied the brothers what they would not have denied to give to minstrels." Then Christ with a terrible look on his face asked the Prior: "Which Order do you belong to?" He answered him: "I belong to the Order of Saint Benedict." Christ then turned towards Saint Benedict and asked: "Is this monk saying the truth?" Saint Benedict replied: "Lord, this monk is destroying my Order and that of his companions. In my rule I have commanded that the Abbot should always sit with the guests, but these monks have denied hospitality to these brothers." Then Christ commanded the monk to be hanged immediately upon an elm tree, which was in the cloister. The same punishment was inflicted upon the sacristan and the cellar-keeper, [26] who were judged in a similar way. When they had been hanged, Christ turned towards the monk who had that vision and who had been merciful to the brothers, and asked him to which Order he belonged. Since he considered that his brothers the monks of Saint Benedict had treated badly those brothers, trembling with fear he answered: "Lord, I belong to this poor Order." Christ then turned to the poor brother and said: "Francis, is it true that he belongs to your Order?" Saint Francis answered: "Lord, he is mine, and from this moment I accept him." Then he embraced

the monk, who at that very moment woke up from his dream. He was surprised at this vision, and especially because he had heard Christ call the name of Francis. So he hurried to announce his vision to the Prior. But when he entered his room, he found the Prior in a crouched position and totally suffocated. So he began to shout with fear, and ran to the other monks, but found them also suffocated. When he wanted to take refuge with the brothers, he discovered them in their shelter. Out of fear because of what happened to the Prior, the doorkeeper sent the brothers away early next morning. And going to the Abbot he recounted everything to him. The Abbot was astonished when he heard what had happened.

This story was spread far and wide. In the meantime the brothers arrived at Oxford and were welcomed with honour by king Henry.¹⁷ Inspired by God, he donated a plot of land to them in order to build a dwelling place, and also the permission to break down part of the walls of the town for this purpose. The king also gave them permission to close the royal road from his castle to Saint Fredeswind, reserving for himself and his successors the sole right of personal transit.

In the meantime the brothers became famous for their sanctity. They were joined by the monk which we have mentioned above, and who was the first one to enter the brotherhood. The lord Rudolph, bishop of Hereford also entered the Order, as well as an Abbot with many others. They lived in such great humility, that the Bishop and Abbot carried the stones for the building as well as the water buckets with their staff.

Brother Agnellus accepted many young men in the Order. He ordered them to study and asked the lord Robert Grosseteste, who was a venerable [27] master of theology at Oxford, to teach theology to the brothers. He humbly accepted and was master of the school, until the Order had a successor to his post. When brother Agnellus once returned to a friary after having been away, he wanted to verify whether the brothers were making progress in their studies. Seeing them in disputation he approached them, and he listened to the theme of their discussion, which had as its theme: "God exists." When he heard them discussing such a theme, he was perplexed and said: "Alas! The simple and unlettered brothers are lost in contemplation of

17 King Henry III, who reigned between 1216 and 16th November 1272.

God, and these educated brothers are discussing whether *God exists*.” For this reason he prohibited them from doing further studies.

In the year of the Lord 1221 blessed Francis instituted the Third Order, which is known by the name of Order of Penitents, in which those who are joined in matrimony begin to do acts of penance and bodily chastisement. The first among them was Saint Lucius.¹⁸

In that same year the lord Pope Honorius III gave the Order a privilege, whereby no brother who had professed in the Order could dare to leave it and nobody could accept to keep with him a brother who had left the Order. The Pope also ordered that no one could wander out of obedience to the Order, and that the brothers could exercise the ecclesiastical censures against these disobedient brothers. In this privilege the Pope called the Provincial Ministers by the name of *Priors*. This command, I believe, has also been set down in the rule, namely that “on no account shall it be lawful for them to leave this Order, according to the decree of our Lord the Pope.”¹⁹ Thus this privilege was given before the *Regula bullata*.

In the year of the Lord 1222 a certain man by the name of Bartholomew happened to be in Italy. When he heard about the widespread fame of blessed Francis, and listened to his preaching, he left his profession as a lawyer, converted and made copious fruits of penance in the profession of the third rule. He became so friendly with blessed Francis, that the Saint gave him permission to accept brothers in the Order. In his house there was a man who was possessed by the devil and who was always uttering foul words. When blessed Francis one day arrived in that house as a guest, even before he approached that place, [28] that devil grew silent and for three days did not utter one single insane word. After the Saint had left that person resumed in his blasphemies, to the astonishment of Bartholomew. When Bartholomew asked him why he had remained silent, the man who had the diabolical obsession, through the virtue and in the name of the Crucifix, answered: “From the moment that brother Francis was coming to this place, and through all the time he spent here coming here from another place until he left, I was tied up in such a way by God, that I could not form one single word.” It was discovered that three days had indeed passed since the Saint arrived from the other place

18 Blessed Luchesius of Poggibonsi, in Tuscany (died 1242).

19 *Later Rule* 2,12 (FAED I, 101).

to that house, and had been on the road or in the house, as that demoniac had stated. Bartholomew then asked him: “Is this brother Francis so famous that you were tied up and were suffering because of him?” And the devil answered: “He is such a great man, that all the world is still not aware of him and does not admire the greatness of his virtues.” Then Bartholomew asked: “How did you know that he was coming and that he was such a great man?” The devil answered: “It has not been a long time since our prince summoned all of us and said that the Father of mercies did not intend to leave all the world in such a state of sin, since every time the world fell into a multitude of sins he would always send someone for the conversion of sinners. Thus, after Adam he sent Noah, and then he sent Abraham and Moses, and after them he sent the Prophets. Finally he sent Christ and the Apostles. Since, therefore, the human race abandoned the way of Christ and the Apostles and the memory of his passion was nearly totally erased from the hearts of men, it is clear from many arguments that it was necessary to send another reformer of all human persons. We saw this man Francis who was being lifted up on high with fervour and with his virtuous and arduous life. In fact, he renounced the world, he renewed the life of Christ, he drew so many persons to a life of perfection in his congregation, and he proceeded to call all people to conversion through his words and example. Therefore we were sure that this was the man whom we feared would be sent to reform the world. Our prince added that God the Father promised Christ that, against a troubled world, he would shortly renew his passion in a pure man, in such a way that the passion would be imprinted upon the hearts of the faithful, from where it had before been abolished. This happened two years before the Saint received the sacred stigmata of Christ.” The devil added, “We had to oppose all our strength against Francis and his Order. Now in that place there were only seven brothers of this Order, but eight thousand devils were destined to tempt them. We therefore looked for a way in which to lead them with deceit to transgress their rule. We tried to tempt their purity by their familiarity with women, we tried to make them accept unworthy young men in their ranks, we tempted their poverty by making them build sumptuous and well-furnished buildings, we tempted their obedience [29] by dividing them in their opinions, in such a way that the Order would fall from its primitive state of perfection. But then another brother of the same Order appeared, who accomplished greater wonders than Francis, and

therefore the Order ascended to such heights of holiness, that a third part of mankind was converted to a life of penance in this Order.”

In the year of the Lord 1223, through the will of the lord Hugolino, Cardinal and Protector of the Order, Pope Honorius confirmed the Rule. Blessed Francis had a heavenly vision, in which he was shown many crumbs of bread. God admonished him to gather all these tiny crumbs together into a host, namely the rule. Therefore he went up to mount Raynerii²⁰ together with two brothers, namely Leo of Assisi and Bonizo of Bologna. There he fasted and prayed like another Moses, and he diligently commanded the brothers to write down the Rule which he received from the mouth of the Lord. When he came down from the mountain he left the Rule in the custody of his vicar brother Elias, who lost it through negligence. Therefore Francis went up again on the mountain and rewrote the Rule according to the revelation of the Spirit. When the Saint was still on the mountain numerous ministers gathered there, because they were afraid that he would write a very harsh Rule. They came to him together with his vicar, brother Elias, and told him that they did not want to be obliged to observe that Rule, unless he would write it according to their counsels. At that moment the voice of Christ was heard in the air, stating that all the friars were obliged to observe that Rule word for word, with all that it contained, since all its contents proceeded from Christ’s own will.

In that same year, on the third day of the *Calends* of December,²¹ the lord Pope Honorius confirmed the rule, during the eighth year of his pontificate, and during the fifteenth year from the foundation of the Order, when the Saint had begun to receive the brothers.

In the month of January of that same year²² blessed Francis first acquired form God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin His Mother, and then from His Vicar Honorius III, [30] a plenary indulgence for all sinners and for all those who would visit, once a year, the

20 Fonte Colombo.

21 29th November 1223.

22 The author is here indicating that he is following the calendar, which marked the beginning of the year on 25th March, feast of the Annunciation. Thus, when he is speaking about January falling in the same year as December 1223, he is, in fact, indicating January 1224. The historical reference to the Portiuncula Indulgence is also mistaken, since Francis had already requested the indulgence from Honorius III in July 1216.

church of Saint Mary of the Angels on the first day of August for the length of a natural day, that is, beginning from the second Vespers of the same first day of August until the second Vespers of the second day of August, including the night hours. Upon the command of the lord Pope, seven Bishops solemnly consecrated this church, and the indulgence was made public.

In the year of the Lord 1224, as a divine confirmation of the rule and of the plenary indulgence, round about the feast of the Exaltation of the holy Cross or, as has been shown by some divine revelation, on the same day of the feast, Francis received the seal of the sacred stigmata of Christ on mount La Verna, as if they were the seals of the most high King.

When he was General, blessed Francis was continually ill and suffering from the rigour of his penances. Since he was delicate in health, his condition worsened. Therefore, during a general chapter, he resigned from his office, and ordered brother Peter Catanio to be the leader of the Order. Francis immediately promised obedience to this brother. While the brothers were weeping copiously, since they saw that they would be orphans without such a father, blessed Francis lifted his eyes up to heaven, and joining his hands together, said: “Lord, I commend to you this family, which you have left under my guidance up till now. I cannot continue to take tender care of them, because of my illness, as you very well know. Therefore I recommend them to the Ministers, who will have to render reason in front of you on judgment day, if perchance anyone of the brothers would perish because of their carelessness, bad example or harsh corrections.” From that moment Francis remained subject till the day of his death, and he was more humble than all the other brothers in all things. Brother Peter Catanio continued to lead the Order for a short period of time as the *vicar of the Saint*, until he died before Saint Francis.²³ While Francis was away, [31] this brother was buried in the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. He soon became famous and shone through many miracles, and a great multitude of people would come to that church bringing offerings with them. When the Saint returned to that place, he was very sad because of the many offerings and because of

23 Peter Catanio was chosen by Francis during the chapter on 29th September 1220, and died at the Portiuncula on 10th March 1221. Brother Elias succeeded him. As the author states, for as long as Francis lived, these two brothers were not considered to be Ministers general, but rather *vicars* of Saint Francis.

the multitude of people who were coming. So he went to the tomb of brother Peter and said: "Brother Peter, for as long as you lived, you were always obedient to me. Now you should also obey me, since too many secular persons are disturbing us. Therefore you are to cease operating miracles, so that we shall not continue to be disturbed by these secular persons." From that moment brother Peter did not do any more miracles.

After the death of brother Peter, blessed Francis placed as leader brother Elias of Assisi, a famous and prudent man. Although he was called Minister by the Saint and by many other brothers, he was not elected as such when the Saint was still alive, nor was he received by the Order as a General.

Also at that same time when brother Elias was chosen, he commanded, among other things, that no brother should eat meat. But a certain Angel under the guise of a handsome young man came and knocked on the door of the friars, and insisted upon asking brother Elias the following question: "whether it is licit for the ones who observe the holy Gospel to eat of all that which is placed before them, as Christ had said, and whether anybody had a permission to impose anything contrary to the freedom of the Gospel to those who observe the holy Gospel." Blessed Francis at that moment was praying in the woods, and this vision was all revealed to him, so that by the Lord's will he revoked all those commands.

In the year of the Lord 1225 the lord Pope Honorius gave a privilege to the Order, whereby the Priors and Custodians, as well as all the prelates of the churches, would excommunicate and expel those brothers who abandoned the Order. Another privilege gave the brothers the faculty to celebrate and say the office behind closed doors in their oratories during times of interdict, on the condition that they would exclude those persons who fell under interdict or excommunication. They could also celebrate the divine mysteries in their oratories [32] on a portable altar.²⁴ These privileges show that it is not true that blessed Francis never thought of obtaining any necessary privileges for his Order from the Church, but he prohibited those, which would induce the brothers to pride. It is clear that the Order acquired privileges when Francis was still alive.

²⁴ The Bulla *Quia populares tumultus* (3rd December 1224). English text in FAED I, 561-563.

In the year of the Lord 1226 in the month of April blessed Francis, when he was in Siena and was gravely ill, sensing that his life was drawing to an end, asked the brothers to take him to Assisi. There he remained for some time as a sick man in the Bishop's palace, but towards the very last days of his life he commanded the brothers to carry him to Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, where he foretold that the Order would have many tribulations in the future. It was here that his soul, freed from the body, accomplished its Passover from this world to the Father, on the 4th day of the *Nones* of October, in the eleventh year of the pontificate of the lord Honorius III. Francis was in his 45th year, 20 years after his conversion to God, and 18 years from the institution of his Order, that is, since he began to have brothers. After his death brother Elias governed the Order until the election of a future General.

In that same year the lord Pope Honorius died, and according to what blessed Francis had foretold, the lord Hugolino, Cardinal and Protector of the Order, was elected Pope, and chose the name Gregory IX.²⁵ He gave Cardinal Raynaldus as Protector to the Order. This Cardinal succeeded him in the episcopate of Ostia and was eventually also elected Pope, taking the name Alexander IV.

In the year of the Lord 1227 the aforementioned brother Elias gave leave to brother Daniel, who was the Minister of Calabria, and to brothers Agnellus, Samuel, Donnolo, Leone, Nicola and Hugolino, who were inflamed with the desire for martyrdom, to go to Morocco in the lands of the infidels, in order to spread the seed of the Catholic truth. They left from the lands of Tuscany and arrived at Ceuta, a Spanish town in Morocco, where they preached outside the city walls for some days to the merchants, since it was prohibited [33] for Christians to enter the town. One Sunday morning, inflamed with the fervour of martyrdom, and armed with the sacraments of penance and of the Eucharist, they entered the town secretly and went to the public square to preach Christ to the Saracens. At first the Saracens were angry, and they insulted them verbally, but then the brothers were presented to the king on his own orders. They declared that they did not want to deny their faith, and condemned the sect of Mohammed. Therefore they were tied with iron chains and locked up in a dungeon.

²⁵ Honorius III died the following year, 18th March 1227. The following day, 19th March, Cardinal Hugolino was elected Pope, taking the name of Gregory IX.

There, for eight days they were treated harshly. The following Sunday, that is, on the 6th day of the *Ides* of October,²⁶ they were taken in the king's presence. They were interrogated one after another in front of the council of the Saracens, and were asked if they were ready to revoke what they had affirmed against Mohammed, deny their faith and become Saracens, and were promised many riches if they accepted these terms; if not, they were to know that they would be taken to death. They continually declared that they preferred to die rather than live, and that Christ was the Son of God and Mohammed was a false prophet and his law was coming from the devil. At that very moment one of the soldiers, burning with rage, struck brother Daniel on his head with a sword. Since the others continued incessantly to profess their faith in Christ, they were given the death penalty. They were undressed and their arms were tied behind their backs. Then they were led outside the city and they were beheaded, and thus rendered their immaculate souls to God. The Saracens savagely struck their heads, and their dismembered bodies were gathered by the Christians and honourably buried in the quarter of the Genoese merchants.

After some years had elapsed, on the 16th day of the calends of October,²⁷ in Morocco, at the church of the Blessed Mary, another five friars Minor together with a great multitude of other Christians of both sexes, were beheaded by the Saracens for their faith, and received the scarlet robe of martyrdom. In that town of Morocco not one single Christian remained who could invoke the name of the Lord.

After the martyrdom of these brothers the Saracens saw that in the church where their bodies had been placed, there was a great light from heaven. The church bells rang out of their own accord and many voices of Angels were heard, who were praising God and the Saints with melodious voices.

Brother Elias, after the death of Saint Francis, began to build a great and impressive basilica outside the walls of Assisi, in a plot of land, which used to be called "the hill of hell". After Pope Gregory IX had placed the foundation stone of this church, it became to be called "the hill of paradise". To build this church brother Elias tried to gather funds in many ways. [34] In order to get the money necessary

²⁶ 10th October 1227.

²⁷ 16th September 1232. The martyrs were brothers Leo, Hugo, Dominic, John and Electus.

he obliged the Provinces to give enormous sums for this building. He also placed a marble vase in front of the new building, in which the visitors to the site would place their money offerings. The companions of blessed Francis saw this, and brother Leo especially noted it and went to Perugia in order to consult brother Giles. He answered him: "Even though the brothers build a large house which stretches from here to Assisi, for me it is enough to have a tiny corner in which to dwell." The brothers asked Giles whether they should break that vase, and he turned to brother Leo and, with his eyes full of tears, told him: "If you want to die, go and break it; if you want to live, leave it, since it will be very hard for you to stand up to the persecution of this man brother Elias." When brother Leo and his companions understood these words, they went and broke to pieces that marble vase. Brother Elias was furious and he had them cruelly beaten and expelled from Assisi. The brothers were very troubled because of all this.

The brothers then gathered in a general chapter and brother Elias was absolved of his office of government because of what he had done. Brother John of Florence, whose surname was Parenti, and who was then minister in Spain, was elected Minister General of the Order.²⁸

It happened that during the time in which Saint Francis was leader of the Order, two among the first brothers came to a castle, which was inhabited by wicked men who were robbers. Their leader was a most a cruel tyrant, who was of noble birth, but inhuman in his actions. This tyrant was inspired by God to accept the brothers with kindness and, against his normal behaviour, he was moved to pity for them and showed them extraordinary humanity. After supper all those present spoke among themselves about their crimes of murder and stealing. The elder among the brothers, who had a special grace from God to speak, asked them to remain silent, and began to preach to them about the wonderful glory of heaven, about the sufferings of hell, about the merits of the Saints and also about the lack of merit of their acts. He was speaking with such fervour that all those who heard him prostrated themselves humbly and with tears in front of the brothers, and they asked them with humility to show them the

²⁸ Brother Elias was, in fact, vicar of Saint Francis, until the Pentecost Chapter of 1227, during which John Parenti was elected first Minister General after the death of Francis. Elias was then elected Minister General in 1232.

way in which they could escape from such torments. Heeding the advice of the brothers, [35] the lord of that castle made a full confession of his sins. Since for him it was difficult to go on a pilgrimage of penance, or to fast and pray for long periods, since he did not know how to do all this, that brother with great fervour and confidence told him: "I am ready to pledge myself in order to satisfy your penance, so that your soul will not perish, if you will be ready to prepare for me and for my companion, as your penance, straw beds in which we can rest for this night." The lord gladly went and humbly prepared beds for them, but nevertheless he wanted to see whether those brothers would sleep that night. In the light of a lamp, which was shining in that dark place during the silence of the small hours of the night, he saw that brother waking up. He spent a long time praying, and for three times during that night he was lifted up high in the air to the very top of the castle. In those moments he was praying intensely and crying bitterly, while imploring the salvation of the soul of that man from the merciful Lord. It seemed that he was crying so bitterly as if he had lost some dear relative or friend. That lord became all inflamed with devotion. The following morning he humbly prostrated before the brothers and asked them to lead him into the way of salvation, and said that he was ready to humbly do anything they would command him. On the advice of those brothers he left all his possessions, he made restitution for whatever goods he had stolen, distributed everything to the poor and then entered into the Order.

Here begins the life
of brother Bernard of Quintavalle,
who was the first to enter
the Order after Saint Francis.
After he sold all his goods,
he gave the money to the poor

[35] There was in the town of Assisi a venerable man, whose name was Bernard.²⁹ He was among the richest and most prudent citizens of Assisi, and he governed the entire town by his counsels. When he was prudently considering how blessed Francis showed such contempt for the world, so much patience in adversity and was so joyful when people scorned him, and when he considered that the people for two whole years believed that Francis was a crazy dreamer, through a divine instinct, one day he decided to invite Francis with great devotion to come to his house to dine with him and sleep there. In this way he hoped to better ascertain whether Francis was acting out of vainglory or out of holiness. After dinner he prepared a bed for Saint Francis in the same room where he slept. Both entered to go to sleep. Blessed Francis was trying to hide the grace of devotion, which he had received from God, and he pretended to sleep very profoundly, so that he would later wake up in order to pray. The lord Bernard also pretended to sleep and he began to snore heavily [36] in such a way that it seemed that he was fast asleep. When Saint Francis thought that Bernard was sleeping he woke up and, raising his thoughts and his face to heaven, lifting up his arms, he became totally inflamed and, with many inexpressible sobs and tears of compunction, he began to pray devoutly by continually repeating these same words: "My God and my all, my God and my all." For the rest of the night he was only repeating these words and did not utter any other phrases. Therefore the devout and humble man became aware that it was divine wisdom that prompted this unlearned and simple man to live such a harsh way of

29 This episode is parallel to that of the *Actus B. Francisci et sociorum eius* (ABF), c. 1 (English translation in FAED III, 435-438).

life for the renewal of the world and the salvation of all, and considered that Francis was so humble that he was rendering thanks to God with such devotion and admiration. The lord Bernard could see everything clearly through the light of the lamp, which illuminated that room. The following morning he woke up inflamed with devotion and said to Saint Francis: "Brother Francis, I have decided to leave this world and to follow you and go wherever you send me." The Saint answered him, full of enthusiasm: "Lord Bernard, what you are asking for is very hard for you, and we have to go and ask for counsel from God. Therefore, let us go to the bishop's palace, where there is a certain devout priest. We will ask him to open the sacred book for three times and to indicate to us what we are to do." When they arrived at that place, according to the counsel given by the Saint, they assisted at Mass and remained in prayer until the hour of Tierce, praying the Lord to favourably reveal his will to them. Then the Saint asked the priest to open the Missal. After having made the sign of the cross, the priest found this first quotation from the Gospel: *If you wish to be perfect, go, sell everything you possess and give to the poor* (Mk 10:21). When the priest opened the book a second time, he found the words: *Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself* (Mt 16:24). At the third opening of the book he read: *Take nothing for the journey* (Lk 9:3). When he heard these words, Saint Francis said: "This is the Lord's counsel. Go, therefore, and do what you have heard." At that very moment lord Bernard went and sold all his belongings, which amounted to a great value, and together with Saint Francis distributed all the money to the poor in the square of Saint George. Therefore, in the year of the Lord 1209, which was the second year after the conversion of Saint Francis, Bernard accepted the habit of the holy Religion.³⁰

This brother Bernard of Quintavalle, from the very beginning of his conversion, strove to live a perfect life built on the foundation of humility and self-denial. After the brothers had multiplied, blessed

30 This account contains some details, which are not accurate. The opening of the Missal took place not at the bishop's palace at Santa Maria Maggiore, but at the church of San Nicolò *de pede plateae* in the main square of Assisi. The *Anonymous of Perugia* 10 says that "they went to one of the city's churches." The Missal, which Francis and Bernard consulted, still exists in Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, USA. Cfr. G.C.P. Voorvelt, B.P. Vab Leeuwen, "L'Evangélique de Baltimore: Étude Critique sur le Missel que Saint François aurait consulté," *Collectanea Franciscana* 59 (1989) 261-278, appendix 278-321.

Francis sent him to Bologna³¹. There he presented himself in the main square. All those present derided him when they saw the shabby habit he was wearing, and the new way of life he led, since they did not know anything about this Order. While the young men and boys were hurling many insults at him, he accepted all these abuses freely with joy and patience. Some shoved him, while others dragged him by the hood, and others also flung mud, stones and dust at him. He not only sustained all this willingly, but he also managed to smile with joy, since with Christ he was made the *scorn of mankind and contempt of the people* (Ps 21:7). One lawyer interrogated him regarding his state, and he told him that he was a friar Minor, and showed him the Rule, which he was carrying. When that man read it, he was astonished and said: "This is [37] the most perfect state of life which exists in this world, and therefore it would be a sin to molest this brother in any way." After this the blessed Bernard acquired permission to build a house for the brothers. But since everybody recognised him and regarded him to be a saint, Bernard wanted to escape from such honours. When blessed Francis arrived at that place he asked him to bring other brothers to live there and give him leave to depart, because he was afraid that the honours piled upon him by men would make him lose his humility.

After these events, Bernard was sent to Florence together with another brother.³² During the first night, when they were humbly asking for shelter for the love of God, they arrived at a certain house, which had a portico on the outside with an oven, and they said to one another: "We can find shelter in this place." The lady of that house, since she saw that they were poor men, did not want to accept them inside, and did not give them blankets out of fear that they would be robbers. However, when they asked her for shelter for the love of God, she gave them permission to stay outside under the portico. When her husband came back and saw the brothers resting under the portico near the oven, he was not happy and told his wife: "Why did you give permission to these vagabonds to sleep in our property?" She answered him: "I did not want to receive them into the house, but I gave them permission to sleep outside, since there is nothing there that

31 Cfr. ABF c. 4 (FAED III, 444-446).

32 This episode is parallel to the *Anonymous of Perugia* 20-22 (FAED II, 43-44) and the *Legend of Three Companions* 38-39 (FAED II, 90-92).

they can steal except firewood.” Since she was suspecting they were robbers, that lady did not give them any blankets to cover themselves, even though it was a very cold night. Brother Bernard felt happy to stay out cold and naked, as well as to listen to those people who were calling the brothers robbers, since he considered this tribulation to be a great treasure.

Very early the following morning the brothers hurried to the church for Matins. After some time early that same morning the lady went to the same church and saw the two brothers praying with devotion. So she thought: “Surely these men are not vagabonds and robbers, as my husband made me think last night.” At the same time, a man called Guido entered the church and began to distribute alms to the poor. When he approached brother Bernard and his companion and offered money to them, they refused it, and he asked them: “Why don’t you accept alms, if you are poor and lack everything?” Brother Bernard answered him: “It is true that we are poor; but we have voluntarily chosen to be poor in order to live according to Christ’s counsels in the Gospel, and therefore we refuse to accept money.” That man Guido was astonished, and he asked them whether they had riches when they were still secular persons. They answered him that they indeed had riches, but that they gave all their belongings to the poor in order to obey Christ’s counsels. That very moment Guido led them to his house and assigned a decent place for them and their brothers for their lodgings, and asked the brothers to give him detailed information about their way of life [38] for Christ’s sake. That lady heard all this conversation, and also wanted to take them and welcome them into her house. In this way the fame of their holiness immediately spread in the city of Florence.

Once blessed Francis went together with brother Bernard to Spain, in order to visit the relics of Saint James,³³ but he had to return back to Italy because of a grave illness. Brother Bernard remained in

33 Santiago de Compostella, a famous shrine for pilgrimages during the Middle Ages. Francis went to Spain in 1212. *1 Celano* 56 (FAED I, 230): “Not too long after this, he began to travel towards Morocco to preach the gospel of Christ to the Miramamolín and his retinue. He was so carried away with desire that he would sometimes leave behind his companion on the journey and hurry ahead, intoxicated in spirit, in order to carry out his purpose. But the good God, out of pure kindness, was pleased to be mindful of me and of many others. After he reached Spain God withstood him to his face, striking him with illness, and called him back from the journey he had begun.”

that place, at the command of Francis, in order to serve some poor and sick persons. When he had concluded this service and was returning to Italy, he sat near the bank of a certain river, since he did not dare to cross it because it was deep. In the meantime, blessed Francis together with some of his brothers, was living in a certain hermitage.³⁴ Brother Elias, who was the vicar, commanded that no brother should eat meat. A certain Angel under the guise of a handsome young man came to the door of the hermitage of the brothers and knocked hard on it without ceasing³⁵. Brother Masseo, who was the door-keeper, came and opened the door and chided him gently, since he saw that he was a handsome-looking man, and told him: “Dear friend, this is not the way you should knock on the door of the brothers. You should first knock once on the door and, after some moments have elapsed, you can knock once more, and if nobody answers you at the third knock, after you wait for some time, you can start knocking on the door the way you did.” That young man answered him: “I am in a hurry and I cannot wait. I only want to ask one question to brother Francis, but since he is praying I do not want to disturb him. But I know that brother Elias is gifted with prudence, and therefore I beg you to call him, so that he can find a solution to my doubt.” When brother Masseo went to call brother Elias, the latter became furious with the spirit of pride and anger, and did not want to go and meet the young man. Brother Masseo did not want to go back to that young man, since he did not want to sin telling him a lie, and because he was afraid that he would scandalise him if that man would listen to the proud response of Elias. So after some time that Angel resumed in banging on the door in continuation.

Therefore brother Masseo recognized that he had to go to speak to him since he was knocking hard once more. He opened the door and said: “My dear friend, you have not observed what I told you before regarding the way you should knock.” But that man answered him: “Brother Elias does not want to come; but now, you go, and tell brother Francis to come to command him to come to me.” Brother Masseo therefore went to blessed Francis, who was praying in the woods, and told him what the Angel had said. [39] Francis directed his gaze to heaven and, without moving, told Masseo: “Command

34 The hermitage of Farneto, not far from Assisi.

35 Cfr. ABF, c. 3 (FAED III, 440-444).

brother Elias on my part with obedience, that he immediately is to go to that young man.” When brother Elias heard this command, he went angrily and, flinging the door open said: “What do you want?” That young man told him: “My dear brother, you seem to be angry. I ask you to explain to me whether it is licit, in order to observe the holy Gospel as your Rule states, that the brothers should freely eat of all that is placed before them, and whether it is permitted for any man to impose observances which go against the freedom of the Gospel.” Brother Elias answered him: “I know very well the answer to this question, but I do not want to explain it to you.” Then the Angel told him that he could give him a better answer. So brother Elias was furious and closed the door with a great bang. When he calmed down a bit, thinking about the difficult question which he had been asked, he returned to the door, so that he could give an explanation to that young man. But when he looked out of the door he could not see the young man any more, and even when he went out to look for him, he could not find him. At that moment this entire episode was revealed to blessed Francis, and he felt troubled in his spirit against brother Elias and told him with a loud voice: “Brother Elias, you are so proud that you have acted wrongly, because you have driven away from us the holy Angels which God sends us for our instruction.”

At that same hour the same Angel appeared in a similar way to brother Bernard, who was near the river, as we have said before. He sat close to him and saluted him in the Italian language. When Bernard heard him speaking in his native tongue, he was very happy, and asked him: “Where do you come from, dear young man?” He answered him: “I have just come from Italy and I was in that hermitage, where I have found brother Francis with other brothers. Brother Masseo taught me how I should knock on the friary door, and I also asked brother Elias a difficult question, but he got angry at me and did not want to speak to me, but afterwards felt sorry for what he did.” Then the Angel said: “Why do you not cross this river?” Bernard answered him: “I am afraid because the river is very deep to cross.” So the Angel took him by the hand and transported him immediately to the opposite bank of the river, and then he disappeared. So brother Bernard thanked God and then arrived at that hermitage, where blessed Francis lived, together with brothers Elias and Masseo and some other brothers. And when he narrated to them the story regarding his meeting with the Angel, all the brothers knew that it was the

same Angel, which had appeared to them under that same form in that same hour. Blessed Francis then revoked the command regarding the prohibition to eat meat.

One day, brother Francis was lost in prayer, and it was revealed to him that brother Bernard was being assailed by many strong and cunning devils. Since the servant of God felt compassion for his beloved son, for many days he recommended him to the Lord with many tears and prayers, [40] in order that the Lord would give him victory over such torments. And while he was fervently praying, Francis received the following reply: “Brother, do not be afraid, because all the temptations which are assailing brother Bernard, have been sent to him that he may exercise himself in virtue and finally acquire the crown of victory. This same brother Bernard will be one of those who will partake of the banquet in the kingdom of God.”³⁶ When he heard this answer Saint Francis was overjoyed, and began to thank the Lord Jesus Christ, even though he barely ever had had doubts regarding his goodness. Once, blessed Francis uttered these words regarding brother Bernard: “I tell you that brother Bernard has been attacked by an army of great and most astute devils, and he had to suffer many tribulations and temptations from them in his own body; however, the merciful God has protected him from all internal and external tribulations and temptations, and has sent in his soul so much peace and tranquillity, that all the friars in the world, when they will hear or see these facts, will be greatly astonished. And he will pass from this life into the life with Christ in the same spirit of peace and tranquillity of the inner and outer man.” All the brothers were greatly surprised when they heard these words, since every single word, which the Saint uttered truly came to pass, exactly as he had literally said.

His contemplation, humility and obedience

When blessed Francis became blind, because of the rigour of his penances and his continual weeping, one day he arrived in a place where brother Bernard was living, in order to speak together about divine realities. When Francis arrived at that place, brother Bernard was in the woods lost totally lost in divine contemplation. Saint Fran-

36 Cfr. ABF, c. 5 (FAED III, 446).

cis called him and told him: “Brother Bernard, come and speak to this blind man.” But brother Bernard was totally lost in God in his spirit, and did not give him an answer, and neither did he approach Francis. Brother Bernard, in fact, possessed a special grace when he spoke about God, and therefore blessed Francis often had a great desire to speak to him about God. Sometimes they could be seen for the greater part of the night speaking together about God. After a short interval, the Saint called Bernard for a second and a third time, repeating the same words, that is: “Come and speak to this blind man.” Brother Bernard was so lost in God that he did not hear the Saint speaking to him and therefore did not go to him. Wherefore Saint Francis was very sad and went back with a heavy heart and thinking that brother Bernard did not want to go to him when he called him. While he was going back from his companion, with these thoughts accompanying him on his way, Francis began to pray. And he received a divine response, which told him: [41] “Why are you confused, you poor little man? Why should a man leave God’s company in order to stay with another creature? This brother Bernard, whom you were calling, was united with me in such a way that he could not come to you and neither could he give you an answer, since he heard not one single word of what you told him.”

When the Saint understood these words he went back to brother Bernard in order to accuse himself humbly regarding his thoughts. But the truly saintly Brother Bernard ran in order to meet blessed Francis and prostrated himself at his feet. Thus the humility of Saint Francis and the charity and reverence of brother Bernard met one another. After having recounted to Bernard how he was divinely scolded, the holy Father commanded brother Bernard, with obedience, that he would do whatever Francis would tell him. Since Bernard was afraid that, as usual, Francis would ask him to command that he accomplish some arduous and mean task, Bernard did not want to accept that command of obedience and said: “Father, I am ready to do whatever you command me, as long as you promise me to obey me in what I shall tell you.” The Saint answered: “I accept.” Then brother Bernard said: “Father, tell me what I have to do.” And the Saint told him: “I command you with holy obedience to punish my presumption and the haughtiness of my heart by placing the soles of your feet upon me when I lie down on the ground. You are to place one on my throat and the other one upon my mouth, so that you will tread upon

my throat and mouth with both feet and repeat this action for three times, while reproaching me with these words: ‘Lie there, you rustic son of Pietro di Bernardone.’ And you are to inflict upon me more severe reproaches while telling me: ‘Where did you get such pride, you miserable creature?’” So brother Bernard tried to obey this command with firmness, although he did it out of obedience, and tried to accomplish it in as gentle a way as possible. When he finished, Saint Francis told him: “Command me now, brother Bernard, since I am ready to accomplish what you ask me, as I have promised you.” Bernard told him: “By the virtue of holy obedience I command you that, whenever we are together, you correct my defects and scold me with harshness.” When he heard this Saint Francis was very astonished, because brother Bernard was such a holy friar, that everybody revered him as a servant of the Lord. So the holy man paid attention not to stay with him for a long time, [42] in such a way that he would never have to apply that command of obedience by correcting his holy soul. Whenever he had a desire to see Bernard or to listen to him speaking about God, he tried to see to it that he would only remain briefly with him. That is why it was so marvellous to see that between the reverend Father and in his first-begotten son brother Bernard there was a holy competition to undertake a spiritual battle, in such a way that one tried to outdo the other in obedience, charity, patience and humility.³⁷

Saint Francis blesses Bernard before dying

When Saint Francis became seriously ill, and the lady Jacoba de Settesoli, a Roman noble lady, came from Rome to visit him, and prepared with great devotion a certain sweet³⁸ which the holy Father usually asked her to offer him, the Saint remembered his first-born son brother Bernard and told his companions: “This sweet is good for brother Bernard.” And he told one of the brothers: “Go and ask him to come to me immediately.” That brother left for Assisi that very moment, in order to look for brother Bernard and lead him to blessed

37 Cfr. ABF, c. 2 (FAED III, 439-440).

38 For the story of Jacoba dei Settesoli’s visit to the dying Francis, cfr. Thomas of Celano, *Tractatus Miraculorum*, c. 6 (FAED II, 417-419). The sweet which Jacoba used to prepare for Saint Francis is called *mostacciolo*.

Francis. And sitting close to the bed of the Saint, among other things brother Bernard told blessed Francis: “Father, I beg you to bless me and show your paternal love for me, in such a way that I will be loved more by God and by all the brothers of the Order.” Blessed Francis could not see him any more, because his eyes could not bear the light of day, but he extended his right hand, and placed it upon the head of brother Giles, who was sitting close to brother Bernard, thinking that he was placing his hand upon the head of brother Bernard. But he immediately became aware that that was not the head of brother Bernard and said: “This is not the head of brother Bernard.” So brother Bernard drew closer to him, and blessed Francis placed his hand upon his head and blessed him and said to one of his companions: “Write down these words which I am telling you. The first brother whom the Lord gave me was brother Bernard, and he was the first one who began to live in a most perfect way the counsel of the Gospel by distributing all his goods to the poor. For this and other virtues with which he is gifted I consider it my duty to love him more than any other brother in our Order. Therefore I want and command, as much as I am able to, that whoever will be Minister General of the Order, should love him in the same way I do love him and honour him. The Provincial Ministers and the other brothers of the entire Order are to honour him in my place.”

When the moment of his death was approaching, just like the patriarch Jacob, surrounded by his sons who were weeping devoutly because of the loss of such a loving father, blessed Francis said: “Where is my first-born son brother Bernard? Come to me, my son, so that I may bless you before I die.” Brother Bernard, full of humility, spoke softly in secret to brother Elias, who was the vicar of the Saint: “Father, go to his right-hand side, so that he will bless you.” When brother Elias went to the right-hand side of Francis, the Saint, who was blind because of the many tears he had shed, touched the head of brother Elias with his right hand and said: “This is not the head of my first-born son brother Bernard.” At that very moment brother Bernard went to stay on Francis’ left-hand side. Saint Francis then crossed his arms and placed his left hand upon the head of brother Elias and his right hand upon the head of brother Bernard, and told him: “May the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ bless you with all heavenly blessings in Christ, since you are the first one of those chosen [43] in the Order to give it an example of Gospel life, in

order to imitate Christ in Gospel poverty. You have not only freely offered your life and given all your possessions for Christ’s sake, but you have also offered yourself in a sweet-smelling sacrifice for the Lord. Therefore be blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ and by me, his little poor man, with an everlasting blessing, when you go in and when you go out, when you are awake and when you sleep, when you live and when you die. Whoever will bless you will be filled with blessings, and whoever will curse you will not be immune from damnation. You are the lord of your brothers and they are all to obey your commands. Whoever you want to receive into this Order, he should be admitted; and the one you want to send away from it, should be asked to leave. No brother is to exert any power over you, but you can go and live in any place which you choose.”

Brother Bernard was often assailed by very serious and subtle temptations by the power of the devil, as Saint Francis had foretold, but he always triumphed over them with copious spiritual fruit.³⁹

The contemplation and ecstasies of brother Bernard

Many a time, after the temptations and the other duties of the active life, brother Bernard would be transported to the peace of the contemplative life, and he would enter into a state of ecstasy as if he wanted to embrace Rachael, for whom Jacob had laboured hard with the sweat of his brow for many years.⁴⁰ Once, while he was assisting devoutly at Mass, he was so absorbed in his mind at the thought of the Lord, that when the body of Christ was elevated, he did not feel anything, but remained immovable with his eyes fixed in their gaze from the morning until the hour of None. At that moment he regained consciousness and, full of admiration, said: “My brothers, my brothers, there is nobody more great and noble in this area, that if one promises him a palace full of gold, he would not feel it easy to carry a tattered sack full of dung in order to acquire that most noble treasure.” This is the way he lived for fifteen years with his mind and gaze always lifted

39 Cfr. ABF, c. 5 (FAED III, 446-447).

40 The English translation of this sentence has to explain what the author intends with the expression: *rapiebatur quasi ad Rachelis amplexus, pro qua insudaverat multis annis*. He is referring to the story of Jacob’s love for Rachael in Genesis 29,16ff.

up to God, in such a way that, because of the great moments of ecstasy of his soul, he often would not feel any hunger for corporal food. He would only eat small portions of whatever was placed before him, saying: "True abstinence is to abstain from tasty food."

Sometimes he would be profoundly engaged in contemplation and would be cut off from earthly realities for a period of twenty days, and at other times for thirty days he would be hovering above the crests of the mountains (of contemplation). As the holy brother Giles said of him, God did not give everybody [44] the grace he gave to brother Bernard of Quintavalle, namely that of flying like a swallow.

He arrived at such limpid and clear intelligence of mystical realities in his contemplation, that even great men of the Church would recur to him for difficult theological questions.⁴¹

Once for eight days Bernard did not feel any spiritual consolation, and he was totally troubled in his spirit, and he fervently prayed the Lord in solitude in order to regain his consolation. That very moment there appeared to him in the air a hand, which was holding a viola. This hand played on the viola and the earthly melody filled him with such a consolation of the spirit, that he was afraid that he would breathe his last if that melody would become heavenly.

Brother Bernard was full of such zeal, that even in the presence of those brothers who were placed in positions of government, he did not think twice to scold them if he considered them to have transgressed the Rule. Once he saw brother Elias, who at that time was Minister General of the Order, who was riding a large coach drawn by a horse. So Bernard ran after him and shouted at the top of his voice: "This horse is too big and high; this is not what the Rule teaches." And he acted in such a way as if he were holding the reins of the horse and riding boastfully in front of the Minister General.

At the end of his life Bernard was afflicted with a variety of illnesses of the body, but his mind was so fixed in God, that he could not think about anything except God. When the brothers wanted to apply some rose water to his nose in order to give some comfort to his spirit, since he was feeling uncomfortable and was disturbed in his meditations, he prohibited them to apply this water, saying that he did not want to receive any remedy against his sickness. Whenever the thoughts about God would cease in his mind, because of heaviness

41 Cfr. ABF, c. 32 (FAED III, 503-504).

in his head or because of any other transient thought, he would hit his head, as if he wanted to regain consciousness, and ask himself why this was happening to him. He did not want any corporal necessity to distract his thoughts, and he tried to be devoid of any preoccupations and told the brother who was nursing him as a doctor: "My dear brother, I do not want to bother about the necessities of my body, but I consign it to you; you can do with it as you deem best for me; whenever you give me food to eat or drink I will accept them; but if not, I do not want to bother about them."

Brother Giles came to visit him, and when he saw him so seriously ill, he told him: "Lift up your heart, brother Bernard, lift up your heart." Brother Bernard was overjoyed and commanded the brothers to find a good place for contemplation, where Giles could stay and be filled with heavenly consolation. After some time he asked for some cherries, and having taken the permission of the doctor to eat them, with many tears, he asked the brothers [45] to eat them with him, saying: "I beg you to eat with me in order to celebrate our last Passover." He showed so much devotion, that many of the friars who saw him were astonished and said: "Truly, we have not known this man to the very end."

When Bernard was approaching the hour of his death, he shed abundant tears, and told the brothers who stood around him, and who had come to visit him from many places: "My dear brothers, you have to consider that, this experience I am going through will also be your experience, and that as I am accepting death, so you will have to accept it at the end. I have not been a friar Minor in anything except in my temptations; but I have always found God ready to help me. In my soul I feel that not for a thousand worlds I would serve anybody else except Christ. I ask you to love one another." After having uttered these words he lay back on his bed, and his face became joyful and brilliant; in this way that blessed soul flew back to the Lord's embrace. His body remained candid and tender, and on his face there were signs of spiritual joy, as if he were smiling. Brother Bernard was then solemnly buried in the basilica of Saint Francis.⁴²

42 Cfr. ABF, c. 5 (FAED III, 447). The tomb of Brother Bernard of Quintavalle still exists, close to the tomb of Saint Francis in the Assisi basilica.

How Brother Bernard appeared in his glory

At that same time brothers Leo and Rufino were also ill at the Portiuncula. During his illness brother Leo had this dream. He saw a multitude of friars who were going on procession. Among them he saw one, who was preceding the others and whose eyes were shining like the sun in its splendour, so much so that he could not gaze at his face because of the brightness, which emanated from it. He therefore asked one of the brothers who were accompanying that procession, so that he would tell him where those brothers were going. He answered: "This procession is going to receive the soul of a brother who is ill at the Portiuncula and who will shortly die." Leo then asked him once more: "And who is that brother whose eyes are shining with such splendour?" The brother answered: "Don't you recognize him? He is brother Bernard of Quintavalle." Leo then asked: "Why are his eyes shining with such brilliance?" The brother replied: "This is because he was always intent upon heavenly things, and therefore could judge better than anyone else. When he once saw a beggar who was scantily clothed and very poor, he said: 'This poor man serves poverty better than you do, brother Bernard.'" He could also judge others, to see whether they were living in poverty out of their own free will. Whenever he would see rich people, clothed with costly garments, or with golden or multi-coloured vestments, he would be filled with a spirit of repentance and say: 'Maybe these persons are wearing hair shirts and above them they wear these stupendous garments in order to hide the martyrdom of their flesh, and therefore they avoid vainglory better than you do, brother Bernard, even though you wear miserable clothes.' In this way he always used to speak well of others, while he would humbly judge himself. He had eyes which emanated the clarity of purity, and whatever good he would observe in creatures, he would refer it to the praise of the Creator." And thus that vision disappeared.

Here begins the life of brother Rufino, the cousin of Saint Clare

[46] Brother Rufino Scifi⁴³ from the town of Assisi shone with an exemplary life like a rainbow illuminating the clouds of divine contemplation with the power of a variety of colours. Among the other first disciples of Saint Francis he shone with the redness of charity, and the whiteness of his purity, and like a lily emanated a fragrant perfume of sanctity. Rufino came from a noble family of the town of Assisi, he was a cousin of Saint Clare, and after having been called by the teaching and life of Saint Francis, he took the habit of the friars Minor with great devotion. Saint Francis often used to praise him highly with words of admiration. He was a man with a virgin-like purity, he was sublime in prayer and contemplation, he was fruitful in sweet-smelling conversation, being adorned with virtues in front of God and men. Once, while blessed Francis was staying in a place and sitting down with his companions in order to form them in divine conversations, brother Rufino came out of the wood, where he had been contemplating the divine mysteries. When the Saint saw him coming from afar, he told his companions: "Dear brothers, indicate to me the most holy soul that God has in this world." The brothers humbly answered that they reckoned Saint Francis himself as the one who enjoyed that sublime privilege. But he answered them: "Dear brothers, I am the most unworthy and vile man that God has in this world. But look, don't you see our brother Rufino who is coming out of the woods? God has revealed to me, that his soul is one of the three holiest souls that God cherishes in this life. And I firmly say to you, that I do not doubt that we can call him *saint* Rufino, even though he is still living in his body, because his soul has already been canonised in heaven, as God has revealed to me." The Saint uttered these words with his brothers in the absence of brother Rufino.

43 Rufino was the cousin of Saint Clare. The attribution of the surname Scifi to the noble family of Clare has not been accepted by the Assisi historian Arnaldo Fortini, author of the 5 volume biography entitled *Nova Vita di San Francesco*. Clare's family was that of Favarone di Offreduccio di Bernardino.

[47] *Rufino's obedience when he went to preach naked*

Brother Rufino was so absorbed in God through the effort of contemplation, that he became nearly insensible to earthly realities and very rarely spoke. When he did speak his words were so brief, that it seemed that he was trying to exert violence upon himself in order to utter them. In this way he was not gifted with the grace to preach the word of God, and he did not possess the courage to speak in public. One day Saint Francis commanded him to go to Assisi and to preach to the people in a church, using the words, which God would inspire him to utter. Brother Rufino answered him: "Father, have mercy on me and do not send him for such a hard work. You know, in fact, that I do not possess the grace to speak in public and I am simple, ignorant and unlettered." The Saint Francis said: "Since you are not willing to obey me, therefore I command you by virtue of obedience, that you should go to Assisi naked, except for your underwear, and entering naked in the church you are to preach to the people who are gathered there." Rufino immediately took off his clothes and obediently went to Assisi. When he arrived he reverently entered naked in a certain church and stood up to preach.

The men who were present, young and old, began to laugh and say: "Look, these men are doing so much penance, that they are out of their minds." In the meantime, Saint Francis, thinking about the prompt act of obedience of brother Rufino and about the harsh command he had given him, began to scold himself saying: "How dare you, son of Pietro di Bernardone, a most vile man, command brother Rufino, who is among the most noble men of Assisi, to go and preach naked to the people? For God's sake, I will make you experience the same fate which you commanded your brother to go through." As soon as he had said this, with great fervour he took off his habit and thus naked went to Assisi together with brother Leo, who, thinking very prudently, took with him Francis' and Rufino's habits. When the people of Assisi saw Francis coming naked, they began to make fun of him as if he were a madman, thinking that both Rufino and himself had become mad because of their harsh penance. Saint Francis then found brother Rufino, who had begun to preach and was forcefully saying: "My dear people, flee from the world, do not sin, render to others what is not yours, if you want to avoid the gates of hell; obey and serve the commandments by loving God and neighbour, if you want to

turn your faces to heaven; *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand* (Mt 3:2)." At that very moment Saint Francis went up naked to the pulpit and preached so marvellously about the contempt of the world, about holy penance, about voluntary poverty, about the desire for the kingdom of heaven, about the nakedness and insults which the crucified Lord Jesus suffered in his passion, that all the people who had gathered there in great numbers, began [48] to weep with great compassion, repenting and pleading God to have mercy on them. On that day there was so much weeping among the people, that never in that town did people express so much grief over the passion of Christ. And thus, having edified the people, the two brothers dressed their habits and began to glorify and praise God, since they had won victory over themselves and showed that they had contempt for the world. Thus they returned to the place of the Portiuncula. Those who could touch the fringes of their habits considered themselves to be blessed.⁴⁴

How with his humility he freed a man possessed by the devil

Brother Rufino was so humble that even the most formidable devils feared him. One day he was begging for bread in Assisi. A man possessed by the devil saw him from afar. Now this man had been tied up by many persons who wanted to take him to Saint Francis, while he was shouting and trembling, but he broke the chains and escaped from the hands of all those who held him. When those who followed him caught him again, they asked him to swear the truth about why he escaped, and he finally answered: "That poor man, the humble, obedient and devout brother Rufino, burns me and makes me suffer with the power of his virtues." At that very moment that man was freed from the devil's possession.

Once, when blessed Francis was on mount La Verna and was praying in a cleft of the rock, many demons came and threw rocks at him, in order to disturb him during his prayers. Now brother Rufino happened to come to that place, and as he usually did, he started shouting and saying: "Praise and blessings to the Lord our God." When the devils heard his voice, they were immediately terrified and escaped from that place. The devils, in fact, were very afraid of broth-

44 This episode is taken from ABF c. 34 (FAED III, 507-508).

er Rufino. Saint Francis had told the demons: "Wait, you proud demons, because you know this man very well indeed." And they were all confused and left him in peace.

Another time it happened that ten men possessed by demons met outside a certain village and went to live in a certain hut. Brother Rufino happened to be arriving from one of three roads, while a knight was riding a horse and coming from another road. When the knight saw those men possessed by the devils, out of fear of them he changed his course. Those demoniacs then began to run here and there in the road as if they were having fun. And one of them called the knight by his name and showed him brother Rufino and said: "Do you see that rustic man?" When the knight answered that he was seeing him, the demoniac told him: "You should be certain that his prayers trouble the devils in hell, as if they were being squeezed into a wine-press."

Regarding a great temptation which brother Rufino endured

At one time, Saint Francis was staying with some of his companions on mount Subasio, during the great Lent. All the brothers [49] were living in various places on that mountain, in tiny cells made of tree branches, and they were dedicating themselves to penance and prayer. Brother Rufino was among the brothers. He was deceived by the enemy who lied to him under the guise of goodness, according to this version of the facts given by brother Conrad of Offida. The despised enemy suggested to Rufino's heart that it was not prudent of him to follow Francis, who was unlearned and simple, and who often sent the brothers to the leper hospices and thus distracted them from giving themselves over to prayer. The devil told Rufino that the prudent life was the one he was living at that moment, namely the life of blessed Anthony⁴⁵ and of the other desert hermits, who lived in solitude. After this the devil appeared to him under the guise of a most beautiful and brilliant Angel and he repeated these words verbally to him. From that moment brother Rufino became very hard hearted in what he had promised to live. He did not come any more to meet the Saint during the lunch hour as he usually did, but he only begged

enough bread from Assisi once a week, in order to take with him for a whole week, and then he would shut up himself in his cell and stay there in absolute solitude.

The blessed Francis and the other brothers thought that brother Rufino wanted to remain closed in solitude for the whole period of Lent and not stay with them, since he was a man of profound prayer. On the day of the Lord's Supper Saint Francis sent for all the brothers who were living on the mountain, in order to come together and celebrate the Lord's Supper, and after communion to eat together. But brother Rufino gave this answer to the friar who went to call him: "Tell brother Francis, that I do not want to come and neither do I want to follow him, but that I want to live here all alone, since in this way I can better be saved than by following his simple way of life, as the Lord has revealed to me." When the brother referred these words to Saint Francis, he was very sad, and again sent to call Rufino to come to him. But he again refused to come, like he did the first time. Before the elevation of the Eucharist Francis sent a third brother, to invite Rufino to come and behold the body of Christ. But he did not want to obey, and the brother who went to call him came back to the Saint reporting the same words as before. So after communion the Saint, full of sorrow, went to a solitary place, and with his eyes filled with tears and with a lamenting voice, he was praying: "Lord, why do you permit my simple lamb to be led astray in this way?"

Then he stood up and personally went to brother Rufino, and with many tears told him: "Brother Rufino, why do you inflict such sorrow on me, when I called you for three times to our solemn celebration and you did not want to come?" Rufino answered him as before, namely that he wanted to dedicate himself fully to the life of a hermit, in such a way that he would never err, and that he would not follow [50] Francis' simplicity, which was often the cause of the distraction of the brothers from their prayers. The Saint continued to plead with him to come and eat with the brothers, but he still refused. At long last, after having been moved by the many tears and pleadings of Francis, Rufino accepted to go to the friars' place, but with the intention of immediately returning back to his cell. Thus they went and ate together, and after supper Saint Francis wanted to lead back Rufino to full communion with the brothers, and with many good words convinced him to explain the reason why he was so obstinate. So Rufino spoke about the divine inspiration and the angelic

apparition, and declared that he was firm in his decision to follow this proposal to the end.

Then the Saint said: "I will now show you that the angel you saw tried to seduce you, and that his suggestion has deceived you." Francis prayed for some time, and immediately the angel of darkness appeared under the same guise of beauty and brilliance, so much so, that the brothers there present were astonished. Brother Rufino was gazing at him and was overjoyed, thinking that this was the angel of the Lord, who had revealed those words to him and was now visibly appearing. But when the angel saw brother Rufino, he was transfigured into a horrible being. When he looked at such an ugly and foul-smelling being Rufino was terrified and he fell to the ground in front of the Saint as if he were dead. Saint Francis immediately helped him to stand up, and comforted him in truth and confirmed him in justice. After these events brother Rufino used to say that that angel appeared in such a horrible form, that he could not believe what he was seeing and could not express it in words. He also said that for a long time after he would feel a great sense of nausea when he had to bear any foul smell.

Regarding how brother Rufino suffered a temptation regarding his predestination, and was freed by Saint Francis

Once brother Rufino was tempted by the devil regarding his predestination. The ancient enemy suggested to his soul that he was not predestined for eternal life, and that therefore it was useless for him to work so hard to exercise virtue in the Order. Because of this temptation, for a long time Rufino was sad and lonely, and he felt devoid of any sweetness and spiritual joy; nevertheless he did not cease from praying incessantly. But the ancient enemy, wanting to add misery to this servant of God, whom he had already wounded, increased his sufferings by fighting against him exteriorly as well as interiorly. One day the devil appeared to Rufino under the guise of the Crucified and told him: "O brother Rufino, why do you give yourself over with such effort to prayers and penance, when you know that you are not predestined for eternal life? And in this you should believe me, because I know the ones whom I have chosen; therefore do not believe the son of Pietro di Bernardone, if he tells you things contrary to what

I am telling you now, and do not go and ask him anything about this matter, since he and any other person whatsoever does not know a single detail regarding this, except myself, because I am the Son of God. Therefore strongly believe what I am telling you, namely that you are one of those who are damned. This brother Francis together with his father is damned, and all those who follow him are being deceived in the same way." Brother Rufino became totally blindfolded by the prince of darkness, since he began to lose the great faith and love he had in Saint Francis, and he did not care that he would tell this to himself. Since brother Rufino did not want to speak about this to Saint Francis, the Holy Spirit [51] chose to reveal it to the holy Father. When Francis saw Rufino in such a spiritual danger, he sent brother Masseo to him, asking him to come immediately. But brother Rufino answered brother Masseo: "What have I got to do with brother Francis?" So brother Masseo, who was full of the Holy Spirit, immediately recognised the deception of the wicked enemy and said: "O brother Rufino, don't you know that brother Francis is like the Angel of the Lord, who enlightens all souls in this world, and that we also have received so many spiritual graces through him? Therefore I want you to come at once with me to him, because I am seeing that you have been deceived by the devil." Therefore brother Rufino immediately went to Saint Francis.

When the Saint saw him from afar he said in a loud voice: "O brother Rufino, little wicked man, why do you not believe?" And the holy man showed him that he had been tempted inwardly and outwardly, and taught him that whatever he had heard that vision suggest to him, came from the devil and not from Christ. "Therefore," he added, "do not give in to these suggestions, and when he will tell you: 'You are damned,' you should answer him forcefully and decisively: 'Open your mouth that I may dirty it.' And this will be a sign for you that it is the devil, since as soon as you will say these words he will vanish. Therefore you are to recognize that the one who appeared to you was the devil, trying to harden your heart in order to refrain from all good, since this is what his job is. Christ will never harden the hearts of those who are devout and faithful; that is why he says: *I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you* (Ezech 36:26)." When brother Rufino saw that the Saint was right when he explained to him how he had gone through that internal and external temptation, he began to shed abundant tears. Then he approached

the Saint and humbly confessed the fault, which he had been hiding from him. The Saint comforted him in the Lord, and told him: "Go, son, and confess your sin and do not cease from praying as you usually do. You should certainly know that this temptation will be for you an occasion for spiritual progress and consolation, as you will shortly experience." Brother Rufino then went back to his cell and began to pray in the woods. While he was praying with many tears, the ancient enemy came back in the guise of Christ and told him: "Brother Rufino, didn't I tell you that you should not believe the son of Pietro di Bernardone, since you are damned, and it is useless for you to exert so much effort in prayers and tears? What use is it for you if, when you are alive, you afflict yourself with so much penance, and then you will be damned just the same when you die?" Brother Rufino immediately answered him with great contempt: "Open your mouth that I may dirty it." The devil immediately retired from him with such anger and commotion that a multitude of rocks on mount Subasio began toppling down the slopes with a terrible noise, and from that time onwards one could see the terrible chasm created by this tremor which caused the rocks to fall down.

[52] The rocks, which were falling down the mountain slope into the valley below, were colliding with each other and were igniting flames of fire. When they heard this terrible noise of falling rocks, Francis and his companions came out of their dwelling place, in order to behold this unheard-of spectacle. Then it was evidently clear to brother Rufino that he had been deceived by the wicked enemy. So he came back to Saint Francis and confessed his guilt and humbly prostrated himself on the ground. The Saint then comforted him and he felt consoled and very calm in the Lord. After this event, while he was praying with many tears, the blessed Christ appeared to him and melted his soul with his divine love, and told him: "Son, you did a good thing to believe brother Francis. The one who appeared to you was the devil, who tried to confuse you with his deception. I am Christ, your master. And this is to be for you a most clear sign, namely, that as long as you live in this world, you will not have any reason to feel sad." Christ then blessed brother Rufino and sent him away so overflowing with joy and sweetness of spirit and in a state of spiritual ecstasy, that he became lost in the Lord day and night. And he was confirmed in so much grace and blessings regarding the certainty of his eternal salvation, that he became renewed into a totally new man.

He was so absorbed in contemplation and was confirmed so much in persevering in prayer, that he could stay continually within a circle and continue meditating day and night, without being disturbed by anything happening around him. Blessed Francis used to remind the brothers of the graces of brother Rufino, saying: "A good friar Minor is the one who possesses the virtues and ongoing spirit of prayer of brother Rufino, who gives himself over to prayer unceasingly, whether he is asleep or awake."⁴⁶

How Rufino touched three times the wound on Francis' side

When brother Rufino was nursing with great affection and devotion the wound which Saint Francis had in his side, and which Christ had impressed upon him, he became very curious to see it. He succeeded in seeing it three times, and therefore he and the brothers became thrice sure of its existence as long as the Saint was still living. The first time he saw it was when he devoutly had to change the shirt, which the holy Father wore under his habit, and on that occasion he noticed that on the right hand side it was stained with blood. The Saint, in fact, had to wear a shirt under his habit, which reached down to his knees, because of the wound on his side. Brother Rufino therefore knew with certainty that that blood flowed from the wound on the side.

Moreover, in order to be more certain regarding the truth of this wound, once, when Rufino was rubbing the holy Father, he let one of the fingers of his hand touch the wound. At this, the Saint felt an intense pain, and he shouted loudly and said: "May God forgive you, brother Rufino. Why did you do want to do this to me?"

The third time when this brother wanted to see the wound and touch it, he charitably but with great attention told Saint Francis: "Father, I beg you to do me a favour, [53] that is, to give me your tunic and accept my tunic out of fraternal love." The Saint, out of love for brother Rufino, took off his habit and accepted Rufino's habit. Since the Saint had only one tunic, he could not conceal his body, and thus brother Rufino could look diligently at his wound.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ This episode is taken from ABF c. 33 (FAED III, 504-507).

⁴⁷ This episode is taken from ABF c. 36 (FAED III, 509-510).

Regarding Rufino's death and a marvellous vision

When brother Bernard of Quintavalle became seriously ill together with brother Leo at the place of the Portiuncula, he then departed from this life. Brother Leo, who was also very ill, saw in his dreams a multitude of friars who were going in procession. Among them there was brother Bernard, who was preceding the other brothers with his eyes sparkling with brilliance, since during his life he had the most pure eyes, and he was able to judge anything he saw better than anybody else. Brother Leo asked one of those brothers, why they were taking part in that solemn procession. He answered him that they came to take with them the soul of a brother who was very ill at the Portiuncula and who would die shortly. When he woke up, Leo thought that he was the sick brother to whom the vision was referring. Since he was more seriously ill than brother Rufino, he stood up as he could, and full of joy he turned toward Rufino and told him: "My dear brother, I believe that the Lord wants to call me from this life." But brother Rufino answered him: "Brother, you are mistaken, because the vision you saw did not refer to you, but to me."

While they were discussing that vision together, brother Rufino said: "My dear brother, you saw this vision in your dreams, but I was wide awake. Blessed Francis, in fact, came to me with all that multitude of brothers, and told me that I will shortly die and will go to the Lord with all those brothers. And then he gave me the sweetest kiss and filled my mouth [54] with the most sweet-smelling fragrance. In order to have the proof of what I am saying, come close to me and smell the fragrance which that kiss which the Saint gave me still leaves in my mouth." Therefore, when brother Leo approached him, he was filled with such fragrance, which was coming out of Rufino's mouth, that he became totally transformed and was compelled to believe all the words, which Rufino had told him. Then brother Rufino called all the brothers who were present, and admonished them to observe poverty and mutual charity. When he finished his admonitions he slept in the Lord. His soul immediately flew to heaven in the company of the Saints. His body was buried in the basilica of Saint Francis.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Rufino died in 1249 and is buried on the right-hand side in front of the tomb of Saint Francis.

Here begins the life of brother Juniper

[54] One of the most famous among the first disciples of Saint Francis was called brother Juniper.⁴⁹ His life was built on the foundation of such humility, patience and contempt of the world, that the gales of temptations and tribulations could not move him, since he was so strongly fortified in his contempt of the things of the world. He shone so brilliantly with the gift of patience, that, even when he was buffeted on all sides, he never showed himself to be confused. He had such a great contempt of his own self, that many mistook his perfection for folly or vainglory. Therefore blessed Francis praised the virtues of brother Juniper in front of his companions and used to say: he is a good friar Minor, who arrives at the same contempt of himself and of the world as brother Juniper.

One day Juniper went to visit a certain sick brother at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. Since he saw him so gravely ill, his heart melted with compassion towards him, and he was inflamed with a great charity and asked the sick brother whether he could be of help to him in any way, and whether he would like to eat something. The poor friar answered that he would have liked to eat a pig's leg. Brother Juniper immediately took him at his word, and said: "I know how I can do this good deed and I will prepare a delicious meal according to my promise." He then took a knife and went outdoors, where he saw a great herd of swine pasturing in a field. So he ran after one of them and caught it, and with the knife he amputated its leg and thus left it disabled. Then he went back and with great care cooked the pig's leg and gave it to the sick brother to eat. That brother ate it with a great appetite, and Juniper was intensely consoled and full of joy to see him eating. In the meantime the owner of that disabled pig, [55] informed about what had happened by the custodian of the herd of swine, came to the place of the brothers. When he entered he shouted at the top of his voice and began to swear against the broth-

⁴⁹ Bernard of Besse, *Book of the Praises of Saint Francis*, I (FAED III, 35) writes that Brother Juniper is buried in the Church of Saint Mary on the Capitolio (Aracoeli) in Rome. He also writes: "Brother Juniper shone with such a gift of patience that no one ever saw him disturbed even when he was enduring great difficulties."

ers and to call them robbers, false men and criminals, since they had maliciously killed one of his pigs. When he heard all that shouting the blessed Francis came to that man and humbly apologised to him together with the brothers, telling him that he was not aware of what happened, and proposing that he would promise to make satisfaction according to the will of that owner. That man was angry beyond any self-control, was uttering swearing expressions, and threatening the friars regarding the amputation of his pig's leg. He was repeating all this foul language over and over again, and he did not want to accept any excuse or promises on the friars' part, but he went back scandalised, and doubled his insults and maledictions against the brothers.

Blessed Francis was full of prudence, while all the other brothers were dumbfounded as to what had happened. He knew in his heart that brother Juniper committed so great a scandal only because of his indiscreet zeal. Therefore he immediately called Juniper to his presence and asked him whether he had cut off a leg from one of the pigs in the field. Juniper was overjoyed with the memory of his deed, and he answered that, yes, that was what he did. With a joyful heart he told Francis that he had done this because that sick brother had asked for a pig's leg, and that the Lord had willed that he would find that pig in the field, so that he could cut off his leg and take it with him to cook and thus comfort his sick brother.

When he heard these words the Saint was very sad and became ashamed of himself, and said: "O brother Juniper, you are not aware of the scandal you have caused us! That man has been justifiably angry at us, and maybe now he has gone to town to spread the news and give a bad image of us. Therefore I now command you through the virtue of obedience, that you immediately go and run after that man and prostrate yourself humbly before him and admit your guilt, that you promise to give him satisfaction for what you have done, in such a way that he would not have any other complaints against us." Brother Juniper was astonished beyond imagination at these words, since other people were so confused at his charitable act, since it was evident for him that all material things have no value whatsoever, except for the fact that they are of service to charity. Therefore he answered: "Do not be afraid, Father, since I will immediately calm him down. Why should he be confused if I have done such a great act of charity with a thing which belongs to God as much as it belongs to him?" Saying this Juniper went running and met that angry man.

When he met him he began to speak to him regarding the amputation of the pig's leg with such fervour and sweetness of heart, as if he had rendered him a great favour, for which that man would certainly gain remuneration and merit.

That man was now so lit up with anger that he became furious, and began to swear loudly and say many insulting words to Juniper, calling him a madman, a dreamer and the worst among criminals. Brother Juniper was astonished to hear these words, since he was overjoyed to be insulted. Thinking that that man did not fully understand what he had told him since, in that matter, he should show to have joy rather than rancour, he repeated the very same words he had said before, and then embraced that man and congratulated him inviting him to be happy for such a great act of charity on his part. In front of so much simplicity that man who was inclined to be so rigid, began to expect that that act of charity could eventually be the cause of his damnation, and therefore he began to feel sorry for what he had said, [56] and recognised his fault because of all the insults he had uttered against the brothers, and because he realized that he was an avaricious man and was ungrateful for God's gifts. Therefore he went and killed that pig and, after he had prepared it, he sent it to the brothers in order to eat it and thus he could make satisfaction for the insulting remarks he had uttered against them. Saint Francis was so happy at such a simplicity in front of contempt and in such patience in front of adversity, that he told the companions who were there with him: "Brothers, my brothers, if only I would have a whole forest of such junipers!"

Regarding Juniper's power over devils

The proud devils could not withstand to stand in the presence of Juniper's great humility and innocent purity. Once a demoniac was, as usual, trying to separate himself from those who were following him on the road, and for nearly seven miles he was running away from them with great speed and diverting here and there. When he was asked to state under oath the reason for his flight, he answered: "That crazy brother Juniper was coming on that road, and I cannot bear to stay in his presence." Truly they found out that Juniper was coming, as that demoniac was stating. When they led that demoniac

to blessed Francis, so that he might cure him, that man who was possessed by the devil did not want to come. So Francis told him: "If you do not come out, I will call brother Juniper to come here against you." That devil had so much terror of the presence of brother Juniper, and of Saint Francis' virtues and humility, that he immediately went out of that man.

How Juniper was sentenced to be hanged upon instigation of the devil

The devil wanted to arouse a worldly tribulation for brother Juniper. Therefore he went to a most cruel tyrant, whose name was Nicholas, who was the lord of a castle, and who at that moment was waging a mortal battle against the citizens of Viterbo. The devil told him: "Lord, you should come immediately since a traitor has been sent by the citizens of Viterbo to suppress you immediately and to set fire to your castle. This will be a most certain sign for you. This traitor is wearing torn and poor clothes, he has a hood falling to tatters covering his head, and he is carrying a chisel with which he can kill you, and a stove so that he might set fire to your castle one night." The tyrant Nicholas marvelled at these words and he was very much afraid. Therefore he immediately ordered his men to guard the gates with all diligence, and that if such a man with these signs should appear, they were to carry him in front of his presence immediately. Now brother Juniper was truly coming all by himself to that castle, since he had received permission from his Minister. On the road he had met some dissolute young men, who had made fun of him and completely tore his hood. He had been giving them good counsels and trying to inspire them with his words.

When the guard at the gate saw brother Juniper approaching, he observed him and saw that his habit was torn, since Juniper had given part of it to the poor. He also saw that Juniper's hood was torn, [57] in such a way that Juniper could hardly be taken for a friar Minor. He immediately caught him with force and led him to the tyrant. He diligently searched for the chisel, which Juniper usually carried with him to repair shoe soles, and he also found the stove, which Juniper carried in order to light a fire, since he often had to stay outside in lonely places. Upon the command of that tyrant Juniper's head, which was

very fragile, was strongly tied up with a rope, which nearly cut into the flesh. Juniper was then placed upon a torture seat, and they pulled cruelly by ropes, so that his body was on the brink of being dismembered. During torture he was interrogated regarding his identity, and he replied that he was the greatest among sinners. When they asked him whether he wanted to steal everything in that castle, he answered that he was the greatest among robbers and that he was incapable of doing any good deed. When he was asked whether he wanted to kill Nicholas with his chisel and whether he wanted to set fire to his castle, he answered that he was capable of doing worse things, if the Lord permitted him. That tyrant immediately ordered that Juniper be carried dragged to the village tied to a horse's tail, and then taken to the gallows and there be hanged. Juniper did not offer any opposition to this decision, he did not show any sadness, but he rather showed himself to be joyful. A great crowd of people immediately gathered. Brother Juniper's feet were tied with a rope, and they dragged him, tied to a horse to the place of his execution. In the meantime a certain man went in a hurry to the place where the friars Minor lived in that village, in order to ask the Guardian to come, since a certain criminal was going to be hanged there and then. Since nobody seemed to care about his confession, or about the salvation of his soul, or about the death of his body, that man asked the brother to go in great haste to hear his confession and invite him to amend his life before dying. The devout Guardian therefore immediately went out to go to that man as soon as possible.

When he approached that place, he heard brother Juniper who was shouting: "You wicked people, do not do this, because this rope is badly hurting my ankle." When the Guardian heard that voice, he began thinking that it could be brother Juniper, since it seemed to him to hear his voice. Because of the great confusion of that crowd, he could only reach him with great difficulty. When he removed the linen veil with which he normally covered his face, he immediately recognized him and was greatly astonished. Brother Juniper, then, as if he did not care about his sufferings and the insults he was receiving, when he saw the Guardian, he could not suppress a veiled smile as he said: "Oh, Guardian, you have grown so fat!" The Guardian was full of sorrow and with tears in his eyes wanted to give his habit to brother Juniper, but he again told him with a smile: "You wicked brother, you are so fat that it is not good for you to stay without your habit. I do not

want it.” Then the Guardian asked those executioners and the people who were standing all around him to wait a bit until he would beg that tyrant Nicholas for grace for his brother. Since those people believed that Juniper was a relative of the Guardian, they expected the tyrant to give a merciful sentence. The Guardian therefore went over to the tyrant and explained to him with many tears that the man whom he wanted to lead to the gallows was one of the most perfect among the brothers which the Order had in all the world, and whose name was brother Juniper.

The tyrant Nicholas was astonished beyond words, since he had just heard about the sanctity of that brother. Trembling with fear he went and prostrated himself in front of brother Juniper and humbly asked his forgiveness. Then he freely pardoned Juniper and liberated him from his chains. [58] Nicholas then added: “Now I truly know that the end of my evil acts and of my corporal life is approaching. Since I have treated with such cruelty this Saint who was without guilt, and whom I did not recognise, God will not be able to bear with me any longer, and I will die a miserable death.” Saying this he went away from brother Juniper. After some time the tyrant Nicholas was cruelly murdered with a sword.

How Juniper would give his tunic or part of it to the poor

Brother Juniper had such piety towards the poor, that, whenever he met somebody who was wearing clothes, which were more poor than his own, he would immediately cut out a sleeve or a hood or any other part of his habit and convince the poor person to accept it. Therefore his Guardian commanded him not to give his tunic or part of it to anybody. But once he met a poor man begging for alms, and feeling sorry for him, out of compassion he told him: “My dear friend, I have nothing to give you except my tunic, and I cannot give it to you, since I am bound by the precept of obedience. But if you will take it away from me by force, I am not prohibited from letting you do this.” That poor man therefore stripped Juniper of his habit, accepted that gift, and left Juniper totally naked. When he returned back to the brothers, he told them that he had been forcefully stripped of his tunic by a stranger.

Since he was always increasing his piety, he not only gave to the poor his tunic, but also books and the altar furnishings, as well as the

other brothers’ mantles. Whenever the poor would come to ask for alms from brother Juniper, the other brothers would hide their belongings or take them away from his presence, so that brother Juniper would not find them.

How he gave the small bells hanging from an altar front to a poor woman

One time, during the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, the sacristan had taken care to adorn with all dignity the altar in the friary in Assisi. Juniper was in that church guarding the altar and occupying his time in meditation, when a poor woman came to that place asking for alms. He answered her: “Come with me, and I will see whether in this adorned altar I can find anything for you.” There was a precious altar frontal, which was adorned with small silver bells hanging from it. When brother Juniper saw this furnishing adorning that altar, he looked at the silver bells and said: “What are these small bells doing here? They are superfluous.” He took a knife and cut them all off and gave them to the poor woman. [59] In the meantime, the sacristan was eating, and he remembered how brother Juniper would normally behave. Fearing that the altar would be stripped of its furnishings, he immediately went to the church, and looking at the altar, he soon realized that the small silver bells had been cut off. He was troubled and confused, but brother Juniper told him: “Do not be so troubled about those small bells, since I have given them to a poor woman, who lacked the necessities of life. They were of no use, but only gave one the impression that they stood for vanity.”

When the sacristan heard these words, he became angry, since he could not find that poor woman even though he looked diligently for her. So he took the altar frontal and went to complain to brother John Parenti, who was General of the Order, about brother Juniper, telling him that he had cut off those bells from the altar frontal and thus destroyed it. Brother John, the General answered him: “He is not to blame for doing this, but your folly is rather to blame, since you left him alone to guard the altar. Didn’t you know how Juniper would act? I am rather surprised that he did not give much more than he gave. I will now call him for correction.” After having prayed Vespers, the minister called all the brothers to meet in chapter, and there he

sternly rebuked brother Juniper because of what he did with those bells. With great fervour he was shouting so much all the time, so that he nearly lost his voice. Brother Juniper did not pay much attention to those words, since he rejoiced when he was scolded, but rather he felt sorry for the General, because he was getting hoarse with his continual shouting. In order to provide a remedy for this, he had the idea of going to the village and asking somebody to prepare for him a bowl of flour mixed with butter. When it was already late at night he lit a candle and went to the General's room with that bowl.

When he knocked on the door, the General opened it. When he saw Juniper holding the bowl the General told him: "Now what do you want at this hour?" Juniper answered him: "Brother, when you were scolding me during chapter, I noticed that your voice was getting hoarse. Therefore I asked somebody to prepare for you this flour mixed with butter. If you eat it, I believe it will do you good." The General did not want to eat it, and told him to leave. But brother Juniper continued to ask him to eat that paste. Since he was feeling pestered by him at that inopportune hour, the General answered: "Go away, you beast; do you think that I can eat at this hour?" When he saw that the General did not want to do what he had asked him, brother Juniper told him: "Brother, since you do not want to eat, hold the candle for me, and I will eat." The General, being a devout and pious man, was so touched by the inner simplicity and charity of brother Juniper, that he answered: "Brother, if you wish, we can eat together." Therefore they both ate that flour paste with great devotion and were refreshed by that food.

Regarding Juniper's silence

Once brother Juniper remained in total silence for six months. He promised himself not to speak the first day, out of reverence for God the Father; the second day, out of reverence for the Son; [60] the third day, out of reverence for the Holy Spirit; another day out of love for the blessed Mary, and then he continued doing this out of reverence for the Saints. All that time he kept silent and never uttered one single word.

His remedy against temptations of the flesh

One day brothers Giles of Assisi, Simon of Assisi, Rufino Scifi and Juniper met together in order to speak about God and the salvation of their souls. Brother Giles told the others: "How do you handle the temptations of the flesh?" Brother Simon answered: "I think about the shame of such a sin and therefore I avoid such an abomination." Brother Rufino said: "I prostrate myself on the ground in prayer, and I beg for mercy from God and the blessed Mary, until I feel that I am perfectly freed of my temptation." Brother Juniper then said: "When I feel such diabolical suggestions attacking the castle of my flesh, I immediately shut the door of my heart with all my strength and I keep myself occupied with meditation and with desires to defend my heart by all means. Whenever these temptations continue to knock on the door of my heart, I answer from behind my closed door and say: Get out, get out of here, since this house is already occupied, and therefore you cannot take it; and I will never permit you to come in. And those temptations go away to other places as if they are vanquished." Brother Giles immediately answered him: "I agree with you, brother Juniper; since man can only avoid that sin by fleeing away from it with all prudence. In fact that sin tries to overcome the inner person by the desires of the flesh, and on the outside the body senses such an enemy as if it were a strong army. Therefore this battle is a hard and difficult one, and victory is rare."

Regarding his profound humility and self-contempt

The humble brother Juniper once asked a certain brother how he would have liked to die. He answered him: "I would like to die in some friary, where there would be many brothers, so that they would implore the Lord to have mercy on me." Brother Juniper said: "And I would like to be so foul-smelling, that no brother would dare approach me; finally they would throw me in some ditch, and there I would die alone and in an abominable state, and I would not be given a burial, and I would be left there so that the dogs will devour me."

Once a great friend of the brothers wanted to welcome brother Juniper in his house, so that he would honour him and receive spiritual consolation from him. But brother Juniper ran away from hon-

ours as if they were poison. So that man went to the friary to express his devout wish, and brother Juniper was obliged by his superior to obey and go. [61] When he arrived at the house of that great man, he was welcomed by him and by all the family with such intense joy that a great feast was prepared in his honour. But he considered honours and applause as a great offence, so that those persons could not make him utter one single word or see a sign of devotion from him. Instead Juniper was appearing before them as if he were offended and very unhappy. That great man was astonished, since he had heard about his great fame of sanctity, and he thought that Juniper was feeling very tired after his long journey, and needed to rest. So he took him in a room, and left him alone there, in order to rest. But Juniper woke up very early and left his bed in a filthy state. Then he ran out of that house without saluting anybody. So that man remained very scandalized with what Juniper had done. When brother Juniper heard the brothers lament regarding the great offence he had incurred to that friend, he considered himself worthy of being scolded for his contempt of such a great man, and showed great joy inwardly and outwardly.

How he entered Viterbo naked

Brother Juniper once entered Viterbo and, to his shame, he took off all his clothes. He then placed his underpants on his head, he tied his habit with the cord and placed it on his shoulders like a bundle of straw; and in this way he walked naked to the main square of the town. When he sat down there, the young people thought that he was insane, and they started to abuse him with vulgar words and to throw stones at him. After having suffered all this from them for a long time, he went to the friary in that naked state. When the friars saw him coming they were confused and scandalised, and their anger at him was enkindled, so much so that they scolded him harshly and judged him worthy of being shut up in prison, or to be hanged. But brother Juniper heard all this with joy and he showed himself happy to be worthy of suffering such punishments, and even greater ones, because of the scandal he had given them.

How he declined to receive honours

Brother Juniper once went to live in Rome, where his fame had already spread far and wide. Therefore, out of great devotion, many Romans came out to meet him. When the humble man, from a distance, saw what was happening and understood that they were waiting for him, he prudently thought that he had better play the fool in front of so much devotion, so that the fame he enjoyed among those people when he was absent would vanish when he would be present. [62] At that moment Juniper saw two boys sitting down upon a plank of wood placed at right angles upon another trunk, who were playing at see-saw, in such a way that one boy would pull down the wooden plank and the other boy sitting on the other side would be lifted up, and then they would repeat the game the other way round. Brother Juniper immediately went and sat down to play with one of the boys, while the other boy was moving that wood up and down. When the Romans came to that place in great numbers and saw Juniper playing in that way, they were astonished, but nevertheless they greeted him with reverence. But brother Juniper did not take any notice of their reverence and devout salutations, and appeared to be more attentive to the boys with whom he was playing. In the meantime the people waited for Juniper to notice their presence, but he would not desist from playing with those boys. So they began to regard him with contempt, and others began to judge otherwise the fame of this man. At long last all the people went back to their homes. When they had all gone, brother Juniper stopped playing, and joyful because he had been held in such contempt, happily entered Rome.

How Juniper satisfied the brothers' hunger for fifteen days when he once served in the kitchen

Brother Juniper was once staying in a small hermitage together with other brothers. Since they all had to go out, and had to leave him alone, the brothers asked Juniper whether he could prepare something for them to eat by staying in the kitchen. He answered them that he would do so willingly. As soon as they had gone, brother Juniper began to think about what he could cook for the brothers and said: "Why is it that, every single day, the brothers have to worry

so much about eating and thus are disturbed in their efforts to pray? Today I will cook so much food in the kitchen, in such a way that the brothers will have enough to eat for fifteen days.” Full of zeal he went to the village, borrowed a big pot, and started to beg for eggs, chickens, and olive oil, and also collected firewood. He went back, lit a fire, filled that pot with water and placed it on the fire. Then he took the herbs and oil, the eggs with their shells, and the chickens with their feathers, and threw everything in the pot, so that he would cook them all together. In the meantime, one of the brothers, who was familiar with brother Juniper, and who knew very well how simple he could be, came back. Brother Juniper took him to see that great fire and all those products boiling in the pot. The brother was astonished at the great simplicity of brother Juniper. So he sat down near the fire and, not uttering a single word, in silence observed what brother Juniper was doing.

He saw him with great zeal running from one pot to another, stirring the contents with a big piece of wood, adding the firewood, blowing on the fire, and continually running around the kitchen busying himself with everything. Since Juniper could not approach the pots because of the great heat of the fire, he tied with the cord a wooden door to his chest, and with this strongly tied protection he could approach the fire. After he had finished cooking in the pots, and all the brothers had come back and entered the dining room for lunch, brother Juniper told them: “Let us eat and be satisfied, and afterwards let us go to pray. For fifteen days you do not have to worry about cooking any more, since today I have prepared enough food to last us through all this time.”

He placed before the brothers the dish, with the eggs in their shells and the chickens with some of their feathers. When the brothers took the food in their bowls, [63] they noticed that there were the feathers of the boiled chickens floating in the broth. In order to convince the brothers about the value of simplicity, he took a chicken with its feathers, and trying to convince them to eat, he placed it in his mouth, and biting it in order to break it into smaller portions, he said that the chicken was good in order to refresh the mind. “This chicken will keep my body humid,” he told them.

The brothers were astonished at this holy simplicity, and they accepted the discipline, which a simpleton like Juniper gave them with great wisdom. The Guardian, however, was very angry at Juniper. So brother Juniper prostrated himself on the ground in front of

the brothers, humbly admitted his fault and said that he was a small man, and confessed all the sins, which he had committed in the world. He also said: “If somebody needs to be blinded because of his lack of merit, I need to be blinded more than him; if somebody needs to be hanged, I need to be hanged for all the evil I committed, and because I have devastated the benefits of God and of the Order.” Having said this he retreated and for all that day he did not want to appear before the brothers. The Guardian then told the brothers: “May it be that we spend all our days in the same goodness of this brother, if we do have it, since I am edified every day by his good example.”

How Juniper went to Assisi without his underwear

Once brother Juniper was living in the Spoleto valley. He heard that a great solemnity was being celebrated in Assisi, and that a great crowd of people had gathered for the occasion. He came naked and without his underwear to Assisi, passing through Spello and another two castles. When he arrived he passed through the centre of the town in front of all those people and went to the friars. The brothers were so confused that they regarded him as a simpleton and said with angry tones that the Order was being troubled because of him. Then the General called the brothers and harshly reprimanded Juniper in front of them all. After having strongly scolded him, he said: “What penance can I give you, which such great excess of insane behaviour on your part would merit?” Brother Juniper answered him: “Father, command me that, since I have come here naked, I will also return naked by the same way I came.”

Regarding Juniper's ecstasy during Mass

Once brother Juniper was totally lost in God during Mass, and the brothers left him alone where he was. After having returned to his senses, he came to the brothers [64] saying: “Who would be so noble in this world, and would not willingly thrown upon himself a bucket of mud from head to toe, if they would give him a house full of gold?” And he continued: “Alas, how little are we ready to sustain shame, in order to gain eternal life?”

How he saw a hand in the air

Brother Juniper was once praying and was thinking hard about himself, when a hand appeared in the air and he heard a voice telling him: "You will not be able to do anything without this hand." He immediately arose, and directed his gaze to heaven and began running round the house and saying: "This is true, my lord, this is true." And he continued to shout in this way.

Regarding one of Juniper's close friends

Brother Juniper had a companion, whose name was brother Accidentalbene, who was very obedient, patient and virtuous. For this brother used to flog himself all day long, and never uttered a word of lament. He was often sent to places where there were the worst of fraternities, and where he would bear with great patience many tribulations. He would immediately answer to all the commands of brother Juniper, and whenever Juniper would instruct him he would laugh. Once brother Juniper heard that this brother had died, and he was sad beyond words, saying: "I never had a better friend than him in this world." So he broke all the necessary things he used, since for him the entire world had been destroyed with the death of his brother. Juniper said: "Since I cannot live with the brothers, and I cannot sustain myself, I will immediately go to his tomb and I will take his head. I will then divide it into two parts. One part I will fashion into a bowl for my food, and the other I will make into a cup in order to drink from it."

Here begins the life of brother Leo

[65] Brother Leo⁵⁰ shone among the companions of Saint Francis like a vase of solid gold, full of sweetness, and decorated with all kinds of precious multicoloured gems. He was Francis' secretary and confessor. His virtues were as numerous as gems, adorning his active life in a splendid way. He was introduced in the fragrance of the garden of contemplative life and in the *wine cellar* (Cant 2:4) of the King. Blessed Francis loved him in a special way because of his dove-like simplicity and often called him with the title of *lamb of God*. Whenever Francis would speak about the good qualities of his brothers in front of other people he would say that a good friar Minor is the one who possesses the purity and simplicity of brother Leo.

Brother Leo was with Saint Francis, when he was in the wilderness of mount La Verna during a Lent in honour of the archangel Michael. That was the occasion when Francis' body was stamped with the stigmata of Jesus Christ.

Leo alone was allowed to go once during the day to offer bread and water to Francis, and at midnight to pray Matins with him. Sometimes it happened that Leo would see Francis lifted up above the ground to the height of a man. Therefore brother Leo would approach him and with great devotion and many tears he would kiss Francis' feet, if he was able to reach them, and would say: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner, and through the merits of such a most holy

50 According to Nicolò Papini, this life of Brother Leo is the work of an anonymous Spiritual friar during the 14th century. Franciscan documents state that Leo was confessor, secretary and close companion of St. Francis. The *Assisi Compilation* and *Mirror of Perfection* state that Leo came from Assisi. Arnaldo Fortini found a document in the Assisi cathedral archives, which mentions a certain *Domino Leone*, thus denoting that Leo might have been a priest. Leo was one of the three companions who wrote the Letter of Greccio to the Minister General Crescenzo da Iesi (11th August 1246), sending him the *florilegium* regarding their memories of Francis of Assisi. He is also the author of two scrolls, namely the *Verba Sancti Francisci* [Words of St. Francis] and the *Intentio Regulae* [Intention of the Rule], identified by L. Lemmens in the manuscript 1/73 of the College of Saint Isidore in Rome (*Documenta Antiqua Franciscana*, Quaracchi, Ad Claras Aquas, 1901-1902). Leo spent his last years in Assisi, where Salimbene, Giacomo da Massa and Angelo Clareno visited him. Leo died on 14th or 15th November 1271 and was buried close to St. Francis' tomb, on the left side facing the tomb.

man [66] receive me in your mercy.” On other occasions he would see Francis lifted up to the very top of the trees, or else he would be lifted up so high that Leo would hardly be able to look at him. Therefore Leo would prostrate himself in prayer on the ground and fold his arms in the form of a cross. One night Leo did not find Francis in his cell and went to look for him secretly on the mountain. Since the night was lit up by a full moon, he finally found the Francis praying on his knees, with his gaze fixed upon God, and uttering the following words: “Who are you, O Lord my God, and who am I, a worm and your poor servant!” Francis was repeating these words over and over again. Leo then looked and saw a great flame of fire, which was of extraordinary beauty and radiance, and which was pleasing to behold. This flame came down from heaven and rested upon the head of Saint Francis. From that flame a voice was heard, and Saint Francis was speaking and answering that voice.

Leo was afraid that he was intruding upon the Saint’s privacy in holy prayer, and he moved back a little, and therefore could not understand the words, which were being uttered. He also beheld that the Saint was extending his arms towards the flame. When that flame finally receded, brother Leo started to walk back very slowly, so that the Saint would not hear him. But Francis heard the sound of Leo’s footsteps and said: “I command you, whoever you are, by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you stop where you are and do not move from that place.” Brother Leo immediately answered him, and said: “It is me, Father.” Afterwards brother Leo told the brothers that he was overwhelmed by such fear, that, if the ground opened up, he would have willingly hid himself into it. He was very much afraid that he had offended the Saint, and he did not want to lose his gracious friendship. Leo had such great love and faith in the Saint, that there was nothing that he would not confide to him as long as he lived. Whenever the brothers would speak about the Saints, brother Leo would tell them: “My dear brothers, all the Saints are great, but our holy Father Francis is in no way inferior to them.”

When the saint recognized the voice of brother Leo, he told him: “Brother lamb, why did you come? Didn’t I tell you many a time that you should not come and follow my footsteps? I command you by the vow of obedience to tell me what you saw.” So brother Leo told him all that he saw and heard. When he saw that the Saint was listening to all his words with admiration and that he was not angry at him, since

maybe he could not scold him for having received such a grace during that vision, Leo summoned up courage, and with great reverence he asked the Saint: “Father, I beg you to reveal to me and explain those words which I was hearing and also those which I could not hear.”

Since the saint loved Leo very tenderly, he realized that God was pleased to reveal his mysteries to brother Leo, at least in part, and therefore he decided to explain everything to him and told him: “O brother lamb of Jesus Christ! In those words, which you heard and in the vision you saw, two lights were shown to me: the light of the knowledge of the Creator and the light of the knowledge of myself. Therefore, when I was saying: ‘Who are you, my God, and who am I,’ I was wrapt in the light of contemplation, in which I could perceive the abyss of divine goodness [67] and could also weep when I saw my profound misery. That is why I was saying: ‘Who are you, Lord, you who are the most wise, the most merciful, and the most good, that you visit me, who am a vile man, and a tiny worm, and who am abominable and despised!’

“The Lord was speaking to me in that flame. Among the words, which He told me, He asked me to give Him three gifts. While I was excusing myself before Him, since I could not give Him anything except for my body, soul and poor clothes, the Lord answered me: ‘Place your hand in your bosom and offer me whatever you will find there.’ When I did this, I found a golden coin,⁵¹ which was so great, resplendent and beautiful, that I had never seen anything like it before. So I offered it to God. For a second time I placed my hand in my bosom and I found another golden coin and offered it. The same thing happened for the third time. When I had made my third offering, I knelt down and blessed God, who had given me the grace to offer him such splendid gifts. At the same time I understood that the triple offering signified golden obedience, most high poverty and splendid chastity, which God in His grace has deigned to make me observe without any remorse of my conscience.

“This, therefore, is the meaning of what you saw and heard when you beheld me stretching out my hands. Now be very careful, brother lamb, so that you should not come inopportunely to explore what I am doing. You may now return to your cell with the blessing

51 This detail regarding the golden coins is different in the 3rd Consideration on the Holy Stigmata, in the *Fioretti* of Saint Francis, which speak of three golden balls, which Francis offered God.

of God, and take good care of me. Because in a few days time God will work such great wonders on this mountain, that all the world will be full of admiration. He will do something totally new, which He has never done in any human person.” After this episode, the stigmata of Jesus Christ were impressed on the body of Saint Francis.⁵²

Regarding how Saint Francis commanded Leo to wash a stone and in what manner

It was on the same mountain, while Saint Francis and brother Leo were talking to one another, that the Saint showed Leo a certain stone, which he was praising with great joy and sweetness of heart. Francis told brother Leo: “Brother lamb, wash that stone with water.” When Leo had done this, he told him: “Now wash it with wine.” Leo did this, and the Saint resumed: “Wash it with oil.” When he had washed it, the Saint told him: “Now anoint this stone with balsam.” But Leo asked him: “Where can I get the balsam from?” Saint Francis answered him: “Brother lamb of God, you should know that when the Lord appeared to me once, He sat on this stone. That is why I commanded you to wash it four times, since the Lord here promised me four things regarding my Order: [68] firstly, that whoever loves our Order with all his heart, will end his days full of divine blessings; secondly, that those who unjustly persecute this Order will be punished more severely; thirdly, that an evil brother who will persevere in his malice cannot remain for long in the Order, but will have to leave it in confusion; lastly, that this Religion will remain till the end of time.”

Leo alone touched blessed Francis’ stigmata wounds

Since Leo was a most intimate friend of Saint Francis, he alone had the privilege of touching the saint’s sacred stigmata, whenever he would apply new bandages to them. He would also notice that the bandages, which he removed, were stained with sacred blood. Every day Leo would change those bandages, which covered the nails protruding in the flesh, in order to control the flow of blood and to

⁵² The episode is also found in ABF, 39 (FAED III, 513).

mitigate Francis’ pain. But from Thursday evening onwards and all through Friday Francis would not allow him to apply any remedy to his sufferings, in order to feel the pain of the Crucified Christ in his stigmata on that day of the crucifixion. Saint Francis saw that, whenever brother Leo touched those sacred stigmata, he would benefit spiritually and would grow in holiness. Although Francis would hide the stigmata from all others, sometimes he would let brother Leo place his hands carefully on those venerable wounds. Brother Leo would feel such great devotion and spiritual joy, that he would often weep profusely and feel such admiration and be inflamed inwardly, that he would think that he was going to die.

One day, when brother Leo was walking together with Saint Francis, he saw a most beautiful cross in front of the blessed Father’s face. This cross was revealing the image of the Crucified Christ, who moved in front of the saint all along the way. From this cross such a great radiance was emanating that it was illuminating not only the Saint’s face but all the surrounding country. Leo also saw that this marvellous cross would stop whenever the Saint would stop, and would move forward whenever he would resume walking. Brother Leo was astonished and felt as if he was wounded by compassion, and inflamed with the fervour of devotion.

Once brother Leo was reflecting and wished to know with a devout curiosity whether blessed Francis was a virgin. In fact, Leo knew that, when he was still in the world, Francis was a very happy man and would often indulge in the company of other impure young people. But since Leo would find Francis so pure during confession and his flesh and heart seemed to be so far away from such vices, one night Leo had the following vision. He saw blessed Francis standing on the peak of a very high mountain. Leo was astonished at such great height, when he heard a voice telling him: “This mountain is the virginity, upon whose summit Francis has always lived in great purity.”

[69] *A marvellous vision regarding poverty*

Once Leo was assisting blessed Francis, who was gravely ill. He was praying with devotion, and was lost in ecstasy and led in his spirit to a certain river, which was wide and overflowing. Looking at the river Leo saw some brothers, who were trying to cross it. They

were overburdened with possessions and, as they tried to cross that river, some of them drowned as soon as they entered the water, others drowned in the middle of the current, and others further away, according to the major or minor weight of what they were carrying with them. Brother Leo was gazing at them with great compassion. Then he also saw some brothers who were free from all worldly possessions, and who managed to cross that river without danger and arrived safe and sound on the opposite bank. Blessed Francis was aware of the vision, which Leo had seen, and he commanded him to reveal to him his vision. When he had done this, Saint Francis told him: "What you saw is all true. The river represents this world, in which the brothers drown, since they do not want to embrace voluntary poverty. The true friars Minor are those who despise all worldly possessions and therefore can pass over without any danger from the present life to the eternal life."

How God moved Leo's lips to praise Saint Francis

Saint Francis was once staying in a hermitage together with brother Leo. They did not have the books necessary to pray the divine office. One night, when they had to wake up to pray Matins, the Saint told brother Leo: "My dear brother, we do not have Breviaries, so that we can pray Matins. However we can still spend our time in praising God, according to the way I will teach you. See to it that you do not change the words I am going to ask you to repeat. I will therefore utter these words: 'O brother Francis, you have committed so many sins in this world that you merit to be thrown into hell.' And you, brother Leo, are to answer: 'It is true; in fact you merit to be thrown into the most profound abyss of hell.'"

Brother Leo answered Francis with his dove-like simplicity: "Father, I will willingly obey; let us begin in the name of God." Saint Francis therefore said: "O brother Francis, you have committed so many sins in this world that you merit to be thrown into hell." Brother Leo answered: "God has given you so many graces, that you will go to heaven." Saint Francis then said: "Brother Leo, you should not say this, but whenever I say: 'O brother Francis, you have committed so many evil things against God, that you merit to be cursed,' you must respond without changing one single word: 'You merit to be enrolled among those who are damned.'" Brother Leo said: "I will do so will-

ingly, Father." Saint Francis then, with many tears and sighs, began to beat his breast and to shout with all his might: "O Lord, God of heaven and earth, I have committed so many evil things against you, that I am truly worthy of being cursed." And brother Leo answered: "O brother Francis, God has made you so holy, that you are blessed in a special way among those who are blessed in heaven."

Brother Francis was surprised that Leo was answering him contrary to his wishes, and began to scold him saying: "Brother Leo, why are you not answering me in the way I am teaching you? I command you by the vow of holy obedience, that you answer me according to the words, which I shall teach you. [70] I will therefore say: 'O brother Francis, you cruel man, how can God have mercy upon you, when you have committed so many sins against *the Father of mercies and the God of all consolations* (cfr. 2Cor 1:3), and thus you are not worthy of meriting any mercy?' And you, brother lamb Leo, are to answer me: 'You are in no way worthy of finding any mercy.'" Brother Leo answered Francis with many tears and said: "God the Father, whose mercy is far greater than any one of our sins, will give you great graces and will add in abundance his mercy and grace upon you."

Saint Francis was mildly angry at Leo, and with patience but also with some irritation told him: "Brother Leo, why are you pretending to transgress your vow of obedience, and are answering me in the opposite way I have commanded you to do?" Brother Leo with great reverence and humility answered him and said: "O holy Father, God knows that I have always promised to answer you according to the words you have commanded me to utter; but God is making me answer you according to his good pleasure and not according to what I have proposed to answer." So Saint Francis was astonished and told him: "I ask you, my dear brother, to tell me these words when I accuse myself as I did before, namely that I do not merit any mercy." He then imposed this obedience upon Leo with many tears. Brother Leo answered him: "Tell me, Father, whatever you wish, and I will answer you according to your will." Saint Francis then said with many tears: "O Francis, you cruel man, can God ever have mercy upon you?" Brother Leo answered him: "Father, God will show such great mercy upon you, that you will receive a great grace from God, who is your salvation, and who will exalt you and glorify you for ever, since *those who humble themselves will be exalted* (cfr. Mt 18:4; Lk 14:11), and I cannot answer you otherwise, since God is speaking through my own

mouth.” And so they both remained in this prayer vigil until dawn, in humble joy and compunction, in tears and divine consolation.⁵³

Regarding some revelations done to blessed Francis, and which became known to brother Leo

One time Saint Francis told brother Leo in a familiar way, that while he was praying for all Christian people behind the altar in Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, Christ appeared to him and told him: “If you wish that I will show mercy to the Christian people, see to it that your Order will remain in the state in which you have founded it, and I will show love for your Order and will preserve it pure from all present tribulations. But you are to know that, in the future your Order will go back from the way you have shown it. The brothers will provoke me to such anger that I will send against the Order the greatest among the powers of the devils. The friars will then give so much scandal among themselves and to the world, that not one of them will have the courage to wear the habit in public. When the world will lose faith in your Order, there will be no more light left in this world, since I have placed the brothers as the light of the world. The brothers will therefore hide themselves in the woods like fugitives, and for me it will be like the days when I pastured the sons of Israel in the wilderness.”

Then blessed Francis said that, because of the sins of the people, Christ would send a great famine in the world, but because of the merits of one poor man who would be living [71] in those times, God will prolong the time of mercy before that tragedy. But when that man would die, such a horrible famine would invade the world that a great multitude of people would die because of hunger. After his death, Saint Francis appeared to brother Leo and told him: “Brother Leo, that great famine, which I had foretold for the future when I was still alive, is going to come during this year. In fact, I was that poor man, for whose merits God had prolonged the time in which He would send it.” After six months such a great famine occurred, that many people died from the lack of food.⁵⁴

53 The episode is also found in ABF, 8 (FAED III, 450-452) in the *Fioretti*, c. 9 (FAED III, 581-582).

54 According to Salimbene, in the year 1227 there was a great famine: *maxima*

How Saint Francis appeared to brother Leo with wings and claws

Once brother Leo wanted to see blessed Francis who was very ill and close to death. He was making penance in front of God in the place of L'Eremita⁵⁵ with fasting and prayers. Now, while he was praying blessed Francis appeared to him. He was joyful and shone splendidly, and had wings with radiant feathers. He had claws like that of an eagle, but these were golden. Since brother Leo was marvelling at this vision and he was feeling very refreshed with a tender feeling of sweetness, he asked Francis why he appeared to him in that way. Saint Francis answered: “Among the other gifts, which the divine piety has given me, I have the gift of coming to the aid of my devout Order as quickly as if I were flying, every time the brothers invoke me in their tribulations, and I want to lead their souls and those of the good brothers to the kingdom of heaven. I also strike the devils with my claws and the unruly brothers and those who persecute the Order I punish them harshly in order to correct them.”

Another time brother Leo, in his dreams, saw what the divine justice was preparing. The angels sounded the trumpets, and gathered in a large field an innumerable multitude of people. Two ladders, one of which was white, and the other one red, were placed on each part of that field, and they were joining heaven to earth. Christ appeared at the very top of the red ladder, as if He were greatly offended and angry; blessed Francis was standing close by, somewhat below him. Francis then came down and with a loud voice called his brothers and said: “Come, brothers, come to the Lord, who is calling you. Have trust, and do not be afraid.” The brothers therefore came running at the admonition of the Father and they started to climb the red ladder confidently. But when they began to go up, one of them fell down from the third step, another from the fourth, another one from the tenth, another one from the middle, and another one from the very top of the ladder.

[72] Blessed Francis was moved with compassion when he saw so many friars tumbling down, and prayed the judge for his sons.

caristia bladi et rerum victualium. The *Chronicon Parmense* notes that in the year 1227 *erat per totam Italiam magna fames*.

55 The name *Eremitae* probably refers to the hermitage of Fabriano, or else to that of Cesi di Terni.

Christ then showed His hands and His side, in which the stigmata appeared to be renewed. Blood had recently flowed from them. Christ said: "It was your brothers who did this to me." While blessed Francis continued to persevere in asking Christ to have mercy on his sons, after a brief time he managed again to come down the red ladder and called his brothers saying: "My brothers, have trust, and do not despair, run to the white ladder and come up, since you will be welcomed and through it you will enter into heaven." The brothers ran to the white ladder heeding his paternal admonition, and the blessed Virgin appeared at the top of the ladder and welcomed them, and the brothers entered into the kingdom without further effort.

How Christ appeared to brother Leo and lamented regarding the defects of the brothers

Another time Christ appeared to brother Leo and told him: "I am very confused regarding the brothers of your Order." Leo trembled at these words and asked Christ to give him the reason. Christ answered him: "The brothers do not recognise my benefits, which I lavish upon them everyday, and you should know that these benefits are not simply spiritual, but also temporal and serve for the necessities of the body, since the brothers do not sow or reap. They often grumble and spend time doing nothing, and provoke themselves to anger and do not go back easily to love others as they should, whenever they receive injury."

Regarding Leo's zeal towards evangelical poverty

When brother Elias, who governed the Order after Saint Francis,⁵⁶ was beginning to build the great and marvellous basilica in that hollow, which is called *collis inferni* (the hill of hell), but which after the lord Pope Gregory IX placed in this place the foundation stone of the church, began to be called *collis paradisi* (the hill of paradise), the same brother Elias began to collect sums of money for the project from all quarters. He also placed a marble vase in front of this

⁵⁶ Brother Elias was Minister General of the Order from 1232 to 1239.

new building, in which people were urged to place their offerings for this project. When the companions of Saint Francis, and especially, brother Leo, who had great fervour for evangelical poverty, saw what was happening, they all went to brother Giles to ask for his counsel. He replied: "Even if there is a house which covers the distance from this place to Assisi, for me it is sufficient to have a small corner in which to live." When the brothers asked him whether they should destroy that marble vase, Giles turned to brother Leo and, with his eyes filled with tears, said: "If you want to die, go and break it. But if you want to live, leave it where it is, since it will be very hard to sustain the persecutions of that man." Brother Leo and his companions understood that they should break that marble vase. But brother Elias was indignant and had them all beaten up with many blows and expelled from the town. When the brothers then met during the general chapter, the same brother Elias was absolved from the government of the Order.

[73] *Regarding a gracious miracle: a child was nourished by the milk of an elderly woman*

When brother Leo was living at Saint Mary of the Angels, it happened that a certain woman gave birth to a male child, in the village known as Isola,⁵⁷ but after she gave birth this woman died. She had a mother who was a widow, and who was an elderly and very poor woman. This woman was afflicted because she had lost her daughter, but she was also very worried, not knowing what to do with the little boy, since she could not afford to take him to another woman who would nurse and feed him. So she came to brother Leo, and she asked for his counsel. While she was telling him what had happened to her, and shedding abundant tears, brother Leo was deeply touched with compassion, since he understood that she lacked temporal help. So he lifted his gaze to heaven and fervently prayed for her to the Lord. At last he returned to her and, with great fervour, told this woman: "Woman, place your nipples in the child's mouth; do not doubt, since He who gave milk to his mother, can also give you the grace to have

⁵⁷ The name *Insula* refers to the modern town of Bastia Umbra, about 4 kilometres away from Assisi.

milk.” That woman was astonished at these words; but since she was well aware of Leo’s sanctity she believed, and placed her nipples in the child’s mouth. By divine virtue that elderly woman was able to produce milk in abundance, and continued to feed the child until the day he was weaned. That boy grew up to a mature age, and became a priest, and used to spread the news of this miracle.⁵⁸

Regarding a certain vision which Leo had about the death of brother Rufino

Once brother Leo and brother Rufino were ill at the place of the Portiuncula. Brother Bernard of Quintavalle was already dead. Brother Leo, who was also very ill, saw in his dreams a multitude of friars who were going in procession. Among them there was one brother, who was preceding the other brothers with his eyes sparkling with brilliance, since during his life he had the most pure eyes, and he was able to judge anything he saw better than anybody else. Brother Leo asked one of those brothers, why they were taking part in that solemn procession. He answered him: “We have come to take with us the soul of a brother who is very ill at the Portiuncula and who will shortly die.” Brother Leo then asked: “And who is that brother, whose eyes are radiant with such clear splendour?” That brother answered him: “Don’t you know him? He is brother Bernard of Quintavalle. His eyes are shining with such splendour, since he was judged to be the most humble among men for as long as he lived. Whenever he would meet somebody who would be dressed very poorly, he would say: ‘Brother Bernard, this man serves most high poverty much better than you do,’ so that he would regard such misery as an evangelical and voluntary poverty.’ And whenever he would see men wearing precious or gold-thread or multicoloured clothes, he would say: ‘Maybe under those clothes he wears a hair-shirt or iron rings, and he avoids vain glory much better than you do, brother Bernard, with your miserable clothes.’ And thus he always made a good judgment of everybody, [74] he always conserved his

⁵⁸ The same kind of miracle is attributed to Saint Francis’ intercession in *The Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis* 182 (FAED II, 463-464); *The Major Legend of St. Francis* X,4 (FAED II, 679-680).

eyes pure, and all good which he saw in creatures, he would refer it entirely to its Creator.”

When the vision disappeared, Leo thought that he was the sick brother to whom the vision was referring. Full of joy he turned toward brother Rufino and told him: “My dear brother, I believe that the Lord wants to call me from this life.” But brother Rufino caught him at his word and told him him: “Brother, you are mistaken, because the vision and salvation you saw did not refer to you, but to me.”

While they were discussing that vision together, brother Rufino said: “My dear brother, you saw this vision in your dreams, but I was wide awake. Blessed Francis, in fact, came to me with all that multitude of brothers, and told me that I will shortly die and will go to the Lord with all those brothers. And then he gave me the sweetest kiss and filled my mouth with the most sweet-smelling fragrance. In order to have the proof of what I am saying, come close to me and smell the fragrance which that kiss which the Saint gave me still leaves in my mouth.” Therefore, when brother Leo approached him, he was filled with such fragrance, which was coming out of Rufino’s mouth, that he became totally transformed and was compelled to believe all the words, which Rufino had told him. At that moment brother Leo was cured of his illness, and brother Rufino called all the brothers who were present, and flew to heaven in the Lord. Brother Leo continued to proceed in all sanctity until the fullness of his days, when he slept in the Lord. His body was buried in the basilica of Saint Francis.

Here begins the life of brother Giles, a most holy and contemplative man

[74] The examples of holy men are a means of salvation for those who devoutly listen to them. They encourage their souls to despise all passing realities, and desire eternal life. Therefore, for the honour of God and in order to present to my listeners some useful words regarding the marvellous deeds which the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, worked in the life of our most holy father, brother Giles, I have decided to write down those facts which, unworthy as I am, I have heard from his companions and which I have learnt through experience with this same holy man, with whom I was familiar.⁵⁹ From the very beginning of his conversion, God wanted to show the greatness of what lay in store for Giles in the future. When Giles was still living in secular clothes, the hand of the Lord came down upon him, and he began to reflect about how he could entirely please the Creator of all things. During that time blessed Francis, like a new herald of the humility of the King, was preparing himself in a marvellous way in the example of a life of penance. Two years [75] after his conversion Francis drew to the cult of evangelical poverty a certain noble man, decorated with prudence, and possessing abundant riches, whose name was Bernard, and another man, who was called Peter Catanio. After having listened to the counsels of Saint Francis, these men left all their possessions and distributed them to the poor, and with great fervour decided to observe the rule of penance and evangelical perfection, after they had accepted the habit of the friars Minor.

Brother Giles was still a secular man at that time. After seven days he heard some relative narrate these facts. He was totally inflamed and melted with divine fire. On the following day, which was the feast day of Saint George, in the year of the Lord 1209,⁶⁰ he suddenly decided to take care of his own salvation. He rose and went to

59 According to Salimbene, who writes in 1284, the one who is writing is brother Leo: "Brother Giles, who was buried in a coffin of stone in Perugia in the great church of the friars Minor ... and whose life was written in a sufficient way by brother Leo, who was one of the three special companions of blessed Francis."

60 The date of Giles' entry in the Order would rather have been that of 23rd April 1208. Giles died on 22nd April 1262 in Perugia.

the church of Saint George, where nowadays there is the monastery of Saint Clare.⁶¹ When he arrived there, he entered to pray. Since he was burning with the desire to see Saint Francis, he went to the lepers' hospital, where Saint Francis was living in an abandoned hut, together with brother Bernard of Quintavalle and brother Peter Catanio. He arrived at a place where three roads met and, since he did not know what way to take, he prayed and Christ led him on the right road. While he was still thinking about what he was going to do, he met blessed Francis who was returning from the woods, where he used to go in order to pray. When brother Giles saw him, he prostrated himself on the ground in front of the Saint, then he humbly knelt down and with great affection asked Francis to accept him in his company. When the Saint saw this most faithful and devout man, he told him: "My dear brother, look what a great grace the Lord is giving you. If at this moment the emperor himself came to Assisi and wanted to assume some person from the town as his knight, servant or friend, would not that man be overjoyed? How much more should you feel overjoyed, since the Lord has chosen you as his knight and most beloved servant!" He consoled Giles and admonished him in order to remain faithfully in the vocation for which the Lord had called him.

Francis then led him personally in the house and called brother Bernard and told him: "The Lord has sent us a good brother." [76] Then they sat down and ate together with great joy in the Lord. After this, blessed Francis went together with brother Giles to Assisi, in order to procure a habit for him. Along the way they met a poor woman, who asked them for alms. Blessed Francis started thinking about how he could offer something to help that poor woman. He then turned with an angelic look to brother Giles and told him: "Dear brother, let us give your cloak to this woman, for the love of the Lord God." Giles was all too happy to take off his cloak and give it to her. At that very moment it seemed to him that his offering had ascended into heaven, and he felt himself full of a new joy.⁶² Thus he was received in the Order, and he was overjoyed to see himself clothed in such a poor and worthless tunic.

61 This life was therefore written after 1260, the year in which the Poor Clares transferred from San Damiano to the new monastery of Saint Clare in Assisi.

62 Cfr. *Speculum Perfectionis* [SP] (Sabatier) 36 (FAED III, 284-285).

Blessed Francis then left with brother Giles to the Marches of Ancona. The Saint was praising the Lord with splendid phrases along the way, singing with a loud and clear voice in the French language. Then he told brother Giles: "Our Religion is similar to a fisherman who casts his net in the water, with the desire to catch a multitude of fish. Then he takes the big ones, and leaves the small fish in the water." Brother Giles was astonished when he listened to this prophecy, since the number of the brothers was still very small. Although the Saint could not preach to the people, he nevertheless exhorted men and women along the road, so that they would love and fear God and do penance for their sins. And brother Giles would admonish them to believe Francis, since he was telling them good words.⁶³

Regarding his pilgrimage to visit the sanctuary of Saint James

After some time Giles acquired permission from blessed Francis to go and visit the sanctuary of Saint James.⁶⁴ During this journey he had to suffer hunger because of his great poverty, but he bore everything with the love of God. One day he went to beg for alms, but did not receive anything. So he found a place, in which there were beans scattered all over. So he gathered them and began to eat them. That night he slept and was so comforted in the Lord, that it seemed to him that he had eaten all kinds of good food. He willingly sought shelter in solitary places and preferred to stay alone than among people, so that he could freely dedicate his time to prayer. Once, during his journey Giles met a poor man. He was moved by piety, and cut off his hood from his tunic and gave it to that poor person. Thus he continued walking without a hood for twenty days. When he arrived at the castle of Ficarollo in Lombardy,⁶⁵ [77] he was invited by a person and went to him willingly, since he was very poor and was hoping to receive some alms from him. But that man placed dice in Giles' hand, and

63 Cfr. *Anonymous of Perugia* [AP] 14-16 (FAED II, 39-40); *Legend of Three Companions* [L3C] 32-33 (FAED II, 87-88).

64 *1 Celano* [1C] 30 (FAED I, 207) says that Giles went together with brother Bernard to Santiago de Compostella, which was the most famous shrine for medieval pilgrims, after Jerusalem. The year of this journey could have been 1212.

65 This castle lies on the left bank of the river Po, between Mantova and Ferrara.

wanted him to start playing. Brother Giles, totally indifferent to this action, answered him humbly: "May the Lord forgive you." Thus he was often treated like a fool by many people he met during his travels.

How Giles went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre

Giles also received obedience from blessed Francis, so that he and a companion could go and visit the sepulchre of the Lord Jesus and the other places of the Holy Land.⁶⁶ While he was staying for some time at the port of Brindisi, in order to wait for a ship to take him on his crossing, he acquired a pitcher, which he filled with water, and afterwards he went along the town crying: "Who would like to have a drink of water?" He would then accept all those things, which were necessary for his livelihood and for that of his companion. After crossing over he visited with the greatest devotion the sepulchre of the Lord and the other holy places. When he arrived at Acco, he stayed there and worked for a living. He used to make reed baskets, which are used by the people of that town. He also used to carry the dead to the cemetery and to carry water in the town. With this work he would acquire bread and other necessities of life. Whenever he could not acquire anything, he would then "have recourse to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door."⁶⁷ After these events he returned to Saint Mary of the Portiuncula.

How divine providence provide for his needs during a pilgrimage

Giles also went on a devout pilgrimage to Sant'Angelo and to Saint Nicholas in Bari.⁶⁸ As he went along his journey in the world, he

66 According to Luke Wadding, Giles embarked on this journey to the Holy Land in 1215.

67 Cfr. *Testament* 22 (FAED I, 25-26).

68 Sant'Angelo is the famous shrine of St. Michael the Archangel, on Monte Gargano, in Puglie, southern Italy. According to tradition, this is the place where the Archangel appeared to the bishop St. Lawrence, during the time of Pope Gelasius (492-494). The shrine was consecrated in the year 493, and was a popular place of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. The shrine of St. Nicholas in

would encourage men and women alike to love God and fear Him, and to make penance for their sins. One day, [78] when he was exhausted from his travels and was suffering hunger, he stopped at the side of the road and slept. He was awoken from his sleep, and found out that God's providence had left half a loaf close to his head. So he thanked God, and after having eaten that loaf, he felt refreshed.

How Giles crossed beyond the sea out of his desire for martyrdom

In the meantime, seeing how his flock was increasing in numbers, Saint Francis had a great desire to send his brothers to preach to the Saracens and other unbelievers, so that they would profess their faith and, if need be, would die as martyrs for the faith. Since he saw brother Giles as being worthy for this mission, and since Giles willingly volunteered for it, being inflamed in his spirit, Francis destined him to the mission among the unbelievers. Giles therefore went to Tunis, which is a town of the Saracens.⁶⁹ A Saracen among them, whom they considered to be a most holy man, after having been silent for a long time, at a certain stage began to preach and told the Saracens in a loud voice: "We have come to know that unbelieving men have come to us, who want to condemn our prophet and our law. I therefore advise you to kill them all with the sword." From that moment a great confusion ensued among the Saracens. The Christians, who were living in that place, and among whom brother Giles with other brothers was also staying, began to fear that they would be killed. So during the night they took the friars forcefully to the ship, and did not let them speak to the Saracens or approach them. The following morning the Saracens came running and started protesting in the port, demanding to capture the brothers. The brothers started preaching from the ship,

Bari was founded in the 11th century. A group of merchants from Bari, Italy, went to Myra, in Lycia, Turkey, where they took away by force from the Greek monks the remains of St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra. They brought the relics with them to Bari and on 9th May 1087 deposited them in the church of St. Stephen. This also became a famous place of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages.

69 During the Pentecost General Chapter of 26th May 1219, Francis sent many friars on missionary expeditions (to Germany, Hungary, France, Spain, Morocco). Giles and some other brothers were sent to Tunis, in North Africa.

against the will and prohibition of the Christians, and began to exhort with courage the Saracens to convert to Christ. They were inflamed with the Spirit of God as if they were burning with a divine fire, and they did not at least care to die for their faith. When they saw that the Christians would continue hampering them in the mission for which they had come, and since they saw that they could not carry it out, the brothers returned to blessed Francis.

How Giles was freezing, but was warmed by God

Brother Francis saw that brother Giles was perfect in grace and virtue, and that he was prepared and ready to do every good deed. So he loved him intimately and often spoke to the other brothers regarding him. He used to tell them: "This brother is one of the knights of my round table." Whenever brother Giles used to come to Francis, to ask him what he wanted him to do or where he wanted him to go, the Saint would answer him: "Your place is prepared; go wherever you wish." But, for four days, Giles could not decide to depart freely and with a calm spirit, and therefore he returned to Saint Francis and told him: "Father, send me wherever you wish, since my conscience cannot find peace in such free obedience." So Francis sent him to the hermitage of Fabriano, in the district of Perugia.⁷⁰ He went there barefoot, wearing only one habit, and it was a period of great cold during winter. A man met him on the road and told him: [79] "Do not proceed on your journey, since you know that I can take you from here to paradise right now." At those words of temptation Giles felt so cold, that he was sure that he would freeze and die. But he began to reflect upon the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, who used to walk barefoot and poor. This meditation immediately warmed him up, and he praised the Almighty, who inflamed him so quickly with his warmth, and without the need of material fire.

When he was staying in that place for many years, one day, while he was, as usual, reflecting upon his sins, he entered the wood. He then called a young friar, took off all his clothes, and placing the cord around his neck he commanded that brother to drag him with that

70 The hermitage of Fabriano is in the Marches of Ancona. According to Bartholomew of Pisa, Francis sent Giles to this hermitage in 1214.

cord to the hermitage of the friars. When they had entered, brother Giles shouted with a loud voice: "Brothers, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner." When the brothers gathered together and saw him naked, they began to shed abundant tears and to tell him: "Father, put on your habit." And he answered: "I am not worthy to be a friar Minor; but if you want to give me back my habit as an almsgiving and out of mercy, I will accept it unworthily." Brother Giles would make boxes in which to place glasses, as well as reed baskets, and well-laden with these wares, he and his companion would carry them to the town and sell them, in order to receive the necessary help for their food and clothing. He insisted so much upon working, in order to clothe one of the brothers. As an alms offering he wanted that brother to pray for him, while he rested or slept.

One day Giles was coming back from a reed plantation, carrying sheaves of reeds. He passed close to a certain church, where the priest called him a hypocrite. At these words brother Giles felt very confused and troubled, and he could not refrain from weeping. When one of the brothers saw him weeping, he asked him why he was so sad and broken hearted. Giles answered him: "I am therefore a hypocrite, since a priest has said this to me." The brother asked him: "Do you believe that it is truly so?" Giles answered: "I believe it, since it is a priest who is telling me so; I do not believe that a priest can tell me lies." That brother told him: "Father, the judgements of men, who can always err, are often different from God's judgements." When he heard this, Giles felt more tranquil in his spirit.

[80] When brother Giles heard that brother Elias, the Minister General of the Order, had been excommunicated because of his disobedience, he prostrated himself on the ground and curled up his body as much as he could. When the brothers asked him why he was doing this, he answered them: "I want to go down to the earth as much as I can, since he fell down so profoundly because he had ascended to such great heights."⁷¹

⁷¹ R.B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government. Elias to Bonaventure*, Cambridge University Press 1959, 194: "(After his deposition as minister general of the Order, Elias) retired to Cortona, and there paid a visit to the Clares, which no friar was allowed to do without licence, under pain of excommunication. Albert (of Pisa, newly-elected minister general) required him to come and seek absolution, or at least to meet him half-way. Elias scorned his overtures, and when the Pope told him that he must obey the Minister General like any

Regarding his prompt obedience

When Giles was staying at the hermitage of Agello,⁷² and had to go for a short time outside the hermitage, the Minister General ordered him to go and meet him at Assisi. He did not want to go back to the hermitage, but started walking directly in the direction of Assisi. When the brothers persuaded him to come first to the hermitage, and then leave, he did not want to listen to them and said: "My obedience is that I should go to Assisi, and not to come back to the hermitage." So, from the same spot in which he heard the orders of the Minister, he started his journey to Assisi, because of the vow of obedience, which he observed in a very strict way.

How he counselled the brothers, to prefer obedience to prayer

One day a certain brother was praying in his cell, when his Guardian ordered him to go out and beg for bread. He rose instantly with indignation and went to brother Giles, who was living at that place, and told him: "Father, I was praying in my cell, and the Guardian ordered me to go out to beg for bread; but it seems to me that it is better to continue praying than to go out to beg for bread." Brother Giles told him: "Brother, you do not know what prayer means; since true prayer means that you are a subject and do the will of your prelate."

Giles then added: "It is a sign of pride to place your head under the yoke of obedience and then pull it out to realize what seems to you to be more perfect. As long as the ox keeps its head under the yoke, it will fill the barn with grain. A religious who truly obeys is similar to a knight who sits on a good horse, and who passes in the midst of his enemies who cannot harm him in any way. A religious who does not obey and who quarrels is like a knight who sits on a bad horse, which is sick and furious, and therefore he is easily wounded by his enemies

other friar he found his position intolerable. He joined Frederick II, whom the Pope had excommunicated in March (1239), and was therefore publicly excommunicated himself." Cfr. Thomas of Eccleston, *The Coming in England of the Friars Minor*, c. 13, in *13th Century Chronicles*, Translated from Latin by Placid Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 156-157.

⁷² Agello is a village near Lake Trasimeno, in the district of Perugia.

and dragged down on the ground and bound in chains, and at the end he is killed or thrown into a dungeon for the rest of his days. If a man is so elevated in grace that he speaks with the Angels, and at the same time he is called by his prelate, he should immediately leave his dialogue with the Angels and promptly obey his superior.”

How he humbly kissed a wound and cured it

Since Giles abounded in the virtue of humility, the Lord made it public with a marvellous miracle. One day brother Giles met a generous man who was riding a horse [81] on his way to Assisi. That man had a foot, which was ulcerous because of a great illness, and he was suffering greatly from it, since he knew that because of that wound he could not free himself from death. So, with many tears he showed his foot to brother Giles and explained to him the reason for his journey to Assisi. He also devoutly begged Giles to mark his wound with the sign of the cross. Brother Giles was moved to compassion, and he humbly kissed that wound and with great devotion marked it with the sign of the cross. After some time elapsed that sick man was perfectly healed, and returned to his family with joy and thanksgiving.

How a certain master in theology stopped preaching at the command of brother Giles, and regarding the words of Saint Clare

Since Giles liked the virtue of humility above all else, he wanted to see it practiced also by others. One day a certain English brother, who was master in sacred theology, was preaching in the monastery of San Damiano.⁷³ Saint Clare and brother Giles were present for the sermon. This brother continued preaching for a long time. Full of fervour brother Giles told him: “Master, now stop, since I want to preach.” That brother immediately refrained from preaching. Brother Giles, full of fervour in his spirit, began to explain God’s word in a style sweeter than honey. After some time, brother Giles told that master: “Brother, now finish the sermon you had begun.” That mas-

⁷³ This master in theology is traditionally considered to have been Alexander of Hales.

ter immediately resumed his sermon and concluded it. When Saint Clare saw this, she was overjoyed in her spirit and said: “Today I have seen before my eyes the realization of the desires of our most holy Father Saint Francis, when he used to tell me: ‘I would greatly desire that my brother clerics would have such great humility, that a master in theology would refrain from preaching if a lay brother would tell him that he would like to preach in his stead.’” Saint Clare also said: “I tell you, brothers, that the master has edified me more than if I had seen him raising the dead to life.”

How he wanted to gain food by working with his hands

When Giles was sent to Rome and lived there, he proposed that, as he had already done from the very beginning when he entered the Order, he wanted to live with the work of his hands. He therefore strove to implement his commitment. Every morning he first assisted at Mass, [82] and then he used to go to a wood, which was about eight miles distant from Rome. From that place he would carry logs of wood upon his shoulders. As a payment he would not accept money, but would beg for the necessities of life. One day he was returning from the woods carrying logs as usual. He met a woman who wanted to buy wood. So he struck a deal with her, and carried the wood to her house. When she saw that he was a religious, she wanted to pay him more than she had promised. But he told her: “I do not want to accept, otherwise I will be won over by avarice.” Not only did he not accept to be paid more than that woman had originally promised to give him, but he refrained from being paid at all. That woman was astonished at all this and nurtured great devotion for the brother.

He was never ashamed to do any menial task, as long as that work was honest. During the grape-harvest season he would help the men to pick grapes, then he would carry them to the wine press and press the grapes with his feet.

One day, when he was walking in a square of Rome, he met a certain man who wanted to engage somebody to gather nuts. But since that man did not personally want to go because the trees were very high and were in a place which was very distant from the city, brother Giles approached him and told him: “I will gladly help you.” So they struck a deal, namely, that Giles could keep part of the nuts he would

gather. He signed himself with the sign of the cross and climbed those high trees and gathered the nuts, keeping a part for himself. Since he acquired a great quantity of nuts, he could not carry them in his arms. So he took off his habit, which was his only protection, then he tied together the sleeves and the hood, and placed the nuts in them. Then he carried the load upon his naked shoulders and went to distribute them to the poor.

During harvest time, Giles would go with the other poor folk to glean corn in the fields. If somebody offered to give him a sheaf of wheat, he would not accept it and would tell him: "I do not have a barn where I can store corn." Whatever he would gather, he would then go and distribute it to the poor.

One day, when he was welcomed in the monastery of *Santi Quaranta* close to the Lateran, it happened that the monk who was the cellar-keeper was looking for a man who would make pastry out of the flour. When he heard him brother Giles volunteered for the task and struck a deal with him to produce seven loaves for every *soma*. He also carried the water, which he needed to make the bread, and managed to acquire a certain number of loaves for himself.

He would rarely oblige himself to work for one whole day, so that he would also have ample time for prayer. Whenever he would be compelled to work all day long, he always found time to take a break in order to recite the hours of the Office.

One day, while he was going to the fountain of Saint Sixtus, in order to bring water to the monks, he came back laden with water and met a man who asked him for a drink. He answered him: "How can I offer you to drink and not be able to carry this water to the monks?" That man was very angry and said many offending words to Giles. When brother Giles went back to the monastery, he was very upset [83] not because of the words which that man had told him, but because he had been so angry. So he took a water jug and went back to the fountain, filled it with water and went to the house of that man who had offended him and told him: "Drink, brother, and leave as much as you like." When that man heard these words, he felt sorry and, full of sorrow, he began to beg Giles to intercede for him before God because of the insulting words he had told him. Giles willingly pardoned him and from that moment that man had great love and reverence for the brother.

In all of these works, because of the small number of brothers, Giles did not have any other companion.

How he was invited to stay in a Cardinal's house and begged for his food in the same house

When the lord Pope was staying in Rieti, the lord Nicholas,⁷⁴ Cardinal and bishop of Tusculum, greatly wished to welcome Giles in his house, because he shone with such great holiness. So he affectionately asked Giles to come to his house and accept to eat food at his table. Giles, however, refused to go against his custom to beg his necessary food, since he wanted to eat as a result of his manual work, adding to that work the prophetic words: "*You will eat by the work of your hands: blessed are you, and may you be favoured*" (Psalm 127:2). This was what blessed Francis used to teach his brothers. In the Rule, which he wrote as well as in the Testament, shortly before he died, he confirmed his will that the brothers are to work with devotion, and as a retribution for their work they should not receive money but the bodily necessities for their food. The lord Cardinal asked Giles, therefore, that at least he would accept to eat at his table whatever he would acquire through manual work. So Giles accepted his invitation. Every day he would go to help the men to pick olives and to do other services, and in this way he gained whatever was necessary for his own living. Whenever he would enter the dining hall of the Cardinal, he would always bring with him the bread, which he gained with the sweat of his brow, and there he would eat it. One day it was raining so hard, and everywhere was flooded, so that brother Giles could not go out to work. The lord Cardinal was overjoyed and told him: "Brother Giles, today you will have to eat from my own food."

At these words Giles began to think how he could gain his bread on that day. So he went to the cook in the kitchen and asked him:

74 There were two Cardinals who had the name of Nicholas: the first one was known as Nicholas of Rome, who died in 1219; the other one was known as Nicholas the Monk and came from the religious family of the Cistercians (Clairvaux). He died in 1227 or 1228. It seems that it is this second Cardinal who is mentioned here. The Roman Curia and Pope Honorius III stayed in Rieti in 1225.

“Why do you keep this kitchen so dirty?” The cook answered him: “Because I do not find anybody ready to clean it.” So brother Giles struck a deal with the cook to receive two loaves as payment, and he started to sweep and clean the kitchen until the lunch hour, when he gained his two loaves. When he saw this, the Cardinal marvelled at the way Giles managed to deceive him, and felt rather sad. Since it continued to rain the following morning, the lord Cardinal said the same words to Giles, namely that on that day he had to beg his living from him. Giles noticed that the knives in that house were dirty and rusting, and he told the head servant to let him sharpen and clean them. [84] Again he struck a deal for two loaves of bread, and began to sharpen and clean the knives, and in this way he acquired his daily bread through his own work. He was always most willing to be laborious in doing promptly what was necessary.

How he was provided for in a miraculous way when he was in want

After these events, since Lent was approaching, brother Giles wished to be transferred to a remote place, in which he could find more peace for his soul. The brothers were rarely found in such places, since their numbers were still very limited. However, Giles acquired licence from the lord Cardinal, and together with a companion set out on a journey. The Cardinal was very sad to see them go and told them with compassion: “Where are you going? You are going away like birds without nests.” So they left and went to a church dedicated to Saint Lawrence, which stood on a mountain upon the castle of Diruta.⁷⁵ This church was far away from all human dwellings and was abandoned. In those days the people who lived in that district did not show any respect to the brothers and did not love them, since they were not yet accustomed to see them living in that area, and therefore they did not provide them with any alms, as the friars’ necessity would call for. Moreover, that time was a period of great famine. Brother Giles placed all his trust and hope in the Lord. After he had been living there for three days, there was a heavy snowfall, and he could not dare go out of that place in any way.

⁷⁵ Diruta is a town in the territory of Perugia, close to the river Tiber. According to Luke Wadding, in 1263 a Franciscan friary was built there, which was later suppressed and destroyed.

When brother Giles saw that he could not acquire his livelihood with the work of his hands, as he was accustomed to do, and that he could not go out to beg for alms, he told his companion: “Brother, let us invoke the Lord our God and cry to Him aloud at the top of our voices, in order that He may deign to come to our aid in such urgent need.” He wanted to repeat the example of some monks, who during times of great need called upon the Lord and were heard. So, following their example, the brothers began to cry out night and day and pray to the Lord with great fervour in order that He might come to their aid in their urgent need. The Lord was merciful to them and listened to their faith and devotion. He inspired a certain man from that castle, who came to their place, without knowing that the brothers were living there. [85] He felt the divine Spirit inwardly prompting him and telling him: “Go to the church of Saint Lawrence, because maybe you will find servants of God living there.” So he came and gave them bread and wine.

That man became aware of the great need in which the brothers found themselves. So he went back to the castle, and began to admonish and encourage the inhabitants to provide for the needs of the brothers, and come to their aid in the Lord’s name. Those people were divinely inspired to be compassionate to the brothers, and for the entire Lent they provided them with bread. When brother Giles saw this and considered God’s grace and mercy, he said to his companion: “Brother, we prayed to the Lord so that He would help us, and our prayers have been heard; now it is fitting that, in order to thank Him, we should pray for all those who gave us alms.” So, in the same way, they prayed day and night for all that Christian population.

The Most High God distributed so many graces through the intercession of brother Giles, that many persons were enkindled by his example and admonitions. They left the world and put on the habit of holy Religion. The others, who could not arrive at this decision, decided to live in penance in their own homes.

How a certain man was stealing vegetables planted by Giles in the hermitage garden

Brother Giles had worked to make a garden in the hermitage of Fabriano. The Lord multiplied the work of his hands, since Giles did a lot of good to other people with these products. Giles would often

invite a certain man to work with him in that garden; but that man always refused to come. One day, brother Giles was absent and that man went into the garden, since he wanted to steal vegetables. Another man, called Donadeo, was close by placing vegetables in a sack. He made the donkey kneel down on the ground, and placed the sack on it to carry. That sack was not heavy, but the donkey did not want to stand up from the ground. That man was all troubled and went to search for somebody to help him, and saw that other man who was running away from that place out of fear of brother Giles. So Donadeo scolded him harshly, since he wanted to steal the work of the man of God. He was so confused, that he did not ask that man to help him, but went back alone to the donkey. The beast immediately stood up, as if it did not have any load to carry. That man realized that what happened was truly a miracle of God, since he had managed to catch that man who was stealing the vegetables of the man of God.

How he denounced the lazy friars who freely preached to others

Giles not only avoided idleness, but he would scold with many harsh words those brothers who were idle. He saw that many would willingly preach to others, but then would not work according to what they would preach. So he used to say:⁷⁶ “If you do the good deeds, which you understand, you will arrive at that goodness, which you do not understand. Deeds are far away from words like heaven is distant from the earth. If one gives you permission [86] to enter into a vineyard to gather grapes, do you think that the leaves will prohibit you from doing so? It is thousands of times better that a man teaches himself, than that he teaches the whole world. If you want to know much, you have to work hard and learn how to bow your head all the time. Our preacher is lady humility. What is humility? It is all about giving back what is not yours. A man should not preach by using words which are too noble or too rustic, but he is to prefer humble words.” He would then sigh and utter these words: “A bleating sheep is as far away from grass in which to pasture as preaching is distant from good works.”

⁷⁶ This section introduces the *Dicta fratris Aegidii*, or *The Words of Brother Giles*, which are a collection of sayings attributed to this brother, modelled upon the style of the *apophthegmata patrum*, or the sayings of the desert fathers.

In the same way brother Giles would speak to those who would glory in their knowledge, and he would say: “If all the earth would belong to one man and he would not cultivate it, what would he get from it? Another man can have a small portion of land, and he would cultivate it well, and therefore he gets fruit from it for himself and from others. So, do not trust in your knowledge, because, even if attain all knowledge without good works, it will not be of any benefit for your salvation.”

Once a certain friar wanted to preach in the piazza of Perugia. Brother Giles taught him what to say in his sermon, namely: “Bo, bo, molto dico e poco fo”.⁷⁷

Another time, Giles heard a proprietor of a vineyard, close to the hermitage in which he was living, who was scolding the workers, since they were talking too much, and was telling them: “Work, work, and do not speak.” In a great fervour of spirit, Giles came out of his cell and shouted: “Listen, brother preachers, listen to what this man is saying: Work, work, and do not speak!”

He once said, regarding the Order: “The boat is shattered to pieces and there is conflict; let those who can escape, escape and go out, if they can.”

In a spiritual fervour, Giles would often say: “O Paris, Paris, how have you destroyed the Order of Saint Francis!”⁷⁸

Once Giles was listening to a singing bird⁷⁹ and a dove. Full of fervour in his spirit he said: “O lady singing bird, I want to come to you in order to hear the Lord’s praises. I want to remember that you do not say “la, la”, but that you say “ca, ca”; as if you were saying: not in the other life, but in this life, you should strive to gain merits through your good works. O sister dove, what a sweet lamentation

⁷⁷ It is impossible to render this rhyme in English. The literal translation would be: “I say much and do little.”

⁷⁸ The brothers of the great convent of studies in Paris, founded in 1229, ten years after the first friars arrived in this university town, had become one of the greatest institutions in the Church, together with their Dominican counterparts. The words of brother Giles echo the feelings of many of the zealots in the Order during the second half of the 13th century, who regarded philosophical and theological studies as the ruin of the Order’s primitive purity. However, it should be said that Spiritual friars like John of Parma and Peter John Olivi had studied at the University of Paris.

⁷⁹ The Latin original has *caucaliam*, which is explained in the footnote as *quondam avem cantantem* (a certain singing bird).

you make! O sinner what will you do if you do not want to learn from the dove's song!"

A certain brother told Giles that the friars made him work so much, that he hardly had any time to pray. Therefore he wanted to ask for obedience in order to go and live in some hermitage, where he would serve the Lord in silence. Brother Giles told him: "If you go [87] to the king of France and tell him to give you a thousand silver marks, would not he answer you: 'You fool, what will you do for me, in order that I may give you a thousand marks?' But if you will render him a great service, then you can ask him that favour with greater courage. Now, if you want to ask permission to dedicate yourself to prayer, you first have to work hard; indeed, it is greater virtue to do one thing according to the will of another, than to do two things according to your own will."

He once also said: "A certain man did not have eyes, nor hands or feet. So somebody asked him: 'If you will regain your feet, what will you give for them?' He answered: 'A hundred pounds.' 'And if you will regain your hands?' He answered: 'All my possessions.' 'And if somebody will give you back your eyesight?' He answered: 'I will serve him all the days of my life.'" The Saint then said: "See, my dear brother, that the Lord has given you your hands and your eyes and your feet and all the good things for body and soul; and yet you do not want to serve Him?"

A certain brother asked Giles how he could become a devout and spiritual man. He answered him: "Why is a field more fertile than the one next to it? Because its farmer cultivates it with the sweat of his brow whereas the lazy farmer leaves the other field sterile. The blacksmith hits the iron rod with many blows, before he can give it a perfect figure. Do you believe that you can become a spiritual man if you do nothing?"

A certain friar told Giles that he worked hard and with devotion to obtain grace, and yet he could not find it. So brother Giles told him: "Say it is your fault, because he who has everything in his possession, can give tomorrow what he cannot give today. But in your case it is not so, since you are not serving God faithfully. If a man had lived since the time of Adam until the end of the world and would do whatever good he can, he will not in the least merit God's benevolence; the food is prepared, but there is nobody who will receive it."

A friar told him: "How can I flee from temptations?" Brother Giles answered him: "A man who flees temptations, flees from eternal life, since *an athlete cannot receive a winner's crown except by competing according to the rules* (2Tim 2:5)."

How he said that the friars who are damned would be punished very harshly in hell

A certain brother went full of joy and told brother Giles: "Father, I have something new to tell you." Giles said: "Tell me, my son." "I was led in a vision to hell and when I was looking very carefully, I did not see any brother of our Order in that place." Brother Giles answered him with many sighs and said: "I believe you, my son, I truly believe you, since you have not seen anything there." At these words Giles immediately entered into ecstasy. When he regained consciousness, that brother asked him: "Father, why do you believe that there is no friar in hell? If there are brothers there, why did I not see them?" The man of God answered him: "My son, I told you that you saw nothing, because you did not go down to the level of hell in which the eternal fire burns the souls of the miserable friars who donned the habit without having done any good deeds and without observing the rule of the friars Minor. [88] Indeed, as the holy brothers are more glorious among others in heaven, in the same way the sinful brothers are more miserable among others in hell."

Regarding his bodily penance and chastity

Giles assiduously kept his body under the yoke of penance in order to keep it in rule under the servitude of the spirit. In this way he conserved the candour of purity without blemish. Indeed, as brother Graziano, his most devout companion, used to say, brother Giles never eat except during the evening, and his meal was very frugal. Sometimes he would say: "Our body is like a pig, which runs avidly to roll in the mud and is pleased to do so continually. Our body is like a cockroach, which likes to roll in a horse's dung. The flesh is hostile to blows."

One brother asked Giles: "In what manner can we be on guard against the vices of the flesh?" Brother Giles answered him: "Whoever wants to carry a great stone or an enormous beam, must know how to move it with technique more than with force. The same method should be used in our case. Every kind of vice damages our chastity. It is like a clear mirror, which becomes opaque with the simple steam of our breath. Therefore it is impossible for a man to arrive at God's grace, while he still likes the pleasures of the flesh. You therefore have to turn your body upside down from top to bottom, and make it roll here and there, and there is no other way for you except that of battling your own flesh, which wants to betray you day and night. It is the one who wins over all his enemies, who will also arrive at all goodness."

Sometimes he would say: "I have a special love for chastity among all the other virtues." A brother asked him: "But is not charity the greatest among virtues?" Brother Giles answered: "And who is more chaste than charity?" He often used to sing saying: "O holy chastity, who are you, who are you? You are so great, that no man who is a fool will ever know you." One brother asked him: "What do you mean by chastity?" He answered: "By chastity I mean that we have to protect all our senses in God's grace." While he was once praising chastity, a certain married man was present and he asked Giles: "I abstain from all relations, except with my own wife; is it enough for me to remain in this state?" Giles answered: "That is what you think, since a man can become drunk with wine from his own wine-flask."

Regarding his most pure chastity

When he was at Spoleto, Giles once heard the voice of a woman, and all of a sudden he felt such a great temptation of the flesh, as he had never experienced before. [89] Since he sensed that it was the devil who wanted to take the better of him, Giles immediately sought refuge in prayer, adding harsh words to himself and chastising his body, and he was totally freed.

A certain brother priest, who was oppressed by a grave temptation, and who could not make himself go out from its propelling force, inwardly inspired by God, began to say: "If only I could see brother Giles, so that I will reveal to him this temptation!" Since he was far

away from him, this priest could not go to him and neither could he acquire permission to do so. Instead, when he was sleeping, brother Giles stood close to him. At his presence the priest felt a great consolation and help. Brother Giles asked him: "Brother, what would you do if a dog came running at you to bite you?" He answered: "I would hit him so that he would run away from me." The Saint then said: "Go and do the same thing with your temptation." The words of this brother consoled and comforted him, and the priest asked Giles to pray for him. He woke up from his sleep and felt that he was totally freed from his temptation. After, this same brother told the entire story to a companion of brother Giles. Many brothers who were tempted to leave the Religion and were preparing themselves to go back to the world, as well as other brothers who were pressed by temptations, were often freed through the healing admonitions of brother Giles.

A certain man was walking along a road and he saw a woman. When he approached her he was tempted and felt his body being stimulated, but he resisted strongly and did not look at her. But when he was close to her he gave up and looked at her. When he saw that she was old, his temptation left him. When he referred his case to brother Giles, he got this answer: "My dear friend, you have lost your battle; it would have been better for you to be inflamed with temptation, and yet not gaze upon that person."

Once brother Giles was with brother Rufino, brother Juniper and brother Simone. He asked them: "How do you handle the temptations of the flesh?" Brother Rufino answered him: "I recommend myself to God and to the blessed Mary, and I prostrate myself on the ground." Brother Giles said: "I understood you correctly." When he asked brother Simone, he answered him: "I sense the tribulation of the carnal act and I flee from it." To which Giles answered: "I understand you correctly." "And, what do you do, brother Juniper?" Juniper answered: "As soon as I feel tempted, I say: Away from me, away from me, since your refuge is taken." Brother Giles said: "I agree with you. In fact, the most secure way of getting rid of this vice is by running away from it more than through fighting against it."

Regarding his voluntary poverty

Giles showed great zeal for poverty. He was content with one tunic, and he lived in a tiny cell built from mud and twigs, and was afraid

of any superfluous things. Once brother Leo told him that in Assisi a great and sumptuous basilica [90] was being built, and that a marble vase was placed there, in order that the visitors would place their money offerings in it. Giles shed abundant tears and answered: "Even if they build an enormous house stretching from here to Assisi, for me it is sufficient to have a tiny corner in which to live." Then, turning with tearful eyes towards brother Leo, he said: "If you want to die, go and break that marble vase, since against poverty it has been ordered to place it there to receive money offerings. But if you want to live, leave it where it is, since it will be very hard to suffer the harsh tribulations which brother Elias will inflict upon you." When he understood these words, brother Leo was strengthened in the Lord and together with some other brothers went and entirely broke to pieces that red marble vase.

Afterwards brother Giles came to Assisi in order to revere with devotion the relics of Saint Francis. The brothers led him to the friary and showed him the sumptuous buildings, which were being constructed, as if they were feeling glorified in them. After he had diligently inspected the edifice, brother Giles told them: "Brothers, I tell you that now you lack nothing, except that you do not have wives." The friars were scandalized at these words and accepted them with a heavy heart, but Giles again told them: "Brothers, you should know fully well that it is not licit for you to administer goods and tamper with poverty, as it is illicit for you to break the vow of chastity. After you will have abandoned poverty, it will be easy for you to abandon chastity."

How Giles removed a doubt, which a friar Preacher had regarding the virginity of the blessed Mary

It happened once, that there was a great master of the Order of Preachers who for many years was anguished with the greatest doubt regarding the virginity of the Mother of Christ Mary. In fact, it seemed to him difficult to believe that the blessed Mary was at the same time mother and virgin. On the other hand he was suffering because of this hesitation, since he was a man of great faith, and therefore he greatly desired to be freed from this doubt by some inspired man. Since he heard that brother Giles was a very enlightened man, he went to him. The Holy Spirit revealed to Giles that that friar was coming to him, as well as what his purpose was and the inner battle he was endur-

ing. So he went out to meet him. Before he had come to him and listened to what he had to tell him, Giles struck the ground with the staff he was carrying in his hand, and said: "O friar Preacher, a virgin before birth." Immediately, as soon as he had struck his staff, a most beautiful lily sprang up in that place. Striking the ground a second time, he said: "O friar Preacher, a virgin during birth." A second lily immediately sprang up. Giles struck his staff a third time, and said: "O friar Preacher, a virgin after birth." A third lily sprang up. After having said these words, brother Giles fled. That friar Preacher was entirely freed from his temptation, and from then on he always had a great devotion towards brother Giles.⁸⁰

How Giles and king Saint Louis saw the secret thoughts of each other's heart

When Saint Louis, king of France, decided to go on a pilgrimage to various sanctuaries, he heard about the sanctity of brother Giles, and decided in his heart by all means to visit him. [91] When he came to Perugia he went to the hermitage of the brothers together with a few companions, like a pilgrim, and he urgently asked to see the holy brother Giles. The porter went and told brother Giles that there was a pilgrim who was asking for him at the door. In the Spirit, Giles immediately recognised the one who came to look for him. He left his cell as if he was drunk and ran quickly to the door. There they both rushed together in amazing embraces and fell to their knees in devout kisses, as if they had known each other before and were the oldest of friends. After showing these signs of charitable love, neither said a word to the other, and observing complete silence they departed from each other.

When Saint Louis was leaving, the brothers asked one of his companions who that man was, who rushed into such affectionate embraces with brother Giles. He replied that it was Louis, king of France, who during his pilgrimage wished to see brother Giles. The brothers were confused at brother Giles, and nearly scolding him, said: "O brother Giles, why did you not say anything to such a great king who came from France to see you and hear some good word from you?" Brother Giles answered them: "Dearest brothers, do not

80 Same account in ABF 67 (FAED III, 564).

be surprised that we did not say anything to one another, because as soon as we embraced, the light of divine wisdom revealed his heart to me and my heart to him. In that eternal mirror, we heard with soft consolation without the noise of lips or tongue, and better than if we had spoken with our lips. If we had wished to describe by using the sounds of the voice things which we felt inside, that very speaking would have caused desolation rather than consolation. Therefore you should know that the king departed wonderfully consoled.”⁸¹

Regarding the advice he gave to the lay brother James

Brother James of Massa,⁸² who was a lay brother and a holy man, and who knew Saint Clare and many of the companions of Saint Francis, had the grace of ecstasy. He wanted advice and therefore asked brother Giles to counsel him, and tell him whether he really had that grace. [92] Giles answered him: “Do not add or subtract anything from it, and flee from the crowds as much as you can.” That brother asked: “What do you mean by these words?” Giles answered: “When the soul is capable of being introduced to that glorious light of divine goodness, it should not add anything out of presumption, and it should not subtract anything out of negligence, and it should love solitude, as much as it can, if it wants to protect that grace and increase it.”

Regarding his advice about how man can be most grateful to God

A certain brother asked brother Giles that he might pray to the Lord, so that He would show him how to be most grateful. The following morning brother Giles said: “I will tell you, but first I want to sing.” So he took a staff in his hand and began to play on it as if it

81 Same account in ABF 63 (FAED III, 517-518), and *Fioretti* 34 (FAED III, 625-626). St. Louis IX, king of France (1226-1270) travelled outside France when he went on crusade in 1248-1254. There is no historical proof that he ever visited Perugia. The hermitage in which brother Giles was living was that of Monteripido, outside Perugia.

82 Massa is a village in Umbria and is also known by the names Massa Martana or Massa di Todi, since it is found in the *comune* of Todi. James of Massa is mentioned in the ABF as well as in the *Fioretti*.

were a viola and went out running in the garden, and was playing and singing as if upon a lyre and saying these words: “Una uni, una uni (one only, one only).” He was adding no more words to these. Then he said: “Do this and you will please God.” But since that brother still did not understand, brother Giles told him: “You should commit your one and only soul without ceasing to the one and only God.”

Regarding the marvellous advice he gave to brother Graziano through a parable

Brother Graziano was nearly always speaking about God. He told brother Giles: “I know how to counsel and preach to others, and I think I know how I should act. I also am ignorant of many other things, like how I can work more in order to please God. Therefore give me advice and tell me your feelings regarding this.” Brother Giles answered him: “There is nothing which pleases God more than to hang yourself by your neck.” Since brother Graziano continued to express these words many times for many days and asked Giles with constancy, until at last he told him: “A man who is suspended is not in heaven, but is so lifted up from the earth that he always looks down; that is what you should do. Since you are not in heaven, you can lift yourself from the ground through virtuous deeds and feel humble and wait for God’s mercy.”

Regarding the advice he gave to one who wanted to enter Religion

A certain man told Giles that he wanted in all ways to enter Religious life. Finally brother Giles told him: “If you want to do this, go in a hurry and kill your relatives, your brothers, and your companions.” He was astonished and with tears in his eyes and with his hands joined together, he said: “Oh brother Giles, how can I be such a fool?” And he answered: “Oh gullible man, how can you be so foolish? I am not telling you that you should materially kill them, but mentally yes, since *whoever does not hate his father and mother cannot be a disciple of Christ* (cfr. Lk 14:26).”

[93] *His remedy against those who grumbled*

A certain brother cook was very afflicted because he could not please all the friars in whatever he cooked for them. He tried to please them all in the same way, but one would want one thing and the other one another. Therefore he consulted brother Giles, and asked him how he could be patient and suffer everything with an inner peace. Giles answered him: "Go, my son, and whenever they tell you: 'This food is salted badly,' stir it and at the same time say with a loud voice: 'This costs a hundred pounds,' and continue doing so in everything. If you do this like a wise man you will soon acquire the inner peace which you are asking God to give you, every time they will tell you these words."

How he answered two Cardinals who requested his prayers

Two Cardinals came to Giles together, in order to listen to some words of life from his mouth. When they were going away, they asked him to pray for them. He answered them: "What need is there for me to pray God for you, if you have more faith and hope than me?" "In what way?" they asked him. Giles answered: "Since you are so rich, you hope that you can be saved with honours and prosperity of this world. On my part, I am afraid that I will be damned because of the ruin and tribulations I have to face." They both felt inner sorrow for their sins and they were changed in their souls when they left him.

How he consoled a brother who was afflicted with a temptation

A certain brother was afflicted by a temptation, and used to pray to the Lord to free him from it. Although he prayed frequently, he never got an answer for his prayers. So he went to brother Giles and, revealing his inner life to him, asked him for a counsel. Giles answered him: "Do not feel miserable, brother, if God wants you to fight against the enemy. You will gain many graces in this way. The more a king arms his knights, the more he wants them to fight courageously."

Another brother asked him: "What can I do, in order to pray with a free will, since I feel so hard hearted and lack devotion?" He answered him: "A king had two faithful servants, one of whom was

armed, while the other one was unarmed. He sent them both to fight against the enemy. The servant who was armed went courageously to battle; the one who was unarmed told his lord: 'Sir, as you see, I am unarmed, but because of my love for you I will go to the battle even without bearing any arms.' When the king saw how faithful that servant was, he told his ministers: 'Go and prepare the arms, and give them to my faithful servant to put them on, and decorate him with my coat of arms.' In the same way, although you feel empty inside, you should proceed to the battle of prayer with confidence, and the Lord will provide you with all that which is necessary."

[94] *How he answered the request of a postulant who wanted to enter the Order*

A certain man asked brother Giles for counsel regarding his wish to enter the Order. He answered him: "If a very poor man knows that there is a treasure buried in a field, would not he ask for advice regarding how to hide that treasure? How much more should a man not waste time in running for counsel in order to find the infinite treasure of the kingdom of heaven!" That man, having immediately accepted this advice, left all his belongings, and entered into Religious life.

A certain friar once asked Giles: "What shall I do? If I do good, I glory in it; if I do bad, I end up very sad and nearly desperate." Giles answered him: "You do good if you feel sad for your sins, but you should be moderate in your compunction, since you should know that God's power to have mercy on you is much greater than your power to sin. If a farmer thinks before he sows and says: 'If I sow now, the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth will come and devour the grain,' he will never sow, and thus will never have anything to eat. A prudent farmer, instead, sows the seed and finally reaps the harvest, which is necessary for him. So do not stop doing good works because you feel sad if you feel vainglory, since the greater and better part will finally remain in your hands."

How, through a miracle, he indicated where a well should be dug

The brothers of the mountain close to Perugia, where brother Giles was living, wanted to dig a well, but they were undecided as to

where to dig it. Therefore they went to brother Giles to ask him for advice. With the staff he was holding in his hand, he went to a certain place, struck the ground with that staff and said: "Dig here." And immediately, in that very spot, to the astonishment of all those present, a most beautiful violet sprang up. When the brothers saw the miracle, they dug the will there and found good quality water.

A certain doctor of law came to Giles. Giles asked him: "Do you believe that God's gifts are great?" He answered him: "I believe." Giles then said: "I will show you that you do not believe this." And he added: "How much do your possessions cost?" The judge answered: "Maybe a thousand pounds." The Saint then said: "Therefore, what you say is true, namely that you believe only in words. If therefore you give those thousand pounds to acquire a hundred thousand, you will regard this as a great richness, and yet you do not want to give all this for the kingdom of heaven. In this way you regard as nothing the things of heaven with respect to those of the earth." The judge answered him: "Do you believe that one works as much as he believes?" Brother Giles answered him: "If you truly believe, you will do good deeds, just as the Saints did." That judge realised that the sentence, which brother Giles had said was true.

How grace is more valuable in Religious life than outside it

Another man asked Giles: "Can a person who lives in the world find God's grace?" Giles answered him: "He certainly can, [95] but I would prefer to receive one grace in Religious life than ten graces in the world. The grace one receives in Religion will easily make him grow and conserve him, since a man in Religion is cut off from the tumult and the preoccupations of the secular life, which is an enemy of grace. The brothers are also preserved from evil and provoked and inflamed to do good when they listen to exhortations of charitable words and are led by an example of a holy life. The grace, which one receives in the world, is easily lost and is very difficult to conserve, since the preoccupations of the affairs of the world, which are the mother of tribulations, impede and confuse the sweetness of grace. Other secular people shun away from good through evil persuasion and the damned example of bad words, and they are violently pushed to go evil. They do not help those who act honestly, but they ridicule

them; not only do they not denounce God's enemies, but they extol them. Therefore it is better to be sure of possessing one grace than having ten in such discrimination and fear."

How a brother learnt that it is useful to be scolded, and how he had a certain vision

Once brother Giles scolded a brother who was worthy of receiving such a correction. That brother was angry at him and could not bear with patience any of his words. The following night he saw somebody during a vision, who said: "Brother, do not be angry, since whoever believes brother Giles is blessed." When he heard this that brother immediately woke up and went to brother Giles and he humbly begged him forgiveness for the fault of having been angry at him. He also told him that he was ready to accept frequent corrections from him, since he could patiently bear with them.

Another friar had a great desire to see brother Giles. While he was greatly feeling this desire, he saw Giles lying down in his sleep and having a book as a pillow under his head. When he opened that book, together with that brother, they read the following words: *This man loves his brethren and fervently prays for his people and their holy city* (2Mac 15:14). There was nothing else written in that entire book.

Regarding his contemplative life and ecstasy

Brother Giles had been transformed into a most perfect man through the labours of the active life and through the blows of many afflictions. Then God transferred him to spiritual rest and to the consolations of the contemplative life. In the sixth year from his conversion, he was staying in the hermitage of Fabriano, in the plain below Perugia. One night the hand of the Lord came down upon him. While he was praying fervently, he was filled with such divine consolation that it seemed that the Lord wanted to lead his soul out of his body, so that he could see the secrets of his inner self in a clear way. Giles was feeling as if his body was slowly dying, starting from the soles of his feet, until his soul went out. Standing close to his body, he saw himself, as it pleased him, since that same soul was united to the

body. Because of the great beauty with which he was adorned by the Holy Spirit it seemed to him a lovely thing to look at himself. [96] His soul was most subtle and was shining beyond imagination. That is the way he considered his own death. At that moment his most holy soul was taken to the contemplation of the mysteries of heaven, which were never revealed to anyone else. So he was saying: "Blessed is the man, who knows how to conserve the mysteries of God, since nothing is hidden from him, according to what God wants and when He wills to reveal it. Therefore I am afraid of myself, and so if these mysteries can be revealed, I want more these mysteries than the ability to have them revealed to me."

Since it is usual for God to permit the enemy of the human race to molest with strength those persons who are most perfect, soon after that moment of consolation, in the very same place, when Giles had entered into his cell after praying, the angel Satan appeared to him under such a most terrible guise that brother Giles lost his speech out of fear. He immediately prostrated himself on the ground and, since he could not pray with his lips, he begged for divine help in his heart. Thus he was immediately freed from that experience. After some days he asked blessed Francis: "Father, is there an experience, which is so terrible that a man cannot sustain it until he recites one *Our Father*?" Blessed Francis answered him: "One cannot sustain looking at the devil until he does not recite half an *Our Father*, because one would die immediately if he is not aided by divine assistance." Brother Giles, who had gone through this experience, believed it was truly so.

How Saint Francis first appeared to him, and afterwards he saw the Lord Jesus Christ with his bodily eyes

In the eighteenth year from his conversion, that is, in the same year in which Saint Francis departed from this life, brother Giles travelled with a companion from the hermitage of Cetona, which is situated in the diocese of Chiusi, to the friary of Cibottola.⁸³ The following night he saw the emperor, who was showing a great familiarity

⁸³ The year of Francis' death, namely 1226. The companion was brother Graziano. Cetona is in Tuscany, close to Chiusi. Cibottola is a village in the territory of Perugia.

towards him; so that, as he said, that vision was a sign of future grace and ecstasy. When he then arrived at hermitage of Cetona, he remained there fasting devoutly all through the Lent of Saint Martin.⁸⁴ During this time he saw blessed Francis in his dreams, and he told him: "Father, I want to talk to you." The Saint answered him: "Prepare yourself if you want to talk to me."

So Giles prayed hard and with great devotion during three whole nights before the feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Then the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him. Giles saw Him with his bodily eyes in such a way that no words can explain, since he felt such an inexpressible joy in his spirit, that he could not dare or try to explain it. After this marvellous apparition he began to speak, but in such a way that it seemed that it was not he who spoke. [97] He would say: "One reads how Saint Paul was caught up to the third heaven, whether in his body or out of his body he did not know;⁸⁵ but in that ecstasy he could not affirm whether God had spoken to him!"

In another place he said: "I know that, if man sees God in a most clear way, he will lose all faith." Sometimes he would say this in order to express himself, since he first had faith but then lost it when he was lost in ecstasy, and when he doubted whether he was living in his body or outside of his body.

During that apparition he was immediately filled with such inexpressible sweetness of heart and fragrance, that he could not sustain any human infirmity, but it seemed that he was exerting himself to the extreme and that he felt that he would soon die. That is why he would shout at the top of his voice in such a way that the brothers living in that place would be afraid when they would listen to his cries. A certain brother was afraid that Giles was dying, and so he went to his companion and told him: "Come at once to brother Giles, because he is dying." That brother woke up and went to him and said: "Father, what is the matter?" Giles answered him: "Come, my son, since it is good for me to see you." He loved him very much and confided many things to him, since he had taken care to teach him a holy way of life when that brother was still an adolescent. So Giles narrated in an orderly way what had happened to him.

⁸⁴ The Lent of Saint Martin corresponds to the Lent of All Saints (*Later Rule* 3,5).

⁸⁵ Cfr. 2Cor 12:2.

The next day the same companion went to the cell of brother Giles and found him weeping and lamenting. So he admonished him not to afflict himself in that way, since he could end up harming his own body. But the Saint answered him: "How can I refrain from weeping, when I fear that I am God's enemy? God has shown such mercy towards me and has given me so many gifts, but I doubt whether I am acting according to his will." He was saying these words also because of the vision he had had, in which he had felt himself transformed in a marvellous way. So he told the same companion: "Until now, I have done whatever I have wanted, and what my hands have wanted to work. But from now onwards I will not be able to do what I used to do before, but what seems good for me to do, as I am feeling in my own soul. Above all, I fear that others might look for those qualities in me, which I am not able to give them." His companion told him: "Father, for as much as you are good, you should always keep God's fear in you, and you should confide in Him, since He not only gives grace to his servant, but also takes care to keep him safe in that same abundant grace." This answer was very pleasing to the man of God.

Giles remained in that inexpressible consolation from the third day before the Nativity of the Lord until Epiphany, but not continually, but in intermittent moments, both during the day as well as during the night. He could hardly bear human frailty, since he was appearing so enlightened. So he would instantly pray to God, so that He would not burden him so heavily; in his prayer he would also add that he did not merit this grace, since he was a sinner, a rustic man, a simple and unlettered person. The more he regarded himself unworthy, the more the Lord increased His grace in him.

He also said that, in the same way the Lord had breathed upon the Apostles, so He had breathed upon him. One night, when brother Giles was with his companion in front of his cell [98] speaking about the word of God, a certain object like a plate shining with splendour came between them both. His companion asked Giles what it was. Giles answered: "Let it be, do not care about it."

In that place there was a certain religious and holy man, to whom the Lord would sometimes reveal His mysteries. Some time before brother Giles arrived there, this brother saw during his dreams the place where a cell had been constructed for brother Giles. The sun rose in that place and shone there until it set. When he saw

brother Giles so changed, he said: "He tenderly carries the Son of the Virgin."

How he was often lost in ecstasy after this apparition

After the apparition we have just mentioned, brother Giles was easily rapt in ecstasy. Thus he began to live in solitude more than ever before and rarely came out of his cell, so that he would securely cherish God's grace. He remained there in fasting, in vigils and in prayer, and he avoided idle words and murmuring all the more. Whenever a brother would come to refer a complaint about another, he would say: "I do not want to listen to the sins of others. Brother, be careful, that when you recount the deeds of others you do not harm your own conscience."

The Most High worked so many graces and gave Giles so many gifts, that he could not hide them in any way. If any brother would speak to him regarding divine glory or the sweetness of paradise, Giles would immediately enter into ecstasy and would remain in the same spot immobile and insensible for a long period of time. So when some shepherds and other young man came to see him, they were shouting: "Paradise, paradise." That very moment he was lost in ecstasy at the very spot. When the brothers wanted to talk to him, they were careful not to mention the word 'paradise', because he would immediately enter into ecstasy.

For these reasons brother Giles separated himself from familiarity not only with secular people, but also with the brothers and with other religious. He used to say: "It is more secure for a man to save his soul with a few persons than with many; whoever treats best whatever regards his soul can work better for the salvation of others."

He also used to say: "For a little carelessness or because of the guilt of others, a man can lose a great grace, and afterwards he cannot regain it, like those who play at dice, who can lose everything because of one point."

How he spoke about this vision in the fervour of his spirit

Brother Giles commended greatly the hermitage of Cetona above all the other hermitages in Italy and beyond, because of the grace, which God had shown him in that place. But he also compared

six hermitages beyond Italy to this place. Out of the great sweetness, which he abundantly felt there, Giles would sometimes say that all men should go to that hermitage with greater reverence than they would show if they were to visit Sant'Angelo, [99] or Saint Peter, or Saint Nicholas, or any other shrine in Italy, in the same way that a lord merits more reverence than a servant, and Christ merits more reverence than the other Saints. He also said that if a place could be equal to another, nevertheless it was not greater or more venerated before God. When he was saying this, his companion answered him and said: "Father, the apparition of the Seraph to Saint Francis on mount La Verna was a great thing; the virgins Saint Christina and Saint Catherine and many other Saints and virgins are also nobly venerated in many towns." Brother Giles answered: "Son, you cannot compare any creature to its Creator."

Another time brother Giles was speaking about heavenly things with brother Graziano, his companion, and brother Andrea from Burgundy. Brother Graziano told brother Andrea: "Do you read in the Holy Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to someone on the sea-shore after his resurrection?" He said this, to see whether brother Giles would answer and would reveal something regarding the vision he had. Immediately brother Giles answered with a loud voice: "Are you asking whether the Lord appeared to someone on the sea-shore? On the contrary he appeared to someone in a certain place, which is not far from this place more than a twelve days' journey." Brother Andrea asked him: "And where is this place?" Brother Giles answered: "What you see, you see, what you hear, you hear." Brother Andrea told him: "You know well that the Lord appeared to Saint Peter near Rome in a place, which is called *Domine, quo vadis*." Brother Giles answered him: "I am not speaking about that place, because in the place I am speaking of greater things have happened. I know a place where the Lord works greater things than He did close to any place on the sea-shore, and less than what I have heard." Brother Andrea told him: "The Lord worked great wonders with Saint Francis of Assisi and with Saint Peter in Rome, and if these are minor things, as you are saying, then the other things you are referring to are greater." Brother Giles answered: "It is true, since those things were greater, but one thing are the works of God, and another thing are these facts which we are referring to." Brother Andrea told him: "Where is that

place?" Brother Giles answered: "What you see, you see, and what you hear, you hear."

Not able to contain himself because of the sweetness and fervour of his heart, he said: "Have you ever been to Chiusi?" Brother Andrea said: "No, but I have seen that district." Brother Giles then told him: "Good." And he added: "Do you know how many great wonders have happened there?" Brother Andrea answered: "No, but pray, tell me, when?" Brother Giles said: "In that same year in which Saint Francis died. These wonders lasted from the third day before the Nativity of the Lord until the vigil of Epiphany." Brother Andrea told him: "Did they continue all the time, or at intervals?" Giles then said: "I have already said too many words." Brother Andrea then told him: "If God wills, I believe that his servants can reveal some of their secrets for the usefulness of others." Brother Giles answered him: "I had no fault in those events. I prayed God intensely and told him that I was not worthy, but He is God and He did to me as He pleased."

Another time brother Andrea told him: "God worked great wonders with Saint Francis on mount La Verna." Brother Giles answered: "I do not know that mountain on this side of the sea, [100] since it is part of a chain of mountains." Brother Andrea told him: "Doesn't it seem a great thing to you, if an Angel appears to somebody?" Brother Giles told him: "I am surprised at you, brother Andrea; since even if there is no heaven or earth, or Angels or Archangels or any other creature, there is no less divine greatness because of this. Therefore, it is a great fact, when God appears." Brother Andrea told him: "I would like that a great and beautiful church be built in the place where God has accomplished such wonders." Brother Giles answered him: "Yes, you are right." Brother Andrea then asked him: "With what title should that church be known?" The man of God answered: "It should be dedicated to the solemnity of Pentecost." Brother Andrea immediately said: "Do you think that the Holy Spirit came upon somebody under the visible guise of fire, as He did during the times of the Apostles, and that He still comes under tongues of fire?" Brother Giles answered him: "*If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing* (Jn 8:54)." He then immediately added: "Let us refrain from speaking any more on this matter."

Another time brother Andrea told him: "You said that in a certain vision in the hermitage of Cetona, in which Christ appeared to you, God took away your faith; please tell me now, did you still have

hope?” Brother Giles answered him: “If one does not have faith, how can he have hope?” Brother Andrea then told him: “Don’t you hope that you will gain eternal life?” He answered him: “Don’t you believe that God can give me the pledge of eternal life, whenever it pleases to Him?” And he added: “Let us refrain from speaking any more on this matter.” He said these words in a very strong tone, so that the other brother would not get lost into ecstasy in the same way.

Brother Giles once said that he was born four times. He said: “The first time I was born from my mother’s womb; the second time I was born in the Sacrament of baptism; the third time I was born when I entered this Order; the fourth time I was born when God gave me the mercy of appearing to me.” Brother Andrea told him: “If I go to a far away place and somebody would ask me, whether I know you and what I know about you, I can thus answer: ‘Brother Giles was born thirty two years ago. Before he was born he had faith, but after he was born he lost his faith.’” Brother Giles answered him: “It is as you say. Truly, I did not have faith, which was good enough until that experience, as I should have had, but then God took it away from me. Since even if I had faith in a perfect way, as I should, God still would have taken it to Himself. At that time I received what I had merited, since a rope was tied to my neck and I was carried in shame along all the alleyways of this town.” Brother Andrea told him: “If you did not have faith, what would you have done, if you were a priest and wanted to celebrate solemn Mass? How could you have said: ‘I believe in one God?’” Brother Giles answered him with great joy by starting to sing with a loud voice: “I know one God, the Father almighty.”

Regarding brother Andrea of Burgundy and the apparition he had

Brother Andrea was a companion of brother Giles. He was a most devout and contemplative man. Once he was praying in his cell and there appeared to him a most beautiful boy [101] with rosy cheeks. At his sight brother Andrea was filled with great consolation. But when he heard the bell calling him for Vespers, brother Andrea felt very perplexed, since he did not know whether he could go to the choir or remain with that boy! So he decided to go to the choir, say-

ing: “It is a good thing that I obey creatures with the love of the Creator.” After Vespers he went back to his cell and found the boy still there, who told brother Andrea that, if he had not gone to the choir, he would have immediately gone away from him.⁸⁶

How Giles was lost in ecstasy when he was speaking with some Ministers

Five Ministers came one day out of devotion to visit brother Giles. Brother Graziano, who was his companion, came before they arrived and told brother Giles: “There are some Ministers who are coming to visit you; I pray you, tell them some words of consolation.” So Giles went to meet them and he began to speak in the fervour of his spirit and to sing with his gaze lifted up to heaven and with open arms, as if he was pulling a rope. He was saying: “O mi fratello, o bel fratello, o amor fratello, fami un castello, che no abia pietra e ferro. O bel fratello, fami una cittade, che no abia pietra e ligname.”⁸⁷ Saying these words brother Giles was lost in ecstasy. The Ministers went back to brother Graziano, who explained to them the words of Giles, saying that the castle and the town were the holy Apostles and Martyrs, who without iron weapons and without any other material means were very strong and victorious. He also told them that the town could refer to the heavenly city.

How Giles spoke with brother Bonaventure and was also lost in ecstasy

One day, brother Giles told brother Bonaventure, who was Minister General: “Father, God has given us many graces. We who do not possess wisdom and are unlettered, who have not received suf-

86 The same episode is narrated in the life of the Blessed Andrea from Spello (†1254), whose feast day used to be celebrated on 3rd June in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary.

87 The literal translation of this rhymed song in Italian would read: “Oh my brother, oh my lovely brother, oh love my brother, build for me a castle, because I do not have stones or iron. Oh lovely brother, build for me a town, since I do not have stones and wood.”

ficient learning, what can we do in order to be saved?" The General answered him: "If God does not give any grace to a man, except that of loving Him, that is enough." Brother Giles then said: "Can God love an unlettered man as He loves a learned man?" The General answered: "An old and poor woman can love God more than a master of theology." So brother Giles, in great fervour of spirit, rose and went out in the garden, in that part which looks towards the town, and began shouting: "You old and poor woman, you are simple and unlettered, but you can love the Lord God in such a way that you can become greater than brother Bonaventure." Having said these words, he remained immobile in ecstasy for three hours.

He was often seen totally lifted up from the ground at a height of one and a half cubits.

How a certain woman had enough milk to nourish her sons by invoking his intercession

A certain woman from Perugia, who had given birth to many sons but did not have milk to nourish them all, came to Giles to ask for his help. [102] Since he was lost in ecstasy she could not speak to him. Out of devotion she placed her breasts on the spot where he had been in ecstasy, and after that she had milk in abundance, which would sometimes spill on the ground even without pressing her nipples.

Whenever Giles would know that some person in the world who was regarded highly would fall down to a miserable state he would say: "Let me prostrate myself on the ground, since if I do not go up high, I cannot fall down."

Regarding how Giles was in a marvellous ecstasy in the presence of lady Jacopa dei Settesoli

When brother Giles was staying in Perugia, lady Jacopa dei Settesoli came to see him.⁸⁸ She was a most noble and devout lady from Rome, and loved Francis intensely when he was still alive.

88 For Lady Jacopa dei Settesoli and her friendship and devotion for St. Francis, cfr. *Assisi Compilation* [AC] 8 (FAED II, 121-123); Thomas of Celano, *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis*, 37-39 (FAED II, 417-418)

Brother Gerardino,⁸⁹ a most spiritual man, also came in order to hear some good words of advice from him. In front of many other brothers who were present, brother Giles uttered these words in the vernacular language: "A man can do many things, but he also arrives at doing what he does not want." Brother Gerardino took brother Giles at his words and told him: "I am surprised, Giles, that, because of what a man can do, he arrives at doing what he does not want, since a man cannot do anything with his own power. I can show you this with many reasons. First of all, because potency presupposes being, and such is the operation of a thing, regarding to what its essence is; for example, fire warms, because it is hot; but man is nothing out of himself. That is why the Apostle says: *If anyone thinks that he amounts to something, when in fact he is nothing, he is only deceiving himself* (Gal 6:3). Therefore, if a man is nothing, he cannot do anything; and man is nothing, therefore he has no power to do anything. My second proof is this: if a man can do anything, he does it only because he has a soul, or only because he has a body, or because he is both soul and body. The reason of the soul alone certainly cannot attain anything; since the soul without the body cannot gain merit or lose it. The reason of the body alone likewise cannot do anything, since the body without the soul is deprived of its life and form, and therefore it cannot act, since every act proceeds from the form. The reason of the soul and body joined in the same man also cannot do anything, since the body exists because of the soul, which is its form. As I have already said, if the soul cannot do anything out of the body, it can do much less when it is united to the body, since *the corruptible body burdens the soul* (Wis 9:15). I will now give you an example, brother Giles. If a donkey cannot walk without a load, it can walk much less if it is burdened with a load." In this way brother Gerardino proved his point with twelve good arguments, in such a way that all the other persons who were present were astonished.

89 According to the editors of Quaracchi (p. 102, note 3), it is probable that this brother Gerardo was the same friar whom Salimbene mentions in his Chronicle, as *Ghirardinum de burgo sancti Donini* (Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, in the Province of Sicily), author of a book entitled *Liber introductorius in Evangelium aeternum*, which he published in Paris in 1254, and which was condemned by a commission of cardinals in Anagni in 1255, as being inspired by the apocalyptic prophecies of Joachim of Fiore. In the ABF 46 (FAED III, 561-563), which is a parallel text, the friar is not *Gerardinus*, but *Guardianus*, that is, a guardian.

Brother Giles then answered him: "Your way of reasoning is not correct, brother Gerardino. Proclaim all your faults regarding what you have stated." Brother Gerardino smiled and admitted that he was at fault in what he had stated.

[103] Brother Giles, however, sensing that he had not spoken sincerely, told him: "Your admission of guilt does not have any value, brother Gerardino; and when such an admission of fault means nothing, there is nothing left for a man to recover." Brother Giles then proceeded: "Can you sing, brother Gerardino?" When he answered that he could, Giles said: "Now sing with me." Brother Giles took out of his sleeve a lute made out of millet reed, just as boys use to make, and beginning at the first chord, with rhymed words, he proceeded to play the chords of the lute and to prove false all the twelve arguments of that brother. Starting from the first one he said: "I do not speak about the essence of man in front of creation, brother Gerardino, since it is true that, if nothing exists, man can do nothing; but I will speak about man after creation, about man to whom God gave free will, and who can therefore merit goodness by consenting to good, and lose merit by not consenting to it. You did not speak correctly and you told me a false truth, brother Gerardino, since Paul in that text does not speak about the absence of substance or the lack of potency, but he speaks about the lack of merit, as he says in another place: *If I do not have charity, I am nothing* (1Cor 10:3). For this reason, I am not speaking about a soul which is freed from the body, or about a dead body, but about a living human person, who can do good deeds if he consents to grace and, according to his free will, can rebel against the same grace and do evil deeds, which are nothing else than the absence of good. Now you have said that *the corruptible body burdens the soul*. Yet Scripture does not say because of this, that it takes the free will from the soul, in such a way that it cannot do good or evil. What the Apostle wants to say is that the affections and intellect and memory are impeded, and are occupied with temporal things. Therefore in some other place we also find: *The earthen shelter weighs down the mind that has many concerns* (Wis 9:15), since they do not allow the soul to *seek what pertains to higher realms where Christ is seated at God's right hand* (Col 3:1), and so the force of the soul's powers is impeded in various ways because of many kinds of occupations and also because of the powers of the earthly body." In the same he annulled all the arguments in such

a way that brother Gerardino had to admit that he had been wrong, this time from his heart.

Brother Giles then said: "Now your admission of fault is worthy." And he continued: "Do you wish me to show you clearly that a creature can do something?" So he went upon a wooden casket and began to shout in a terrifying voice: "Oh damned man who lies in hell," and then the same brother Giles answered with the voice of the damned man, which was so mournful and horrible and terrible, that it terrified all those who were present. He was shouting and crying: "Alas for me, alas for me!" In his own voice, then, Giles said: "You miserable man, tell us, why did you end up in hell?" That same mournful voice answered: "Because I did not do the good which I could and should have done; and because I did not avoid the evil things which I could have avoided." He asked him again: "What would you like to do, if you are given a time for repentance, you evil one who are damned?" He answered: "I would throw the whole earth little by little in the fire, so that I would avoid eternal punishment, since there would be an end to that, but my punishment will last for ever." [104] Turning then to brother Gerardino, Giles said: "Did you hear, brother Gerardino, that a creature can do something?" Then he said: "Tell me, brother Gerardino, whether a drop of water which falls in the sea can give its name to the whole sea, or whether the sea gives its name to that drop of water?" Gerardino answered that the substance and the name of the drop are absorbed and become part of the name of the sea. After hearing this brother Giles was lost in ecstasy in front of all those who were there. He understood that human nature, with respect to the divine nature, is like a drop of water which is absorbed in a great ocean of Divinity, namely in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word.

How he was lost in ecstasy in front of the Pope

When Pope Gregory IX once visited Perugia⁹⁰ and heard about the marvels of brother Giles, he sent to call him in his presence. Giles entered with a companion some time afterwards. At the Pope's presence Giles felt such spiritual sweetness that he felt that he was going

90 Gregory IX transferred the papal curia to Perugia in October 1234, and he remained there until the autumn of 1236.

to enter into ecstasy. Since he was afraid that he would get lost in ecstasy in front of the Pope, he did not want to enter, but sent his companion to offer his excuses to the Pope and to tell him that he could not come in that moment. When he had done that, and the Pope asked him the reason, that brother answered: "Most holy Father, brother Giles is downstairs, but I believe that he is afraid that he would be lost in ecstasy in front of you, and that is why he is afraid to come." Then he Pope, greatly desiring to see Giles, commanded him to enter into his presence. Immediately after he had spoken to the Pope, Giles was lost in ecstasy and remained immobile with his eyes lifted up to heaven. The lord Pope was astonished and in front of all those who had experienced that event he said: "If you will die here in front of me, I will not wait to have the proof of any miracle from you, but I would immediately enlist you in the catalogue of Saints."⁹¹

How his virtue of obedience was shown when he was enraptured before the Pope

The same Pope went to the hermitage of Monterpido outside Perugia, where brother Giles used to live, in order to pay him a visit. When the brothers arrived at his cell they found him in ecstasy. They therefore returned to the Pope, who personally went to the cell of the man of God. Seeing him in ecstasy, and knowing that the lord Cardinals had been waiting for him for some time, the lord Pope was surprised and retreated sadly, since he could not speak to him as he had desired.

When the same lord Pope, in order to have enough time to speak to Giles, invited him one day to dine with him, brother Giles went to the Pope's palace before lunch. Entering into the room he proceeded to prostrate himself and to kiss the Pope's foot. When the Pope received him with great joy and kindness, someone among the guests [105] suggested to the Pope that he ask him to sing. When the Pope heard this, he was very surprised, not knowing whether he could sing, and he told him: "Brother Giles, sing." The holy man answered him: "Father, what do you want me to sing?" He repeated

⁹¹ The same words were uttered by Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) in front of Blessed Andrea, who was a friar minor, and maternal uncle of the same pope, and who did not accept the title of cardinal.

these words many times to the Supreme Pontiff with a loud voice and a great fervour of spirit, and went running quickly to the other section of the palace as if he wanted to hide himself. Then he gathered all his thoughts and sitting with his legs crossed he remained enraptured until the hour of vespers.

As the lord Pope and all the others who were there could certify, Giles was immovable and it seemed that he was senseless. The lord Pope was very sad that he had so quickly lost the occasion to speak with such a holy man, and harshly scolded the one who had suggested to him to ask Giles to sing. What else can we say? After the members of the Curia had eaten supper, while Giles still remained in that ecstasy, the Pope told his assistants: "We have lost that man, but let us put to test his virtue of obedience." So the Pope called brother Giles and said: "The Order of Minors is directly subject to our obedience, and therefore we command you by the virtue of obedience, that you are immediately to come to us." It is a marvellous thing to say, but that man, who appeared to be out of his senses, immediately ran to the Pope and prostrating himself at his feet humbly confessed his fault. The lord Pope touched him and lifted him up with his own hands. Then brother Giles said: "How are you, my Father?" The lord Pope answered him: "Everything is fine with me, my brother." Giles then said: "Holy Father, you have a very onerous work to do." He was referring to the mental preoccupations of the Pope. At these words the lord Pope answered: "Brother, this is true, but I beg you to help me to shoulder this responsibility." Brother Giles then answered: "I would willingly place my neck under the yoke of my lord's commands." The Pope then told him: "Brother, what you are saying is true." Brother Giles stood up and went a short distance away from the Pope and thus remained in ecstasy of spirit from vespers to the third part of the night. When the lord Pope saw this he was astonished, as were all those who stood there with him; and they realized that his life was more devout than that of all other persons.

The following day, Giles came back to his senses. The Lord's servant was comforted with the food in the Pope's home. After this, the Pope asked him in a familiar way: "Brother Giles, what will happen to me?" Giles began to excuse himself and he would not answer him in any way. So the Pope told him: "At least tell me how I should be." After many long excuses, Giles answered him: "You should have two eyes, one on the right and the other on the left. The right eye

should be open to contemplate heavenly things, while your left eye should be open to attend to the inferior realities.” When the lord Pope saw this, he regarded Giles truly as a servant of God, and showed great devotion, reverence and love towards him.

The holy man always showed himself to be happy and swift to obey. If it happened that he would speak with somebody on the word of God, he would be filled with marvellous joy, he would respond with great devotion and express his joy by kissing the straw and the stones and he would accomplish many other similar acts of marvellous devotion. Since he would feel very sad to leave that marvellous state of grace in which he persevered and would have to go back to the body of human nature, [106] namely to eat at the appropriate time, he desired to be able to live by eating the leaves of the trees, so that he would escape from conversation with men and would not be compelled to cede to this grace even for a short span of time. When he would return to his brothers, he would come quickly and full of joy, praising God and blessing Him, and would say: “No tongue can utter, no words can express,⁹² *what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him* (1Cor 2:9).”

Since he was filled with devout faith and faithful devotion and showed great reverence towards the Sacraments of the Church and her canonical laws, every time he would hear someone refer to these same ordinances of the Church, he would quickly and devoutly commend himself to her and would say: “Oh holy mother Roman Church! We unwise and miserable men do not know you or your goodness. You teach us the way of salvation, you prepare it and show us the way that, if one would persevere in it, he would never commit any offence, but would go straight up to the glory of heaven.”

He would most willingly attend Mass and every Sunday he would receive the body of Christ with singular devotion. In the same way, on the holy days of obligation, he would enter the church early in the morning, and would remain there praying all day long, occupied in divine meditations.

92 This expression is taken from the liturgical hymn *Jesus dulcis memoria*, by St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

How he was enraptured while speaking about God and how he appeared shining with great splendour

When he was once living in the hermitage of the friars at Agello, in the district of Perugia, he went back to the brothers during the usual hour of Vespers, in order to eat. After the meal, with fervour of spirit, he explained the word of God to the brothers with such great devotion and sweetness, that all those who were listening to him were inflamed in their hearts with the love of God. At the end Giles was enraptured, and he remained immobile in front of the brothers who were present until the hour of the rooster’s crow. After this he left the brothers and directed his paces to his cell. All of a sudden, he appeared shining with so much splendour, that the light of the moon, which was very clear that night, seemed to have been absorbed by that splendour and could be scarcely seen. When the brothers saw this they remained astonished. The holy man therefore returned to the brothers, whom he had left shortly before, and he comforted them with by telling them: “What would you do, my brothers, if you see greater things than these? Whoever does not see great things has little faith.”

How the devils vainly tried to induce him to vainglory

The evil spirit, who saw that brother Giles was wholly obedient to the secret plans of God, tried with all his might to molest him and prepared great tribulations. When Giles was staying in the hermitage of Pregio⁹³ near Perugia, he was praying in his cell one night. He heard the devils that were standing close to him and were saying to one another: “How is it possible [107] that this man works so hard? Now he is a saint, how he is an anointed one, now he is ecstatic.” When brother Giles referred these words to his companion, and asked him what the word *ecstatic* meant, he answered him: “Father, do not pay any attention, because this is a diabolical temptation, in order to make you fall into vainglory and pride.”

On another occasion, in that same place and under an olive tree, a brother asked him: “Father, what do the wise say about this contem-

93 The name in Latin is *locus de Prepo*. The editors of Quaracchi say that this is a fortified village in the territory of Perugia. It could also be that the name *locus de Prepo* is the same as *locus Montis prope Perusium*, namely the hermitage of Monteripido.

plation?" He did not know that Giles, as usual, would fall into ecstasy. The brother who was the companion of brother Giles, when he heard these words, as if he wanted to get rid of that brother, told him: "The wise say many things." But brother Giles interrupted them suddenly: "Do you want me to tell you what I think? Contemplation is a fire, an anointing, an ecstasy, a savouring, a rest, and glory." That brother marvelled greatly at those words, which had been uttered with such a profound fervour.

Regarding his marvellous doctrine and his counsels of salvation

Brother Giles used to explain these words from the Gospel: *I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers* (Lk 22:32). He would say: "These words mean that a man should first take care of his own salvation, and afterwards of the salvation of others. The conversion of souls is most pleasing to God. We can understand these words as referring to those who can accomplish this without any detriment to their souls, in such a way that, wherever they may be, they dedicate all their time to God, just as Paul did."

A certain secular man asked him to pray for him to God. He answered him: "You have to pray for yourself; in this way, why do you send somebody else to pray for you when you yourself can go to pray?" That man answered: "What are you saying, brother Giles? I am a sinner and I am very far away from God. You are God's friend, and therefore you can quickly intercede for others." The Saint said: "My dear friend, if all the squares of the town of Perugia were full of silver and gold, and news is spread through the town announcing that anyone can go and receive those riches, would you send a herald to get them for you?" That man answered: "Certainly not; I would personally go and I would not confide in any other person to be faithful in this work." The Saint then told him: "It is the same thing regarding God; He fills the whole world, and everybody can find Him. Therefore, go to find God and do not send someone else."

Another man told him that he had a great desire to go to Rome. Brother Giles said: "You will go to Rome, you will go to Rome; you can hardly choose the best coin and discard the bad one." He used to call

sins and bad examples by the name of bad coins, whereas he used to refer to true virtue and merit as the best coins.

How he instructed a certain brother, who had been a knight, and how, after this brother entered the Order, he did not take care of him

A certain knight, who was a relative of brother Giles, was converted by his admonitions, and entered his Order. After this brother Giles did not take care of him and did not admonish him [108] as he used to do previously, neither did he talk with him in a familiar way any more. So this knight was surprised and saddened at this behaviour, and one day he spoke in this way to brother Giles, wanting to complain: "Most dear father, I am very surprised at you, since, when I still lived in the world, you took abundant care of me all day long, and you taught me, and I believe that I have entered the Order as a result of your admonitions, and I expected that you would be more available to me when I am in the Order. But you are saying nothing to me, and that is why I am so surprised. I would like you to tell me, at least once, what I should do and what I should avoid." Brother Giles answered him: "My brother, now you form part of the Lord's family and now both of us are companions under the authority of the same Lord. Do you, therefore, want me to attend to my office as your companion and to tell you: do this or do that? And how can I know this, if our Lord wants that you do some other thing than that which I tell you? I can inform you regarding one thing, and maybe the Lord wants you to be ready for something else."

When he said this, he turned his gaze and his mind towards heaven as if he wanted to speak with God. That knight heard him saying with great fervour and devotion: "Oh my Lord, what a precious thing is holy chastity, how much it pleases you and how much do you love those who possess it! What a great reward of eternal life you give those whom you associate with the holy Angels!" Then he began to blow hard and to savour his breath and say: "Pu, pu, o Lord, how much does a soul like this please you!" He said for a second time: "O Lord, how much do you love that person, who because of your love is separated in heart from the world, and leaves behind and is totally separated from father, mother, relatives and everything which one

possessed in the world!" Then, pronouncing again, "pu, pu", he blew hard and savoured his breath as before. For the third time he said: "O Lord, how much do you love obedience and all those who serve your precepts!" For the fourth time, he said: "O Lord, how much do you love that soul, which is lifted up and perseveres in prayer and vigils and in the contemplation of heavenly things! How much consolation do you give that soul! And how many tears does it shed during prayer, since it knows that the person who weeps is dear to you, and will find paradise opened!" For the fifth time he said: "O Lord, how much are you pleased with that person who, because of your love, sustains all kinds of suffering and carries your cross, who is capable of shouldering the yoke and all weights, just as my brother the ass does, since it does not complain when it is overburdened and when it is beaten and when people say to it: 'Go away, may God give you a bad year, may the wolf devour you, may you be exorcised.' My brother ass does not answer anything to all this, but it gives me the best example of patience." When he heard these words that knight was changed into a good servant and God was praised in a marvellous way in him.

How he scolded himself because of his anger

When brother Giles was living in the hermitage of Cetona, he worked at a small garden in which there were beautiful cauliflowers. He was standing in the garden with his staff in his hand and was saying the *Our Father*, when a certain strong brother came to put him to the test. He was holding a big knife and with it he was cutting the cauliflowers and devastating them. When brother Giles saw this he said many angry words to that brother, and waving his hands at him he expelled him from the garden. [109] That brother told him: "Oh brother Giles, where is your patience and your holiness?" Giles sighed and said: "Oh brother, forgive me, since you came upon me all of a sudden, and I was not armed and I could not defend myself immediately."

When a certain nobleman once asked him why Saint John, since he had been sanctified in the womb, entered the desert and lived a life of such intense penance, as the Gospel testifies, brother Giles answered him: "Tell me, why do we place new meat in the salt, when it is so good?" That man immediately answered: "So that it can be preserved better." The Saint then said: "In the same way Saint John was

preserved by the salt of penance, and his sanctity has lasted for a very long time." That nobleman was greatly edified by this answer.

How to friars Preachers were scandalized by his words, but were then greatly edified

Another time, when brother Giles was living in the hermitage of Cetona, two friars Preachers visited him out of devotion. While they were speaking together about God, one of the friars Preachers said: "Reverend Father, God spoke to Saint John the Evangelist about great and lofty mysteries." Brother Giles answered: "Most dear brother, Saint John says nothing regarding God." The friar Preacher told him: "Most dear father, be careful; what are you saying?" Brother Giles immediately said: "I repeat once more and tell you, that Saint John says nothing about God." At this those two friars felt rather angry and left Giles with a feeling that they had not been edified. When they had left a short distance, brother Giles called them and showed them a mountain, which rises above the hermitage of Cetona, and told them: "If there would be a mountain of millet seed as great as this mountain above us, and at the foot of that mountain there would be one sparrow, that would eat out of that mountain of seed: how much of that mountain would decrease in one day, or in one month, or in one year, or in a hundred years?" The friars Preachers answered him: "Not even in a thousand years would one notice that the mountain is decreasing in size." So brother Giles told them: "The eternal Divinity is so immense like this great mountain, that Saint John, who was just like a sparrow, said nothing with respect to the immensity of God." When those friars understood the truthfulness of his words, they prostrated themselves at his feet and asked him to forgive them and to pray for them to the Most High. And thus, edified with great devotion, they departed.

An example of spiritual espousal

Brother Giles sometimes used to say: "We cannot find a more clear example of the relationship between God and the soul than that between a husband and wife. The bridegroom, when he accepts his spouse, dresses her with long robes, gives her purses, a belt and other ornaments. When they are married the bride takes all these orna-

ments off and she unites herself with her husband. In the same way the good works adorn the soul like gems and vestments, while it is prayer which joins it to God.”

[110] A certain old man asked brother Giles whether the soul sometimes goes out of the body in this life and is enraptured in contemplation. When Giles answered him that it is so, he added: “Man lives in the world, but his soul is separated from the body in ecstasy.” That brother then said: “I believe that it is uncomfortable for the soul to return to the body.” Brother Giles answered him with a sigh: “Yes, you are saying the truth.”

Brother Giles was often engaged in prayer and this is how he would express himself: “Who are you, to whom I am praying, and who I am who am praying? I am a sack of dung full of worms, while you are the Lord of heaven and earth.”

Brother Graziano, who was a perfect man and who lived with brother Giles for more than twenty years, used to say that all during those years he had never heard one single idle word proceeding from Giles’ mouth.

The holy brother Bernard of Quintavalle noticed that brother Giles was nearly always closed in his cell like a recluse and gave himself over to prayer, often used to joke with him telling him that he was not a man in the full sense of the word, since he hardly ever spoke with men because of his ecstasies and divine consolations. Bernard often used to tell the brothers: “He lives like a lady in her room.” He used to tell Giles with a joyful tone: “Go out to speak with men; go out to beg for bread and procure the necessities of life for the brothers.” But brother Giles used to answer him with humility and great joy: “Brother Bernard, not every man has received the grace to eat the food of the swallow, like brother Bernard of Quintavalle.” He used to say this, since, just as the swallow eats its food while flying, in the same way Bernard used to feed himself with ecstasies and divine consolations while he would travel along the roads and up to the mountain tops.

Regarding how he scolded some brothers from Sicily who had been expelled from that land

Brother Paul from Prato, a most austere man who showed great zeal for poverty, said that, while he and some other brothers were hearing from the mouth of brother Giles the words God, which were

sweeter than honey, two brothers came over. These brothers had been expelled from Sicily by Frederick,⁹⁴ at that time king of Sicily and a rebel against the Church. Brother Giles, after receiving them kindly, asked them who they were and from where they came. They answered him that they had been expelled from that land by Frederick, the persecutor of the Church. When brother Giles heard this, he was inflamed with zeal for poverty, and started scolding them [111] saying: “You have been expelled from your land; you have been purged from your land? Certainly you are not friars Minors.” He continued to shout and repeat the same words, and gesturing with the palms of his hands he added: “Most dear brothers, you have sinned against that greatest of sinners, Frederick. Since therefore he has been the source of much good for you, you should have compassion on him and pray for him, so that the Lord will soften his heart, and not criticise him. He did not expel you from your land, because, if you are true friars Minors, you know that you possess no land of your own.”

How the death of brother William was revealed to brother Giles

In the friary of Perugia there was a certain brother who was called William. He was very noble by birth, but he was a dissolute man in his words and actions, and was not at all pleasing to the spiritual brothers. One day he went to a castle, where his sister used to live. In the river he saw many boys who were swimming, when one of them all of a sudden was engulfed in the water and was on the verge of drowning. That brother immediately threw himself in the river, in order to save that boy who was trapped in the current of the river, but he was pulled under the water together with that boy. During that same hour, brother Giles, who was at the time living in Perugia, was washing his hands together with other brothers, before sitting down for lunch. He smiled gently and told the brothers: “Brother William

94 Frederick II of Swabia had become an arch-enemy of the Mendicant Orders, who were defending the Pope’s interests in southern Italy. It is within this historical context of an excommunicated emperor, under whose protection brother Elias passed in 1239, after his downfall from minister general, that the Franciscans had to suffer, particularly within the geographical confines of the Kingdom of Sicily.

is now fine and it will be better for him.” The brothers did not know that brother William had died, but after some time they heard that he had drowned, and fearing that he had been damned because of the fact that he lived a dissolute life, they prayed for him so that the Lord would reveal his state to them. One of the brothers was told in his spirit that brother William had been saved because of the charity he had shown in trying to save that boy. That is why the brothers did not know why the holy brother Giles had said those words, namely that brother William was fine.

How the devil tried to immobilize him while he was praying

Once brother Giles was staying in Spoleto, at the church of Saint Apollinare, where the friars had found shelter. One night he woke up and immediately entered the church in order to prostrate himself in prayer. But he felt that the devil was upon him and he was oppressing him and trying to molest him in various ways. Giles began to pray unceasingly, but he could not stand up, no matter how hard he tried. At last he dragged himself, as best he could, to the font of blessed water. As soon as he had aspersed himself with faith, he was immediately freed from the devil that was molesting him.

How the devil placed Giles in a very narrow place

In the fifty-second year of his conversion, while Giles was approaching towards the end of his life, the enemy of the human race began to vex him more than usual. One night Giles was trying to rest for a short time after having been engaged in a long period in which he had prayed with great effort. [112] But the devil took him and placed him in a very narrow place, in such a way that he could not move in any way. Since he could not stand up, no matter how hard he tried with all his might, brother Graziano who was assisting him began to hear him breathing heavily. So he came closer, and he clearly heard Giles breathing with difficulty. Drawing close to the door of his cell, in order to check whether he was praying or was in difficulty, he understood that Giles had some corporal tribulation. He immediately cried out and asked: “Father, what is the matter?” Giles answered

him: “Come quickly, my son, come quickly.” Since he could not open the door of the cell, Graziano said: “Why is it that I cannot open?” The Saint answered: “Push with all your might, my son, and open the door quickly.” So he opened the door and entered the cell. The devil that was in that place took him and dragged him with all his might and did not let him stand up. He could not move in any way. Brother Giles then told him: “My son, calm down, and let us fall into the hands of the Lord.” So Graziano immediately obeyed this command. When the devil had partially let hold of him, he invoked the name of the Lord and with a manly strength he managed to take Giles out of that narrow place.

When he had rested a bit, Giles told his companion: “How is the devil so able to impede divine goodness in such a way?” Then he continued: “My son, you did a good thing to come over. May the Lord repay you.” Graziano then said: “Father, why did you not call me immediately? How could I have bore with my conscience if you had died? I would have been greatly guilty for you and for both of us.” Brother Giles answered him: “What would have happened to you, my son, if my enemies wanted to take vengeance upon you?” He then repeated: “Why does the devil attack so much the good works of God? But if this happens once or twice, it is tolerable. But you should know for sure that, the more I resist God, the more I am confused, and the more I suffer and go down into the depths, and thus by molesting me, I take vengeance upon him. My principle is not this, namely to serve God because of God’s sake, and because of His mercy the aim is the same and I am His. In this way the devil can never be strong and win against God.”

Once brother Giles was praying devoutly, when the devil came to molest him and was terrifying him so much, that he started crying: “Brothers, help me, help me.” Brother Graziano, who was staying in the cell next to his, went running to him crying: “Do not be afraid, father, do not be afraid; I will come to help you.” He went to his cell and asked him: “Father, what is the matter?” Giles answered him: “My son, nothing is the matter, nothing is the matter.” Brother Graziano said: “Let it be, I am now close to you, since the enemy is persecuting you so much.” The father answered him: “May the Lord repay you, my son, since you have done me a good deed by coming to me. But now it is enough for me; you can go and return to your cell.” This is the way in which the devil often troubled him. In fact, when he went

into his cell in the evening, Giles would sigh and say: "Now I have to wait for my martyrdom."

How he manifested his spiritual joy

One day, when he was nearing his death, brother Giles went back to his cell, and full of indescribable joy he told a certain companion: "My son, tell me what you think. [113] I have found a great treasure, brilliantly shining, which I cannot express with my tongue. However, I tell you, my son, that if you are blessed by God, you will be able to see it." He often repeated these words. Whenever he would utter them, he would be so full of joy and ardour, that it would seem that he was intoxicated with divine love and abundance of grace. Every time one of the brothers would call him to come to take food, he would answer full of joy: "My son, this food is the best I can have." The brother would then try to convince him, nearly tempting him and saying: "Father, you will not cure yourself by doing this, but please come and eat." The Saint would then answer not very lightly: "Brother, you are not right in what you are saying. I would rather like you to beat me hard until you draw blood out of me." He believed that his most holy soul was feeling ready to go out of his body in a short time, and he wanted to enjoy the glory of that most blessed treasure. That is why, for many days before his death, he greatly wished to unite himself with Christ and enjoy his most blessed company.

Another time a certain brother told him that Saint Francis had said that the servant of God should desire to end his life in martyrdom. Brother Giles answered him: "I do not want to die a better death than the death of contemplation." Once, out of his great desire to die as a martyr for the love of Christ, he had gone among the Saracens, but then he had to come back and merited to be lifted to the heights of contemplation, and would say: "Now I do not want to die a martyr's death."

How he prophesied that he would not be canonised

When the devout man became very ill, and had a high fever and was greatly afflicted with whooping cough and headaches and chest

pains, in such a way that he could not rest, eat or sleep, it happened that the brothers would try as best they could to make him find some rest by laying him down on a bed and transferring him to Perugia, under the escort and protection of some armed men, since the brothers were afraid that after his death he would be taken somewhere else, since he had strongly expressed his wish to be buried in Saint Mary of the Angels. When the holy man heard their plans, full of spiritual fervour, he said: "Tell the citizens of Perugia that they will not ring their bells neither for my canonisation nor for any great miracles. Only the sign of Jonah will be given them." But when the townsfolk heard this they said: "Even if he will not be canonised, we want to keep him here just the same."

Regarding his happy death

On the vigil of the feast of Saint George, during the night brother Giles' condition worsened. The brothers placed him on a bed, and without any length of time and without any violent movements of his body, he closed his eyes and his mouth, and his most holy soul went out of his body and was taken into the heavenly abode. Oh most holy father, brother Giles, on the very day in which the Lord has inspired you to follow the footsteps of blessed Francis and take the habit of most holy Religion, [114] namely on the feast day of Saint George, now that fifty two years have passed, you have been taken up to heaven, and you will reign with him for ever. Be mindful of us, whom you have left here in such danger and misery!

Regarding a marvellous vision

A certain holy person who was praying saw brother Giles, at the moment of his death, together with many other souls of friars and other persons, going out of purgatory and ascending straight up to heaven to the Lord Jesus Christ together with a multitude of Angels who were accompanying him and with great honours and many sweet songs he penetrated the heavenly tabernacles, and the Lord placed him on a throne of glory.

Regarding a revelation which a certain friar Preacher had regarding the glory of brother Giles

When brother Giles was ill, a certain brother from the Order of Preachers also fell ill in one of the friaries of his religious family. This brother had another friar who was very close to him. When this friar Preacher was sick and was nearing death, his friend asked him that after he would die, if God would permit, he would reveal his state to him in a vision. As he had promised, on the very same day in which brother Giles died, he also ended his days. After his death this friar Preacher appeared to his friend, who asked him how he was. He answered him: "I am very well, since on that day when I departed from this world, a certain friar Minor whose name is Giles also died. Because of his great holiness Christ conceded that all the souls who were in purgatory would ascend to heaven together with him; thus I was freed through his merits from the torments which I was enduring." Having said this he disappeared. That brother did not want to reveal this vision and he began to feel seriously ill. When he realised that this had happened to him because he had not revealed the virtues and glory of the holy father Giles, he immediately sent for the friars Minor. Ten brothers came to him. He also called together many other brothers of his Order, and revealed all the vision to them with great devotion. Thus they came to know about that event which occurred on the very same day in which brother Giles had died.

The holy brother Giles passed from this world to the Father in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1262, on the solemnity of Saint George, during the night, in the fifty-second year of his conversion. The lord brother Bonaventure, who was General Minister and afterwards became Cardinal, said about him that, regarding the things pertaining to the soul, God had given Giles a special grace to help those who invoke him with devotion, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the Trinity lives and reigns for ever and ever. After his death Giles also shone forth with many miracles.

After brother Giles had died, the citizens of Perugia looked for a stone with which to construct a tomb for him. They found a certain marble sarcophagus, upon which there was a sculpture of the story of Jonah. [115] Thus they came to realize the evident sign of his holiness, as he had prophesied regarding himself. Then they honourably buried him in that place.

The life of brother Masseo from Marignano, who was a most perfect man

[115] Blessed Father Francis, who was a most holy shepherd, used to guard and govern his flock with great care. He used to be vigilant in order to be a diligent custodian of his brothers. Once he was prudently considering how brother Masseo was greatly increasing in virtue. Francis thought it best to place Masseo upon the solid foundation of humility, in order that he might not be drawn to vainglory because of his reaching such heights of sanctity. Therefore, when he was once living in a certain hermitage together with other holy brothers, after he had gathered them all together, blessed Francis said to brother Masseo: "Brother Masseo, all your brothers here present possess the grace of prayer and contemplation. You, on the other hand, have the grace of knowing how to speak and how to answer to the needs of those persons who visit us. Therefore, I would like you that, from now onwards, in order that your brothers may be free to dedicate their time to prayer and contemplation, you are to take upon your shoulders the tasks of door-keeper, alms-begging and cooking in the kitchen, in such a way that nobody except yourself will be absorbed with the care of temporal things. When the brothers meet for their meals, you are to eat outside the door, so that, before anyone comes to knock on the door, you will be there ready to satisfy that person's requests with some good words. In this way nobody will be obliged to go out, except you alone. I ask you to do all this through the merits of saving obedience." Masseo bowed his head, covered it with his hood, and humbly obeyed. Then for many days he became a door-keeper, went out to beg for alms, and humbly cooked the meals of the brothers in the kitchen.

The other brothers, who were enlightened by God, began to feel very sorry for Masseo in their hearts when they saw him shouldering all the burdens of that hermitage, especially because he was a man of great perfection as well as a man of prayer more than all of them. Therefore, they prayed the holy Father to distribute those duties among them, since they could not bear in their conscience to see their brothers so burdened under the yoke of all those duties. On the contrary they were not feeling at ease during their prayers, and their

conscience would scold them until they would see brother Masseo relieved from all those burdens.

Blessed Francis heard the wishes of the brothers and agreed to answer their charitable supplications. Therefore he called brother Masseo and told him: "Brother Masseo, your brothers want to share in the duties which I have imposed upon you, and therefore I want that all your duties should be divided equally among you all." [116] Brother Masseo answered Francis with humility and patience: "Father, whatever duty you impose upon me in whole or in part, I regard as having been given to me totally from God." When Saint Francis saw the charity of the brothers and the humility of brother Masseo, he preached to them all a marvellous sermon regarding most holy humility, without which no other virtue is acceptable before God. After this he distributed all those offices among them, and blessed them with the grace of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁵

How Saint Francis made brother Masseo turn round and round in the middle of the road, in order to know God's will

The blessed Father Francis willingly liked to choose brother Masseo among the other companions, to accompany him, because of the grace of holy words, which he possessed, as well as because of his unique discretion, when he used to come to his aid and protect his privacy during contemplation, every time people would throng to see Francis. Whenever people would come in order to listen to the words of life from the Saint's lips, if he would be praying, brother Masseo would begin to speak to them fervently about God, and in this way they would be satisfied. Thus, whenever blessed Francis wanted to recount the graces of his brothers, he would say that a good friar Minor should have the gracious behaviour of brother Masseo, together with his natural sense of courtesy, expressed in his beautiful and devout words.

Once it happened that Saint Francis and Masseo were travelling together on the same road in the province of Tuscany. Brother Masseo was walking slightly ahead of Francis. They arrived at a three-

⁹⁵ Parallel text in ABF 12 (FAED III, 461-462) and *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* 12 (FAED III, 585-586).

way fork in the road. One road led to Siena, one to Florence, and the other one to Arezzo. So brother Masseo asked: "Father, which road are we going to take?" Saint Francis answered him: "We'll take the road which God will show us."

Brother Masseo then said: "And how are we going to know which road God wants us to take?" The Saint answered him: "The Lord will reveal his will through a sign He will work in you. Therefore, I command you through obedience, that you stand in the middle of this fork and turn round and round until I will tell you to refrain from doing so." Masseo therefore obediently started to turn round and round, to the point that his head became dizzy, and because of all those turns he would sometimes fall down and then stand up and resume his turns. He did not stop according to the command of the Saint, and did not even notice the secular people who were travelling on that road and who were looking at him. Saint Francis then called him and said: "Stay where you are and do not move." He stood still, and Saint Francis asked him: "What direction are you facing?" He answered: "I am looking towards Siena." The Saint said: "This is the road which the Lord wants us to follow." Brother Masseo was astonished at the way Francis had made him turn round and round like a small boy. But he did not dare to ask him to explain to him the reason for doing so, because of the reverence he showed to the holy Father.

When they approached Siena, all the people came out of that town and with great devotion and humility led the Saint and brother Masseo to the bishop's palace. At that very moment there was a civil strife in the town, and the citizens were wielding swords one against the other. Saint Francis preached to them and all were instantly reconciled in peace. [117] Because of this the Bishop of that town received blessed Francis with great solemnity and charity. The Saint, however, fled from the praises of men, and after waking up early the next morning, and without bidding farewell to the Bishop, he secretly went out of the town. Brother Masseo was very troubled in his heart, and he walked ahead of blessed Francis on the road, and he began to murmur secretly in his heart and think: "Why did this good man behave in this way? Yesterday he made me go round and round like a small boy in front of secular persons, and today he did not utter one single good word to the Bishop, who honoured him so greatly." But he was divinely inspired and felt sad in his heart because of what he was thinking. So he said to himself: "Brother Masseo, you are a very proud

man and you merit to go to hell, since you want to rebel against God with your pride. In fact, all the things which this holy man, brother Francis, accomplished while travelling on this road, were manifested according to God's will. If he did not come to Siena, many people would have killed each other with the sword, as you saw them on the point of doing, and they would have been damned. Therefore, even if he commanded you to throw stones, you should obey." While he was having all these thoughts, he heard blessed Francis who was calling him from behind, since all Masseo's thoughts had been revealed to him. He told him: "Hold on fast to those things that you are thinking now, since they are good and have been inspired by God; the murmuring which you were doing before came out of a will which is bad, blind and haughty, and which was instigated by the devil." Brother Masseo was surprised and recognized his fault with all humility in front of the Saint.⁹⁶

How blessed Francis with fervour pushed brother Masseo in front of him for a distance measured by the length of a rod, and regarding the sweetness which Masseo felt

Blessed Francis, after having sent many brothers and companions in various provinces of the world, in order to show a good example in what he had ordered others to do, chose to go to the province of France together with brother Masseo. When they were staying in a certain place, they begged for alms for the love of God. When they had found a certain spring of great beauty, on whose side there was a large rock, which rose in a good position. They placed the pieces of bread, which they had acquired while begging for alms. Blessed Francis, who was a despicable-looking man and short in stature, did not acquire the same beautiful pieces of bread as brother Masseo did, since Masseo was a handsome-looking and muscular man. When Francis realized this, he was full of joy in the spirit and said: "O brother Masseo, we are not worthy of such a great treasure." In this way he continued to increase the tone of his voice in many words of praise. Brother Masseo answered: "Most dear father, how can you

⁹⁶ Parallel text in ABF 11 (FAED III, 459-461) and *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* 11 (FAED III, 584-585).

speak of a treasure, when we are living in such want, and we do not have a table-cloth, nor a knife, nor a bowl, nor a fork, nor a servant or a maid!" Saint Francis answered him: "I consider that we possess a great treasure every time we do not have anything which is prepared by human industry, but anything we acquire, has been ministered to us through divine providence, as you can see in these pieces of bread which we have acquired, in this beautiful rock and in this clear spring of water. Therefore I desire that we pray God, so that this most noble treasure [118] of holy poverty, which God has administered to us, will make us love Him with all our heart." And thus, after having eaten those pieces of bread and drank water from that spring, they praised God with divine hymns and continued on their road to France, until they arrived at a certain church in which they entered. While blessed Francis was praying there behind the altar he received a divine visitation and he felt a great fervour inflaming him to greatly and totally desire poverty. He was so inflamed that it seemed that his face was glowing and his breath was exhaling flames of love. Inflamed in spirit Francis went out to his companion and said: "Ah, ah, ah, brother Masseo, offer me yourself." He said these words thrice. Brother Masseo was astonished at this great fervour, and while Francis, for the third time, was telling him: "Offer me yourself," Masseo threw himself in the arms of the holy Father. Saint Francis, with a great sigh and with the fervour of the Holy Spirit, began to cry out with a resounding voice: "Ah, ah, ah," and he lifted up Masseo together with him in the air and pushed him forward for a distance measured by the length of a rod. When brother Masseo saw this he was greatly astonished with the great fervour of the holy Father. Afterwards he told his companions that when the Saint had pushed him forward he had felt such a great sweetness and such a consolation of the Holy Spirit, that he could never remember anything like it in all his life.

Saint Francis then said: "My dear brother, let us go to Rome to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and let us pray to them, so that they will teach us and help us to possess the inexpressible treasure of most holy poverty." After this he began to greatly praise poverty. When they arrived in Rome, they entered the church of Saint Peter. The Saint went to pray in a corner and brother Masseo in another, and they were praying God and the holy Apostles with tears, so that they would teach them and help them possess the treasure of holy poverty. And behold the holy Apostles Peter and Paul appeared to Saint Fran-

cis in great splendour, and they were embracing him and kissing him, while saying: "Brother Francis, since you have prayed and desired the same things which Christ and the Apostles observed, therefore we tell you in God's part that your desires have been accomplished and that the treasure of most holy poverty has been given to you and to your followers in a most perfect way. On God's part we tell you, that whoever will follow perfectly your desire and example, will be sure to attain the reign of beatitude. And you and all your followers will be blessed by the Lord." When they said this they went back and left him greatly consoled inwardly. So Francis revealed everything entirely to brother Masseo, and they were both filled with great joy and happiness, and returned to the valley of Spoleto, where they had to begin to live this heavenly and angelic life.

This same brother Masseo taught an Angel how to knock on the door of the brothers, as we have narrated with great detail in the life of brother Bernard of Quintavalle. Masseo was also with Saint Francis, when he accompanied him to the lord Pope Honorius in order to request the plenary indulgence of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula.

[119] How Masseo acquired humility from God, since he considered himself to be a great sinner

It happened once that certain brothers were speaking with brother Masseo about God. Somebody said that there was one among the brothers, who was truly a friend of God. He possessed the grace of the active and contemplative life, and with it he also had the grace of a most profound humility, in such a way that he considered himself to be a great sinner. He was confirmed and sanctified in his humility and he continually grew in these gifts and progressed for the better, in such a way that God never allowed him to fall in any way. Brother Masseo was astonished to hear these words, and he was so much inflamed with love, desiring to acquire the virtue of humility and be most worthy of God's embrace, that with his great fervour he lifted his gaze to heaven and firmly resolved not to find any other joy on earth until he would feel in his soul that most brilliant humility. He therefore resolved to continue offering prayers and he stayed continually shut up in his cell and afflicted himself continually before God with inexpressible groans, in such a way that it seemed that he considered

himself worthy of hell, if he could not arrive at such humility, since that friend of God of whom he had heard was full of virtue more than all other persons, but he considered himself worthy of hell. While brother Masseo remained in that sadness for many days, and cleansed himself with hunger and thirst and many tears, it happened that one day he entered into the woods and gave himself over to this desire with groans, sighs and tears, and prayed God to give him this virtue.

Since God *heals the contrite of heart* (Ps 146:3) and listens to the voice of the humble, Masseo heard a voice coming down from heaven and calling him: "Brother Masseo, brother Masseo!" Masseo recognized through the Holy Spirit that the voice belonged to Christ, and answered: "My Lord!" The Lord then told him: "What do you want to give in order to obtain this grace?" Masseo answered: "My Lord, I am ready to give you the eyes of my head." The Lord said to him: "And I want you to retain your eyes and to acquire this grace." Brother Masseo therefore remained in this great grace of humility which he had requested, and was enlightened by God in such a way that he was nearly always in spiritual joy. Often, when he used to pray, he would hum in a monotonous way with a subdued voice like a dove: *Oo-oo-oo*, and would repeat these noises in continuation, while his face would glow with happiness and with the joy of contemplation. He became most humble among all and considered himself to be the least among the brothers. Once brother James of Fallerone,⁹⁷ of happy memory, was listening to him humming secretly in a uniform tone. He asked him why he did not change the sound and tone of his voice. Masseo answered him with great joy: "Because if one finds all goodness in one thing, it is not opportune for a man to change the sound of his voice."

Regarding his prayers and the abundance of his tears

Brother Masseo was a man of many prayers and tears, as some brothers testified, since they observed him in secret day and night. [120] He only ate once a day, during the evening, and then he would

⁹⁷ Brother James came from the noble family of Brunforte. He was the son of Roger, called *Fallero*. According to some authors he died circa 1290, while Papini states that he rather died in 1308. This episode is parallel to ABF 40 (FAED III, 514-515).

enter his cell and sleep for a short time. Round about midnight he would wake up, and would spend the rest of the night praying with great fervour, and would utter the following words: "My Lord Jesus Christ, give me the grace of contrition for my sins and the grace to amend and satisfy for them according to your will." He did not desist from this prayer, except when the prayer would be followed by copious tears. Early in the morning he would hear Mass, and then he would enter his cell and would pray in plain chant: "O Lord, my God, make me know you, fear you and love you with all my heart."

Regarding his burning charity towards his neighbour

When he was living in the hermitage of Cibottola, even though he was always naturally happy, for a time he was feeling very sad. The brothers noticed this and told him: "Brother Masseo, our father, are we guilty of making you feel sad, you who normally are never sad? If the wine flasks, which we conserve in this place are the reason for your sadness, we shall remove them immediately." The brothers, in fact, had some small wine flasks, in which they placed the wine, which others would give them. The brothers were afraid that Masseo was disturbed because of his zeal for poverty. So Masseo told the brothers who had gathered there: "My brothers, you are not giving me any reason to feel sad, and I really do not care much about the wine flasks. But this is the reason for my sadness. For a long time now I have tried hard to have the virtue of humility, since I regard myself as the most despicable and the worst among all men. But my reason cannot explain to me how a man, who day and night sacrifices himself in fasting and prayer and tries to exercise himself continually in all virtues, is not better than a man who all day long utters idle and unedifying words, and who recites the Office very badly, and who does not observe chastity, nor obedience, nor poverty. And I feel that I cannot incline my soul to feel such great humility. After many prayers and great efforts of sacrifice the Lord told me: "You cannot obtain what you are asking for in prayer; this grace can be given to you by me alone." Now I am therefore feeling sad, since I cannot attain what I am praying for. If anybody would amputate my hand or my foot, or would pluck my eyes out of my face, even though I try to serve him in any way I can, I still cannot love him as before, and it is not so pleasing for me to hear good things about him."

How Masseo did not like grumbling

The procurator of the brothers of that same hermitage of Cibottola would often grumble about the other brothers, and whenever he would see or hear bad actions or words, he would tell the brothers: "This is what that brother priest has done, and this is what the other brother has done." Brother Masseo could not bear to listen to him without feeling uneasy, but because of his reverence towards the Guardian he did not say anything to him. At last he took the procurator close to him in a secluded place and told him: "My son, I beg you to keep before your eyes the good deeds of men and Saints, and in this way you will turn evil into good, and good into best. Indeed, if you fix your gaze upon the evil which you see and consider how you can reveal it to others, you will turn good into evil and evil into the worst of vices."

[121] One day he also said these words against those who would have liked to go often here and there on pilgrimage: "It is better to go and visit the living saints than the Saints who are dead. It is more praiseworthy to visit the good men who live, than the tombs of the Saints. The living saints teach you how to avoid the dangers, which they encounter, as well as the spiritual and corporal temptations over which they have won." He would also often say: "Where there is the greatest need, there lies the greatest profit." Thus he left this life full of virtues, and was buried in Assisi in the basilica of Saint Francis.⁹⁸

98 Masseo died in 1280 and is buried on the left side behind the tomb of Saint Francis.

Beginning of some facts regarding
the life and miracles
of Saint Anthony of Padua,
that were not written down
in whole or in part
in his major Legend⁹⁹

[121] The most glorious father, Saint Anthony of Padua, was one of the chosen companions and disciples of Saint Francis. The Saint used to refer to him as *his bishop*, on account of the fame of his life and preaching.¹⁰⁰ When the Pope had convened a council in Rome,¹⁰¹ in which a great multitude of pilgrims took part, because of

99 The Bollandists, in *Acta Sanctorum* (13th June) edited this work in 1698 under the title: “*Legenda alia seu liber miraculorum chronicis Ordinis olim insertus et ex msc. (scil. ex illis quae II aut I nominavimus) erutus a R.P. Luca Waddingo et quidem: Caput I. Miraculis confusi et conversi haeretici.*” They called it *Liber Miraculorum*. The major Legend of Saint Anthony would be the *Vita Prima* or *Assidua*, by an anonymous Franciscan writer, dated 1232, written for the occasion of the canonisation of St. Anthony in Spoleto (30th May 1232). The *Liber Miraculorum* can be seen as a subsequent addition to the *Assidua*, just as the *Tractatus Miraculorum S. Francisci* by Thomas of Celano is nowadays regarded as an addition to the *Memoriale in Desiderio Animae* (2C). The *Liber Miraculorum* is made up of 66 episodes, of which only 4 are directly concerned with events in the life of St. Anthony and with his canonisation. The rest of the episodes are all miraculous events, of which 33 regard miracles during the life of St. Anthony and 31 are miracles post mortem. The sources of the *Liber Miraculorum* include *The Deeds of St. Francis and his Companions*, the *Benignitas*, and the *Rigaldina*, both of which are 13th century documents considered as sources for the life of St. Anthony. The events, which occurred in France, when Anthony was staying there (1225-1227), were probably familiar to Arnald of Sarrant, who came from the Province of Aquitaine.

100 Francis refers to Anthony as “my bishop” in the short letter which he wrote to him in 1223, authorising him to teach theology to the brothers in Bologna (FAED I, 107).

101 According to Luke Wadding (*Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1227, n. 15), these events occurred in 1227, during Eastertide, when Pope Gregory IX was elected (1227-1241) and began his pontificate on Easter Sunday, in front of all those who had come to Rome for the Easter indulgence. In 1228 Gregory IX also

the indulgences which could be acquired, - in fact there were Greeks, Latins, French, Germans, Slavs, English and many other people of diverse languages – the Pope commanded Anthony to preach. The Holy Spirit worked so many wonders through the tongue of Saint Anthony, as if He was working through the holy Apostles, that all the people who heard him marvelled because they understood his words clearly. Each and every one of them could listen to him in his own native tongue. On that occasion he spoke about difficult and sweet realities, in such a way that all those who were present [122] were astonished and they remained struck with admiration. For this reason the pope called Anthony by the name of *Ark of the Covenant*.

How he preached to the fish

When Saint Anthony was preaching in Rimini,¹⁰² that town was inhabited by a great multitude of heretics. Anthony desired to dispute against their errors and to lead them back to the light of the truth. But these heretics had hearts of stone, and not only did they refute the Saint’s words, but they treated him with utter contempt when they came to listen to him. So Saint Anthony, inspired by God, one day went to the mouth of the river close to the sea-shore and, standing on the bank at the place where the river entered the sea, he began to preach to the fish and to call them on the part of God: “Listen to the word of the Lord, you fish of the river and the sea, since the unfaithful heretics chose to regard it with contempt.” At that very moment such a great quantity of large and small fish gathered near Saint Anthony, that nothing similar had been seen before; and all the fish were holding their heads slightly above the water. In that spot one could see large fish swimming close

convened a council in Rome, against the emperor Frederick II. The aim of this narrative is to present Anthony’s sermon as a representation of the miracle of Pentecost in Acts 2:4. This episode is also found in ABF 44 (FAED III, 519) and *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* 39 (FAED III, 631).

102 This famous episode in the life of Saint Anthony took place in Rimini, in 1222, at the mouth of the river Marissa. The heretics who Anthony converted were Cathars, who were numerous in northern Italy. The episode is also found in ABF 45 (FAED III, 519-521) and *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* 40 (FAED III, 632-633). It shows striking resemblance to the episode of Saint Francis who preached to the birds (1C 58: FAED I, 234).

to small ones, and the small ones swimming in peace among the large ones. One could see many diverse species of fish, and all were swimming in the same fashion, and they looked like a painting of a field with a multitude of colours and figures, which were marvellously swimming in perfect order before the Saint. One could see that a multitude of large fish were ordered like an army in front of a castle, and they arrived first at the place where the Saint was preaching. The medium-sized fish had taken possession of more shallow waters, and as if taught by God they stayed immobile in their places in peace. The multitude of small fish looked like pilgrims who were hurrying to acquire an indulgence, and they approached the holy father as if he were their teacher. Thus, during this heavenly sermon, all the fish came to stand in front of Saint Anthony, and they behaved in an orderly fashion, with the small fish in front, with the medium-size fish in the middle, and with the large fish behind, where the water was deeper.

When all the fish had gathered in complete orderliness, Saint Anthony solemnly began to preach to them and say: “My brothers fish, you are bound to give great thanks to your Creator according to your capabilities, since He has given you a noble element in which you live according what suites your nature, namely the sweet and salty waters. There you can find many places in which to shelter, in order to avoid the discomfort of stormy waters. He has given you an element that is transparent and clear, many ways that you can follow while swimming, and also abundant food. In order that you may live, your Creator administers to you the food for your necessities. [123] In the beginning of the world, you were blessed by God and were given the commandment to multiply. During the flood, you alone were preserved without harm among all the other animals that were outside the ark. You have been adorned with fins and have the strength to go wherever it pleases you. You received the command to preserve Jonah, the Lord’s prophet, and after three days to place him back on dry ground. It was you who provided the Lord Jesus Christ with the coin in order to pay the tax, since he was poor and did not have any money. After the resurrection you provided food for the eternal King. So for all these many graces you are bound to praise and bless the Lord, since you have received unique and good gifts among all the other animals.”

Upon hearing these words and other similar exhortations, the fish made sounds. Some opened their mouths and all of them made

a sign of bowing their heads, as they could, as if they wanted to praise the Most High. Saint Anthony was overjoyed in his spirit at the reverence that the fish were showing, and he said with a clear and loud voice: “Blessed be the eternal God, to whom the fish in the waters render more honour than heretics, and to whose words the irrational creatures give heed more than men who are unfaithful.” The more Saint Anthony preached, the more the fish increased in multitudes, and not a single one of them left the place where it was staying. The citizens of the town flocked to see this miracle. The heretics also came over in order to see this unusual miracle. They marvelled at this event, and with contrite hearts they all prostrated themselves at the feet of Saint Anthony, and then sat down together to listen to his preaching. So Saint Anthony opened his mouth and preached so marvellously about the Catholic faith, that he converted all the heretics who were there and strengthened the faith of all the believers, who remained there filled with joy and blessings. After Saint Anthony had given leave to the fish, they departed happily and joyfully with many gestures in which they seemed to bow their heads and to play. Then they all swam away in the other parts of the sea. The Saint remained in that place for many days preaching, and he converted the heretics and reaped great fruits with his preaching.

How he converted a certain heretic

When the holy man was staying in the region of Toulouse, there was a certain heretic who perfidiously and with strong arguments disputed with him regarding the salutary Sacrament of the Eucharist, and also insulted him and would hardly be converted to the faith.¹⁰³ After a long time this heretic confronted him with these words: “Let us stop arguing with words and come to facts. If you, Anthony, can show me through a miracle and in front of all that there exists the

103 The Bollandists also speak about Toulouse. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1225, n. 15 says that the episode occurred at Bourges, and that the heretic was a certain Jew by the name of Guyard. Bartholomew of Pisa says that the event happened at Rimini, and that the heretic’s name was Bononillo (Bonelum). Given that the question regarded the doctrine on the Eucharist, the heretic could only have been a Cathar. Anthony was preaching in Provence in 1225 and was Custos at Limoges in 1226.

body of Christ, I will reject all heresies and I will submit myself to the yoke of faith.” The Saint answered him that he was ready to take this challenge confidently. So the heretic added: “I will shut my beast indoors for three days and make it suffer hunger. After three days I will take it out in front of all those who are gathered, and I will make it see its fodder, which I shall prepare. At the same time you are to stand in front of it holding what you assert to be the body of Christ. If that famished beast will discard its fodder and will hurry to reverence that God, which you assert has to be adored by all creatures, [124] I will truly believe in the faith of the Church.” The holy man willingly accepted this challenge. On the fixed day all the people gathered in the large square.

The heretic was there present, surrounded by the crowd of his evil supporters. He was leading a mule that was suffering from hunger, and he was also holding its fodder. Saint Anthony celebrated Mass in a chapel. After Mass, in front of all the people there gathered he took the most holy body of Christ and, after imposing silence on the bystanders, said to the mule: “In virtue and in the name of your Creator, whom I am truly holding in my hands, although I am unworthy, I tell you and command you, o beast, to immediately and humbly kneel down in reverence, so that the perverse heretics will know that every creature reverently obeys its Creator, to whom the dignity of the priestly ministers upon the altar.”

At the same time the heretic offered the fodder to that famished mule. A marvellous thing happened! That beast that was suffering so much hunger, at the sight of Christ, and at the words of Saint Anthony, discarded its fodder and immediately bowed down its head and knelt before the living Sacrament. Great was the joy of the Catholics, while the heretics were all brought to confusion. According to his promise, that heretic denied all his errors, and began to believe and to obey the precepts of the Church.

How he was invited by heretics and ate poisoned food without suffering any harm

It happened that when Anthony was in Italy he was invited by heretics to dine with them. The Saint accepted the invitation, in order to make them turn away from their errors, following the example of

Christ, who ate with publicans and sinners. Since a troubled conscience often plans violent actions, the heretics, whom Anthony frequently confounded in his sermons and disputations, with evil thoughts in their minds, placed poisoned and deadly food in front of blessed Anthony. But the Holy Spirit revealed this to the Saint. When he reproached them with peaceful exhortations regarding their malicious plans, the heretics lied and imitated the father of lies by telling the Saint that they had done this in order to test the truth of the words of the Gospel, which states: *They will be unharmed should they drink deadly poison* (Mk 16:18). They convinced him, therefore, that if he would purposely eat that food and it would not harm him in any way, they would adhere always to the faith of the Gospel, whilst if he would be afraid to eat that food, they would judge the words of the Gospel to be false. Anthony remained intrepid in front of that food. After marking it with the sign of the cross he began to take the food in his hands and to eat it. Then he told the heretics: “I am doing this not to tempt God, but for the sake of your faith and in order to imitate the Gospel constantly and without fear.” When he had eaten that food, the Saint appeared healthy as before, and did not suffer any harm in his body. When the heretics saw this, they were all converted to the Catholic faith.

[125] Regarding his actions when he was Custos of Limoges, and how he was seen in two places at the same time

When Saint Anthony was Custos of Limoges,¹⁰⁴ during Holy Week he was in the town of Limoges. It was Holy Thursday of the Lord’s Supper and Anthony was sowing the words of life to the congregation gathered during the hour of Matins at the church of Saint Peter *de Quadivio*. At the same hour of midnight the Friars Minor of that friary were praising the Lord and singing the Office of Matins. Saint Anthony, who was the Custos, had been assigned to sing one of the readings during the Office of Matins. While the friars continued to pray the Office until the reading, which Anthony was supposed to proclaim, all of a sudden he appeared in the midst of the choir and

¹⁰⁴ At this point the Bollandists begin chapter 2, entitled *Sancti miracula, cum esset Custos Lemovicensis*. The Custody of Limoges was part of the Province of Aquitaine.

solemnly sang the lesson. All the friars there present were astonished, since they knew that he was in the town preaching. In that same hour, in fact, the power of the Lord made him appear with the brothers in the choir, where he sang the reading. After he finished singing he disappeared, and continued to spread the seed of the words of life to the people in the church of Saint Peter. In fact, during the time he was singing the reading in the choir, he had been silent in front of the people present in that church.

A similar fact happened in Montpellier, and it is found in a certain Legend of the Saint.¹⁰⁵ During the time in which Anthony was teaching in Montpellier, it happened that once he was preaching during a solemnity, in front of the clergy and the entire population. When he had begun his sermon, he remembered that he had to attend to some office, but that he did not want to discard it in any way because of his forgetfulness. In fact, it was the custom, on certain exceptional feast days that two among the learned brothers should sing the *Alleluia* during conventual Mass. It happened that on that particular day the servant of God had to attend to this office. He was not at the least troubled by this, but it seemed that he wanted to sleep, and bowed down his head on the pulpit, while he immediately covered his head with his hood. At that same hour the man of God was seen in the church of the friars singing the *Alleluia*, while for the whole span of time in which he was singing his body remained immobile on the pulpit in front of the multitudes of people who stood there. One should not have any doubts regarding this, since the almighty God also transferred the holy Doctor Saint Ambrose to the funeral of Saint Martin,¹⁰⁶ and the holy Father Francis to the provincial chapter at Arles, where Anthony was preaching on the inscription which was placed on the cross.¹⁰⁷ [126] In the same way God wanted to show in this marvellous man that these Saints were all equal in their merits. When Anthony had diligently completed the office assigned to him, it seemed that he returned to his senses, and continued in a splendid way the sermon he had started earlier.

¹⁰⁵ Saint Anthony was sent as *lector* in the town of Montpellier in 1224. The Legend written by Lorenzo Suriano in 1572, also narrates this episode in chapter 20.

¹⁰⁶ Cfr. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita S. Martini*, chapter 48.

¹⁰⁷ This episode is found in 1C 48 (FAED I, 225); LMj IV,10 (FAED II, 557); LMn IV,4 (FAED II, 700).

How he breathed in the mouth of a novice and liberated him from a great temptation

When Anthony was Custos of Limoges, a certain novice, called Peter, had a great temptation to leave the Order. The man of God was informed by divine revelation regarding this temptation. He took great care of the flock entrusted to him, and he had a most tender compassion for the lost sheep. So inflamed by the Spirit he breathed into the mouth of that novice, and opened his mouth with his own hands, saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit". A marvellous thing occurred! The very moment in which that young man felt in himself the power of the spirit of the holy Father, he fell to the ground and stopped breathing. Saint Anthony, however, in front of the brothers who were standing there and who came hurrying to that place, with his own hands lifted the novice up from the ground. Immediately that novice resumed breathing and began to speak saying that he had been enraptured in the company of the angels, and narrated the marvels that God had worked in him. Since the Saint wanted to attribute that miracle to the power of God and not to his own merits, he commanded that novice that he should not care to speak any more about the revelations he had received. From that moment all temptations withdrew from that brother, and as he himself used to say, for as long as he lived in the Order, he was freed from all stings of temptation, and he led from above to a virtuous life and progressed in all holiness, in such a way that he became an example to the other brothers.

How he freed a certain monk who was very troubled by temptations of the flesh

During the same time the holy Father was led by God to the abbey of Solignac¹⁰⁸ and left the diocese of Limoges. A certain monk from that same monastery had been for a long time prey to a malicious temptation of the flesh. Although he disciplined his body through fasting, long vigils and prayers, he could not find any solace against that evil impulse and vexation. But God took care of him and

¹⁰⁸ The famous Benedictine abbey of Solignac, on the river Sarthe close to the town of Sablé.

reserved blessed Anthony to his aid. When that monk heard about the sanctity of blessed Anthony, he went to him and confessed all his sins and also described with confidence that temptation, and then he humbly pleaded with him to answer his prayers and help him. So the holy man took that monk to a secluded place, took off his own tunic and gave it to that man who was in danger in order to wear it. As soon as he had worn Anthony's tunic, it was as if that tunic and the cord that girded that most chaste body, emanated such purity and cleanliness of the spirit that all the heaviness of that corporal temptation was repressed. From that moment all motions of the flesh ceased to infest that monk, as he later on gave witness to many other persons.

How he gave a certain devout woman the hair that her husband had torn away from her head

In the same town of Limoges there was a certain woman who showed great devotion to the friars, and who would often buy the things that were necessary for them. [127] She had a jealous husband, who was also not a devout man. One evening that woman remained outside late in order to acquire the brothers' necessities of life. When she returned home after nightfall, her husband angrily shouted at her and said: "So you are just back from your lovers' company." She answered him: "Yes, it is true. I have been with the friars Minor, whom I love and for God's sake I take care of them." At these words her husband was enraged. He pulled her so strongly by the hair that he tore away all the hair from her head. When she saw her locks of hair all torn away she gathered them and, enlightened by her faith, placed them on a pillow arranging them in such a way that she reclined her head above them. The following morning, she sent for Saint Anthony, and asked him to come over quickly, since she was not feeling well. Since the holy man thought that she needed confession, he went to her house as quickly as he could. She told him: "Brother Anthony, look what happened to me for looking after your brothers." She then told him what had befallen her, and full of spiritual fervour added: "If you will pray to God for me, I know that God will place my hair to where it belongs." The Saint said: "Woman, may you be blessed, but is this the reason why you made me come here?" So he went back to the brothers and called them, and told

them what had happened to that woman. He also pleaded with them to pray for her and said: "Brothers, let us pray, and may the Lord look favourably upon her faith, as I hope He will." At that very moment in which the Saint was praying the hair of that woman were placed back in an ordered way on her head where they belonged. When her husband returned home, that woman showed him her head and told him all that had happened. He was astonished and moved his inner spirit towards the fear of God. He totally drove off all suspicions and jealous feelings, and began to respect the brothers and became very devoted to them.

How, through his merits, a certain maid who worked for the brothers, was not soaked by rain

When the holy man was staying in Brives, in the diocese of Limoges, he received the first dwelling of the friars Minor and he had a cell prepared in a crypt that was very far away from that place. There was a spring of water in the rock, and which came out in drops from that rock. There he lived a solitary life in great austerity and dedicated himself to contemplation. Since he had no cook, and the friars cooked his food, the Saint asked a certain devout woman to plant some vegetables in a small garden, in order to provide comfort and food to the brothers who were subject to him. Once there was a heavy downpour of rain, and the entire place was inundated. That woman called a maid and gently told her to hurry to the garden and to bring whatever vegetables were necessary to cook a meal to the friars. That maid had no intention of going through the discomfort of getting soaked in the rain. However, won over by the prayers of her lady, she finally went to gather the vegetables necessary for the brothers' meal, and then she had to carry them to the hermitage of the friars, which lay at a great distance from her lady's manor. Although the rain continued to fall very heavily and did not stop for one moment, neither her body nor her clothes got wet. She went back totally dry to her lady and told her that, [128] although it was raining heavily, the rain did not touch her in any way. Peter from Brives, who was the son of that lady, and a

canon at Saint Léonard le Noblet,¹⁰⁹ often used to praise the Saint and to speak about this miracle which he heard from his mother.

How he revealed a diabolical stratagem to the brothers

When he was living in the same area, one evening after Compline, he remained as usual occupied in prayer. Some of the brothers, after having gone out of the Oratory, had the vision of a certain large field, which belonged to one of the friars' friends¹¹⁰. This was full of men who were clearing the whole field and destroying the ears of wheat from their roots. The brothers were very sad to see the great destruction that befell a man who was their great friend, and they rapidly approached the man of God and with loud voices informed him regarding the damage, which had been done to such a great friend of the Order. The man of God answered them: "Be silent, brothers, calm down, and go back to your prayers, because this is the work of our adversary, who has planned an evil stratagem during this night in order to disturb our souls during the time of prayer. You should surely know, that the field of our devout friend will not suffer any damage and no destruction will befall it." The brothers obeyed the admonitions of the holy Father and waited to see what would happen until the next morning. The following morning they all looked at that field and

109 Nobiliacum, or Saint Léonard le Noblet, is a town on the river Vienne, where a monastery of monks once stood. During the life of Saint Anthony there was a college of ten secular and regular canons, together with the prior. The town is famous for Saint Leonard, abbot, a very popular Saint in the Middle Ages. According to an old 11th century legend, Leonard belonged to a noble Frankish family at the time of King Clovis, and he was a disciple of Saint Remy of Rheims. After having secured the release of a great number of prisoners and slaves he entered monastic life near Orleans, preached the Gospel in Aquitaine and, after having prayed for a safe delivery for the wife of King Clovis during childbirth, he founded a monastery on the royal domain of Noblac (Noblet) near Limoges. His cult spread far and wide during the period of the Crusades.

110 This could be a reference to the "spiritual friend" of the friars, mentioned in the Bull *Quo elongati* of Pope Gregory IX (28th September 1230), after a delegation of brothers, including Anthony who was Minister of Romagna, went to the Pope following the general chapter of 1230, asking him for an interpretation of difficult passages of the Later Rule of the Friars Minor. The spiritual friend had the duty to keep in his possession the alms and offerings deposited by the friars (FAED I, 570-575).

found it to be perfectly intact and unharmed on all sides. From this they recognised that the devil had tried to trick them, and since they were now aware of the malicious plans of the devil they grew in their devotion to the Saint and revered him all the more.

How he predicted the imminent wickedness of the devil

Once Anthony was preaching at Sainte Junien in the diocese of Limoges.¹¹¹ Such a great multitude of people had gathered that the large church was not enough to hold them all inside. So the man of God had to go out in the spacious square to preach in front of that great congregation. A wooden pulpit was immediately prepared for him in an elevated place, and the man of God went up to that pulpit and told the people: "I know that soon the enemy will insult us during this sermon, but do not be afraid, because his malice will not harm you." A short time elapsed, and the pulpit on which the Saint was standing gave way and disintegrated in the presence of all the astonished onlookers, but it did not harm him or anyone else. The people were enkindled with greater reverence towards the man of God, whom they saw shining with the spirit of prophecy. They prepared a new place for him, and everybody listened with great attention to his sermon.

How he preached forcefully against vice

Once Anthony was preaching in a synod at Bruges. He addressed the Archbishop with a great fervour of spirit, and told him: "I am speaking to you, you horned man."¹¹² Then he began to preach

111 St. Junien is a fortified town on the river Vienne, west of Limoges. According to Wadding a Franciscan friary was founded in 1230 in that place, where there was also a famous abbey, with a college of canons and an archpriest.

112 The archbishop of the town of Bourges was Simon Sully (1218-1232), who held a synod in 1228. The synod could have been held under the authority of the Pontifical Legate, and it was a synod against the Albigenians. St. Anthony preached during this synod. He reproached the archbishop (in Latin he called him *cornuted*, literally a beast with horns), maybe because of the fact that he was a mitred prelate.

about all the vices, [129] which stained the conscience of that Archbishop. He preached with such clarity and with such fervour and solid arguments taken from the testimony of Scripture that the Archbishop immediately began to feel inner sorrow and began to shed tears and feel a sense of devotion he had never experienced until that day. When the synod ended, he humbly went to a secluded place and opened the secrets of his conscience. From that moment onwards he became more devoted towards the friars and occupied himself assiduously in the service of God.

How those who were hearing his sermon were not soaked by heavy rain

Once Anthony convoked the people of Limoges for a sermon. There was such a multitude of people that no church was deemed large enough to contain such a large congregation. So the people convened in a large open space, which used to be the *forum* of the pagans, and which was called *the sandy hollow*. In that place the people could be received more comfortably and Anthony could preach about heavenly words as was befitting to him. While the Saint was preaching to the people with great fervour with words as sweet as honey and all those persons were captivated and drawn to heavenly things, all of a sudden, thunder began to be heard, lightning bolts lit up the sky and it started to rain heavily. Since those people were afraid of the storm and the rain they began to move away from that place and to be agitated, but the man of God comforted them with sweetness and told them: "Please do not move and do not be afraid of the rain, since *hope does not disappoint* (Rm 5:5) those who trust in God, and in this way the rain will not do you any harm." The people obeyed the words of the man of God, and *he who binds up the waters in the clouds* (Job 26:8) held the rain from falling upon them, while it was pelting down heavily in all the other parts of the town. After the end of the sermon of the holy man, not one single drop of rain had fallen upon those people, who were attentively listening to the divine words. When he at last concluded his sermon after a long time, all those people stood up. They beheld all the ground around them totally soaked with rain,

while the place in which they were staying was dry. Thus they praise-God who showed His marvellous power in that Saint.¹¹³

Regarding the way he cured an insane man with his cord

One day Saint Anthony was preaching. From the midst of the crowd an insane man stood up, and he was disturbing him and all the people listening to the sermon. The Saint gently reproached him and told him to shut up, but that man said he would not be still until Anthony would give him his cord. The Saint untied his cord and handed it to that man. Then the insane man embraced and kissed it and regained his senses and the use of his rational faculties. In front of all the astonished bystanders he knelt in front of the Saint, and thanked him for his cure, while all those people were aroused to glorify God in his servant.

How an Angel carried a letter sent by the Minister

Saint Anthony was preaching in Padua, hearing confessions and giving spiritual counsels. He continued to do so for a very long time. He greatly desired spiritual peace, and longed to dedicate himself to prayer and contemplation. He therefore wrote a letter to the Minister, asking him permission to be sent to another place, which would be good for quiet and contemplation.¹¹⁴ He wrote the letter [130] in the cell in which he studied, and went to the Guardian, asking him humbly to find somebody to take that letter to the Minister. A servant of God was found and went back to Anthony's study-cell in order to take that letter. But when Anthony diligently searched for it in the place where he put it, he could not find it in any way. So he thought

113 The Bollandists here commence chapter 3, entitled "Other miracles which the Saint worked in Italy and in Gaul, regarding people raised from the dead, newly-born children, and a prophecy of martyrdom."

114 This episode could refer to the famous Lenten preaching, or *quaresimale*, which Anthony held in Padua in February-March 1231, after which he asked for permission to transfer to the hermitage of Camposampiero, where he spent the spring months of 1231 in quiet contemplation and in writing his *Sermones festivi*.

that probably his request was not pleasing to God, since when he went back to that place, he could not find that letter. Therefore he changed his plans and told the Guardian that he did not care any more to send that letter. A marvellous thing occurred! After the number of days necessary for that servant to go to the Minister with the letter and come back with an answer had passed, blessed Anthony received from his Minister a reply to what he had requested in his letter, namely, that he could transfer to that hermitage where he requested to go for his spiritual consolation. One should truly believe that an Angel in the guise of a servant had taken that letter to the Minister, so that he would satisfy blessed Anthony's petition, which was acceptable to God. This is to be reputed as showing a true miracle.

Regarding how the abbot of Vercelli praised Saint Anthony in his Commentary on the angelic hierarchy

Saint Anthony was the first friar who, with the consent of Saint Francis, was instructed by the general chapter of the Order to dedicate himself to the study of theology together with brother Adam of Marsh.¹¹⁵ They both went to the abbot of Saint Andrew of Vercelli,¹¹⁶ who was one of the most excellent theologians. He was translating the books of blessed Dionysius (the Areopagite) from the Greek original into Latin, and was writing a most beautiful commentary. At that moment the general study house had been transferred from Milan to Vercelli.¹¹⁷ The abbot received them kindly, and became aware of such

115 This information regarding Adam of Marsh is not correct, since he was never sent with Anthony to the *studium* of Vercelli. Anthony was already a priest when he entered the Order, and Adam was a Master in theology when he entered the Order of Minors in 1226. So they were both scholars and lecturers of theology, and not students.

116 According to the Bollandists, this was not a Benedictine monastery, but rather a community of Canons regular, whose superior is here mistakenly called by the name of abbot. This community of Vercelli was founded round about the year 1220, whose first superior came from the Canons regular of St. Victor in Paris, and whose name was Thomas "Gallus". He was a most famous doctor of theology and a scholar of the mystical writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, and died in 1226.

117 Again, this information is incorrect, since there was no study house of theology in Milan. The study houses were in Bologna and Padova. The *studium*

progress in their intellectual faculties and spiritual elevations, that the same doctor abbot said that he could truly describe the celestial hierarchy as he saw it in their own souls, and regarded himself as if unlearned men had given him instruction. Indeed, for five years they studied with him the books of blessed Dionysius, and they arrived at such inner peace of mind and light of wisdom, that it seemed that they did not only learn these hierarchies, but that they actually experienced them in their own lives. That is why the same abbot witnessed to the sanctity of blessed Anthony in his Commentary, in the third chapter, where under the letter *u* he adds this note: "Frequently love [131] penetrates where the knowledge of physics stays outside. That is why we read how the holy Bishops did not consider it a great thing to be instructed in the science of physics, since when they were satisfied with the rapture of their intellectual faculties in mystical theology, with which they penetrated the heavens, all knowledge of physics could lead them up in a most subtle way to the most blessed Trinity. I myself have experienced this in the holy brother Anthony of the Order of friars Minor, with whom I have been uniquely familiar. He was less instructed in the secular sciences, but with his most pure soul and the ardour of his spiritual faculties, he was inflamed and enraptured in mystical theology and fervently desired and was abundantly satisfied with it, as I can demonstrate with what has been written regarding John the Baptist: *He was a burning and shining lamp* (Jn 5:35). Indeed, he was burning inwardly with love, and outwardly shining resplendently with the same love."

[132] The same holy man Anthony did not presume to lecture theology, without the explicit will of Saint Francis, even though the brothers insisted. Francis wrote a short letter in which he gave this answer to Anthony: "Brother Francis sends greetings in Christ to Brother Anthony. I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers provided that, as is contained in the Rule, you do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion, as is laid down in the Rule. Wishing you all good."¹¹⁸

generale was transferred from Padova to Vercelli after 1228. St. Anthony did not stay in Vercelli for five years, as the author here states, but rather for five months. This could have been a copyist's mistake. He was sent to Vercelli in 1224, and from there he passed to the house of studies in Bologna, where he lectured theology to the brothers.

118 FAED I, 107. The text in the *Chronicle of XXIV Generals* is slightly different.

Somebody also referred that the same Saint Anthony was once a companion of Saint Dominic, since they were both canons regular.¹¹⁹

Once, when a certain abbot of the black monks was preaching in Padua, and Anthony heard him mentioning Saint Paul and Dionysius, he was totally changed and was enraptured for a long span of time in the contemplation of the sweetness of God's word.¹²⁰

How, by the merits of the prayers of Saint Anthony, a novice who was going to leave the Order was compelled to bring back the psalter to him

Once Anthony was lecturing theology to the brothers at Montpellier. It happened that a certain novice left the Order and took with him during the night a psalter with commentary, which had a great value. In fact, the servant of God used to teach the brothers by using this psalter, but the novice stole it from him just the same. The man of God was very sad when he heard what had happened. He immediately went to pray, so that through divine power the devil would have permission to meet that novice who was fleeing with security and crossing a certain bridge, and to appear to him in under a terrifying aspect and tell him: "Go back to the servant of God Anthony and to your Order, and take with you the psalter. Otherwise, under God's command, I will kill you and throw you in the river." That novice was terrified and astonished, but he was trying to resist him for a short time. But that devil began to grow so large and to come so close to the

119 This is another error, since Saint Dominic, born in 1170 at Caleruega, in Spain, founded the Order of Preachers in 1216, and died in Bologna, in 1221. He was indeed a canon at the cathedral of Osma, but not a canon regular, as was Anthony before he became a friar Minor. So they were never companions, and probably never even met.

120 The black monks are the Benedictines. We do not know which word of Scripture the author is referring to here. It could be the text of Acts 17:34, where Saint Paul preaches in the Areopagus in Athens, and converts a certain man called Dionysius. Subsequently this Dionysius was believed to have been bishop of Athens. Dionysius the Areopagite, as he was subsequently known, was the composer of mystical treatises, namely *De divinis nominibus*, *De caelestis hierarchia*, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, *De mystica theologica*. Popular tradition confused him with St. Dionysius (Dennis), bishop and martyr of Paris during the 3rd century (feastday on 9th October).

novice that not only did he look horrendous and terrible, but he also wanted to kill him. So the novice was immediately captured by divine fear, went back [133] to the man of God, offered him the psalter, and recognized his fault. At last he pleaded with tears to be readmitted into the Order.

How he saved the life of a boy who remained in a cauldron of boiling water

One day Saint Anthony came to a certain village in order to preach. A certain woman was holding her son close to a cauldron that was placed on top of the fire in order to give him a bath. She heard that Saint Anthony wanted to preach. With the fervour she had to listen to him she became distracted, and thinking that she was placing the child in the bed, she placed him in the cauldron, and forgot all about him, and hurried out in order to hear the sermon, leaving the child all alone. After having listened to the sermon, she returned home. Her neighbours asked her where her son was, and she remembered that she had left him close to the fire. Since she imagined that he would have by now been burnt she started to tear her hair and scratch her face in desperation, and to cry aloud about her misery. With a great hurry she ran to her house together with her neighbours, but she found the boy in the cauldron, playing in the boiling water. All those who were present were astonished, since that child did not show any signs of burning, and they raised their voices to thank God and the Saint.

Regarding a dead boy whom the Saint miraculously raised

One day Saint Anthony entered a certain castle in order to preach. A certain woman had come to listen to his sermon, and had left her baby boy in the cot. After she returned home from the sermon, she found her son turned over himself and dead. So she went back to Saint Anthony, heartbroken with sorrow because her baby boy

had died, and with many tears she began to plead with him to raise him up. He felt compassion for her, and with great confidence told her a second and a third time: "Go home. God has done a wonderful thing for you." She believed the words of the Saint and went back home. She found her baby boy alive and kicking, she who had left him dead, and he was playing with a bead of tiny balls. He never had those toys before.

How Anthony was seen during prayer embracing the child Jesus Christ our Lord

Once Saint Anthony was preaching in a certain town. A certain nobleman offered him hospitality, and assigned to him a separate room, in which he could dedicate himself to study and contemplation. Saint Anthony was therefore praying all alone in that room, while the nobleman was going around in his house. He looked with great fervour and devotion at the place where Saint Anthony was alone praying. [134] Through a small opening he secretly beheld Saint Anthony holding a small boy in his arms and embracing him. He was a most beautiful and joyful child, whom the Saint was embracing and kissing, and contemplating his face incessantly. That nobleman marvelled and gazed with intense joy at the beauty of that child, and tried to imagine from where such a lovely child could have come from. Saint Anthony then revealed to the nobleman that the child whom he saw was the Lord Jesus. In the meantime Saint Anthony had come back after having prayed for a long time, and prohibited to that nobleman to reveal what he had seen for as long as the same Saint lived. Therefore, after the death of the holy father that nobleman, with tears in his eyes, witnessed on the holy Gospels and revealed that vision which he had seen.¹²¹

¹²¹ This famous vision probably refers to the one that occurred at Camposampiero in 1231, some weeks before the death of St. Anthony, when he was a guest of Count Tiso, who would have been the nobleman who saw Anthony embracing the Child Jesus. This episode has left an indelible mark on the iconography of St. Anthony, who is often represented with the book of the Gospels and with the Child Jesus in his arms.

How the sins written down on a small parchment were erased through the merits of the Saint

During his preaching tours, Saint Anthony met a certain person who was truly sorry for having committed sins, but who could not confess them in any way because of sobs and tears. The Saint said: "Go, and write down all the sins you remember to have committed on a small piece of parchment, and then bring it to me immediately." When that person wrote down the sins, they were erased from the parchment that same moment.

How he recognized the devil under the guise of a messenger, who entered the church in order to sow confusion

During a solemn feast Saint Anthony went to preach in a certain church. The old enemy entered the church under the guise of a messenger and brought a letter to a certain noble lady, whose son the devil hated in a most special way. In that letter it was written that her son had been brutally killed by his enemies in that place. Saint Anthony, although his ears had heard nothing regarding that letter's contents, immediately said to that woman: "Do not be afraid, lady, because your son is alive and is coming back to you safe and sound. This messenger who has come was the devil, who has done this evil act so that he would disturb you while you listened to my preaching." As soon as that messenger heard these words, he disappeared like smoke.

How he foretold a pregnant woman, that the son she was carrying in her womb would be a martyr in the future

One day a certain pregnant woman from Le Puy¹²² came to visit Saint Anthony, and recommended to him the baby she was carrying in her womb. After praying Anthony turned to her and said: "May you be good, full of joy and trust; because the Lord will give you a son, who will be great in the Church of God because he will become a friar

¹²² The Latin text mentions the place as *Anisio*, or *Anicio*. The name of the town was *Anitio seu de Podio*, in French, Le Puy, where St. Anthony was Guardian.

Minor and a martyr, and who will lead many to the palm of martyrdom with his preaching.” That woman bore a child, whom she called Philip. [135] He entered the Order of friars Minor and after he journeyed a lot on this side of the sea, with the help of divine inspiration and out of devotion he crossed over to the other side of the sea. When he was in the castle of Ashdod,¹²³ he was captured by the Saracens, and together with him all the other Christians, who were around two thousand, ended up in the hands of these barbaric people. They were all condemned to death. Among them all brother Philip acquired permission to be beheaded last, in order to comfort all the others and commend them to the Lord. All those Christians were comforted by his words, and when they were interrogated whether they wanted to deny their faith and thus avoid death, or whether they intended to remain strong in faith and thus suffer capital punishment, they unanimously answered that they wanted to follow the way brother Philip had chosen.

At that moment, in front of all the Christians gathered in that place, brother Philip began to preach in a convincing way with many words of comfort in faith, and said: “My most dearest brethren, be constant, since this night the Lord has revealed to me that I will enter into the glory of heaven together with a thousand souls, through the way of martyrdom.” And in this way he comforted them, heard their confessions, and then they all answered that they had chosen to die for their faith in Christ. Thus all those holy people were beheaded for confessing their faith, while brother Philip continued to preach to them and to strengthen them in faith. The Sultan was angry and commanded to throw him on the ground and break his hands. When Philip did not refrain from preaching even then, the Sultan commanded to peel his skin down to his navel; but even so, he did not manage to make him stop from comforting the Christians. So he commanded that his tongue be cut off. But the brother continued to preach with inextinguishable fervour even without his tongue, until all of his com-

¹²³ Ashdod is a town close to Ashkelon in the modern state of Israel. In the Middle Ages it was known as Azoto. The reference to the “other side of the sea” is a clear indication of the Holy Land, or *Outremer*, as the Middle East was known during the Crusader era. The Franciscan Martyrology mentions the martyrdom of brother Philip from Le Puy and companions on 7th March 1288, but mistakenly places Ashdod in Edom (*Azoti in Idumaea*). The name of the Sultan who killed Philip was Melek-Messor.

panions had been killed by the sword. At long last he took off his hood and with great devotion let himself be beheaded and thus attained the glorious palm of martyrdom. The bodies of the Saints remained unburied for four days. The Sultan came to that place, and he marvelled at the fact that he found the bodies incorrupt and without any odour of death. From this fact it was very clear that the prophecy of Saint Anthony had truly and completely been fulfilled.

How he mended a glass that was broken and miraculously filled with wine an empty barrel

When he was relieved from his office as Custos at Limoges and returned to Italy with a companion, he was passing through the Province of Provence. [136] A certain woman who lived in a small village took pity on them because they were hungry, and for God’s love welcomed them into her house. She was like another Martha and with extreme care she placed bread and wine on the table. She took a glass on loan from her neighbour. But God wanted to test her success with the trial of a temptation. That woman poured the wine for the brothers from the flask, but since she imprudently did not close the tap of the wine barrel, all the wine spilled out on the floor. The companion of Saint Anthony took hold of the glass, but without much care, and ended up breaking it against the table, in such a way that the base fell down on one part and the upper section of the glass itself remained whole on the other part.

When they were nearing the end of their lunch that woman wanted to give them more wine to drink, but when she entered the wine cellar she found nearly all the wine spilled out on the floor. So she went back to the brothers and began to weep bitterly and feel very sad because she had lost all that wine. When Saint Anthony realised what was happening, he felt compassion for that woman, and he bowed down his head on the table, and joined his hands together, and started praying to the Lord with fervour. When that woman was looking at him praying a marvellous thing occurred. That glass, which was on one part of the table, joined itself by its own power to its base, which was on another section, and by divine power they became one whole. When that woman saw this she was astonished and took that glass in her hands and began to shake it vigorously, and realized

that it was made whole by the power of prayer. That woman believed that the power, which joined that glass together, could also restore the wine that had been spilled. So she ran down to the cellar and found the wine barrel, which some moments before was only half-filled with wine, now full to the brim, in such a way that the wine was nearly spilling out of it and bubbling as if it were new wine. That woman was full of joy and marvelled at all this. However, when Saint Anthony felt that his prayers had been heard, like a true humble disciple of Christ, left that place immediately, so that other people would not show him any honour.

Regarding miracles that occurred in Italy and first of all regarding a disabled boy who was cured

When Anthony was in Italy, he dedicated his time continually to preaching and hearing confessions. One day he was returning from a preaching tour and was walking along solitary roads, in order to avoid the applause of the multitudes on his return. A certain woman was also walking along the same road, in order to take a short cut. She was trying by all means to take this deviation in order to meet the Saint, since she was holding in her arms a son whose limbs and legs had been disabled since birth. When she came in front of the Saint she prostrated herself at his feet and with many tears and sobs begged him to show compassion on her, a desolate mother, and to bless her son with the sign of the cross. In fact, she hoped that by the power of this sign, her son would merit to acquire perfect health. The servant of Christ at first did not want to do this, because of his profound humility, but that woman continued to increase her crying and tears, and to insist in telling him, "Lord, have pity on me." Anthony was touched with compassion towards that afflicted mother [137] and her sick son. His companion, who was a man famous for his goodness, also exhorted him in the same way, and so, with the power and name of Christ, he blessed that disabled boy with the sign of the cross. A marvellous thing occurred! That boy was instantaneously cured. That mother, who had come full of sadness and carrying her disabled son, took him back home full of joy since he could walk with his own power. The holy man prayed that woman not to attribute that miracle to his merits, but to her faith, and exhorted her not to divulge that miracle for as long as she lived.

Regarding a certain disabled girl who was perfectly cured by the Saint

A certain girl whose name was Paduana lost the use of her legs when she was still four years old. She used move by crawling on her belly like a serpent. Moreover she also suffered from epileptic fits, and she would often fall down miserably on the ground and roll over herself, fuming at her mouth. Her father Pietro decided to carry her in his arms and to go unannounced and meet Saint Anthony, since he was returning from a sermon he had delivered. When he met him that father begged him with devotion and trust to mark his daughter with the sign of the cross. When the holy Father noticed his sincere faith, he marked that girl from head to toe in the name of the Trinity. When he had done this, the marvels of God's power were made evident at that very spot, since that girl who could not walk, all of a sudden began to move and to walk without needing anybody on whom to lean, and her legs regained strength. She was also immediately healed from her epileptic fits and did not fall headlong any more.

How he preserved the garments of a certain lady from being soiled with mud

In the town of Padua there was a certain noble lady. When she heard that Saint Anthony was in the town, together with a great multitude of people she went out in the open fields to listen to his sermons, but since the crowd was pushing in all directions, she fell down in the mud. She realized that all the precious and new garments she was wearing were by now ruined. She humbly commended herself to God and to Anthony, his servant, in order to protect her from the imminent danger she was in. In fact, she was terrified of her husband, who could be wild with anger at her, if she would return home with all those garments soiled with mud. That lady immediately commended herself to the patronage of the Saint, which she had requested in prayer. A marvellous thing indeed happened! She could continue walking and, among all the others who were walking with her, only her clothes were free from mud stains. All those who saw this fact praised God and the Saint, and that lady arrived joyfully at the place where Anthony was going to preach.

How a certain woman miraculously heard Anthony preach from her house, which lay at a long distance from where he was

Another good woman had a great wish to go out and follow the man of God, who was sowing the Word of life. But her husband prohibited her from doing so, and she had to remain indoors and languish in her sadness. While she was walking in the balcony of her house, she looked through the window, which faced the direction of that place where the Saint was preaching. She began to fix her gaze devoutly in that direction, since at that time Saint Anthony had to preach, in order at least to have the joy of beholding that area, since it was prohibited for her to go there. A marvellous thing occurred! While that woman was gazing with her soul full of spiritual uplifting, [138] all of a sudden, with the power of Him who usually approves the just desires of the soul, she could hear the echo of the Saint's voice in her ears. She remained there fixed by the sweetness of that voice, and for as long as she was staying in that window, she could listen to the echoing of his voice and said: "I can hear brother Anthony preaching."

That woman realised that it was the same voice that she had desired to hear. Now she was two miles away from the place where Anthony was preaching, and certainly could not hear the voice of a person from such a distance. Nevertheless that woman continued to insist with certainty that she was hearing his voice. Her husband also came up to that same window, and experienced the same thing as his wife was affirming. The grace of God and the merits of Anthony his servant made that faithful woman listen clearly to the voice of the Saint from that window. From that moment, she was united with a peculiar friendship with the servant of God, and her husband did not prohibit her any more from having such a good devotion.

Regarding the fruit of his preaching and how he joined together a foot that had been mutilated

It often happened that the servant of God Anthony would greatly desire to provide remedies for the salvation of souls, and he would try to draw closer to God those sinners who were afar because of sin. What is more marvellous, however, according to what the brothers narrate, is that he would appear to many persons who were sleeping at night, and would call them by name and tell them: "Wake up and go to that brother or to that priest and confess to him that sin which you

have kept hidden for so long." Now nobody would have known about these sins, except God. In this way, many persons who did not have the courage to confess their sins, because they felt ashamed, went to sacramental confession and were absolved.

It happened once that a certain man from Padua whose name was Leonardo came to the man of God. Among other sins he confessed to him, he told him that once he had hit hard his mother by kicking her with his foot, in such a way that she fell down with a great thud on the floor. The man of God was shocked to hear this, and in the fervour of his spirit he scolded him harshly. When he was correcting him, he added: "The foot that hits father or mother should immediately be amputated." That simple man did not understand in an intelligent way the words of the Saint, and he was so upset and sad because of his guilt that, when he returned home and immediately amputated his own foot. The news of that punishment which ended in tragedy soon spread like wildfire across the town and it also reached the ears of Leonardo's mother. She went back in to her house in a hurry, and saw her son with his foot mutilated. When she learnt the cause of what he had done, she went to the friary and with loud shouts began to ask to see brother Anthony, whom she regarded as having wanted to kill her son because of what he had convinced him to do.

The Saint consoled her and tried to explain to her what he had intended to tell her son. That same moment he went with her. He prostrated himself in anxious and devout prayer, then joined that foot with the thigh while signing it with the sign of the cross. He laid his sacred hands upon it for some time. That very moment that foot became one whole and was joined to the thigh, in such a way that the man quickly stood up as if nothing had happened to his foot, and jumping with joy he praised God.¹²⁴

[139] Regarding how he courageously faced up to a blood-thirsty tyrant and how he did not accept his gifts

There was a certain powerful man, who was a most cruel tyrant, and whose name was Ezzelino de Romano,¹²⁵ who terrorized the

124 This same miracle is also found in the life of St. Peter of Verona, Martyr of the Order of Preachers (†1252), whose feast day recurs on 29th April.

125 Ezzelino de Romano was a tyrant who terrorised Verona and Padua in the be-

town of Padua and its district. He had started to govern as a tyrant in Verona, where he had massacred many persons. Father Anthony heard about him and he intrepidly went to him personally. When he entered into his presence Anthony told him: "O enemy of God, you are most ferocious tyrant and a rabid dog, why do you not want to stop shedding the blood of innocent Christians? Look, the sentence of God's judgment will fall down upon you in a most hard and terrifying way." He also added many other serious and harsh words of admonition. The guards who were standing around the tyrant expected him to command them, as he usually did, to cruelly kill Anthony. However God made the tyrant open to listen to Anthony's words. That tyrant seemed to feel sorry and avoided all sense of wickedness in his soul, in such a way that he seemed to have become as meek as a lamb. He placed a rope around his neck and prostrated himself in front of the man of God, not without the astonishment of all those who were present, and humbly confessed his faults, and promised to change his life and obey Anthony's admonitions with a good and pleasing will. Then he spoke to his companions who were astonished and said: "Comrades in arms, do not be surprised by my attitude. I truly tell you that I beheld a most resplendent and divine light emanating from the face of this Father, and I am terrified to look at him, and when I stood before him I considered myself on the brink of falling down headlong into the abyss of hell."

Therefore Ezzelino showed great devotion towards Anthony, and for as long as the Saint was living, he refrained from doing any wicked or cruel acts, as he himself confessed afterwards.

Since the holy man frequently used to preach with courage against that cruel tyrant, he wanted to test in a malicious way the recitude and just life of the man of God. So he sent his servants to give Anthony a very precious gift, telling them: "Go and present this gift to brother Anthony on my behalf, with as much humility and devotion as you can. If he will receive it, kill him that very moment. If, on the other hand, he will refuse it with indignation, sustain everything with patience and come back, and do not molest him in any way." So those fraudulent servants went in front of Anthony and presented them-

gining of the 13th century. The Bollandists mention his surname *de Romano*. He was born in Treviso and died during a battle in Milan on 10th October 1259. He is also mentioned in the *Chronicle* of Salimbene de Adam from Parma.

selves to him with due reverence and told him: "Your son Ezzelino de Romano recommends himself to your prayers and humbly begs you to accept this small gift, which he is sending out of devotion, and to pray God for the salvation [140] of his soul." Saint Anthony refused to accept that gift, and with great anger told them many harsh words, and asserted that he would never accept a gift that was the result of stealing from others. Finally he told them that they were all heading towards eternal damnation, and that they were to return back from where they came in order not to contaminate the friary with their presence. They immediately returned back to the tyrant with great confusion, and told him all that had happened. The tyrant answered: "He is a man of God, leave him alone; let him say whatever he wants about me."

Regarding his most austere life, his bodily infirmities and his most holy death

Anthony fed the people of Padua with the food of the word of God for one whole Lent. After this period until Pentecost, which was the time for harvest, in order to dedicate himself in a more comfortable way to prayer and to the study of Holy Scriptures, he went to live in a certain remote place, which is called Camposampiero. The owner of this place was called Tiso.¹²⁶ He was a great friend of the friars Minor, and helped them in their needs from his own riches. Tiso considered Anthony as an angel sent to him by God and therefore he received him with great devotion. At his bidding he immediately had three cells of twigs constructed on a very large chestnut tree, which had abundant foliage. In these cells Anthony, together with two of his most perfect companions, namely brother Luca¹²⁷ and brother Rug-

126 Count Tisio welcomed Anthony in his estates at Camposampiero, and provided for him a tiny hermitage in the branches of a large chestnut tree. It was Count Tisio who saw Anthony holding the Child Jesus during an intense moment of spiritual uplifting.

127 This is brother Luca Belludi. According to Bartholomew of Pisa, *Liber de Conformitate*, brother Luca was buried in the friary of Padua, since he had been a close companion of St. Anthony, and was famous for his holy life, wisdom and preaching. He also composed some *Sermones dominicales*. Luke Wadding (*Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1249, n. 9) says that Luca was a member

gero, dedicated all his time to prayer and contemplation.

After some time he began to feel that his physical health was rapidly deteriorating. So he commanded the brothers to carry him to the friary in Padua. Since many people would have come out to meet him, the humble man, who shunned honours and applause, was carried to the place of the friars at the monastery of the Poor Ladies outside Padua.¹²⁸ Since his illness became very serious, after having uttered edifying words and given signs of devotion, his most holy soul passed over from this world to the Father. [141] The years of the life of Saint Anthony were thirty-six. He lived for fifteen years in his family's house, for two years in the monastery of Sao Vincente, for nine years in the monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, and finally for ten years in the Order of Saint Francis, where he joyfully shone with clear signs and miracles.

How he appeared after his death to the abbot of Vercelli and healed him

On that same day in which Saint Anthony passed away from this life, the abbot of Vercelli, who was most famous for his in-depth knowledge of Scriptures, was alone in his room, intent upon meditation of divine realities. He had shown a special love for the holy man, while he was alive, and had met him face to face, and they frequently used to feed one another spiritually with their discussions regarding the Scriptures. In one of his Commentaries this same abbot had written these words regarding Saint Anthony: "Brother Anthony of the Order of friars Minor was resplendent with God's grace since he fully drank from the abundance of mystical theology."

The abbot, therefore, was alone during the same hour when the servant of the Lord died. Saint Anthony appeared to him and entered his room, and after having saluted one another with benevolence, the holy man told him: "Lord abbot, I am leaving my 'brother ass' in Padua, and I am hurrying to my homeland." That very moment he

of the noble family of Belludi from Belluno, was a companion of St. Anthony, famous for his life and doctrine and for his zeal for poverty. Information regarding brother Ruggero is lacking.

¹²⁸ This was the monastery of Arcella outside Padua. Here Anthony died on Tuesday 13th June 1231.

touched the abbot's throat with great tenderness, and he immediately freed him from the serious illness that afflicted his throat, and then went out and disappeared.

That abbot thought that Anthony was going to his native land, namely to Spain, since he was totally unaware of the fact that he had died. He wanted at least to see him for some more time, and therefore he rose and went out, but did not find him, and began to ask anxiously the servants of the monastery whom he met whether they had seen brother Anthony. The servants answered him that he had not come. But he continued to insist that he had just seen him and that the Saint had spoken to him, and then had miraculously healed him and immediately went out of his room.

The abbot immediately went to the friary that was in that town, in order to see whether he could find him. Since he did not find him at all, the abbot went back and understood in a most clear way that the holy father had died and had left to go joyfully to his heavenly home. After having diligently asked, he came to know in a most certain way that Saint Anthony had died that very hour in which he had appeared to him.

Regarding the solemnity of his canonisation and his miracles

From the very day of Anthony's death, God showed His radiant and divine face and began to operate extraordinary miracles, prodigies and marvellous signs. The news of all these miracles reached the ears of the lord Pope Gregory IX by means of the ambassadors who came to him from Padua. After having previously examined the miracles with mature deliberation, the same Pope, on Pentecost Sunday and with indescribable solemnity, [142] read the account of the miracles in front of the prelates and a great crowd, and approved them all, in the name of the Trinity. Marking himself with the sign of the cross the Pope enrolled the holy father Anthony in the catalogue of the Saints. These things happened on the eleventh month after the death of Saint Anthony. After having solemnly sung the *Te Deum laudamus*, he intoned with a loud voice the antiphon of the Doctors, *O Doctor optime, Ecclesiae sanctae lumen*. After all the clergy there present had sung

this antiphon together with the verse and responsory, the Pope sang the Prayer with great devotion and thus concluded the celebration.¹²⁹

On that same day all the population of Lisbon, the native city of the Saint, celebrated the solemnity with great joy. However the people were unaware of the reason of their joy, since on that day nobody in Lisbon knew that Anthony was being canonised. A marvellous thing happened, however. All the bells of that city began to peal joyfully of their own accord, without anybody who was ringing them, and in this way announced the glory of such a great father with their ringing. In fact, it was later discovered that the bells began to ring some time after Saint Anthony was glorified with the grace of canonisation on that same day. That city was then enlightened with the wonders of so many miracles, that the main altar of the cathedral church was honourably dedicated to Saint Anthony, and his feast day began to be annually celebrated with solemnity during the following years.

Regarding a boy who had drowned and was freed from death

In that same city of Lisbon there was a small boy called Parisius, who was a nephew of Saint Anthony, was taking a stroll with his friends on the seashore, and then went with them out on a small boat. But a great storm blew up, and the big waves swept that small boat under them and submerged it. The other boys were older in age and knew how to swim very well, and thus avoided death. But Parisius alone drowned like a heavy stone in that vortex of water and was suffocated in a short time. When his mother heard what had happened, she let out cries of anguish and hurried to the seashore, and with many tears begged the fishermen to go out with their nets and try to bring back her son to her, so that she might at least see him dead.

The fishermen dropped their nets as if they went fishing, and gathered from the sea the boy and gave him back to his heartbroken mother. In the meantime all the relatives and friends had come to that place and with tears and sobs took that boy back home. There they tried to take the sea water out of him and lifted him up head downwards, but there was no voice nor any sign of life in him. Therefore they decided to take him to burial the very next day. His mother, however, was full of trust in the Lord and in His servant Saint Antho-

¹²⁹ Gregory IX canonised Saint Anthony in the cathedral church of Spoleto, on Pentecost Sunday, 30th May 1232, in less than one year's time from the death of the Saint on 13th June 1231.

ny, and did not let them bury him, [143] but with many loud prayers she invoked the Saint with great devotion and firmly vowed that, if her son would come back to life, she would offer him to his Order.

On the third day, in front of all those who were present, that boy who was dead woke up and returned back to life. All those people were wild with joy and praised God and Saint Anthony with great devotion. The mother did not forget her vow, and when that boy grew up, she freely offered him to the Order. He lived a most holy life among the brothers, and used to speak to them about the wonderful miracle that God had worked in him through the merits of Saint Anthony.

How a withered vine blossomed all of a sudden and produced gapes and wine

Once a group of persons were speaking together about the miracles of the Saints. One of them was praising the miracles worked by Saint Anthony, and spoke about the miracle of the glass, which an unbelieving man had once thrown down on the floor and which was not broken. Another person who heard this account wanted to ridicule those miracles and took in his hand an empty glass and a withered branch of a vine and said: "If Saint Anthony will make grapes grow out of this vine branch, in such a way that I can fill this glass with grape juice, then I will truly consider it to be a miracle. Only then will I believe the other miracle of the unbroken glass which you have just mentioned." A marvellous thing to say! That vine branch immediately blossomed with leaves; then the grapes grew, flourished and matured, in such a way that they could be pressed into juice and the entire glass was filled to the brim. When those present saw this miracle they stopped making fun of Anthony's miracles and began to praise him.

How he resuscitated the daughter of the king of León from death

The queen of León¹³⁰ had a great trust in Saint Anthony. When her eleven-year old daughter died, she kept her unburied for three

¹³⁰ The queen was Teresia, the third wife of Alfonso IX, king of León. She was the mother of Blessed Sancha and died at Toledo on 25th July 1270. Since this miracle mentions the king and Alfonso IX died on 13th April, 1231, it could only have occurred when Saint Anthony was still alive.

days against the will of the king and barons, and she continued praying and saying: "Saint Anthony, I come from your homeland, give me back my daughter." As a result of her great devotion, her daughter lived again and told her mother: "May God forgive you, mother. When I was in the glory of heaven among the virgins, Saint Anthony immediately prayed the Lord to listen to your prayers, and thus I was raised from death and sent back to you. But you should know one thing, namely, that the Lord has promised me to let me stay with you for not more than fifteen days."

How a certain heretic pretended to be blind, and denied the miracles of the Saint. As a result he became truly blind, but after having converted he miraculously began to see again

While Saint Anthony was shining in Padua with his many miracles, some heretics made fun of his prodigious deeds, and wanted to proclaim publicly that these miracles were a fake. So they came to Padua [144] and blindfolded one of them with a bandage stained with blood. In front of the entire crowd they were crying aloud and saying that he had been unjustly blinded, and therefore they prayed the crowd so that everyone would beg Saint Anthony to restore his sight. They stayed there for one whole hour, and then the one who was pretending to be blind began to cry out in a loud voice: "Blessed Anthony has restored my eye sight." All his companions ran to him and took off his bandage, so that they would make fun of Anthony for this fake miracle. But when they took off the bandage they found both eyes of that man in the same bandage. In this way those who tried to confound the truth came to a bitter delusion. They were terrified and immediately felt sorry for what they had done. They publicly confessed their treachery, and after many devout prayers and with the merits of Saint Anthony, that man regained his eyesight and they also regained the light of faith.

Another heretic who denied the Saint's miracles became a leper, but when he converted he was cured from his leprosy

A certain leper heard about the fame of the miracles of Saint Anthony, and he went to Padua. On the way he met a certain knight who was a heretic, and who denied the truth regarding Saint Antho-

ny's miracles. He told the leper: "Where are you going, you miserable man? May your leprosy come upon me, if Anthony will be able to free you from it." The leper was full of trust and went to pray devoutly under the ark of Saint Anthony and asked for his intercession. When he was sleeping there Saint Anthony appeared to him and said: "Wake up quickly, because you have been cured of your leprosy, and go to that knight who makes fun of my miracles and give your crutches to him, because he is now infected with your leprosy." That poor man stood up and went to that knight. He could not believe his eyes when he saw him all covered with leprosy, and told him: "Saint Anthony commanded me to bring you these crutches, which I used as a leper." That knight was felt sorry for his sin, and after having made a vow to Saint Anthony, promising that he would not deny his miracles in the future, he was immediately cured from leprosy.

How he appeared to certain men from Padua who wanted to kill a chaplain, and made them go back from their intention

Once a group of men from Padua were waiting on the road to lay a trap for a certain priest and kill him. But Saint Anthony appeared to them visibly and told them: "What are you doing here? Go back immediately from where you came." They answered him: "On the contrary, good friar, you go on your way, since we have not the slightest intention to move from this place." The Saint then said: "And neither will I move from here." They asked him: "Who are you, that you have the courage to command us in this way?" He answered: "I am Saint Anthony." They immediately were terrified of him and fell to the ground, and the Saint disappeared. Then they went to meet their enemy with great meekness and after having made peace with him, told him about the vision they had. Then they publicly spread the news of what had happened to them.

[145] How Saint Anthony cured a certain knight from a wound in his arm, but that knight wanted to take vengeance and received the wound once more

A certain knight was seriously wounded in his arm during a battle. The doctors could not cure him by any remedy. So he made a

vow to Saint Anthony, and his former health was restored. But when he was cured that knight was ungrateful for the grace he had received, since he wanted to take vengeance for the wound from which he had been cured. The following night, however, Saint Anthony inflicted upon him the wound he had received. In this way his ingratitude was punished.

A certain boy was cured from a swollen neck by the Saint's intercession, but his mother neglected her vow and her son became ill once more, until he was completely cured

A certain boy from Padua, whose name was Enrico, suffered from a twisted neck that was badly swollen. His mother made a vow that she would take a wax figure of his neck to the Saint's tomb, and the boy was immediately cured. The woman, however, neglected the vow she had made, and the boy's neck became swollen once more, and he suffered intense pain. His mother became aware of her negligence and made penance and went to take that wax figure of her son's neck to the Saint. That very moment her son was instantly cured.

Regarding a deaf abbot who was cured

A certain good and holy abbot, who for thirty-five years could not hear or speak, prayed and made a vow to Saint Anthony, so that he would take mercy upon him and cure him. He offered himself to take care of the Saint's altar for as long as he lived. When he went to the Saint's tomb he was immediately cured and had perfect health, and from that moment remained there to take care of the church.

How Anthony's nephew drowned and after a vow was raised from the dead

In the city of Lisbon the son of Anthony's sister, who was five years old, was playing with other boys in a little boat, which capsized. The other boys could swim, but he drowned. After three hours, his mother received her dead son from the fishermen who drew him from

the water. The boy's father wanted to bury him. But his mother was crying: "You will either leave him with me, or else you will have to bury me with him". So she turned to Saint Anthony and prayed with many tears: "Brother, you have always been kind and marvellous with strangers, will you now be cruel with your sister? I therefore beg you to come to my aid and give me back my son now. I promise you that I will offer him to the service of God in your Order." That very moment the boy woke up as if nothing had happened to him, and his mother offered him to God as she had vowed, and he lived a holy life in the Order.

In the same way, also Aldonsia, the daughter of Teresia, queen of Portugal,¹³¹ had become so gravely ill, that the doctors gave up all hope of making her live with medicines. [146] Her mother the queen was desperate because she saw that her daughter's death was irreversible. So she turned towards Saint Anthony with many tears, and devoutly invoked his help saying: "Most holy father, come to my help, since you were born in this reign. Pray now for me to the Lord, so that He might restore my daughter's health." That night, the girl Aldonsia had just gone to sleep when she saw Saint Anthony, who asked her: "Don't you recognise me?" She said that she did not know him, and he answered: "I am Saint Anthony, and I have come to you because your mother has invoked my help in her prayers. Now you have to choose one of these two things: you either have to accept to die, and the Lord will forgive all your sins and all penalties, in such a way that today you will be with me in heaven; otherwise you can remain in this world with your mother, and I will restore your health here and now." She chose to have her health restored and was cured that very moment. During that vision she accepted the cord with which the Saint was girded, and she began to shout and to call her mother saying: "My lady, Saint Anthony is here and he has given me back my health." The queen and all the maidservants came running that very moment, and

¹³¹ The Bollandists note that there was no Teresia, queen of Portugal, after the death of Saint Anthony. In fact, Teresia who was the wife of Henry of Burgundy, and whose husband added her dowry to the reign of León, lived two hundred years before the birth of Saint Anthony. Teresia who is mentioned here was the third wife of Alfonso IX, king of Portugal, and mother of Aldonsia. But she was not a queen. In the genealogical list of the royal family Aldonsia is mentioned as the wife of a knight called Peter, from whom the noble family of Ponce de León was descended.

they found her healthy and well, and they all gave thanks to God and to Saint Anthony.

How he raised back to life ten children who had drowned

A certain nobleman, who had heard about the miracles of Saint Anthony, since he could not have offspring, went to the Saint's tomb and there invoked him to pray God for him, so that he could become a father, and promised to visit the tomb ever year and bring his newborn child with him. When he went back home, his wife conceived and bore him a healthy son. When his son was seven years old, he was once sick. His father left him at home and went to the tomb of Saint Anthony, in order to fulfil the vow he had made. In the meantime, while his father was absent, the boy became healthy again. He was playing with other nine boys in a riverbed, some distance away from a dam where water was held in order to irrigate the fields. All of a sudden the sluice gates were opened and the water rushed forth with great force and all those boys were carried away in the current and drowned. Only two of them were found and were buried. Nobody could find his son, and neither anyone else of the other seven boys.

That father returned from Padua and there he met his brother with other noblemen and friends. He immediately asked how his son was, and those present answered that his son was playing with the other children, since they did not want to upset him. That father went home and insisted upon calling his son and wanting to see him. When all those present remained silent, he told them: "I will not eat or drink today, for as long as I do not see my son." So they had to tell him the truth about what had happened. The father was overwhelmed with sadness and began to insist that he would not touch any food or drink until Saint Anthony would give him back his son. His words became true as soon as he had uttered his wish, since his son came back with all the other nine boys. They had all been raised from death by the prayers of Saint Anthony after they had drowned. Great was the joy of all those present, and all the people rendered thanks with loud voices to Saint Anthony.

[147] Regarding a certain woman who was possessed by a devil, and before dying in desperation Anthony appeared to her and she confessed her sins and went to the glory of heaven

In the reign of Portugal, in the fortified town called Linhares, there was a certain lady whose name was Lupa. She was possessed by a demon, posing as a woman and her maidservant. The devil instigated her to become very cruel and she was ensnared in many evil crimes. What else could be worse? The woman, however, had a special devotion to Saint Francis and Saint Anthony. When she became seriously ill because of her many great sins, she did not care at all about the salvation of her soul and did not want in any way to be led to confess her sins. So while she was confined in her illness and was sad with desperation, two friars Minor entered her house to try to comfort her and to convince her to confess her sins. She began to assert that she had committed so many sins, that no matter what penance she would do for them, she would never make God bow down to have mercy upon her. One of the brothers, who was the elder one, told her: "If you want to confess your sins and make penance for them, I will take them upon myself and I will make you participate in my good virtues and I promise you everlasting life by the power of the Passion of Our Lord."

Having heard these words that woman was changed for the better and was encouraged to do penance. She was changed from a wolf¹³² into a lamb. So she confessed her sins with many tears and expressed deep sorrow for them. After this she asked to be dressed in the habit of the friars Minor, whom she received from the hands of that brother, and thus she died happily in the Lord.¹³³ Those two brothers immediately disappeared. All those who were there present realized without any shadow of doubt, that they were Saint Francis and Saint Anthony, since that woman was very devout to them and assiduously invoked their help. She was then buried in the friary of Guarda.¹³⁴

¹³² In Latin the name for a female wolf is *lupa*, that is, just like the name of this woman.

¹³³ Receiving the habit of the friars Minor meant that the woman asked to be accepted in the Order of Penitents (Third Order) of Saint Francis.

¹³⁴ The fortified town of Guarda in Portugal had a Franciscan friary, founded before 1268, since in that year Pope Clement IV addressed a bull to the guardian. The town of Linhares was in the same diocese of Guarda.

Some time after a certain man of arms came to the town of Linhares, where this woman called Lupa was buried. One night he heard the voice of a woman who was weeping and saying: "O miserable me! I served in a despicable way for fourteen years and I worked all in vain!" That man of arms was terrified and came to his senses. He armed himself with the sign of the cross of the Lord, and thus comforted he said: "I command you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you tell me who you are and why you are crying in this way." She answered: "I am the demon, who for fourteen years held the lady Lupa who is now dead, and compelled her to serve me in many crimes, in order that after her death I might take her with me in the profound hell because of her many sins. However, just before she died, two friars Minor wearing their hoods [148] came to see her, since she had been fond of them, and they drew her to penance and snatched her soul from my power and took her to the joys of heaven. And this should be for you a sign of the truth of what I am saying. When you will go to Linhares, where she died, you will hear a rumour among the population, namely, that a certain carpenter killed his wife, and he was caught and hanged for having murdered his own wife. I was the cause of that murder, and I will now carry with me to hell both the carpenter and his wife. In this way I will avenge myself by taking two souls instead of the one I lost."

When he heard these words, that man of arms went to Linhares. While he was staying in that town, he found out that a carpenter had indeed been hanged for having killed his own wife. So he who had already heard about what was to happen revealed the truth of that story, and everybody marvelled at it.

How he liberated a woman who was possessed by the devil and was on the verge of desperation by giving her a parchment

In the same reign of Portugal, in the town of Santarem, during the time of king Dionysius,¹³⁵ there was a certain woman who was a sinner, but who had a great devotion to Saint Anthony. She was so ob-

¹³⁵ Dionysius was the husband of queen Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, who belonged to the Order of Penance of Saint Francis. He reigned from 1279 to 1325.

sessed by the devil that he tempted her to commit suicide. In fact, she felt that it was Christ who was speaking to her in her heart and inspiring her with these words: "Miserable woman, you have committed so many evil things against me, and now you cannot be saved except by committing suicide." While she was convincing herself inwardly with similar thoughts and was very troubled, the devil wanted to attack her even outwardly, and so he appeared to her under a human form and said: "I am the one whom you offended so much; therefore if you go to the river, which is called Tagus, and you will drown yourself in order to give me satisfaction for all your faults, I will remit all your sins and I will give you eternal glory."

In this way the devil used to appear often to her and tell her these words. Once her own husband called her a demoniac. That woman became desperate and at nine in the morning on that same day she went to the river Tagus, in order to commit suicide by drowning as the devil had suggested to her. While she was going she passed by the church of the friars Minor, and wanted to go in, so that she would recommend herself to Saint Anthony, since it was his feast day. So she entered that church and prostrated herself in front of the altar of the chapel of Saint Anthony, and with many tears she prayed and said: "Saint Anthony, I have always shown trust in you, be kind to answer my prayer, and show me whether it is God's will that I go and drown, or else whether I should totally abstain from such an act."

While she was praying in this way, she fell into a very sweet sleep. Saint Anthony appeared to her and said: "Woman, wake up, and take this parchment which will free you from the vexations of the devil." She woke up from her sleep and found a certain parchment tied to her neck, in which the following words were written: *Behold the cross of the Lord, escape all you His enemies; the lion of Judah and the root of David has won, alleluia, alleluia!*¹³⁶ From that moment all temptations disappeared; for as long as she kept that parchment, the devil did not trouble her any more.

[149] But when king Dionysius heard about this story from this woman's husband, he asked to have that parchment, and immediately the devil entered and possessed that woman once again. The hus-

¹³⁶ This is the third antiphon of Lauds of the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross (3rd May): *Ecce crucem Domini, fugite partes adversae; vicit Leo de tribu Iuda, radix David, alleluia, alleluia!*

band of that woman had pity on her, and since he could not have that parchment back, at last, through the friars Minor, who mediated for him with the king, he received that parchment and gave it to his wife, in order to be liberated from the devil as she had been the first time. She confessed her sins devoutly with many tears and was totally converted to God, and for twenty years she lived a holy life and ended her days in peace. King Dionysius placed that parchment among his relics, and many miracles occurred in the case of those who invoked Saint Anthony through it.

How he freed a certain woman who out of desperation wanted to hang herself because of her licentious husband

In the reign of Portugal, in a castle called Serpa, there was a certain woman called Serra, who had a unique devotion towards Saint Francis and Saint Anthony. Her husband was an astute and wicked man, who had left his wife and lived with concubines. He not only led an evil life, but would also abuse his wife by breaking her bones with his beatings and by all kinds of afflictions. That woman became so sad that she became desperate and, in order to avoid her anguish, she decided to hang herself and thus end her miserable life. One night, when her husband was away from home and the other members of the family were sleeping, she prepared a rope in her room and was on the verge of placing her neck in the loop since the devil had convinced her to strangle herself, when somebody began to knock very hard on the door of her house.

That woman therefore hid the rope and went to see who was knocking. When she opened the door she saw two friars Minor, who humbly asked her for the love of God to accept them in her house. That woman asked them their names and wanted to know from where they had come. So they answered her that they came from very far, and one was called Francis and the other Anthony. So she told them: "Enter, for the love of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony, to whom I have always been devout." She prepared some food for them on the table, and while they ate they said many good and holy words to that woman. In this way she felt completely changed for the better, and

she decided that, out of reverence for those brothers, she would not hang herself that night, as the enemy of the human race had suggested to her.

The brothers entered the room they had been assigned, and the woman went to her bed. That same night the brothers appeared to her husband in his dreams and told him: "We are Saint Francis and Saint Anthony, and we have been sent to you from God, in order to admonish you and tell you that, if you do not convert from your wickedness and your evil ways, and send away your concubines, and live in faithfulness to your wife, within three days you will die and you will end up in the profound abyss of hell. Know that this night your wife, who is very troubled by the way you abuse her, was going to strangle herself with a rope, [150] but we have come to her house. Therefore you now go to her and as a sign of the truth we have shown you, ask her to give you the rope with which she wanted to hang herself." That man was terrified and that very moment felt contrition for his sins. The following morning he woke up and went home. His wife also woke up, and did not find the brothers, but only the bed, which was still prepared as if nobody had ever slept in it. So she was astonished, and could not understand how they managed to go out of the house, since all the doors were locked.

Her husband then came in and greeted his wife with kindness and told her: "My dear, where is the rope with which you wanted to strangle yourself last night?" His wife looked at him in disbelief, but he told her: "I know very well what a grace you have received this night since you have welcomed in your house Saint Francis and Saint Anthony who have freed you." So that woman confessed the plain truth, while her husband told her that he had had a vision, and humbly asked his wife to forgive him. Thus both of them lived in mutual love and harmony and were full of virtuous deeds for as long as they lived. In this way they both praised Saint Francis and Saint Anthony.

Regarding how he appeared in his glory to a certain woman on his feast day

There was a certain married woman, who lived close to a castle called Torres Novas, in a village called Elbron, in the reign of Por-

tugal.¹³⁷ On the feast day of Saint Anthony she was hurrying with a certain girl in order to go from this village of Elbron to the castle of Torres Novas in order to grind corn. All of a sudden a very strong wind blew in front of her and shook the sack full of corn, which she was carrying on her head, in such a way that it fell down on the ground and that woman also fell backwards as if she died on the spot. That very moment there appeared to her a young man with a good-looking face who took her soul and began to lead her with him wherever he was going. At first he led her through a very large field, until they arrived at a most horrible and dark well from which there leapt terrible tongues of fire, which went up to great heights. The smoke from that well was very dense, black and foul smelling, and within the well one could here anguished cries and shrieking screams, together with the weeping, moaning and howling of all those who were imprisoned in that profound abyss.

That woman looked down with fear in that well and saw down there many human persons who had been evil and cruel in many different kinds of positions in life, who were being tortured in various ways by the devils. There were merchants who used to cheat and who were carrying burning sacks filled with money, hanging from their necks; there were those who practiced usury, who were being eaten by the demons together with red-hot coins; there were robbers, adulterers, murderers, false witnesses, together with judges and other sinners who were being tortured in the fire with punishments which merited their crime. So that woman asked [151] the young man, who was accompanying her, what that place was. He answered that it was the infernal well. What was more astonishing was that, among the many people she saw, there were persons who were still alive, and who had been assigned to that place in order to accompany the devils. They came from the city of Lisbon and from the town of Santarem, whose names were rendered public, although it was said that they still had not come to that place. One had to believe all this, because in this vision God wanted to reveal the future as if it were present.

After this, the young man led the woman to another pleasing and fertile place, which was adorned with many plants of various species and also different kinds of flowers and fruit. In the centre the

¹³⁷ Torres Novas, a fortified town in the province of Estremadura, on the bank of the river Tagus.

woman saw a large tent, as white as snow, and very beautiful. Coming out of that tent she saw a procession of splendidly dressed men, who wore multicoloured garments, and carried crowns on their heads. They proceeded two by two out of that tent. At the end of the procession there was a man who was adorned in a splendid way like a bridegroom, and it was evident that the procession was being held in his honour. That woman asked the young man what that place was, and who were those men she saw so splendidly attired and proceeding in such a perfect order. The young man answered her that, that place was where the souls come to rest, and that all those persons who were in procession were the ones who were saved. Among them, the last man who proceeded with such great pomp was Saint Anthony, since on that day everybody was celebrating his feast day both on earth and in heaven, since he was exceeding in his excellence among the Saints. He also told her that the feasts of the other Saints were also celebrated with such great solemnity. Then the young man said, "I have led you here in order that you may see that, on the feast days of the Saints, you are to abstain from servile work and you should show reverence towards them, especially by not indulging into any works of evil."

While the soul of that woman was being led in that way, the people of the village were carrying her body for burial, since everybody thought that she was dead. When they were preparing her grave, in front of all the terrified and astonished onlookers, that woman woke up and spoke about her vision in front of all those persons, in front of others, and finally she repeated it to me, who am writing this account.

How he converted robbers through the power of his words

Around the year of the Lord 1292 a certain very elderly man told a certain friar Minor that he had seen Saint Anthony. That man said that he had been a robber and a kidnapper, and was part of a gang of twelve robbers who lived in the woods and used to be predators and rob all passers-by. Those twelve robbers, when they heard about the fame of the preaching of Saint Anthony, agreed among themselves to go on a certain day to listen to his sermon disguised in their clothes. In fact, they could not believe what they heard, namely that Anthony's words were so powerful, that he seemed to be a burning torch, just like another Elijah.

[152] Therefore, on the appointed day they went to listen to his preaching. While they were listening to his inflaming words, they began to feel sorrow for their sins and to repent. After the sermon had ended, they had repented from their sins and evil actions. The holy father then listened to their confessions one by one and encouraged them to save themselves by doing penance. Then he severely admonished them not to return to their past perverse life, and promised them eternal joy if they persevered, but also an unheard of punishment if they recanted.

The same old man said that some of those robbers returned back to their dishonest life, and as the Saint had foretold, they ended up quickly in the most terrible sufferings and punishments. The others who persevered in penance lived in peace and tranquillity in the Lord. The Saint had ordered this old man to visit the tombs of the Apostles twelve times. As he was returning from Rome after the twelfth time he had been there, this old man narrated this story with many tears to the friar, and said that he was now waiting to receive from the Saint the grace to arrive at the joys of eternal life after this miserable journey here on earth, just as Saint Anthony had promised him.

HERE FOLLOW THE MIRACLES
THAT WERE CONFIRMED BY WITNESSES
IN FRONT OF THE BISHOP OF PADUA

A certain man who served the nuns at Padua, and who was twenty-five years old, was born deaf and dumb. His tongue hardly protruded from his throat, and it was too short and bent backwards upon itself. The tongue appeared to be dry and hard to all those who saw it. This man once had a vision, which was then repeated, in which he felt that he had to implore with all his heart the help of Saint Anthony. Since he was unlettered and very rough in his manners, he did not understand what the vision meant. Therefore he went from house to house, and then in the public squares, asking for Saint Anthony. Then he had the vision for the third time. This time he was instructed in the vision to go with devotion to the church of Saint Anthony, and possibly to spend the night there and to invoke the Saint fervently.

After the ninth hour he felt himself surrounded by a divine light and all his body began to perspire heavily, and he was shaking violently in the head and in his other members. What else can we say? That very moment his tongue was prolonged to its just proportions, and he received the gift of speaking and hearing. On that very spot he opened his mouth, and began blessing Saint Anthony for such a great grace.

What is more amazing is that he started to utter new words, but which were totally intelligible, and he spoke with expressions, which he had never understood before. In fact he did not know except a few words, which were most necessary for his daily needs, as he was divinely inspired to utter. Since he had never learnt to speak with the help of anybody, all those present were amazed, since they knew very well that he had been deaf and dumb from birth. People from both sexes therefore converged to witness this new miracle. This young man, who was called Peter before, because of the evidence of this miracle, was now called Anthony.

[153] Regarding how he cured a necromantic who had been physically harmed by demons

A certain man who lived close to Padua wanted to discover occult realities with the help of the demons. One night he went with a certain cleric and took part in a séance. That cleric knew how to invoke demons through the art of black magic. While that man was among those present to the séance, and that cleric was invoking the demons, they came with a great noise and horrendous sounds. That man was so terrified that he could not answer the demons in any way. All of a sudden his tongue was cut off and his eyes were gouged out of his head. When he opened his mouth there was no sign of his tongue. In the place where his eyes had been, there was a deep and large cavity. That man had to suffer greatly in his heart because of his guilt. He was very troubled with his great penance, since he could not confess his sins in any way. Therefore he turned towards Saint Anthony and invoked his help with all his might. He remained in the friary praying for many days and nights. Once the brothers were singing the *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord* during Mass. When the priest elevated the Body of the Lord, that man was given back his eyes in his head.

When they saw this miracle many people gathered together and continued to pray with him to God, so that through the merits of Saint Anthony who gave him the grace of having back his eyes, he would also give him back the use of his tongue. When the choir was ending the singing of *Lamb of God, give us peace*, God gave back the tongue to that man, and he could speak from that very moment and began to praise and glorify the marvellous deeds of Saint Anthony.

Regarding a dumb friar who was cured from a deadly disease

A certain friar called Bernardino, who came from Parma, was gravely ill for two months and could not speak. He had become so weak, that he could not even blow out a candle with his breath. Although expert doctors from Lombardy had applied red-hot irons to his throat for nine times, and the same treatment had been applied to his head, there was no remedy for his disease, but it only grew worse. He was in the danger of suffocating. So he asked to be carried to the ark in which Saint Anthony of Padua was venerated, and he prostrated himself there in prayer, devoutly invoking the Saint's intercession. At that place he first began to cough and breathe heavily without being able to speak. He nevertheless continued to pray in the company of many friars and other persons, who came there to assist in that miracle. All of a sudden he vomited blood and regained the use of his tongue and was restored to complete health. He began to praise the Saint by singing the antiphon: *Salve Regina*, together with a minister and a lector who were present for that great miracle, and who accompanied his singing with joyful voices.

How a certain boy drowned in a pond and was raised from the dead

A certain boy whose name was Tommasino was twenty months old, and his parents lived close to the church of Saint Anthony. One day they left him by himself close to a pond full of water. When his mother came back home, she saw the feet of her child protruding from the water. She drew close and understood that her son had drowned in the pond by falling headlong into it, [154] with his feet sticking out.

With moans of desperation she drew him out rigid and dead. She was weeping and shouting so that all her neighbours were drawn to come to her house. Many people gathered there, together with some friars and workers who were repairing the church of Saint Anthony. When they saw the dead boy, they felt compassion on his sorrowful and weeping mother. That mother turned with all her heart to Saint Anthony, imploring him with tears and vowing that she would give grain as alms to the poor, according to the equivalent of the weight of her son, if the same Saint Anthony would make him live again. After a short while that child rose and was restored alive to his mother.

Regarding a woman who was freed from a serious ulcer

A certain woman from the diocese of Forlì, whose name was Beatrice, had been seriously ill for ten years with a tumour called *steatoma* in her skull, which was as large as a fist. Since she could not find any remedy with the help of the most expert doctors, she began to invoke with great devotion the help of Saint Anthony. She made a vow that, if she would regain her health once more, she would adorn his altar all round with a silver braiding. When she was sleeping that same night, Saint Anthony appeared to her. It seemed that he was dividing in four the part that was swollen by the tumour with great patience and gentleness. In this way he fully restored her health. When that vision disappeared, that swollen tumour was divided into four parts, and a great quantity of pus came out. The lady's head was now healthy and free from pain, as Saint Anthony had miraculously foretold. The whole of Padua came and according to that vow, the woman adorned the tomb of the Saint with a silver braiding.

Regarding a brother who was cured from hernia

A certain brother Cambio from the Province of Rome had a horrible hernia and his lower intestines could not be held in their position, even though an iron belt was applied to his abdomen. He was suffering without any hope of remedy. One day he came to the tomb of Saint Anthony in Padua and implored his help. Since there was a multitude of sick people who had flocked in that place seeking remedy

from their diseases, he could not squeeze himself between the columns of which surrounded the tomb. So he stretched his hand and touched the tomb of the Saint and then applied his hand to his intestines with great trust in the Saint's intercession. A truly marvellous miracle occurred! His intestines were placed back in their proper place, and the hernia which he had in his abdomen disappeared and was closed in such a way that, as the same brother Cambio used to say, not even his forehead was as hard and as solid as that part which had been cured. After this miracle that brother was jumping with joy and praised the Saint saying: "Some time ago I could not jump in this way."

[155] Regarding a certain marvellous vision

In the year of the Lord 1367,¹³⁸ Edward, prince of Aquitaine, gathered an illustrious and great army of knights in order to help Pedro, the king of Castile,¹³⁹ since the latter had been expelled and had to escape from his reign because of his illegitimate brother Henry. This lord prince commanded a certain doctor who was a surgeon, and whose name was Peter, who lived in the city of Bordeaux, to accompany his army in order to cure the knights wounded in battle. The surgeon Peter was extremely upset and sad because of the order he had received. He saw that the will of the same prince was strong, and that he could not dare to resist it. Since he nurtured a special devotion for Saint Anthony, he went full of trust to the friary of the friars Minor in Bordeaux. He then asked a certain friar to celebrate Mass for him in a certain chapel in which there was a wooden sculpture with the image of Saint Anthony. When the same Peter was hearing Mass with devotion, he was gazing at the same image of the Saint and was praying with great fervour, so that, if it were not useful for his soul, Saint Anthony would mercifully prohibit him from doing that work; and if it was, he would render him favourably inclined to accomplish his duty.

A marvellous thing happened! While he was praying with these words and gazing at the image, he saw that it was moving and that it

¹³⁸ The author is here referring to events linked with the Hundred Years War between France and England (1337-1453).

¹³⁹ Pedro, known as "the cruel one" (1333 – 23rd March 1369), was the illegitimate son of Alphonso XI (30th August 1311 – 26th March 1350). He was deposed by Henry of Trastámara. War erupted between Castile and France on one side and Portugal and England on the other.

gesturing in a negative way, just like a man who was saying no. Peter was greatly astonished, and began to think that what he saw was fruit of a strong sense of imagination. He was afraid that the vision was the effect of a hallucination and not of a sound reasoning. Therefore he again gathered all his inner strength, and he fixed his gaze attentively on the image and resumed his prayer. [156] Again he clearly perceived that same wooden image that was gesturing in a negative way, and the Saint was shaking his head. After Mass, Peter went back full of wonder, since he could not understand whether that miracle meant that Saint Anthony wanted to say no to him through that sign, namely, that Peter should not proceed with his army, or whether that sign meant that his military action would not be useful to his soul. So he remained astonished, and full of doubt he returned home. After some time an ambassador came to him from the lord prince, asking him to come to his presence with haste.

Peter therefore went immediately to the house of aforementioned prince. When the seneschal met him, he told him: "Are you ready to go to Spain with the lord prince, as he has commanded you to do?" Peter was afraid, and so he answered: "Lord, I am ready to do all that is pleasing to the will of the lord prince." The seneschal smiled and with a cheerful look on his face he answered him: "You speak well just like a good and faithful man, and the lord prince concedes that, for your consolation, you remain here for as long as you do not receive a different command." So he was full of joy and went to the church of the friars Minor and thanked Saint Anthony. In front of all the brothers he recounted the whole story, and took an oath by touching the book of Holy Scripture, in order to prove that the vision he had was true.

During the time when the town of Padua was captured from the hands of the perfidious tyrant Ezzelino de Romano,¹⁴⁰ since the hand of the Lord fell down heavily upon him to put an end to his tyranny, the Legate of the Church was surrounding the town and besieging it continually with his army. During the night of the feast [157] of Saint Anthony, when the Guardian of the friars Minor of Padua, brother

¹⁴⁰ The date of this event is 19th June 1256. The Apostolic Legate was Filippo Fontana, archbishop of Ravenna (1251-1274). Cfr. Salimbene, ad an. 1250; Wadding, ad an. 1263, n. 8.

Bartolomeo de Corradino, was keeping vigil at the tomb of the same Saint and was praying and shedding tears, imploring for the liberation of the same town of the Saint, he distinctly heard the echo of a voice coming out of the tomb and telling him: "Brother Bartolomeo, do not be afraid or troubled, but be greatly comforted and full of joy. You should certainly know that the Lord has mercifully conceded to me that the town of Padua should be freed in the Octave of my solemnity, and will acquire freedom and immunity for the future." That is what happened, according to what the Lord had planned. Many friars who were present and keeping vigil in the church truly heard that voice. Afterwards they spread the news of what they heard to the citizens of Padua. They also decreed to celebrate annually the Octave day of Saint Anthony with all the due solemnity with immense joy, just like the feast day. For the grace of God they diligently observed this statute to this very day.

Regarding the translation of his relics, and how his tongue was recently found to be incorrupt

In the year of the Lord's Incarnation 1263, after the Lord willed that, through the merits of Saint Anthony, the town of Padua be freed from the yoke of the tyrant Ezzelino, who had depopulated the same town, the citizens increased their fervour of devotion towards the Saint and they built a larger and more solemn church in his honour. They decided to transfer the body of the Saint, on the Octave day of the resurrection of the Lord.¹⁴¹ Although the body had been buried underground for a long time, when they opened the tomb they found that his tongue was still incorrupt, and had a beautiful reddish colour. In fact, it had been buried for 27 years or more,¹⁴² since the holy father was buried a short time after his death. The venerable brother Bonaventure, who was then General Minister, and who afterwards became Cardinal and bishop of Albano,¹⁴³ was present for this

141 In 1263 Easter Sunday fell on 1st April. The Octave day, or *Dominica in Albis*, fell on 8th April.

142 The body of Saint Anthony had been buried for 32 years, 3 months, and 10 days, that is, since 17th June 1231.

143 Saint Bonaventure was Minister General from 1257 to 1274, and became Cardinal Bishop of Albano in 1273.

most joyful translation of the relics. He received the Saint's tongue in his hands with great reverence, and shed abundant tears, and began to praise it with most devout words in front of all those present: "O blessed tongue, you always blessed the Lord and asked Him to bless others. Now it is clearly apparent that you exercise great merits before God!" He placed it in a sealed reliquary, and gently kissed it, and commanded that it should be placed in a place of honour.

Regarding those who wanted to destroy his image in the Lateran, and how they perished by a sudden death

During the time of the lord Pope Boniface VIII the apse of the basilica of the Saviour in the Lateran in Rome was restored.¹⁴⁴ This section of the basilica is called *episcopium* (the bishop's place).¹⁴⁵ [158] For the placing of the mosaics of the apse, two expert friars Minor were commissioned.¹⁴⁶ When they placed the images, which the same Pope had ordered them to depict in the mosaic, those friars saw that there were still some empty spaces, in which they could place other figures. Moved by a divine instinct they inserted in the mosaic the figures of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony. The lord Pope came to know what the two artists had done, and he was angry and sent some clerics, and told them: "Since the image of Saint Francis is already in its place, we are inclined to tolerate it in the mosaic; but regarding Saint Anthony of Padua, of what importance is he to us? Therefore go and destroy his image, and in its place command the artists to place the image of Saint Gregory."

Those clerics went up to the apse. One after another they confessed that they saw a terrible person who appeared visibly to them and threatened to throw them down from that high place to the ground. Thus they were prohibited from carrying out their plans because of that vision of anger. As the two friar artists narrated, some

144 Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1304). This event occurred in 1296.

145 The name refers to the fact that the Lateran Basilica is the Episcopal seat of the Pope, who is the bishop of Rome, and is considered as the mother and head of all the churches of the city and of the world.

146 It was Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292) who, in 1291, commissioned brothers Giacomo (Minus) Torriti, or de Torrita, and Giacomo da Camerino. Wadding doubts whether the first brother was a Franciscan or a layperson.

of those clerics died immediately, while others died after a short time. When the Pope heard what had happened, he referred the following reply: "Let us refrain from our plans and let that Saint stay where he is, as he wills, since we now clearly see that, if we do not revere him, we shall be losers and will not acquire anything."

How Saint Anthony appeared together with Saint Francis to a sick man, and miraculously cured him

In the castle of Beja,¹⁴⁷ in the kingdom of Portugal, there was a certain man called Pedro Petri, who was a powerful and rich man, and was very fond of the Order of friars Minor. He had handed over to them a plot of land upon which to build a friary, and he himself had given many other gifts to the friary. This man became seriously ill, and one night there were four friars together with many other persons who were keeping vigil in his room and waiting for the moment of his death. This man Pedro used to keep a habit of the friars out of devotion, since he wanted to be buried in it. It was then that there appeared to him two friars Minor, one on his right and the other on his left. One of them asked him: "Pedro, do you recognise me?" He answered: "Yes, I recognise you, since you are two friars Minor, but I cannot make out who you are." The friar then told him: "I am Saint Francis, and this brother is Saint Anthony. Since you always showed great devotion towards us, and you showed great favours towards the brothers who live in this friary, we have been sent to console you and to cure you from this infirmity." At that moment Pedro, in an attitude of adoration, prayed Saint Francis to bless the habit, which he, the dying man, was wearing. As soon as Francis had blessed it, the two Saints disappeared. That man then got better with great haste, in such a way that everybody in that room was astonished. From that day onwards he lived for another twelve years and he did not want to keep the keys of any other treasure, except of the box in which he kept the habit which was blessed, and in which he died and was buried.

¹⁴⁷ Beja, a fortified town in the province of Alemtejo.

Beginning of the life of brother Simon of Assisi¹⁴⁸

[159] In the very beginning of the Order, when Saint Francis was still living, a certain young man came to the Order. His name was brother Simon of Assisi. The Most High had endowed him with such great graces and blessings, and with such sweetness of heart, that he was led to great heights of spiritual uplifting and contemplation. All his life was a mirror of sanctity, and in his soul one could see the image of divine goodness. I heard from other brothers who lived with him that he was rarely to be seen out of his cell. When he was among the brothers he would always speak about divine things. He had never learnt any grammar and had nearly always lived in the woods. He could speak in such a profound and elevated style about God and the love of Christ, that his words seemed to be superhuman. One evening, he came to the woods with brother James of Massa and some other brothers to speak about God. He began to speak about Christ's love in such a sweet and devout way, that one of the brothers who were present told me that those brothers spent the whole night in holy discourses, but it seemed to him that it was only a short time they were together in that place.

Brother Simon had the grace of such sweetness of spirit that, whenever he felt himself enraptured by divine visitations and inflamed with love, he would go in bed, as if he would need to sleep, since the inner peace and sweetness of the Holy Spirit which he would feel would render him not only interiorly at peace in his soul, but would also make him rest physically. Often he would be enraptured in such visitations and become exteriorly insensible. Once it happened that he was touched by heavenly graces and was inflamed interiorly by divine charisms, in such a way that he appeared exteriorly insensible to all reality. A certain brother wanted to experiment this state of ecstasy, that is, whether it was true that brother Simon was insensible as

¹⁴⁸ Nicola Papini stated that this life was written by a friar who did not know brother Simon personally. Some attribute this life to the pen of brother Crescenzo da Iesi, Minister General (1244-1247). The life of brother Simon of Assisi is to be found in ABF 55 (FAED III, 538-540) and *Fioretti* 41 (FAED III, 633-635).

he appeared. He took a burning coal and placed it on his foot, and let it stay there until it extinguished itself. Brother Simon felt no burning sensation. What marvelled the brothers more was the fact that there was no sign of burning on his flesh.

One day, brother Simon was talking to some of the brothers about God with great fervour of spirit. On that occasion he managed to convert to God a certain young man from San Severino,¹⁴⁹ who had been very vain, and who was lax in his behaviour, being a nobleman and very delicate in his manners. When brother Simon gave him the habit of religious life, he still kept for him his secular clothes. The devil, who wanted to seduce the young man with sinful desires, inflamed him in the flesh with such great carnal stimuli, that he was on the point of despairing because of so many temptations, and he would often go to brother Simon and tell him: "Give me back [160] my secular clothes, the ones I used to wear, because I cannot sustain such great temptations." Brother Simon began to feel sorry for him. So he began to speak to him about God in such a powerful way, that all of a sudden he extinguished all evil desires from his flesh. But when he was once assailed by a very great temptation, he asked to have his secular clothes back and wanted to return to the world, saying that he could not sustain any more such ardent stimulus of the flesh. Brother Simon once more felt sorry for him and said: "Come, my son, and sit down close to me." The young man went full of anguish, and sat down close to the father, reclining his head in his bosom with great devotion. At that very moment brother Simon lifted his gaze up to heaven and prayed fervently for the young man, to the point that he became enraptured in prayer and was finally heard. That young man was totally freed from all temptations, and his great ardour for the pleasures of the flesh was changed into the ardour of greatest charity.

One day a certain criminal was condemned by a tribunal to have his eyes gouged out. This young brother, full of great fervour and pious mercy, went to the judge and in the presence of the entire tribunal pleaded with him, for the love of God, to revoke such a cruel sentence. When the judge refused to change his sentence, that young man was so inflamed, that he began to plead humbly with him with many tears, and to ask him to gouge out his eyes instead of the eyes of the criminal, and to pardon him for his offence. That judge was struck by such

¹⁴⁹ San Severino is a town in the Marches of Ancona.

great charity on the part of the young man and sent the criminal away totally pardoned.

Another time brother Simon was staying in the wood of the castle of the lords of Brunforte, and was dedicating himself to prayer. In that place he was disturbed by the chirping of a multitude of birds. So he commanded them in the name of the Lord that they were to go away from that place and not come back there again. Those birds promptly obeyed his command, and from that moment they did not return there any more. This holy man grew ever more in sanctity, until he arrived at the end of his days. He was buried in the friary of Spoleto,¹⁵⁰ where by the grace of his virtues many people were cured and received many spiritual gifts, to the point that a dead man from the valley of Spoleto returned back to life. [161] The miracles of brother Simon were confirmed by many and in a solemn way were declared to be authentic by the bishop of Spoleto, who instituted a commission to examine these miracles under the command of Pope Gregory IX.

¹⁵⁰ It seems that the author is mixing brother Simon of Assisi with another brother Simon of Collazzone, who was buried in Spoleto. Bernard of Besse, in his *Book of Praises* I,27, mentions brother Simon and says that he was buried in Spoleto (FAED III, 36).

Beginning of the life of brother Christopher,
who is buried in the friary of Cahors.
This life was compiled by brother Bernard of
Besse,
a member of the Custody of Cahors¹⁵¹

[161] *Like a vessel of beaten gold encrusted with every kind of precious stone* (Eccli 50:10) the holy father and brother Christopher shone with many virtues. Since many words are not always pleasing and I do not have information about many of his deeds, I think it will suffice to mention some examples for the grace of his memory. Christopher was born in the region of Romagna, he became a secular priest, and after rejecting the luxuries of this world, he took the habit and followed blessed Francis when the saint was still alive, and with his blessing he was sent to the region of Aquitaine, where he strove to become a perfect servant of Christ.

Regarding his profound humility, his piety and his austere life

Christopher was inwardly filled with a dove-like and profound humility, with a piety coming out of the heart, and he felt a deep and marvellous compassion for the miserable and the afflicted. When he was once occupied in a certain ministry together with the brothers, he began to minister to the lepers with great zeal, cleansing their feet and their sores, reordering their beds and diligently procuring all their necessities. But the more he was pious with others, the more he became strict with himself. He afflicted his body with fasting, with a most harsh hair-shirt, and for a long time he fastened his body with iron chains and other iron instruments which bit into his flesh. We have seen him when he was nearly one hundred years old. As an old man

¹⁵¹ Brother Christopher was born in Romagna, became a diocesan priest, and entered the Order of friars Minor becoming one of the closest to Saint Francis among the brothers. He spent the rest of his life in Aquitaine, France, and died in Cahors in 1272. Bernard of Besse mentions brother Christopher in his *Book of the Praises of Saint Francis*, I (FAED III, 36-37).

he never went out of the friary, and he never ate anything except on Sundays and special feast-days. He was seen to grow in wisdom and virtue the more he grew to be of a venerable age. In all his mortifications [162] he continued to show a joyful face, since he was interiorly filled with joy, which shone exteriorly. He used to adorn the afflictions of his flesh with the love of his heart.

Regarding his occupations and prayers and his abundant tears

He was never found to spend one single moment in idleness, but he was always occupied in prayer, or in spiritual reading or in humble work, like that of taking care of the vegetable garden, in order to serve the brothers with great respect and solicitude. He also possessed the gift of tears during prayer. He used to retire in a most strict cell built with branches, twigs and straw. There he used to experience many divine consolations. The same Mother of God appeared to him and spoke with him in secret. He also cherished a most fervent devotion to her most holy mother Anne during his contemplations. He would celebrate Mass every day with many tears and great devotion, and the fact that the Lord accepted his daily offering is proved by the following evident signs and wonders. One day the flame on the altar on which he was celebrating extinguished itself; the candle was lit up again in a miraculous way by a flame coming down from heaven. Often a dove white as snow would appear upon his head while he was celebrating. A young and most holy brother, whose name was Peter, used to assist him at Mass. Brother Christopher was his master of formation. Peter had left his relatives and a very comfortable life in order not to run after vain realities, and entering the Order he grew so much in sanctity, that it is said that often a dove and his Guardian Angel would be seen speaking with him. At first brother Christopher would see this dove but he would not notice any other sign, and he would try to avoid it since he felt it was molesting him during the celebration. At last, he accepted the cause of all the movement around him, but prohibited any more wonders to happen. Scripture says: *Do not be sure of forgiveness* (Eccli 5:5). The holy man was still afraid of the sins he might have committed when he was still in the world. So he convinced this

angelic young man Peter, whose conscience he knew well, to ask his Guardian Angel whether his sins had been forgiven. When that young brother asked his Angel, he got this pleasant answer: "From now on do not be afraid of what you might have committed, but persevere in the good deeds you have begun." Thus he kept faithful unto death to Christ and acquired the crown of eternal life at the end.

How he would reprehend vices and sins, how he did not want to assume the office of preacher, and how Saint Francis revealed to him the day of his death

Brother Christopher did not have the office of preacher. Yet he praised Christ with divine words in front of everybody, he exhorted all to sanctity and he preached with severe words against the spreading of the evil of sinners. In order to live up to the real Christ-like meaning of his name, Christopher carried Christ in his body through penance, in his heart through devotion, in his mouth through praise and he always proclaimed his divine law. He took part in that chapter of the brothers at Arles, when blessed Francis, although being physically present in another place, appeared with his arms spread wide in the form of a cross.¹⁵²

[163] The death of Saint Francis was also revealed to him in the same way. When he was staying at Martel, which is a village in the diocese of Cahors, he saw a vision in his dreams. He was standing at the door of the same friary in which Francis had been staying during his final illness. He knocked on the door and the Saint commanded the brothers to let him in. The holy Father extended his hand toward him. So he kissed it devoutly and received his blessing. The Saint, who was on the point of dying, said to him: "My son, go back to your province, and announce to the brothers that I have now consumed the sufferings of my present life, and I am hurrying to the heavenly homeland." The following morning brother Christopher remembered his vision, and afterwards he learnt that on that very hour blessed Francis had migrated from this life.

¹⁵² The chapter of Arles was celebrated in 1224. Anthony of Padua was also present at this chapter.

MIRACLES REVEALED DURING HIS LIFE

Our father, brother Christopher, was filled with virtues and grace in front of God. These became manifest through many signs. In the town of Cahors, Raymond, who was an eight-year old boy, was in agony, and all the members of his body were not functioning, so much so that everybody thought that he had died. The man of God heard the cries of his mother. After having first prayed, he imposed his hand on the boy's head, marked him and blessed him with the sign of the cross. That very moment the boy began to speak, he called his mother, ate and was freed by the merits of the Saint and, against all human hope, became healthy once more.

Regarding a small boy who was freed from the danger of death

Another boy in the same town, called Peter, was disabled so that he could not move his right foot or arm. He could hardly see and everybody thought that he would soon die. His mother decided to call the holy father. He came and placed the book of the Gospels upon the boy's head, and uttered the words of blessing with the sign of the cross, marking him from the head down to his toes. That very moment the boy regained his health.

In the same town a boy was very ill and he could not speak any more. His mother went hurrying to call brother Christopher, since she trusted his holiness. She asked him to pray for her dying son, and with great insistence she continued to tell him that she would never leave his presence until he would render her son back to her safe and sound. The father prayed to the Lord, and that very moment the boy was cured, even before his mother had returned back to him.

Another man from the same town was troubled by a serious illness of epilepsy. He begged the man of God Christopher to bless him, and as soon as he had received his blessing, he was perfectly freed from that illness.

A certain noblewoman from the town of Sauveterre was on the verge of dying from an acute fever, when she was in Cahors. So she begged with great devotion and constancy that brother Christopher would come to visit her. When he came to her and marked her with the sign of the cross, all of a sudden she regained her former health.

[164] In the diocese of Cahors a small boy was left all alone in the fields, while his mother was working during harvest-time. The boy got sick all of a sudden, and became totally unable to speak. His mother took him to many churches dedicated to various Saints, but could not find any remedy for his illness. So she went to Martel, where brother Christopher was living at that time, and presented her son to him. He prayed upon the boy and marked him with the sign of the cross, and that very moment the boy started to speak once more.

A certain cleric was seriously ill. So he brought water to the man of God and asked him to bless it, and then drank it. He was immediately cured from his illness of incontinence.

In that same town, outside the gate which is known by the name of *de Insula*, there was a very high rock. The man of God was passing from that place and saw a great number of men and women going about their business down to the river below. So he told them: "All of you should go away from this place, since in a few moments that rock will fall down." At first those persons began to laugh at him, since they had passed under that rock every day and they could not see that it was on the verge of falling down. But since he continued to admonish them and insist that they move away, knowing him to be a holy man, they all went away from that place. A great part of that rock fell down, but did not harm anyone. When those persons saw what happened they gave great thanks to God and to his servant Christopher for having freed them.

Regarding the fame of his sanctity and the spirit of prophecy

When he was staying at Martel the servant of God Christopher saw what appeared to be two doctors who approached the bed of a sick man. In his spirit he knew that that man was in the state of mortal sin, and that those two doctors were devils, who appeared under the guise of doctors. So he made the sign of the cross against them, and they immediately disappeared. That sick man confessed his sins with great faith.

In the town of Cahors there was a woman who had been seriously ill for a long time. She asked the servant of God Christopher,

who came to visit her, to pray for her so that the Lord might make her healthy again or else take her out of this world. The father answered her: "Do not be afraid, my daughter, because on that certain day at nine in the morning you will leave this life." He told her that he would return to visit her on that day round about nine in the morning. When that day came over, he arrived and the woman told him: "Father, your words regarding me have not been accomplished yet." He answered her: "Do not doubt, my daughter, because they will be accomplished right now." In fact, after a few moments, while the bell was ringing for the hour of Tierce, that woman died in front of brother Christopher and many others who were present.

In the town of Martel there was a certain devout woman whose husband was very harsh and did engage in any works of mercy. The wife of that man told the servant of God, brother Christopher: "I do not have anything to give for alms, except some wine." The pious man of God answered her and said: "Give your wine to God with confidence." So that woman gave the wine as alms to the poor, and she hardly had any more left. Now one day her husband was tasting the wine, and he felt that only the sediment was left. So he immediately began to ask what had happened to the wine. [165] His wife was afraid, and said: "There is enough wine left." So he sent the maidservant to the wine-barrel, in order to check. She found the wine-barrel full to the brim, and came back full of joy to tell her master. When that woman heard this she was overjoyed, and told her husband the whole truth. When he understood what had happened, he glorified God and gave his wife ample permission to give alms to the poor. That man and his wife considered this abundance a great gift of grace, which they could only ascribe to the merits of the servant of God Christopher, since the woman had given alms after he had convinced her. Piety is here to be commended, since *the usefulness of spirituality is unlimited, since it holds out the reward of life here and now and of the future life as well* (1Tim 4:8). The Lord glorified his Saint with signs and miracles. This has been verified to us and to many others, with all the wonders, which we know about up till now, as well as with marvellous deeds that he worked among others, while he was still alive. Only God knows how many are the miracles, which can be known to have occurred through his intercession.

Regarding his most devout death

On that same night in which he passed over from this world, with the brothers gathered around him, brother Christopher spoke to them about the kingdom of God. He comforted them with sweet words, and blessed them, while praying for them. Then he recommended his spirit to God and died in the Lord. His body looked beautiful in death, so that he seemed to be asleep rather than dead. He died in the town of Cahors, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1272, on the eve of the feast of All Saints,¹⁵³ during the first vigil of the night. He had been united perfectly with Christ for sixty years, and entered to reign forever with all the Saints.

On that same day, two cloistered nuns, one of whom was called Agnes, both of whom were advanced in age, witnessed that they had heard the Angels sing with a most sweet melody.

Another brother from the Order of Penitents, who lived in the town of Cahors, during the same hour of Christopher's *transitus*, had a dream in which he saw the Angels who were transporting the soul of the man of God into heaven with great joy. When he wanted to touch him, they would not let him, telling him that he was not worthy to touch such a holy body. This brother narrated this vision to many others.

During the same hour, a certain citizen of the town, called Peter, saw in a similar fashion the soul of the holy father lying in a splendid bed, and having the splendour of the rays of the sun. When he asked him who he was, he got this answer: "I am Christopher. I have just died and I am now going to God, and I will reign with Him for ever." That man was astonished at that vision. So he immediately went out of his bed, and woke up all his family, announcing to them the death of the father. He went to the friars and found that Christopher had died and that his dead body had been taken to the church.

[166] Regarding the devotion of the people after his death

The following morning, the whole town awoke with the news of the *transitus* of the holy man. So many persons came to pay their

¹⁵³ Brother Christopher died on 31st October 1272. He had entered the Order in 1217.

last respects to the holy body that neither the brothers nor the strong young men who were helping them were able to control them from touching him, seeing him and tearing his clothes to pieces, since they wanted to keep relics of them. So they had to snatch the body away with great force and prepare it for burial with sweet-smelling ointments. They then closed the body in a wooden casket until the third day, so that those multitude of people could come to visit it, but at the same time shielding it and the friars from all violence. Thus the body was buried with great veneration in the church of the friars.

MIRACLES THAT OCCURRED AFTER HIS DEATH

Brother Christopher shone with so many miracles, when people invoked him not only in the diocese of Cahors but also in other remote regions, that he was confirmed to be a true saint and friend of the Most High, who reveals Himself so wonderful and loving among the Saints.

How he raised a boy from death

In the town of Cahors there was a two-year old boy whose name was Peter. His mother left him unattended for a moment, and he fell from a high bridge and died on the spot. His mother came back in haste, and found her son dead. She was suffering miserably and wailing so loudly that all the people of the neighbourhood came out to see what had happened. The mother turned in prayer towards the servant of God Christopher, invoking him, and promising to take a wax image of her son to his tomb, if he would give her back her son alive. As soon as she uttered her vow, the little boy began to move, opened his eyes and began to live again as if nothing had happened to him.

Regarding another boy who was resuscitated in the same way

Another boy by the name of Peter had died in his mother's womb, and was taken out dead by the midwife. The persons present invoked the intercession of father Christopher, and that boy began to breathe in a miraculous way.

Another boy who was also resuscitated

In the same town there was a two-year old boy called William. His father and mother placed him healthy in his bed to sleep. Round about midnight they woke up with a fright, because they found him cold and dead. They started to shout and to weep, so that many of their neighbours woke up and came to their house. They promised the holy man of God Christopher with great devotion that he would have mercy on them and give them back their son alive, and they would carry him to his tomb with a wax image of the boy. As soon as they uttered this vow, the boy began to show signs of life. He raised his arms and opened his eyes, and by the merits of the Saint returned back to life. The parents kept faithful to their promise to the Saint with great devotion.

Regarding the little girl who was resuscitated

Little Raymunda was found dead in her bed by her parents at midnight. She remained immobile and dead until the following morning. Her father had great trust [167] in the servant of God Christopher, since he knew him well when he was still alive, and said: "Saint of God Christopher, give me back my daughter, and I promise you that I will bring to your tomb the linen-shroud which covers her and her wax image." After having uttered this vow, that girl, who had lay down dead from midnight until the morning, began to open her eyes, and also to move the members of her body. All those who were standing by were glorifying God and marvelling at what happened. Her parents kept to their word and completed their vow with great devotion.

How he resuscitated a boy from death

There was a boy called Hugo who lived in a village near Cahors, called Contetum. He was very ill and everybody thought that he was now nearing death, since it seems that he did not move or breathe any more. His mother was sad and weeping at her miserable situation, and since she could not find any other means of human help,

she turned to God and to his faithful servant Christopher, since she had heard about his numerous marvellous deeds and virtues. Among other things, she promised that if he would give her back her son, she would take him with her to visit the tomb, together with his linen-shroud and a wax image of the boy. How marvellous is God in the grace of his Saints! As soon as that woman had uttered her vow to the Saint of the Lord, the boy began to live, opened his eyes, and began to be strong in all his members. His mother faithfully carried out what she had promised.

A certain boy who was freed from a dangerous illness

A certain boy from Cahors, called John, was very ill and was on the verge of dying, so that all those who looked at him thought that he was indeed dead. His mother made a vow to the saint of God Christopher, promising to visit his tomb with the boy and the linen-shroud. At that moment, against all odds, her son began to be healthy again.

A nun was cured from a serious disease

A certain nun of the Order of Saint Clare, called Hilaria, was battling against a serious disease and was in a terminal stage. In fact, she could not move on her bed and neither could she sleep, and she was expecting to die more than to live. When she heard about the death of the holy man she began to pray with tears and great devotion: "Holy Father, I have seen you so many times and I have confessed my sins to you. Pray now for me to the Lord, so that by your merits I will be restored to my former health." While she was praying in this way, she fell into a very sweet sleep and was comforted in the Lord. The following morning she woke up, and went to the church and received Holy Communion with all the other nuns, and felt that she had been completely cured from her illness.

A boy who was cured

There was a boy from Montauban in the diocese of Cahors, who was very ill and was dying. For eight days he could not drink any

milk from his mother's breasts because he could not swallow anything. [168] His mother had not slept for many days because she was so worried for her son. Once, being nearly in desperation, she slept for a short while, and heard a voice in her sleep telling her: "Do not be afraid, woman, but offer your son to the saint of God Christopher, and through his merits the Lord will make him healthy again." When the mother woke up she found him already cured, and afterwards she fulfilled her vow by taking him to the tomb of the man of God together with his linen-shroud and the candle.

A woman is cured after a long illness

Valeria was lying very sick at Cahors. She could not speak or move any of the members of her body, which was showing a dark skin colour. The priest who came to visit her could not get one single word out of her mouth, and believing her to be dead he returned back to the church. Those who were present felt very sad, since that woman was loved by everybody, and in their hearts they prayed with devotion: "Saint Christopher, help her." They repeated these words many a time, and the woman began to open her eyes, to praise God and his saint Christopher, who had freed her from the danger of death. From that moment she was cured of her illness.

A certain cleric was freed from a serious illness

In the same town, a certain cleric called Godfrey was so depressed by his illness that he could not speak for two days and remained in his bed like a dead man. The doctors despaired that they could cure him. His sisters made a vow in his name, that she would visit the tomb of the Saint with his linen-shroud. At that very moment he could speak again and was freed from his disease.

How an iron key was miraculously removed before being swallowed

In the same town of Cahors there was a small boy called Raymond. He was holding an iron key in his hand. He placed it in his mouth and swallowed it. The key got stuck in his throat. That boy immediately lost his speech and began to turn blue since he was choking.

When his mother realized what had happened she began to shout and weep with grief. Many neighbours came over when they heard her cries. Together with his mother they invoked God and the Saints. But the boy remained in grave danger of choking. So his mother turned towards the saint of God Christopher and prayed thus: "Saint Christopher, make my son healthy again, and I will bring him to your tomb." When she had repeated this prayer for the second or third time, the boy vomited a lot of blood and the key gushed out of his mouth with such force that it hit the opposite wall as if it were a bullet. All those who were present immediately praised God and his saint Christopher, and the mother brought her son and the key to the tomb with great devotion.

A boy swallowed a coin, and was restored to health after being in great danger

A three-year old boy by the name of Raymond, the son of a knight from the castle of Flaouhatum¹⁵⁴ in the diocese of Cahors, swallowed a coin in the same way, after having placed it in his mouth. [169] The coin remained fixed in the throat and could not be brought out in any way. The boy continued to moan and cry and could only taste some milk with difficulty. For eight whole days he remained in this agonising situation, and it seemed that he would soon die. His mother invoked the saint of God Christopher and made a vow that she would carry her son together with his linen-shroud to the tomb. As soon as she uttered her vow, the boy vomited a quantity of blood, and out came the coin. In that way he was out of danger of dying.

A boy who was freed from the danger of death

In Cahors there was a certain boy called Peter, who was very ill and was on the point of death. For two days he had lost all sense of his bodily members and could not move in any way, so that everybody thought that he would soon die. His grandfather had been very devout to the saint of God Christopher, when he was still alive. So he

¹⁵⁴ The editors of Quaracchi place an interrogation mark after the name, signifying that they were not able to find the modern equivalent of the name of this castle.

offered the boy to him and promised to carry him to the tomb together with the linen-shroud and a candle. As soon as he made his vow, the boy began to open his eyes, and to move his feet and other members of the body, until he was totally cured from all illness.

Another boy in the same town, who was also called Peter, was lying in a most desperate condition and everyone was despairing of his health. He had lost all his senses and seemed to be lying dead on the bed. The women standing there convinced his mother to make a vow to take her son to the tomb of the Saint with the candle and linen-shroud. At that very moment he immediately opened his eyes and began to smile heartily, and his health was totally restored.

A girl who was freed from the jaws of death

In the same town of Cahors there was a girl, called Sibilla. She was gravely ill and was on the point of dying. Her mother was weeping and scratching her face, and the whole house resounded with her moans because her daughter was dying. One passer-by, however, told her: "Do not weep, but offer your daughter to saint Christopher, and I believe that he will give her back to you." The mother uttered the vow, that she would carry her daughter with the linen-shroud to the tomb of the Saint. At that very moment her daughter opened her eyes, she began to eat and was restored to perfect health.

Another five-year old boy called William was very ill in the same town, and he was lying in bed as if he were already dead. His parents and relatives were tearfully invoking the saint of God Christopher to make him healthy again. In front of all the onlookers, after nearly one hour, the boy became healthy again and was out of any danger of death.

Another boy from the same town was so ill that for three days he had lost his sight and speech. As soon as his mother had uttered her vow, the boy began to speak, and said that he had been in a very beautiful place with saint Christopher, where there were many Saints who were all dressed with golden vestments. From that moment the boy became healthy again.

A certain man from Spera, a village close to Cahors, had an accident in which a great milling stone, which is normally carried by oxen, fell upon him and broke his thigh. That man could only pray in

his heart, and so offered himself to the patronage of the blessed Virgin and the saint of God Christopher. From that moment he did not sense any more pain in his fractured foot, [170] but after some time he was totally cured in a marvellous way from the intense pain which such a fracture normally inflicts, in such a way that it finally disappeared and he was totally cured. It would have been nearly impossible for him to avoid death after such an accident.

Those who were freed from the dangers of childbirth

In the village of Martel in the diocese of Cahors, a certain woman called Aymerica had been in intense labour for six days, since she was carrying a dead baby in her womb. She was under anguish and was suffering terribly, but no doctors could find any remedy for her. So she remembered the servant of God Christopher, since he had been especially friendly to her and her husband when he was alive. So she and her husband began to invoke him with great devotion, in order to come to their aid. When both had finished praying, all of a sudden that woman felt that her pain had ceased and she gave birth to her dead child, and was thus freed from the danger of death. Afterwards she visited the tomb of the Saint, taking with her a candle, in order to thank him with gratitude for such a great grace.

Another woman in Cahors, who had been in labour pains for many days, and was now very weak, was on the point of dying. So she began to invoke the holy man of God Christopher in order to come to her aid. A certain devout woman there present had the intuition from God to remember that she possessed a cord which the man of God used to gird himself with. As soon as she placed it upon that poor woman, she immediately gave birth and was healthy again.

How he cured persons who had physical disabilities

On the same day of the death of the holy father, a certain woman from the town of Cahors, called Arnalda, who was so disabled in her hands and feet that she could scarcely take hold of her walking stick and move about, was praying on her knees in bed, and made a vow that, if she was cured, she would take a wax image of her hand and

foot to the holy man's tomb. All of a sudden, when she had uttered her vow, she became perfectly healed, and on that same day she joyfully went with other women to carry cement and bricks in order to construct the tomb of the man of God.

In the same town there was another woman called Bertranda, whose hand was withered and useless, in such a way that she could not work in any way. She made a vow to the man of God that, if he would cure her, she would carry a wax image of her hand to his tomb. She was immediately freed and could start doing any manual work.

There was in the same town a boy called Arnald, who had been disabled in both legs from his mother's womb. He would spread out his legs and crawl on the ground and on ashes, neither could he stand up straight in any way. On the same day of the death of the holy man of God his relatives made a vow to offer him to his service, if he would cure him. As soon as they made their vow, the boy immediately stood up straight. Full of joy in the Lord his relatives took him to visit the sacred body.

Exclarmunda was a woman from the village of Arches, whose hand was withered and was dangling close to her chest, in such a way that she could not bend it in any way. She had been gravely ill, and for four days she could not even speak. So her father made a vow saying: "Holy Father Christopher, whom I saw and loved when you were alive, help me now and give me back my daughter safe and sound, and I [171] vow to bring a wax image of her to your tomb." That very moment she was cured and could stretch her hand and speak freely, just like she used to do before.

Blind persons who began to see again

In the village called Saint-Germain, there was a certain man whose name was Peter. He had been blind for many years. When he heard about the miracles that the Lord was working through the merits of the holy man Christopher, he made this vow with great devotion: "Saint Christopher, give me back my eye-sight, and if you will do this, I will visit your tomb and bring two wax images of my eyes." As soon as he uttered his vow, he could see again, and he visited the tomb with great devotion, as he had promised.

In the parish of Saint-Cyprien, in the diocese of Cahors, there was a woman called Guglielma, who had been totally blind for more

than one year. She made a vow that, if the man of God Christopher would give her back her eye-sight, she would visit his tomb with a wax image of her head. She immediately recovered her eye-sight in a splendid way through the merits of the Saint.

Bernarda was a woman from the town of Cahors. For a long time she had lost her sight in one of her eyes. She made a vow and promised to visit the tomb of the man of God with a wax image of her head and a candle. That moment her eye was healed and she began to see again, and she fulfilled her vow as she had promised.

Peter, coming from the same town, was once working in his vineyard. A vine-branch hit his eye in a serious way, and a great quantity of blood came out of it. For a whole night he could not rest or sleep because of the pain. Everybody thought that he had lost the use of that damaged eye. He came to the tomb of the man of God, and after staying there for some time and touching the tomb with great devotion, all of a sudden, through the merits of the Saint he was cured from all his sufferings and his eye was healed.

A dumb man healed through the merits of brother Christopher

A certain man had lost his speech for many days and no remedy could be found to cure him. While he was praying with great devotion in his heart to the saint of God Christopher, all of a sudden he began to speak once again.

Persons freed from epilepsy

In the same town of Cahors, there was a boy who had been suffering from epilepsy for two years. His mother could not find any remedy to relieve him of this miserable state. She heard about the miracles of the holy man, and made a vow to take her son to his tomb. From that moment the boy was freed from such a horrible danger for his health.

Another man was suffering from the same illness, and no human remedy could ever cure him. His relatives made a vow to the man of God, and when they led him to the tomb he immediately regained his health through the merits of the Saint.

Those who were freed from a trembling disorder

John, from the diocese of Saintes, blasphemed the blessed Virgin on the vigil of the feast of her Assumption. That very moment he was struck in his right side and his hand shook uncontrollably. [172] He shook violently and could not control himself in any way. He spent the whole night awake in desolation and in great affliction. The following morning he went wandering along the village and in the churches as if he were out of his mind. Sensing that he was being admonished, he came to the tomb of the man of God, where he spent nearly one whole hour with great devotion and tears praying to the Saint. While the brothers and many secular people were watching him, he was perfectly cured from that grave illness.

A certain woman from Cahors had a son who suffered terribly because his head was always trembling. She carried him to Toulouse to the golden shrine of Saint Mary. Since he was not cured, she returned and took him to the tomb of the man of God. There he slept for a short time, and his trembling died down, and he was restored back to perfect health.

Regarding persons who were freed from ulcers

Another woman had a serious ulcer in her foot, and was suffering greatly, since the open wound produced pus, and it could not be cured by any medicament. On the same day when the holy father Christopher died, that woman came to the church of the friars. She touched the bier on which the holy body was lying, and that very moment she was cured from her disease.

In the same town of Cahors there was a woman called Bernarda, who had a most serious abscess, which was all infected with pus in her left breast. She was suffering terribly and no kind of medicine could relieve her of her dangerous state, so much so that she was on the point of dying. So she offered herself to the servant of God Christopher, and asked his help with devotion and promised to take a wax image of her breast to his tomb. As soon as she pronounced her vow, she was immediately freed from that disease, and visited the tomb as she had promised. Many other women who had the same physical discomfort were cured through the merits of the Saint.

Those who were freed from fever

Alayda was a woman from the same town of Cahors who had been suffering for more than three years from quartan fevers. The doctors could find no remedy for her illness. When she heard about the miracles of the man of God, she went to his tomb and after having slept there for a short time, she made a vow that, if she was cured, she would visit his tomb with a candle. She was immediately cured in a splendid way. But after some days, she neglected to fulfil her vow, and her fever returned. A certain neighbour told her that the fever had returned because she had neglected to fulfil her vow. So she returned to the tomb with a cord around her neck, and she offered the candle she had promised for her cure, and there humbly invoked the saint of God Christopher. When she had done this, she was freed in a perfect way from her illness.

John was a cleric from the same town, who was troubled with tertian fever. His mother took him to the tomb of the holy man, to whom she was very devout. When he had slept for a short while in that place, the Saint appeared to him in his dreams and said: "Wake up, my son, because your mother's faith has now saved you." John woke up healthy once more and told his mother: "Mother, let us go now, since saint Christopher has made me healthy again through his merits." As soon as he said this he woke up, and was freed from that illness.

A knight by the name of Raterius, happened to come to the tomb of the man of God. Upon hearing how many miracles happened at that place, he said: "I cannot believe how a man whom I could see when he was alive can now work miracles." His companions scolded him for having uttered those words. [173] Upon returning home, all of a sudden he became seriously ill. In his suffering he recalled to mind what he had said, and felt sorry for it and began praying: "Help me, saint Christopher, so that I will confess that you are a saint and you can work miracles. I promise you that, if you cure me, I will come to visit your tomb as soon as I possibly can." As soon as he pronounced his vow, he was immediately cured and visited the tomb with devotion, and from that day onwards began to profess the sanctity of brother Christopher.

A woman who could not take a ring off her finger, managed to free it

A certain woman could not take out by any force a ring from her finger. When she made a vow to the saint of God Christopher to offer to him the ring and a candle, without any violence she managed to free it as she wished.

How an overcoat was lost and found

A certain man was working in his vineyard close to Cahors, and he took off his overcoat and left it in the vineyard, but afterwards could not find it. He was very upset and invoked the saint of God Christopher, so that he would give it back to him, promising to offer him a candle and his overcoat. That man went to the saint's tomb all sad, but when he arrived he immediately found his overcoat near the door of the church, and he thanked the Saint and fulfilled his vow.

In the same town a certain woman, who had known the servant of God very well, woke up during a certain night at the first watch, and realised that her bed was in flames, since the straw and linens were on fire. She woke up with her family but could not put out the flames. So all of them invoked the saint of God Christopher with urgency. That lady promised to offer a candle to the Saint, and that very moment the flames extinguished themselves in a marvellous way. She then fulfilled her vow with devotion as she had promised.

There were many other persons in various other parts who were sick, or who were in need, and through the intercession of the servant of God Christopher found remedy in wondrous signs, and gave witness with faith that their prayers had been answered, to the praise of almighty God, to whom be honour and glory for ever.

Beginning of the life of Saint Agnes, who was Saint Clare's sister

[173] Clare, who was a most prudent virgin, had a sister who was a most sweet and pure young lady. Clare desired the conversion of her sister above all else, [174] and used to offer heartfelt prayers to God for her. She prayed for her with a resolute spirit. Since the two sisters were joined together as if they were one soul, so there was the same unity of will between them in their desire to serve God. The merciful Mother, therefore prayed that her sister, who was still living in her family's house, would despise the world, and God would lovingly lead her from the proposal of a physical marriage to espouse His love wholeheartedly, in such a way that she would wed Christ, the glorious bridegroom, in perpetual virginity. Their mutual love was so marvellous that, as time went on, the new division between them was making them suffer greatly in their hearts.

The divine majesty swiftly favoured the unique gift, which Clare was praying for. God consented in a special way to show his satisfaction in answering her prayers, and He generously and swiftly came to her help. Fifteen days after Clare's conversion, Agnes, illuminated by the divine Spirit, went hurrying to join her sister and told her that she had resolved to follow the mysterious promptings of her will, and that she wanted to serve the Lord in a radical way. Clare embraced her lovingly and joyfully, and told her: "I thank my God, most beloved sister, since He has been so quick to answer my prayers."

This marvellous conversion was soon to be followed by the need of self-defence on the part of the two sisters. While they were both staying in the church of Sant'Angelo di Panzo,¹⁵⁵ where they were faithfully following Christ's footsteps, and while Clare was feeling compelled by the Lord to teach her new novice, all of a sudden a whole

¹⁵⁵ The references to Clare staying at Sant'Angelo di Panzo are to be found in *The Acts of the Process of Canonization of Clare of Assisi* XII,5 and *The Legend of Saint Clare* V,10, in *Clare of Assisi, The Lady. Early Documents* (CAED), revised edition and translation by R.J. Armstrong, New City Press, New York – London – Manila 2005, 184 and 287. Sant'Angelo di Panzo was a dwelling of recluse women (*incarcerate* or *penitenti*), that would have been closer to the Beguine expression of women religious rather than the Benedictine or Cistercian expressions.

battle was waged against the young Agnes by her relatives. When they heard that Agnes had gone to stay with Clare, the following day twelve men went running to that place, full of rage. With a malicious stratagem they pretended to come in peace, and they were let inside. They immediately turned towards Agnes – since they now despaired of making Clare return home – and told her: “Why did you come to this place? Now hurry up and come back home with us.” Agnes answered that she did not want to leave her sister Clare. One of the knights was furious and began to hit her, and drag her away by pulling at her hair. The rest of the men continued to push her and drag her away. The teenage girl, who seemed to be an innocent victim in the jaws of lions who were snatching her away from God, began to cry: “Help me, my most dear sister, and do not permit them to tear me away from Christ my Lord.” Those kidnappers were violently dragging away the teenager, they were tearing her clothes, and leaving locks of hair which they tore off her head. In the meantime Clare was full of tears and praying fervently so that her sister would not give up what she had resolved in her soul.

That very moment the body of Agnes became so heavy as she was lying on the ground, that all those men, try as they might with all their strength, could not carry her beyond a certain brook. Some farmers came from the neighbouring fields and vineyards and tried to help those men, but they could not lift her body from the ground in any way. Since they could not believe that they were so helpless, they began to make fun of the miracle and began to say: “She has eaten lead all night long; no wonder she has become so heavy.” The same lord Monaldo, who was her uncle, was so furious that he wanted to hit her with a lethal blow. [175] But when he raised his arm to beat her, all of a sudden he was struck with an intense pain, which paralysed him, and continued to writhe in pain for a long time. After this long ordeal Clare came to the spot and asked her relatives to go away, and leave Agnes, who was lying there half-dead, into her care. Those men who came with such wicked intentions, had to return back with a sour look. Agnes then rose up full of joy from the ground and was happy that she had taken part in Christ’s cross, and that she had won her first battle, and promised to offer herself for ever to the service of God. When blessed Clare asked her how she was feeling, she answered that God had come to her aid with His grace, so that she had hardly felt any of the innumerable physical blows and beatings she had suffered.

After these events blessed Francis gave her the tonsure with his own hands, and called her Agnes, so that she would strongly resist and fight with manly courage for the innocent Lamb,¹⁵⁶ Jesus Christ, who offered his life for us on the cross. She made steady progress in religious life in every good behaviour and holiness, in such a way that all those who were living with her were full of admiration, and noticed that her way of life seemed to be that of a new and super-human effort to follow Christ.

How blessed Agnes was sent as an abbess to the monastery of Florence

Saint Francis later on sent Agnes to the monastery of Florence as an abbess.¹⁵⁷ There she converted many souls to the Lord through her goodness and holy way of life, and through their sweet words and loving admonitions to serve God. Inflamed with the contempt of the world, she planted the observance of evangelical poverty according to what she had promised Saint Clare. She used to feel great suffering because she was physically separated from her sister, Saint Clare, and thus she once wrote the following letter from Florence:

*Letter sent to Saint Clare from her sister Agnes, who was feeling desolate because she was separated from her.*¹⁵⁸

“To her venerable mother and the woman beloved in Christ beyond all others, to the Lady Clare and her whole community, Agnes, the lowly and least of Christ’s servants, humbly presents herself

¹⁵⁶ In Latin there is a play between the name *Agnes* and the noun *Agnus* (Lamb). Before going to join Clare, Agnes was called Caterina.

¹⁵⁷ Agnes of Assisi was sent as abbess to the new foundation of Poor Ladies at Monticelli, Florence, and remained there for a period of more than twenty years. It is not difficult to imagine that there was a considerable exchange of letters between the two sisters, but only one has come down to us, dated 1230, that is, a year after Agnes arrived at Monticelli.

¹⁵⁸ We are reproducing the English translation of the Letter of Agnes of Assisi to her Sister Clare (1230) in CAED, 404-405.

with all obedience and devotion with best wishes for her and them for whatever is sweet and precious in the eyes of the most High King.

The lot of all has been so established that one can never remain in the same state or condition. When someone thinks that she is doing well, it is then that she is plunged into adversity. Therefore, you should know, Mother, that my soul and body suffer great distress and immense sadness, that I am burdened and tormented beyond measure and am almost incapable of speaking, because I have been physically separated from you and my other sisters with whom I had hoped to live and die in this world. This distress has a beginning, but it knows no end. It never seems to diminish; it always gets worse. [176] It came to me recently, but it tends to ease off very little. It is always with me and never wants to leave me. I believed that our life and death would be one, just as our manner of life in heaven would be one, and that we who have one and the same flesh and blood would be buried in the same grave. But I see that I have been deceived. I have been restrained; I have been abandoned; I have been afflicted on every side.

My dearest sisters, sympathise with me, I beg you, and mourn with me so that you may never suffer such things and *see whether there is any suffering like my suffering* (Lam 1:12). This sorrow is always afflicting me; this emotional tenderness is always torturing me; this ardent desire is always consuming me. As a result, distress utterly possesses me and *I do not know what to do* (Phil 1:22), what I should say, since I do not expect to see you and my sisters again in this life.

Oh, if only I could lay bare for you on this page the continuing sorrow that I anticipate and that is always before me. My soul burns within me, and I am tormented by the fires of innumerable tribulations. My heart groans within me, and my eyes do not cease to pour out a flood of tears. Filled with every kind of sorrow and spiritless, I am pining away entirely. *Even though I seek consolation, I do not find it* (Lam 1:2). I conceive sorrow upon sorrow, when I ponder within me with fear that I will never see you and my sisters again. Under such distress I am totally disheartened.

On the one hand there is no one of all my dear ones to console me; but on the other hand I am very much consoled and you can congratulate me for this: I have found great harmony and no factions here, which is beyond belief. Everyone has received me with great

happiness and joy, and has very devoutly promised me obedience and reverence. They all commend themselves to God, to you, and to your community, and I commend myself – and them – to you in all things and in every way, that you may have a solicitous concern for me and for them as you have for your own sisters and daughters. Know that, I and my sisters wish to observe inviolate for all the days of our lives your admonitions and precepts.

As far as the precepts are concerned, be assured that the Lord Pope has satisfied me, as I have said, and has satisfied you too, in all things and in every way according to your intention and mine regarding, as you know, our position on the ownership of property.¹⁵⁹ [177] I beseech you to ask Brother Elias to visit me more often to console me in the Lord.”

Afterwards Agnes returned to Assisi.¹⁶⁰

One night Agnes was praying devoutly all by herself in silence, away from the other sisters. Saint Clare was also praying close by.

159 The Quaracchi editors say that Agnes is here referring to the Privilege of Poverty which Innocent III gave to the monastery of San Damiano in 1216. We know, however, that the Privilege of Poverty by Innocent III is not considered to be an authentic document, and that the authentic Privilege of Poverty is that given by Pope Gregory IX with the Bull *Sicut manifestum est* of 17th September 1228 (CAED 86-88). Maybe here Agnes is referring to another papal letter by Honorius III, *Sacrosancta Romana Ecclesia*, sent on 9th December 1219 to the Monastery of Saint Mary of the Holy Sepulchre of Monticello, in the diocese of Florence (CAED 336-339). In this letter, among other things, the Pope recalls the privilege given to the Monastery of Monticelli by cardinal Hugolino: “By your just petitions We are inclined to accept without a mediator for the Roman Church and under the protection of Blessed Peter this Monastery of the Glorious Virgin, in which you have given yourself up to divine allegiance, together with the people and everything there, and We enforce this privilege by this present communication. We especially set it up that a monastic Order that is known to have been established in the same place according to the Lord and the Rule of Blessed Benedict, which you profess, and may it be inviolably observed there for all time. Nevertheless, besides the general Rule of Blessed Benedict, you have voluntarily imposed upon yourselves the regular observances of the Ladies of Saint Mary of San Damiano at Assisi.” These words show that Monticelli was spiritually united with San Damiano regarding the observance of poverty, even though, like many other monasteries of the Poor Ladies in “Tuscia” and the “Valle Spoletana”, they had to profess the Form of Life given to them by cardinal Hugolino in 1219.

160 Agnes returned to Assisi in the beginning of 1253, the same year in which Clare died, in order to be close to her sister who was very ill.

During her prayer she saw Agnes who was totally uplifted from the ground in the air, and she also saw that an Angel was crowning her with three crowns. The following day blessed Clare asked Agnes what had happened when she was praying and what kind of contemplation she had had the night before. Agnes did not want to tell her. But after having been obliged by the yoke of obedience on the part of blessed Clare, Agnes recalled her mystical experience and said: "I was first meditating devoutly upon the goodness and patience of God, and regarding how he is daily offended by sinners, and I was feeling a great sense of suffering and compassion. Secondly, I meditated upon the indescribable love, which He has towards sinners, and how He sustained a most harsh passion in order to redeem them. Thirdly, I was contemplating the souls of purgatory and the sufferings they have to endure, and how they are not capable of helping themselves."

Regarding her patience and death

Agnes secretly wore a hair-shirt made of a horse's mane from the time she was a teenager until the day of her death. Her nourishment was nearly always bread and water. She showed intense compassion for all. She died in a mature age and lived in perfect holiness all the days of her life until she was fifty-six years old. Then she left this life's prison, and was eternally welcomed with joy by the Angels in heaven.¹⁶¹

[178] On the day when Agnes died a multitude of men and women gathered out of devotion to the Saint and was going up the ladder into the monastery of San Damiano. They were all expecting to receive some spiritual consolation from her holiness. Suddenly the iron chain which held the drawbridge got loose, and all the people standing on the ladder fell to the ground, and bumped their shoulders, arms and heads; the whole wooden drawbridge also fell down

¹⁶¹ According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1253, n. 23, Agnes died *nonaginta septem diebus post Clarae obitum ad Agni nuptias evocata 16 kalendas Decembris excessit e vivis anno suae aetatis 56* ("ninety-seven days after the death of Clare she was called to the wedding feast of the Lamb on the 16th day of the Calends of December [16th November] when she ceased to stay among the living, and was 56 years old").

with a crash.¹⁶² But with the help and merits of Saint Agnes, whom those devout people were invoking, they all escaped unhurt and joyfully avoided all danger.

Regarding miracles occurring after Agnes' death, and first of all regarding a girl cured from an ulcer

After some time a certain girl from Perugia had a horrible and large ulcer in her throat. Out of great devotion towards Saint Agnes she came to the monastery and the sisters undid the bandages with which the wound was tied. Then they led her for a short time to the Saint's tomb. There she prayed as she could, and stood up full of joy, and was happily totally cured and went back home.

How a nun was freed from a most serious ulcer

A certain nun in the monastery of Saint Mary of the Angels in Perugia had a horrible ulcer with seven holes in her breast, as if she had been struck by a divine judgment. Her relatives and all the doctors were desperate that she would ever be cured. The friars comforted her and bade her have patience, and also encouraged her to commend herself to Saint Agnes. So she knelt down, as she could, in front of the altar, and began to pray to blessed Agnes to cure her. That very moment she felt a very sweet taste. Blessed Agnes appeared to her, and she comforted her with great tenderness. Then she gently touched the ulcer with her hand and it seemed that she was applying ointment to the wound and curing it. Then she woke up as if from a sleep and found that she was completely cured. From that day onwards she did not show any sign of the wound or feel any of the pain she used to feel before.

¹⁶² This interesting note shows that the monastery entrance in San Damiano was high above ground level, for protection of the sisters and their cloistered life. The entrance could be reached by a ladder, which could be taken up and down, and by a drawbridge, similarly taken up and down by iron chains. The door to the infirmary of San Damiano, where Clare died, and where Agnes probably also died, is still to be seen high above the ground, to the right-hand side of the façade of the church.

Another nun from the monastery of Venice had a similar wound in her breast, which was horrible to look at. The doctors and her relatives all thought that she would soon die. So she commended herself with all devotion, as best she could, to Saint Clare and Saint Agnes. They both appeared to her as if they were two nurses carrying vessels with ointment, and they entered the room with a multitude of virgins. The other nuns of the infirmary and another lady who was there at that time all saw this vision. The saints stood by the sick nun, and while Saint Clare spoke to her regarding the power of God and the merits of Saint Agnes, convinced her to believe that she would undoubtedly be cured. Since the nun did not understand what was happening to her, she began to have doubts regarding these words. Then Saint Clare and Saint Agnes told her that they were two doctors who came to nurse her from Assisi. Blessed Agnes then began to gently apply the ointment to that nun's wounds. When she had finished, she and all the other virgins who accompanied her disappeared. That very night the sick nun was cured and she was totally healthy as before, and no sign remained in her body of the wound she had been suffering from.

[179] A nun freed from leprosy

A certain nun from the monastery of Saint Clare in Assisi had been sick for sixteen years with a kind of disease, which for the other sisters of the monastery, seemed to be common leprosy. That nun humbly prayed blessed Agnes to intercede for her in front of the Virgin Mary in order to have mercy upon her and provide a remedy for her illness. When she had prayed and made her vow, through the merits of blessed Agnes she was restored to her former health, and no signs of that disease could be seen any longer.

A certain man was freed from pain in his foot

A citizen of Assisi was hit on his foot by a stone. For a long time he remained in pain and suffered much, in such a way that he could hardly go out of the door of his house for his daily errands. Since no medicine seemed to be effective in relieving his pain, on the feast day

of Saint Agnes, he stood up as best he could, and came to her altar in order to humbly prostrate himself in prayer. When he had finished praying, he could stand up healthy again, and from that day onwards did not sense any more pain in his foot. Sister Balvina, abbess of the monastery of Saint Clare, told me the story of this miracle, and I have written it down.

A man who was seriously ill and was freed

A certain artist by the name of Palmerius narrated to the aforementioned abbess Balvina and to me that he had a brother who was so ill that the doctors all despaired of his recovery. One night that sick man lost his speech, and it seemed that he was on the verge of breathing his last. Palmerius was close to his bed, and was crying and wailing, since he saw that his brother was dying. He went down on his knees and began to make a vow to Saint Agnes with great trust and many tears, saying that if his brother would be cured, every time Palmerius would happen to paint the image of Agnes, he would add a golden crown above her head. As soon as he made his vow and finished praying, the sick man woke up as if from a deep sleep, and that very moment began to speak and ask to be given food. On that same day he woke up from his bed and began to walk, and to eat and drink with other people. Afterwards he said that he had seen a nun who had come to visit him with great tenderness.

A boy who had a diabolical obsession was miraculously freed from it

A certain twelve-year old boy from Assisi was walking with some friends near the monastery of Sant'Apollinare. He met a stranger, who offered him a small box full of beans and then went away. When the boy opened it three beans fell to the ground, but he ate the fourth one. Looking around him he could not see that man any more. When he went back home he was assailed by an intense pain and vomiting, and began to have a terrible aspect in his eyes, so that all those who looked at him thought that he was obsessed by the devil. The following day his father and many other persons carried him to the church

of Saint Clare, and they began to pray for him to Saint Agnes. [180] That very moment the boy began to shriek and to bark like a dog. Then he began to shout with a loud voice: "Look, now two devils have been thrown out. Therefore, recite a *Hail Mary*, so that the third devil will also go away." The people who were in that place prayed for him. The third devil left the boy, who remained healthy and without any harm. Thus, through the power of God, he was perfectly freed from three devils.

A girl freed from a diabolical obsession

A certain girl called Putticula, from the gate of Saint Claudius in Foligno, in the parish of Saint John, took an oath upon the Holy Gospels of God and in front of the brothers, who ministered to the monastery of Saint Clare, that she had been troubled by evil spirits. Her father Innotitius and her grandmother Iacoba made a vow to take the girl to Assisi on the tomb of Saint Agnes, the sister of Saint Clare, hoping that she would be freed through the merits of these two saints. When Putticula remained in front of the tomb of Saint Agnes from None till Vespers, she felt that she had been totally freed of her vexation. Now this miracle happened on the feast day of Saint Francis. Her grandmother Iacoba, together with Benvenuta, the wife of Vagnotius, took an oath regarding the truthfulness of this fact, which could be proved without any shadow of doubt. On the 22nd day of November, her relatives came to the tomb of Saint Agnes and offered a wax image of the girl weighing two pounds.

A man cured from a horrible abscess

A certain man from Perugia was suffering from continual fever since he had a horrible abscess. The doctors were despairing of his health and were of the opinion that he would soon die. A certain Giliola instructed him to commend himself to blessed Agnes and to promise to visit her tomb. So he accepted the proposal and formulated his vow. That very moment he was totally freed from that illness. He did not remain ungrateful for such a great benefit, which he had received, and he visited the tomb of Saint Agnes as he had promised.

A nun was cured from blindness in one eye

One of the nuns of the monastery of Saint Clare in Assisi lost sight in one eye, in such a way that she was totally blind in one eye and could hardly see from the other. Since the doctors could not help her in any way through their surgical operations, she commended herself with great confidence to blessed Agnes. The other sisters meanwhile offered for her their most devout prayers to the virgin. One day the sick nun was in the church praying, and she heard a certain woman who was inviting her to come close and who was saying: "Open your eyes, since your sight has been fully restored." When she opened her eyes she could see quite clearly, and she was perfectly freed from her blindness. She then said that, after the miracle, she could neither hear nor see that lady who had spoken to her. So she firmly believed that the lady had been Saint Agnes, who had interceded for her complete recovery. This miracle occurred in the year of the Lord 1315.

[181] A boy cured from a horrible abscess

In the year of the Lord 1330 lady Vitula from Assisi, the wife of Mattiolo Pietro from the gate of Saint Francis, had a son whose name was Martino. This boy had a horrible abscess in his throat, which had nine holes, and it was a very dangerous and serious wound. He also had another abscess on his shoulders, which was big and painful, and the doctors could not relieve his pain in any way. Meanwhile his mother had made a vow to Saint Agnes, the sister of Saint Clare. When the mother was still praying, she fell asleep. In her sleep she had a vision of a virgin who was dressed most beautifully in a robe which was half green and half red, and was full of gold brocade. On her head she was crowned with a golden tiara, and in her right hand she was holding a lily.¹⁶³ This virgin told her: "My daughter, do not doubt, because your son will be cured and will become healthy again."

¹⁶³ The figure of Saint Agnes, as it is presented here, is a typical representation of a painting or statue of a virgin saint, with the symbols of virginity (crown or tiara, lily), evoking the antiphon of the Common of Virgins: *Veni, sponsa Christi, accipe coronam quam tibi Dominus praeparavit in aeternum* ("Come, o bride of Christ, accept the crown which the Lord has eternally prepared for you").

That woman woke up full of joy after that vision, and feeling confident in her happiness she went hurrying to the monastery of Saint Clare, and recounted to the abbess and the other nuns the vision which she had had, and the promise which Saint Agnes had made to her. After having assisted at Mass, that mother and her son were shown the relics of the saint. At the same time the boy was totally cured from the abscess in his throat, but he still had the wound on his shoulder.

Saint Agnes then appeared to the boy in his sleep. She was accompanied by another lady who was holding a small box with ointment in her hand. She asked him: "My son, how are you feeling?" The boy answered her: "I have been cured from the abscess in my throat through the merits of Saint Agnes, but the other wound I have on my shoulder still makes me suffer intense pain." So Agnes answered him: "In the same way I cured you in your throat, I will now cure you in your shoulder." So she took off the bandages that the doctors had applied on the wound in order to heal it, and she threw them on the floor. On the spot where the boy had his abscess she applied the ointment, which her companion ministered to her. As soon as she had done this, the boy was cured from all his wounds. His mother came over to his side, and she found the bandages and ointments, which the doctors had applied to the wound thrown on the floor. Her son was happily showing her how he had been cured of his ulcers, and he narrated to her the vision he had. The mother and her son took an oath regarding the truthfulness of this account, in front of brother Tommaso Vannini.

A boy was cured from a dangerous abscess

Lady Flora from Assisi had an eleven-year old son called Secte, who had a horrible abscess on his chest. The doctors could not cure it with medicines. The lady heard about the remedies, which the most blessed Agnes was offering in similar cases, through the divine power to heal sickness. So she advised her son to go and visit the tomb of Saint Agnes and commend himself to her prayers. When he had done this, a marvellous thing happened. He went to bed with that wound which was painful and horrid to look at. The following morning he woke up and found himself cured and freed from that wound. He told his mother: "Rejoice, mother, because this night that Agnes, whose

tomb you commanded me to visit in order to watch there in prayer, came to me and carried me with her to her sister Clare, who had a kind of ointment, which Agnes applied to my wound. Look, now I am marvellously cured." [182] I, brother Tommaso Vangoli,¹⁶⁴ have listened to the account of this miracle from the lips of that mother, and I have received her statement under oath, which is signed. I have written down the account as it has been just presented.

¹⁶⁴ Tommaso Vangoli was the Custos of the Sacro Convento of Saint Francis in Assisi in the year 1345.

Beginning of the life of Saint Clare, virgin

[182] Saint Clare was a most devout disciple of the cross and a precious small plant of blessed Francis. She was of such sublime holiness, that not only Bishops and Cardinals, but also the Supreme Pontiff himself showed a great desire to see her and to hear her words and to visit her personally. One day the lord Pope arrived at the monastery of Saint Clare,¹⁶⁵ so that he would listen to heavenly and divine words from her who was the secretary of the Holy Spirit. Both of them spoke about the salvation of their souls and praised God for a long time. In the meantime Clare asked the sisters to prepare loaves of bread on the table for all, since she desired that the Vicar of Christ would bless them and afterwards they could be kept with devotion. After they had finished their divine discourses, the most holy Clare with great reverence knelt down and asked the Supreme Pontiff to bless those loaves of bread that had been prepared. The Pope answered her: "My most faithful sister Clare, I want you to bless those loaves, and to mark them with the sign of the cross." Clare answered: "Most holy Father, please excuse me, because I am would be worthy to be sternly scolded if, in front of the Vicar of Christ, I who am just a most humble woman, would presume to impart such a blessing." The Pope answered her: "In order not to attribute to presumption, but to acquire merit in what you are about to do, I command you with the virtue of holy obedience, that you bless these loaves of bread with a great sign of the cross." Since Clare was a true daughter of obedience, she raised her hand and began to bless those loaves, and made the sign of the cross in the air above them. A marvellous thing happened! That very moment there appeared the sign of the cross marked on each loaf. Therefore many of the persons there present ate those loaves with great devotion, while many other loaves were kept as a future sign of that miracle. The Pope was greatly admiring the power of the cross in the life of that spouse of Christ. He first rendered thanks to God and afterwards he blessed her and filled her with great consolation.

¹⁶⁵ This episode refers to the visit by Pope Gregory IX to the monastery of San Damiano (here the author calls it mistakenly "monastery of Saint Clare") in 1228. The episode is taken from ABF 42 (FAED III, 516-517).

In the same monastery lived also sister Ortolana, who was Saint Clare's mother, as well as Agnes, Clare's sister. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, [183] together with many holy nuns and spouses of Christ. Saint Francis used to send over to them many sick people, and with the power of the sign of the cross, which they adored with all their hearts, all those who were signed by the same sign became cured.

LETTER SENT TO SAINT CLARE BY THE LORD CARDINAL HUGOLINO, WHO LATER ON BECAME POPE GREGORY IX¹⁶⁶

"Huglino, a wretched and sinful man, the Bishop of Ostia, commends himself – all that he is and all he is capable of being – to his very dear sister in Christ and mother of his salvation, the servant of Christ, Lady Clare.

My very dear sister in Christ! From that hour when the necessity of returning here separated me from your holy conversation and tore me away from that joy of heavenly treasure, such a bitterness of heart, such an abundance of tears, and such an immensity of sorrow have overcome me that, unless I find at the feet of Jesus the consolation of His usual kindness, I fear that I will always encounter such trials which will cause my spirit to melt away. And this is reasonable because, just as an overwhelming sorrow ensued when the Lord was taken away from the disciples and nailed to the gallows of the Cross, so I remain desolate by your absence from me. For that glorious joy, with which I discussed the Body of Christ with you while celebrating Easter with you and the other servants of Christ, has forsaken me. And although I have always known and have considered myself to be a sinner, yet after having recognised a sure sign of your merits and having observed the rigour of your way of life, I have learned with certainty that I have been weighed down with such a burden of sin and have so offended the Lord of the whole universe, that I am not worthy to be freed from earthly concerns and be associated with the company of the elect, unless your prayers and tears obtain for me pardon for my sins.

¹⁶⁶ The English translation of this letter is reproduced from CAED, 129-130.

Therefore, I entrust my soul and commend my spirit to you, just as Jesus on the Cross commended His spirit to the Father, so that on the day of judgment you may answer for me, if you have not been concerned for and intent on my salvation. For I have a certain belief that you will obtain from the most high Judge whatever the insistence of so great a devotion and abundance of tears implores. The Lord Pope is not coming to Assisi now, but I will seize the first opportunity in my desire to see you and your sisters.

Greetings to the virgin Agnes, my sister, and to all your sisters in Christ! Amen.¹⁶⁷

167 In the Codex of the friary of Saint Mary of the Angels in Tyrol, which during the time of the publication of the Quaracchi edition belonged to the Friars Minor Reformed, (Cod. P. 37. F), dated c. 1491, the editors found a section about Saint Agnes of Prague, entitled *De alia Agnete, filia Regis Bohemiae*, which they included in a footnote. The following is the translation of this text:

"There was another Agnes, a virgin pleasing to God and to men, who descended from a noble and illustrious family, and who was the daughter of a king. She shone like a new star in the brilliance of her beauty. She battled against the ignorance of this world, and joyfully spread around her the rays of purity. She was like the morning star in her brilliance, and was constituted in a special way to be gracious and close to God, and to walk before us with the radiance of her light, which is the light of truth, thus shining with the splendour of justice and holiness. In this way we may walk full of trust in the brilliance of the way of God's commandments, just as the Saints did, in order to be close to the way of God's counsels, which lead us to the heavenly home.

Agnes therefore was the daughter of the king of Bohemia, whose name was Ottokar, or Premysl. He was the cousin of Hermann, the Landgrave of Thuringia, whose son Louis was married to blessed Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew, king of Hungary. Ottokar wanted to wed his daughter to the emperor Henry, son of Frederick II; but Agnes was not led to him. With the inspiration of the Holy Spirit she decided not to marry and to discard the comforts of the world. When she heard about the fame of the holiness of Saint Clare from those who came over from Rome and Assisi, she gently asked her father to permit her to have a heavenly spouse, not an earthly one. Her father was afraid of falling into the disgrace of the emperor, since she had been promised to him as his wife. Therefore Agnes prayed the Lord in order to help her in this matter.

With the consent of her father, the virgin of God Agnes sent over to call the friars Minor, who were in Mainz. (In those days Mainz was a metropolis of the church of Prague. The king had sent ambassadors to the archbishop of Mainz because of the interdict that the bishop of Prague had placed upon that city, with the authority of Pope Honorius III. This interdict remained for seven years. Therefore many a time nobles went over from Prague to Mainz, and there they met the friars Minor, mentioned the name of Agnes, and told them that she had sent for them). The friars therefore went over and, in front of

REGARDING THE MIRACLE OF THE BUILDING OF THE FRIARY AT LÉRIDA¹⁶⁸

[184] When Saint Francis sent his friars into the world, so that they would sow the word of life through their holy manner of living, among other things he sent four friars to the kingdom of Aragon. Two of these friars arrived at Lérída, and were sent to the house of a certain nobleman called Ramon [185] de Barriacho. The friars began to

many other princesses and illustrious ladies they consecrated her to God and gave her the habit of Religion. This happened in 1233 during the time of Pope Gregory IX, and according to the laws of the Apostolic See Agnes was instructed to follow the way of life of Clare and her sisters. Since her father the king Ottokar and her brother Venceslas wanted to give to her and the other nuns a great dowry, Agnes did not accept it, and she wanted to live by charity, with the help of the friars who used to beg for alms for the food of the sisters.

When Frederick II heard of the contempt of the world, which Agnes accomplished, he was rather troubled, but since he knew that she had been espoused to Christ he was consoled, and said that he accepted the fact that she became the spouse not of a man of this world, but of the Lord God. In fact, he was troubled because he feared a wedding with another man, not because of Agnes' resolve to be espoused to God.

After her conversion she wanted to imitate the holy Father Francis, who repaired three churches and instituted three Orders. In the same way Agnes solemnly built three churches in Prague: the first one in honour of the Saviour of all, where she gathered her sisters; the second church in honour of the Virgin Mary and Saint Francis, where she placed the friars who were ministering to the sisters; the third church in the hospital she built in honour of Saint Francis, where she placed the members of the Order of Crosiers, but which was rebuilt by the friars Minor under the command of the same holy land Agnes, and given over to the Order of the Crosiers of the Red Star. She endowed the hospital with many gifts from her own riches and dowry, and she received in it all the sick and weak and all the miserable and poor people, to whom she would faithfully and personally minister in their temporal and spiritual needs. Blessed Agnes heard about the fame of Saint Clare by means of ambassadors, who had also spoken to Saint Clare about Agnes. Clare therefore praised the Lord God and sent some relics to Saint Agnes, namely a head scarf, a bowl, a glass and some other items used by our Father Francis, which Saint Agnes received with great devotion. Through these relics God worked many wonders, with the merits of blessed Clare. All these relics were adorned with gold and other precious stones and kept in the monastery. Saint Clare also sent a letter to Agnes with the following words: " (here follows the text of the First Letter of Saint Clare to Saint Agnes of Prague, text in CAED, 43-46).

168 Lérída is a town situated between Zaragoza and Barcellona. The friary at the time formed part of the province of Cataluña.

speaking fervently to him regarding God, in such a way that he began to nurture a great devotion towards them and the Order. The friars then asked him, being a very rich man, to build a friary for them, and promised him that God would give him enough money for the project, and that He would also increase his wealth. God touched the heart of that man and he believed the words of the brothers, and started to build a friary for them outside the town. What else can we say? The expenses for the building increased daily, and his money coffers became empty, and he did not even have enough money necessary to pay the builders.

[186] Ramon sent his shield-bearer to the treasury in order to take money to pay the workers, but he found no money in it and returned to tell his master that all the money had been spent. The master, however, did not believe his shield-bearer, and preferred to confide in the friars' words, and therefore he commanded him to return to the treasury and there search diligently for the money. When that man went and searched diligently, he returned to his master Ramon and told him plainly that he did not find any money in the treasury. So Ramon was enkindled with anger, and when he saw the friars, he began to hurl angry words of abuse at them. The friars told him: "Do not lose your temper, because the Lord will accomplish what He has promised." Then Ramon went personally to that place, where he used to store his money, and he found the entire treasury full of coins. So he was overjoyed and marvelled greatly. He went back to the friars, knelt down and humbly confessed his fault in front of them.

THE MARTYRDOM OF BROTHERS JOHN AND PETER, WHO ARE BURIED IN THE FRIARY OF TERUEL

The other two most holy brothers whom the most holy Father Francis sent to the same kingdom of Aragon were brother John, who was a cleric and a priest, [187] and brother Peter, who was a layman. When they arrived at Teruel they took possession of a friary where they used to pray, and from where the fragrance of their holiness spread in the entire world. In those days the town of Valencia was populated by Saracens, and it was under the command of the infidel

Moors. In this town the king who was reigning was called Azotus Abueziti, and he was a great persecutor of the Christians. One day the two holy brothers John and Peter, inflamed with the zeal of faith and with the desire for martyrdom, decided to journey towards Valencia, in order to preach the word of God to the infidels of the town. As soon as they entered it, they began to fervently preach the faith of Christ, and to show the falsity of the law of Mohammed to the Saracens.

When king Azotus Abueziti heard them, he ordered that they be locked up in a dungeon. He tried to convince them with threats and promises to reject the true faith and accept the law of Mohammed. They, however, remained steadfast in confessing the true Catholic faith and continued to grow stronger in their resolve. So the king commanded that they be beheaded in the square of the town, called *Ficareta*. On the feast day of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, in the year of the Lord 1231, the two brothers were beheaded and offered their souls to the Lord in a glorious martyrdom.¹⁶⁹ The Christians who lived in Valencia buried them, and from that moment they began to shine with many miracles.

During that time, the most Christian king of Aragon, Jaime,¹⁷⁰ entered into battle with great courage against the king of Valencia, the town where the two brothers were martyred, out of vengeance for their death, and he began to have glorious victories. The king of Aragon was continually winning over the king of Valencia Azotus Abueziti, he captured many of his lands, he killed many of his soldiers, and thus the king of Valencia continually diminished his power. In one battle a great multitude of Saracens were taken prisoners. The holy friar martyrs helped the Christians with frequent and great miracles, and these managed to take their holy relics, which were handed over to them by the Saracens as a ransom for the redemption and freedom of their many prisoners. When the Christians had received the bodies of the holy friars, they gave them an honourable burial in the friary of Teruel, and they shone with many miracles up till the present day.

169 The feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist falls on 29th August. The two brothers martyrs are commemorated in the Franciscan Martyrology on 3rd September.

170 Jaime I succeeded his father as king of Aragon when he was just six years old (1206), and died when he was seventy, on 27th July 1276, after having reigned for 63 years.

The conversion of the king of Valencia and the friary of Valencia

When the king of Valencia, Azotus Abuzeiti saw that he was being defeated in battle every single day by the Christians, and when by divine grace he became aware that such a victory was only possible through the power of God, he began to make negotiations with Jaime, the king of Aragon, and he promised to convert to the Christian faith, to accept the Catholic faith and receive baptism, and also to hand over his town and his reign, on condition that his life would be spared and that he would be fed every day. The king of Aragon rejoiced, and thanking God first of all, he then accepted these terms of confederation of the kingdom.

In the year of the Lord 1238, on the eve of the feast of Saint Michael,¹⁷¹ the king of Aragon entered the town of Valencia. All those among the Saracens who did not want to receive baptism, had to escape [188] or were killed. The king of Valencia Azotus Abuzeiti, as he had promised, converted and was baptised, and he consigned all his reign to the king of Aragon. The king of Aragon let him keep his royal palace in the town, and also let him keep all of his retinue, for him and his descendants. This venerable custom has been kept for generations, to the present day.

Once the king of Valencia was baptised, the cult of Mohammed was erased from that town. He called the friars Minor to him and said: "My dear brothers, I was the one who killed the holy friars at Teruel, out of my lack of faith. I am now very sorry with all my heart for what I did, and therefore I want to satisfy this evil deed. In this way I want to give to you my royal palace as your monastery. You should strongly desire to have it, since I and the other leaders of the infidels have shed the blood of so many Martyrs has been shed in there, and therefore the whole place is consecrated by the blood of the Martyrs. In the same place the blessed Vincent was martyred for his faith,¹⁷² and he is so highly venerated by all Christians. Therefore be quick to ask the king to give you this palace, and I believe that your desire and mine will thus be accomplished."

The friars then rendered thanks to God, and went to king Jaime, who was their lord and a special friend, and asked him humbly to

¹⁷¹ 28th September.

¹⁷² Saint Vincent, deacon of the bishop of Zaragoza, was martyred on 22nd January 304 under the emperor Diocletian, by the hands of Dacianus, the prefect of Spain, after undergoing cruel torments. His feast day is still celebrated in the Roman calendar on 22nd January.

give them that palace. The king said: "I do not have any intention to snatch away that palace from the one who is now my collaborator, since he would be very upset at such an act." The friars answered him: "Lord, that is why he sent us to you, since he greatly desires to give us his palace as a satisfaction for having killed the holy friars of Teruel." When the king heard these words, he joyfully conceded that palace to the brothers, and they built a friary in that place.

How through the merits of the holy Martyrs, multitudes of locusts were sent away

After some years it happened that an infinite multitude of locusts descended like rain upon the region of Teruel. They covered the entire ground and they devastated the fruits of the earth, and especially all vegetation. The population of Teruel, seeing that no human remedy could be found, began to make processions and implore the help of God and the Saints, but to no avail. At long last they were convinced that they had to carry in procession the relics of the holy friar Martyrs, and to unanimously pray to the Saints in order to relieve them of that tragedy. When they had done this, and were carrying the relics out of the village to a certain church, and when the procession was returning to where it came from, all of a sudden all those locusts disappeared from that region, and not a single one of them could be found. All the persons who witnessed this fact remained full of joy and astonishment at such a miracle.

[189] REGARDING BROTHER BENVENUTO THE COOK,
AND HOW ANGELS PREPARED FOOD FOR THE FRIARS
WHEN HE WAS RAPT IN ECSTASY

The holy Father Francis, when he was alive, received in the Order a knight called Benvenuto.¹⁷³ Out of humility this brother always

¹⁷³ There were four friars Minor with the name of Benvenuto. One died in Mantua round about the year 1230, according to Bartholomew of Pisa and Luke Wadding. The other one was Blessed Benvenuto of Recanati, who died in Rieti on 5th May 1289, but he was not a knight, as Bartholomew of Pisa mistakenly asserts. The third one was Blessed Benvenuto of Gubbio, who was a knight

wanted to serve the brothers in the kitchen, and out of a free act of self-denial he was received in the Order by Saint Francis and given the responsibility of this office of cook. In the Province of Sicily there was a certain nobleman who on a Saturday wanted to offer food out of devotion to the brothers, and he sent to them all necessary ingredients for a good lunch early in the morning. Brother Benvenuto, who had been first a knight and who now was a cook, before starting to prepare the food, went to hear the first Mass of the day with great devotion. When the Mass was finished, and when the friars began to celebrate the Mass of Our Lady¹⁷⁴ with solemnity, he was rapt in ecstasy because of the sweetness of heart which he was feeling, and he remained in that state for a long time. Forgetting all about his duties in the kitchen, he remembered nothing about the food he had to prepare. When he came back to his senses, he was greatly afraid and full of confusion hurried to the kitchen. When he got close to the kitchen, he heard the voices of many servants who were working there. So he was astonished, since the kitchen door was locked. He immediately opened the door and when he went in he found nobody there, but all the food was already prepared and ready to be served. So he was certain that, because he was rapt in ecstasy during that Mass, his work had been done through the ministry of the Angels.

A MIRACLE THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF SAINT FRANCIS

[189] When Saint Francis was returning from Santiago de Compostella, he passed through the castles of Chateau-neuf and Orgon in Provence.¹⁷⁵ He arrived at a place where there was a deep waterway.

and was received in the Order by Saint Francis, and who died in Corneto in Puglie on 27th June 1232. The fourth one was Saint Benvenuto of Ancona, who was a bishop and died in 1282.

174 This was the votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the friars used to sing every Saturday.

175 Chateau-neuf and Orgon are two fortified villages not far from Avignon. Francis is traditionally considered to have gone to Spain in 1213 to convert the king of Morocco, Miramolin, whose name was the Latin version of the Arab name "Amir-al-Mu'minin", literally, "the commander of the believers". His real name was Muhammad al Nasir (1199-1213). He lost his foothold in Spain during the battle of Las Navas in 1212. During this time Morocco was gov-

He had a companion with him and it was in the middle of winter. They met a certain young man from Chateau-neuf who, although he was worldly and vain, was nevertheless very generous and pious. When he saw that Saint Francis did not dare to cross that waterway, because it was winter and the water was very cold, he was touched with compassion. [190] So he took the two ponies, that he was leading, laden with bales of cloth, and unloaded his wares, and made Saint Francis and his companion ride them. Then he helped them to cross, took them over to Orgon and ministered to them in all their needs. When Saint Francis and his companion were leaving they thanked him saying: "May the Lord repay you in the day of the retribution of the just."

That same year the young man changed his worldly way of life into a good and praiseworthy style of life, and went to visit the thresholds of the Apostles Peter and Paul.¹⁷⁶ When he was there he prayed to the Lord that he would die during that year, since after receiving so many indulgences during that pilgrimage he wanted to go out of this life. Indeed, it occurred that, by a divine plan, the young man died during that pilgrimage. When his relatives heard the news of his death, they called a priest to celebrate Mass for his repose and to take part in the meal of farewell. Mass was nearly finished when more than 70 friars Minor, to the astonishment of the local people who never believed that there were so many of them, entered in procession in the castle of Chateau-neuf, singing and walking in an ordered way to the church. There, in front of all the people who heard them, they sang the Mass of the dead for the young man's repose, with melodious voices.

They were then invited to the meal, and entered for that fraternal gathering. When they rose from the meal, they accompanied the people with devotion and joy to a certain place, which is close to Dur-enque. After the local people had returned home, they did not find any missing food that had been prepared before. The people therefore

erned by the "al-Muwahhidun", or the Almohads. Francis probably followed the pilgrim road to Compostella in Spain. There is no proof that he actually arrived at Santiago de Compostella.

176 Our translation follows closely the Latin expression: *ivit ad Apostolorum Petri et Pauli limina visitandum*. This expression is used in a particular way for the pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, and to this very day it is the expression used when bishops are called by the Pope for a special visit, *visita ad limina*, literally "visit to the thresholds".

realised immediately that a great miracle had happened. They sent explorers to search for the brothers, in order to discover where they had gone, or where they had come from, or what was the intention of their visit, but they did not find not even one of them. In this way the inhabitants of that castle believed that it had been Saint Francis who had come over with so many brothers in order to honour the funeral Mass of that young man.

It happened that on that same road, close to Saint Celonicus, between Barcellona and Girona, one of the companions of Saint Francis entered into a vineyard in order to pick some grapes and eat them, because he was famished. At that very moment the guardian of the vineyard entered and caught him red-handed, and demanded his tunic or habit as a pledge. Saint Francis begged that man to give back the habit to his companion, but he did not want to, and went to give it to the proprietor of the vineyard as restitution to the harm, which the friar had done by picking the grapes. So Saint Francis humbly prostrated himself and begged the guardian of the vineyard to give back the habit to his companion. He insisted so much, that the man finally agreed to give it back to the brother, and invited both of them for supper. The Saint spoke about God in such a fervent and devout way, that he told the man that he and the brothers would always regard him with great devotion, for as long as he lived. So that man wanted to welcome all the brothers who would pass through that place and to provide them with food and lodging. The Saint told him: "I am pleased with what you are willingly offering."

That man became a friend of the Saint and all the brothers. After some time he died. When the funeral was being celebrated, the local people began to murmur against the friars, since they had not come to honour their friend. That very moment twelve friars entered the church and began to sing so melodiously that everybody was amazed. After Mass they prepared a meal [191] for the brothers, but when it was time to eat, it seemed that all those friars had disappeared, and not one could be found. So everybody thought, without any doubt, that it was Saint Francis with his holy brothers who had come for the funeral, or else those were Angels in the habit of the friars Minor. Because of such a great miracle, the people of that village became very hospitable, and whenever the friars would pass through the village, they would welcome them and offer them lunch and hospitality. This tradition has remained to this present day.

How Saint Francis became a friend of John de Castris and how he worked a miracle for him

In the town of Lérida, in the kingdom of Aragon, in Spain, there was a merchant called John de Castris, who was a rich man, and who was united with a most intimate devotion to Saint Francis. One night he was in agonizing pain because of a wound. When Saint Francis touched him with his stigmata, he was restored to his former perfect health. From that moment he was inflamed with such a great devotion towards the Saint that Francis often used to appear to him and assist him in all his tribulations and needs.

Once it happened that John had sold his merchandise for a great sum of money. One of his colleagues in the merchant business, whom he barely trusted, was blinded with his avarice and he stole all that money and hid it in secret. John realised what had happened to him. So he prayed Saint Francis, as usual, and turning to him he begged him to find that large sum of money of which he had been deprived. Saint Francis, however, did not appear to him as usual, and neither did he give him any answer of consolation. Therefore John was totally desperate and knew that he could not get back that money. He was sad beyond all consolation, and his wife and children suffered with him and wept. In their sorrow they tried to console him and told him that he should not despair regarding the help coming from Saint Francis, since, if the Saint had already helped him in major issues, in this particular aspect he would not abandon to help him in a perfect way, if he would continue invoking his aid.

When he heard these words John felt much better and consoled. So he stood up and with great fervour entered the church of the friars Minor and with all his heart commended his business to Saint Francis. He wanted to follow the man who stole his money, since he thought that he had fled to Pamplona. But he did not have any horse to carry him to that town. So he went to the square in order to borrow a horse from somebody. When he arrived there he bumped into Saint Francis, who appeared to him as a windmill worker, and who immediately asked John what he was looking for. John answered him: "I am looking for a horse, to take me in all haste to the town of Pamplona." The Saint answered him: "I have a very good horse and I know the road very well, and if you like I can willingly accompany you." When John asked him his name and where he came from, the Saint gave

him the same answer, which the angel Raphael once gave to Tobit.¹⁷⁷ So John did not know who was that stranger. He rode the horse with him and together with Saint Francis who appeared to him under the guise of a windmill worker, he directed his journey toward Pamplona.

Marvellous to say, as soon as they had gone out five miles from Lérida, all of a sudden Saint Francis led John to Pamplona so swiftly [192] that they arrived before sunset, having just travelled for about one sixth of the length of that day. The Saint took John to Pamplona and made the horse pass in front of the same house in which the robber of the money had come, it stopped there and would not move. John tried to make it go on, but to no avail. At that moment the Saint told John: "Go down and enter that house, and see whether you can find the man you are searching for, while I keep the horse here and wait." John believed him and immediately dismounted. Entering the house of that robber he found all the money. After having discussed the matter at length with him, he managed to get back all the money, which had been stolen, and he was glorifying and praising God and Saint Francis. When he went down again he could not find that windmill worker or the horse, but found a piece of parchment with the following words written down: "You should know that it was Saint Francis who led you here, and that through the merits of the same Saint you have found your money." When he saw this, John was overjoyed more because he had met Saint Francis than because he had found his money.

How Francis healed John's son

The same John was in the town of Tarragona, and was loading a ship with the products of his merchandise. When he wanted to make his son embark upon the vessel, this boy developed a serious fever. According to the judgment of doctors the boy was beyond all hope of cure according to the laws of nature. John was seized by an intense sorrow, since his wife was also very ill in her home at Lérida. So he went out of the town and began to pray fervently to the holy father

¹⁷⁷ In Tob 5:16, Tobit gets this answer from the angel Raphael, without having the slightest hint that he was the angel sent by God: "I shall complete the journey with him (Tobias). Do not be afraid. On the journey outward all will be well; on the journey back all will be well; the road is safe."

Francis for the health of his son. After having spent a long time in prayer Saint Francis appeared to him and told him: "Do not be afraid, but you are to know for certain that your son will be cured, if you will carry him out of the town." When the Saint told him these words he disappeared. John stood up and went back joyfully to his son, and told him about Saint Francis' intercession and help. When they had both gone out of the town, his son was restored to perfect health in that very spot.

The death of John

When the lord John was approaching his end, his wife saw him entering a room all by himself, and as was his custom, praying to Saint Francis and commending himself devoutly to him. That very moment Saint Francis appeared to him and spoke to him with great familiarity. His wife came to know about this marvellous dialogue, since she saw him all by himself and he was talking aloud. Then man realised that his wife was seeing him and told her: "Be careful not to enter this room, but go immediately to the door of the house, and there you will find a young man who is asking for me. Make him enter." His obedient wife went to the door, and there she found a very good-looking young man, who was unknown to her, but who appeared to be of a beauty beyond compare. According to what her husband had commanded her, she welcomed that young man and made him enter. The young man then went into the room and locked himself up in it together with Saint Francis and John. After having spoken to John, Saint Francis gave him five pieces of parchment with large characters written upon them, in a rather shaky handwriting in Latin, which was full of common words in Italian, and in which there was [193] the sign of the Tau (T), by which the Saint usually signed his letters when he was alive.¹⁷⁸ Up till this very day, John's grandchildren still cherish with great devotion these relics in the town of Tortosa.

After some time John began to be seriously ill. While he was devoutly invoking Saint Francis, he appeared to him visibly and com-

¹⁷⁸ It is clearly evident that this episode is modelled upon the historical episode of Francis who consigned a parchment to brother Leo on mount La Verna, in which the saint wrote the Praises of the Most High God and the Blessing to brother Leo, with the signature of the *Tau cum capite*. This relic is still venerated in the lower basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi.

forted him during his illness, since he would soon be lifted up and go the Lord. Afterwards he told him: "John, choose one of these two options: you can either spend your purgatory in this life, or else in the other life after your death, since I have prayed for you to the Lord and he has answered my prayers." John answered: "My father and master, may it be pleasing for you to choose what is best for me, since I want to follow your advice in all things." The Saint then told him: "It would be better for you to choose, as the divine will decrees." So John answered: "If it is pleasing to the divine piety, I would prefer to sustain purgatory in this life than in the next." Saint Francis answered him: "What you have chosen is good."

So Saint Francis shut and locked the door of John's room, and then he set fire to the great quantity of cannabis leaves,¹⁷⁹ which were in that place, and placed John in that flame. John was burning and he was invoking with many screams Saint Francis, to free him from those flames. The Saint told him: "My son, you will only bear the flames for a short while, because soon the divine clemency will free you." John answered: "My father, I cannot bear this flame. Do not leave me here in such anguish." Saint Francis answered him: "Do not be afraid, my son, because I will not leave you alone. This same night you will be perfectly purged of your faults in order for me to lead you to eternal life." When John remained in that agonising pain he continued to cry out to Saint Francis to help him, and it pleased the Saint to blow out all those flames. Then he placed him in bed and disappeared.

The members of John's family heard him speaking to somebody and then shouting and groaning. So they entered the room and asked him why he had been groaning in that way and with whom he was speaking. So he told them all that had happened to him. Since they looked at the cannabis leaves and saw that there was no sign of burning in them, they thought that he had hallucinations in his illness. But John told them: "Know for sure that I am not saying nonsense." He then showed them the signs of burning in his flesh, and everybody remained dumbfounded at what they were seeing. He continued: "In order that you may know that I am saying the whole truth, I will reveal to you that this very night I will surely depart from this life and go to the Lord." That same night, as he had foretold, John was totally purified and his soul flew to the Lord.

179 The cannabis leaves were used to make ropes.

It is even more marvellous to say that, when Saint Francis gently came to cure John's wounds, as the Legend describes in a more detailed way, the room in which the sick man was laying was left in such a spotlessly clean state that neither his wife nor anybody else could believe their bodily eyes after they had seen him so badly burnt.

A certain boy from Lérida resuscitated from death

In the town of Lérida it happened that the son of a certain woman departed from this life. His mother was full of sorrow and prayed with many tears to Saint Francis in order to resuscitate her son. When she did not receive this grace, she took a rope to the church of the friars [194] Minor, together with a great multitude of people, in order to bury her son. The mother was full of anguish, and she went up to the terrace of her house, in order to see her son for the last time while he was being carried away by the people for burial. When she saw him she continued to invoke Saint Francis with great confidence and with many screams. At that moment she saw Saint Francis with her bodily eyes, who was standing close to her son, and when he touched the dead body he woke him up and resuscitated him from death, and then disappeared. That boy who was being carried in the arms of those persons began to cry and all the people were full of joy and admiration. They carried him back home and gave him back to his mother who was overjoyed.

A certain baron is resuscitated from death

In the same town of Lérida there was a certain baron whose name was Arnaldo de Ortari. He was seriously ill and eventually died. When the people were carrying him for burial they invoked Saint Francis and the baron was given back his spirit and began to live again and feel completely healthy. So he came to the friars, and he took an oath upon the book of the Gospels and gave witness to the truth of the fact that he had been dead and through the intercession of the Saint returned to life.

Another baron from the same town of Lérida, whose name was Berengario de Abelya, was also seriously ill. The doctors had given

up any hope to apply medicines for his recovery, and were not expecting him to live beyond the following day. The sick baron invoked Saint Francis, and the doctor who believed that he was certainly dying, found him totally healthy and overjoyed.

In the same town there was a certain lady, who was the wife of the baron of Monte Catano, who was in labour pangs. When she invoked Saint Francis she was immediately freed from all suffering.

A certain woman freed from a grave illness

In the year of the Lord 1282 there was a woman from Valencia, a town in Catalonia, who lost her husband and afterwards had given birth to a child. But she had been very weak for one whole year and was now sick, in such a way that she could wake up in any way from her bed or do any work. But she was very devoted to Saint Francis and was asking for his help with great confidence. The Saint appeared to her in a vision and told her: "Go to Lérida and stay in the church of the friary of my brothers Minors and keep vigil for nine nights, and you will be healed." She heard these words together with the man to whom she was engaged before her illness and childbirth, but who was refusing to take her as his wife because she was so ill. So she went to the friary of Lérida. When she had kept watch in the church for four nights, while she was sound asleep during the fifth night, and the friars were praying Matins, Saint Francis appeared to her and told her: "Wake up, because you have been cured from your illness." She immediately woke up and found herself cured, and began to shout with amazement. When the friars, who were praying Matins, heard her shouting, they came running and asked her while she was crying out in that way. She then told them that she had had a vision and was cured through the merits of the prayers of Saint Francis. [195] The news of this miracle spread first among the many venerable noble ladies, and then among all the people. All of them came to the church of the friars at Lérida and began to show great reverence towards Saint Francis, and for eight days they rendered homage to him for such a great miracle, which was a sign of his virtue and glory. The illustrious queen of Aragon, who happened to be in that place, received the friars out of her great devotion.

How a disabled girl was healed

There was a woman from Girunda in Catalonia, whose daughter was disabled in her hands and feet, in such a way that she could hardly move and could not place food in her mouth. The mother was exhausted serving her daughter all the time, and she desired her death more than her life. Once she refrained to give her food from the lunch hour until dusk, and her daughter was feeling very weak. Her mother answered her: "My daughter, it would be better for you to be in paradise, since I am exhausted with trying to serve you." Upon hearing these words that girl felt so sad that she desired death, and she continued not wanting to eat. She was heartbroken and cried until the hour of Matins. When the bell rang to call the friars Minor for Matins, that girl remembered the miracles of Saint Francis, since the fame of their truthfulness had spread in the entire world. Therefore she turned to him in prayer and said: "O most holy Father Francis, if the things that people in the world are saying about you are true, I beg your merciful kindness that I may not die because of this illness of mine, and that you will deign to free me and my mother from this great burden."

That very moment Saint Francis appeared to her together with Saint Anthony of Padua. They were both clothed with candid robes and had cords which were white as snow. As the young girl was hearing and seeing the vision, Saint Francis turned to his companion and said: "Brother Anthony, hold her by her feet." When Saint Anthony did this, Saint Francis took her by the hand, and in this way they both made her go out of bed and made her completely healthy. When they were going out of that room, the girl asked Saint Francis: "Sir, who are you?" He answered: "I am the one whom you have devoutly invoked. Stand up, because you are now healed through the merits of my prayers." Having said this both saints disappeared.

That girl stood up perfectly healthy and full of amazement and joy began to shout so loudly, that her mother and all the neighbours ran towards her. When they found her healthy they asked her how she was freed from her disability. She narrated to them how Saints Francis and Anthony appeared to her in the manner described above and how they cured her. The news of this miracle immediately spread like wildfire and all the town was stirred. The friars Preachers said that it was Saint Dominic who had cured her. Nevertheless the Bishop of that town came to see her, and when he verified the miracle, together

with a multitude of people he took the girl to the church of the friars Minor in order to thank God. When the girl looked upon the image of the stigmatised Saint Francis, she said: "This is the one who made me healthy." When she grew up she was married and had a son, who later on became a friar Minor and who preached this miracle in public.

A girl rescued from drowning

The daughter of a host who welcomed the friars at Colimbria in his house was one day playing without paying attention on the seashore. A big wave swept over and swallowed her, but when all the people looked for her, they found her safe and sound [196] upon a rock jutting out over the sea, with the red garment she was wearing. She told them that two friars Minor had come out to rescue her on a boat, and they were the same friars who the night before had slept in her family's house, who had preserved her from death and kept her out of any danger. These words were true, since that night brother Raymond de Pavo together with his companion has slept in her father's house. This miracle showed how Saint Francis repaid the act of kindness of that man towards his brothers.

In the year of the Lord 1272, in the town of Valverde in the diocese of Nîmes, there was a magistrate called Martin, who welcomed the friars Minor and gave them hospitality. His daughter gave birth to a child, but the hand of the Lord became heavy upon that baby boy and he blind, deaf and dumb, and was totally paralysed, in such a way that on one side of his body, from head to toe, he seemed to be immobile like a dead person. Even his arm was disabled. While the danger of this illness in four members of the body was getting worse, the grandmother of this boy felt maternal compassion for the child, since the mother, that is, the wife of Martin the magistrate, was already dead. So she turned with great trust towards Saint Francis, and began to invoke him with great faith in order to cure the child. So that night she left the child close to his dead mother. When it was morning, she returned to take the boy and found out that, through the merits of Saint Francis, he could talk, see and hear and could also lift up his disabled arm and place his hand close to his mouth. But the inferior part of his body remained totally disabled. That woman was overjoyed, and so she was inflamed with greater devotion and thanked

Saint Francis and invoked him fervently so that, just as he had already cured the child in part of his disability, he would deign to complete the miracle and heal him entirely. That very moment her devout prayers were heard, and the boy was totally healed from all infirmity.

A miracle regarding a crow offered to Saint Francis

A certain crow was offered to Saint Francis when he was still alive. Through the merits of the holy Father this crow was tamed and stayed among the brothers, and it almost seemed to reason like a human being. Whenever the brothers used to go to the choir and to pray the canonical hours during the day, the crow used to accompany them. When they washed their hands before meals, the crow used to wash its claws and it entered the refectory with the brothers and shared their food. After some time, through the power of God alone, this crow began to speak intelligently. When Saint Francis saw this he was overjoyed and amazed. Once, when he was in the refectory, he commanded it to go to the infirmary to take care of the sick brothers and provide them with their needs. A marvellous thing happened! That very moment the crow seemed to be able to reason and obeyed the servant of God in everything. So it went to the town of Assisi, and followed the instructions that the man of God had given it, by following a servant of the brothers. It entered into the houses of rich people and begged alms for the sick brothers according to its ability. The people marvelled greatly at this and gave the alms to that servant, who then would carry them to the sick brothers.

Once the Bishop was celebrating and receiving offerings, and the crow went to him and, as it was accustomed to do, asked him for alms. The Bishop did not want to give it alms on that occasion, but [197] promised to give it another time. So the crow seemed to be angry and it took off his mitre and carried it to a butcher, in order to receive meat to give to two sick brothers, by depositing the mitre as a price. The Bishop marvelled when he heard this story, and after having paid for his mitre, he received it back.

One summer day, a certain knight entered the town barefoot, and when the crow asked him for alms he refused to give any. So the crow ran after him and placed its claws on his feet. The knight immediately hit the crow with his stick. Another day the crow found the

same knight riding a horse between Assisi and the Portiuncula, and he was carrying a beautiful hat on his head. The crow remembered the beating it had received and so it snatched the hat from his head and left it hanging high up on a tree. So the knight had to dismount from his horse and to climb up the tree in order to get his hat back. That very moment the crow flew above the horse and hit him hard with its claws, so that the horse fled. In this way it took revenge upon the knight for his unkindness towards it.

When Saint Francis died, the crow began to get seriously ill and did not want to eat anything. When the brothers told it to go to the Saint's tomb, it immediately obeyed and went there. In that place it did not eat or drink anymore, until it died peacefully on that very spot.

How Saint Francis marvellously defended the lord Amanerius of Lobreto

In the time in which Edward,¹⁸⁰ the king of England, was waging war against the Scots, the English and the Scottish armies had gathered in great multitudes to make battle against one another. In the English army there was a man from Gascogne, who was a warlike and powerful soldier. His name was lord Amanerius of Lobreto, who was most faithful to Saint Francis and devoted to his Order. While a most ferocious battle was being waged between the two sides, and the Scots were firing volleys of arrows against the English, this lord of Lobreto was invoking Saint Francis with great devotion. That very moment he had a vision of Saint Francis, who appeared hovering in the air above him, and wearing the habit of the friars Minor. He was keeping back with his hand all the arrows, which were flying against the lord Amanerius, in such a way that he was protected and suffered no harm at all.

The hand of the Lord, however, grew heavy on the English. Many fell to the ground after sustaining enemy action, great numbers were running in order to escape, and others were wounded or cruelly killed. The battle infuriated against them to such an extent, that king Edward, who was a coward, managed to escape with some of his men.

¹⁸⁰ Edward II (1307-1327) suffered a heavy defeat at Bannockburn on 24th June 1314.

When he arrived in a certain valley and entered a certain hovel for shelter, he and his men were very sad at what they had suffered. They were also thinking that their most faithful knight and collaborator, namely the lord Amanerius, would by now be dead, or that was what they were sure of. But it pleased God, through the merits of Saint Francis, to show a great miracle, which was unknown to all others, in order to demonstrate the His greatness before the king and his men.

[198] When the aforementioned battle had ended, all the English were killed, or had escaped, or been shamefully taken captive. Saint Francis disappeared from the vision and the lord Amanerius remained alone, with his shield-bearer who was wounded. His horse was suffering from very serious wounds, and its intestines had fallen to the ground. The night was approaching, and when Amanerius perceived the danger of the enemy which might still be lurking in the dark, the insecurity of the roads, which were unknown to him, and realized that he was all alone with his horse, rendered useless because of its wounds, as well as with his equally wounded shield-bearer, he felt terrified. So he went and miserably hid himself in a wood, fearing that the enemy might return and add more misery to his already critical situation.

Finding himself in such need, he turned his eyes to heaven and towards Saint Francis, whose most efficacious help he had already experienced. He began to sigh and groan, and to pray fervently and ask the Saint with confidence to protect him. When he was invoking him in this way, Saint Francis appeared to him once more wearing the habit of the friars Minor. He comforted his trembling body with his presence and with sweet words commanded him to follow him without fearing. What else should we say? The Saint was preceding him, and Amanerius was following with his half-dead horse. After going through many deviations, and through the guards which were keeping watch and speaking among themselves, Saint Francis led him to the hovel, where the king of England, full of sorrow, was trying to hide during that night. When they arrived there the Saint disappeared, and his wounded horse, which through the supernatural benefices of the holy Father, had not only lived, but also gone through such an ordeal, died on that spot. The king was overjoyed at the arrival of such a faithful and courageous knight, but he was full of astonishment at the help, which he had received from the holy Father Francis.

Regarding how Saint Francis freed the lord of Libreto and his family from death

Another time the aforementioned lord Amanerius was staying at his house in Casteljaloux. He took his wife aside and after lunch told her: "Come, let us go to the friary, and there let us receive spiritual consolation in their company and drink some of the wine you offer them all together." This lord had a vineyard close by the friary, which was built outside the town walls. Every year his lady would give the wine to the friars out of love for Saint Francis. The lady marvelled at these words, since her husband had never invited her to come over with him to the friary, but Amanerius answered: "Come, because God wants us to do this good deed, since the Lord wants to comfort me before I die." So through the gift of grace of God and the merits of Saint Francis, the lord and his wife, together with all their family, except for a small daughter and two cooks and servants, went for consolation at the friary, and were rescued from future danger.

When they were with the friars full of joy together with their family, all of a sudden they heard a terrible noise. Everybody was terrified, thinking it was an earthquake. Rising from that castle of Casteljaloux they saw a kind of dust in the air, but they could not discern what it was. When that cloud of dust had calmed down a bit, they saw that a great part of the castle had collapsed, and was now in ruins. They were troubled because of their daughter, who was not with them, but that very moment Saint Francis found her safe and sound and brought her over to them, and therefore they thanked God for having avoided such a danger. They were all of the opinion that it was Saint Francis that took such great care to inspire the lord Amanerius to take all his family to that friary, in order that his devout followers might not perish in that catastrophe. In fact, only the two servants were found to have died during that collapse.

[199] How a knight offended Saint Francis and was punished

There was in the town of Lérida, in Catalonia, a certain knight. He had secretly stolen a horse from a certain shield-bearer. That particular horse was the one he wanted to mount during a duel. The friars Minor asked him to give back the horse he had stolen, in order not to provoke divine anger against him. Since he adamantly refused

to do this, the friars asked him to give back the horse out of love for Saint Francis and to refrain from going to the duel. But he answered them: "I will be victorious in the duel even before Saint Francis can do anything about it."

That knight sent candles to all the churches of Lérida, so that they would burn for one whole night. It happened that the candle which he sent to the church of the friars Minor, was burning on the altar while brother Michael, the custos of Pamplona, was celebrating Mass upon the same altar. When he started to read the Gospel, that candle extinguished itself, even though there was no wind to blow it out, and it immediately lit itself up again. The same thing happened when he concluded the Gospel reading. When brother Michael was saying the Canon of the Mass, that candle extinguished itself and its flame did not light up again. That friar was astonished but did not know what that sign meant. After some time the knight, full of trust in his own power, entered courageously in the field for the duel riding upon that horse. Engaging himself in that duel, the boastful knight, who had insulted Saint Francis with contempt, was also held in contempt by God, and was killed, just as the candle which blew itself out in the church of the same Saint had foretold.

A young girl freed from a deadly illness

A certain young girl from Ancona was suffering from a serious illness. Preparations were already underway for her funeral. Saint Francis stood by her when she was nearly breathing her last and told her: "My daughter, have trust in me, because by my grace you will be soon freed. But do not tell anybody that I will cure you until evening." When evening came, that girl rose from her bed all of a sudden, to the astonishment of the bystanders who escaped from her. In fact, they believed that her body had been possessed by a demon, and that her soul had gone out of it, but the devil had given the body to another person. Her mother heard those persons running off and cursing the devil, but she could not make her daughter go back to bed, not even with the help of her relatives. Her daughter then said: "Mother, do not believe that I have a demon, because during the third hour of the day Saint Francis has freed me from every illness, but told me not to tell anybody about the miracle up to this moment." The name of Saint Francis was the cause of a great joy, just as the name of the devil

had been the cause of the escape of those persons. They told that girl to eat some chicken, but she refused, since it was Lent, and told her mother: "Do not be afraid. Don't you see Saint Francis who is clothed in white? He commands me not to eat meat, since it is Lent, and he also commands you to give the tunic, which you reserved for my funeral to the wife of that man who is in prison. Look, now I see him going away from here."

How the Angels carried the stones for the building of the church of Saint Francis in the castle of Manfredonia

Two friars Minor were working at building a church in honour of Saint Francis in the castle of Manfredonia, in the diocese of Siponto.¹⁸¹ [200] Their hard work, however, had the drawback of not finding enough means to conclude the building. One night, when they woke up from sleep in order to sing the divine praises, they heard the sound of falling masonry. So they exhorted one another to go and see what was happening. When they went out they found a multitude of men who were piling a great quantity of stones. These men were all dressed in white, and they were coming and going to that place. When a great pile of stones had been stacked, it was clear that what they had seen was not a fantastic illusion, because they had enough stones to conclude the building of that church. They removed all doubts regarding to whom those beings were, who had come to them under the guise of men, especially when they could not find a single one of them after having searched diligently.

How a seriously wounded boy was healed

In the town of Rete, in the diocese of Cosenza, it happened that two boys were fighting at school, and one hit his friend on his chest with such force that he ruined his stomach, and all the indigested food

¹⁸¹ The Latin name *Sipontum* corresponds to the town of Manfredonia, in the Puglie region of Italy, close to Monte Gargano.

he had came out of his wound. From that time onwards that boy could not hold any food in his stomach. He could not digest any food or take it from any plate, because it would immediately go out of that open wound. The help of the doctor did not provide any remedy for him. So his relatives took the wounded boy to the friars, in order to consult them, and there they made a vow to Saint Francis that, if he would free that wounded boy from the jaws of death, after all the desperate remedies of the doctors proved to be in vain, they would offer him to his church together with a wax image of the same boy. When they had pronounced their vow, the boy was freed totally and in a marvellous way. The doctors at Salerno judged this cure to be a miracle, as if he had been resuscitated from death.

A sick man healed after being in danger of dying

Two men were going to the mountain of Trapani for business, but one of them got sick and was in danger of dying. The doctors came over to try to help him, but they could do nothing to cure him. His companion made a vow to Saint Francis that, if his colleague would be healthy again, they would both observe the Saint's feast by going to solemn Mass. When he had pronounced the vow, he returned home to his sick friend. He had left him without voice and unable to move his senses, and now that he was thinking that he would find him dead, instead he found him restored completely to perfect health.

A boy is cured from a most serious illness

There was a certain boy from the town of Todi, who lay in bed half-dead for eight days, with his mouth shut and his eyes half-closed. The skin on his hands [201] and feet was totally wrinkled. Everybody was despairing regarding his health. But his mother pronounced a vow and in a short time he was cured and lived again. Although that boy was still very young and did not know how to speak, he still stammered in such a way as to explain that it was Saint Francis who had cured and freed him.

A young man freed from a deadly wound

A certain young man who lived in the same town of Todi was losing the use of all his limbs and could not speak. For three days he could neither eat nor drink, and did not feel anything, so that everybody thought that he would die. His mother did not search for any remedy on the part of doctors, but prayed Saint Francis for his health. When she had pronounced her vow, she received him back unharmed and showing good signs of life, and she began to praise the Most High Saviour.

A certain girl who was cured

A certain girl from Arpino, in the diocese of Sora, could not move because of a disability. All her nerves in the limbs were contracted and she could not do any human act. It seemed that she was tormented by a demon and that her spirit was not living in her body. Her illness grew so serious, that it seemed that she had returned to the stage of infancy in a cot. Her mother, who was divinely inspired, carried her in the cot to the church of Saint Francis in Vicalbo. There she multiplied her tears and prayers, and her daughter was immediately freed from all danger and regained the health she had enjoyed when she was still very young.

A certain woman was preserved from death

There were three women in a house at Nettuno. One of them was very devout to Saint Francis and to the friars. A hurricane struck the house, and it collapsed on the three women, killing the other two and burying them under the debris. That woman immediately invoked Saint Francis and he did not permit her to suffer any harm. The wall under which the woman ran for shelter remained standing, while the beams from high above crashed down, and the wall still retained the weight of the falling masonry. At the sound of that house collapsing a great number of men came running to help the women. While they could not hold back their tears in the case of the dead women, they thanked Saint Francis for that woman who remained alive, and who was very fond of the friars.

A boy was miraculously freed from danger of suffocating

A boy from the castle of Corneto in the diocese of Viterbo swallowed a silver chain, which his father had given him to hold. It got stuck in his throat, and he could not breathe in any way. His father was shedding bitter tears and was considering himself to be the murderer of his son, and he was rolling on the floor as if he were out of his mind. The boy's mother was also miserably crying because of this accident. All the friends of the family took part in the sorrow, [202] because they were seeing that the young boy would soon be snatched away by untimely death. His father invoked the merits of Saint Francis, and made a vow so that his son would be freed. That very moment the chain was expelled from the boy's mouth, and all those present blessed the name of Saint Francis.

A young man freed from death

There was a young man from the village of Platea in Sicily, who died and whose soul was commended to holy Father by the local clergy. When the grandfather of that young man made a vow, that very moment the young man was called back to life.

A young man preserved from falling to his death

In the same village there was a young man called Alexander, who was with his companions pulling a rope on a high rock. The rope broke and the young man was thrown down and was found to be seemingly dead. His father came and with many tears and sobs invoked Saint Francis and made a vow, and he received his son back safe and sound.

A woman cured from a habitual fever

In the same village there was a woman who had suffered for a long time from a persistent fever, and was on the verge of dying, so that everyone was preparing to commend her soul. When she invoked the name of the most holy Father, she was restored to complete health.

A boy who was cured from a double apostemate

There was a boy from Arezzo whose name was Gualtiero, who was assailed by insistent fever because of a double apostemate, which the doctors could not cure in any way. When his relatives made a vow to Saint Francis, he was restored to perfect health.

Persons who were cured from dropsy and paralysis

In the town of Fano a certain man who was ill with dropsy was cured and freed from the same disease through the merits of Saint Francis.

A certain woman in the town of Gubbio was lying in bed totally paralysed. For three times she invoked the name of Saint Francis in order to be freed, and she was instantaneously liberated from her illness.

A certain man is cured from paralysis

In the castle of Arpino, in the diocese of Sorano, there was a certain paralytic, whose mouth was fast shut and who could not blink his eyes. His mother took him to the church of Saint Francis in Vicalbo. Since this young man could not move his tongue, his mother started praying for him insistently, and before she went back home, he was restored to his former health.

[203] A girl who suffered from epileptic fits was cured

In the town of Poggibonsi there was a girl called Ubentina. She was seriously ill with epilepsy and could not be cured. Her relatives gave up all hope of any human remedy, and so they were always crying and invoking the help of Saint Francis. They also made a vow to the most holy Father that they would fast every single year on the vigil of his feast day, and on that day they would give food to the poor, if their daughter would be relieved of that illness. As soon as they had

pronounced their vow that girl was completely freed and never again did she feel any effect of her former illness.

Pietro Mancavella also had paralysis. His arm and hand were dangling, and his mouth was stretched backwards towards his ear. Although he received the medical help of doctors, he even lost his sight and his hearing. Therefore he devoutly invoked Saint Francis and in this way he was totally freed from all kinds of sickness, through the merits of the most holy man.

A man was cured from the pains of arthritis

A certain citizen from Todi was greatly afflicted by arthritis, and because of the intense pain it gave him he could scarcely sleep. Since he realized that nothing could relieve him of that pain, not even the expertise of doctors, he went to a certain priest and began to invoke the name of Saint Francis. As soon as he had pronounced his vow, he felt himself to be as healthy as before.

A man was cured from an intense pain in his foot

A certain man called Bontadoso felt an intense pain in his feet and toes, and he could scarcely walk. He would not be able to eat or to sleep. A certain woman convinced him that he should humbly offer himself in supplication to Saint Francis. He was very troubled by his pain, but did not believe that Francis was truly a saint as people used to say. Since that woman insisted strongly that he pray to him, he made a vow in these terms: "I will vow that I will believe that Saint Francis is truly a Saint, if within three days he will free me from my illness." That very moment he woke up and marvelled at the fact that he could walk on his foot just like before.¹⁸²

Another woman had been bedridden for many years because of an illness, and she could hardly move. She offered herself to Saint Francis and was healed and could continue her daily duties as before.

A certain young man from the town of Narni was seriously ill for ten years, and had become rigid in all his members and no medicine

¹⁸² 1C 142 (FAED I, 304).

could cure him. When his mother made a vow for him to Saint Francis, he immediately regained his health and could live a comfortable life.

A certain woman from Pisa did not know that she was pregnant, and when the church of Saint Francis was being built in that town, she worked very hard all day long in the construction work. Saint Francis together with two other friars who were carrying candles in front of him [204] appeared to her and said: "My daughter, you will conceive and bear a son, and you will rejoice greatly and give him my name." When the time came she gave birth to a son. Her father in law said: "We must name him Henry for our relative." The mother answered: "No, but his name should be Francis." Her father in law ridiculed that name, as if it were the name of a rustic person. After some days had passed and the boy was still not baptised, he became very ill and was dying. That whole family was full of sorrow, and the joy of the birth was changed into mourning. One night, the mother was still awake and full of anguish, when Saint Francis appeared to her with the two friars who accompanied him as before, and he looked confused and told that woman: "Did I not tell you that you would not have joy regarding this child if you will not give him my name?" At these words the woman began to cry and to declare that she had no intention of giving the child any other name but that of Saint Francis. At these words the child was cured and he was given the name of Francis in baptism. The boy had the grace of not crying, but he lived his childhood in great innocence.

A girl who was not named Francesca became unhealthy

Matteo from Tolentino had a daughter whose name was Francesca. The friars left that place and transferred to another friary, and the man was very upset. So he changed the name of his daughter from that of Francesca to that of Mattea. But when he deprived his daughter of this name, she was also deprived of her health. The contempt for the Father Saint Francis was the cause of an action against his daughter. In fact, the girl became very sick and she was in danger of dying. When that man was in anguish over the possibility that his daughter would die, his wife was upsetting him by inciting him to consider the danger of hating the servants of God and showing contempt for the Saint's name. So he made recourse with haste to devout

prayers and restored the name of Francesca to his daughter, of which he had previously deprived her. He carried his daughter with many tears to the friary and that very moment the girl regained her former health.

Against a woman who did not observe his feast

There was a woman in Sicily who, when the solemn day of the feast of Saint Francis approached, did not care to abstain from servile work. So she sat down in front of the bowl in which she was going to grind flour, but as soon as she applied her arm to the grinder all of a sudden her arm became full of blood. This stupid woman began to cry out to her neighbours. They came running in great numbers to witness what was happening, but blood continued to come out of her vein. So that woman realised with sorrow that she had done a great mistake and made a vow that she would abstain from doing servile work on the Saint's feast day. As soon as she had promised this, the blood stopped flowing.

The cure of persons with hernia

A man from Pisa had a hernia in his abdomen, which he tried to hide as much as he could, since it was a monstrous growth and caused him intense pain. It seemed that it was the devil that had caused such a discomfort against him. [205] When he was on the verge of despairing, he began to think that he would not live much longer and began to prepare himself for the end. In the meantime, however, his conscience continued to sting him, and he began to recall to mind and to orally invoke help from Saint Francis. He continually prayed to have strength against such an evil thought of desperation, and obtained a quick recovery from such a great wound.

A certain young man named John from the diocese of Sorano had a hernia in his intestines, and no medical help from doctors could cure him. It happened that one day his wife went to the church of Saint Francis. While she was praying for her husband's health, one of the friars told her in simplicity of spirit: "Go and tell your husband to offer himself to Saint Francis and to sign the place where he has

the hernia with the sign of the cross.” When she heard this she returned and told her husband. So he offered himself to Saint Francis and marked the place of the hernia with the sign of the cross. His intestines miraculously entered into their respective place. That man was astonished because of that unexpected cure, and in order to check whether he was truly healthy again, in order to not be deceived, he began to exercise himself strenuously. But he got an intense fever. So Saint Francis appeared to him in his dreams and calling him by name told him: “John, do not be afraid, because you have been cured of your illness.” This miracle was proved to be true because a certain religious man called Roberto had a vision of Saint Francis, who appeared to him. When Roberto asked him who he was, he got this answer: “I am Francis, who have come to cure one of my friends.”

Persons who could not speak cured by Saint Francis

A certain woman in the region of Puglie had lost her speech and could only breathe with great difficulty. Once she was sleeping at night, and the Virgin Mary appeared to her and told her: “If you want to become healthy again, go to the church of Saint Francis at Venusio and there you will be cured.” That woman woke up but she could not breathe well, and so she made a sign to her relatives that she wanted them to take her to Venusio. They were willing to accept her desire and they accompanied her to that place. The woman entered the church of Saint Francis, and there she began to pray with all her heart. All of a sudden she vomited a lump of flesh from her throat, and in front of all the onlookers, she was miraculously freed.

In the diocese of Arezzo there was a woman who for eight years nurtured a desire that God might deign to cure her tongue and make her speak. She prayed intensely for this grace. When she was sleeping two friars who were wearing a red robe appeared close to her, and they gently advised her to offer herself to Saint Francis. She willingly obeyed their advice, and offered herself with her whole heart, since she could not speak. That very moment she woke up and found that she had regained her speech.

Those freed from blindness

A certain woman called Sibilla had been blind in her two eyes for many years. She was carried full of sorrow to the tomb of the man

of God. In that place she fully recovered her eyesight and full of joy returned back home.

In the castle of Vicalbo in the diocese of Sorano there was a young girl who had been blind from birth. Her mother carried her to a certain oratory dedicated to Saint Francis. There she invoked the name of Christ, and through the merits of Saint Francis she merited to regain her eyesight.

[206] In the town of Arezzo there was a woman who had been blind for seven years. She was carried to the church of Saint Francis, built close to the town, and she regained her vision.

In the same town the son of a poor woman, after having been offered to Saint Francis by his mother, could see again.

A blind man from Spello went to the tomb of the sacred body and regained his sight.

In Poggibonsi, in the diocese of Florence, a certain blind woman had a vision inviting her to go to visit a certain oratory of Saint Francis. They carried her to the place and she prostrated herself in front of the altar. There she regained her eyesight and could return to her house.

Another woman from Camerino was totally blind in her right eye. Her relatives applied to her eye a piece of cloth that blessed Francis had touched. When they pronounced the vow, through the merits of God and the grace of Saint Francis, she could see again. The same grace was given to a certain woman from Gubbio, who regained her sight after having made a vow.

A citizen of Assisi had lost his eyesight for five years. When Saint Francis was still alive he had seen him and had also been his friend. So he prayed to Saint Francis, reminding him of their former friendship, and as soon as he touched the Saint’s tomb he was freed from blindness.¹⁸³

Albertino from Narni was totally blind for about one year, for his eyelids hung down over his eyes. Vowing himself to Saint Francis, his sight was immediately restored.¹⁸⁴

A certain young man called Villa could not walk or speak. His mother, with great faith, made a vow to carry a wax image of her son to the place where Saint Francis was buried, and she took the image

183 1C 136 (FAED I, 301).

184 1C 136 (FAED I, 301).

there with great devotion. When she returned home she found her son who could walk and also speak.

There was a man in the diocese of Perugia who was unable to utter a word. His mouth was always open, and he gaped and gasped horribly, for his throat was swollen and inflamed. When he came to the place where the most holy body rested and started going down the steps to the tomb, he vomited much blood. And he was entirely cured and began to speak, opening and closing his mouth in a normal way.¹⁸⁵

A certain woman had a lump in her throat and her tongue was dry and stiff. She could not speak, and neither could she eat or drink. After having taken many medicines, which gave her no relief from her discomfort, she offered herself with all her heart to Saint Francis, and immediately expelled that lump of flesh from her throat.

Bartholomew from the castle of Arpino in the diocese of Sorano was deaf for seven years. He invoked the name of Saint Francis and could hear again.

[207] In Sicily there was a certain woman from the town of Platea, who was deprived of speech. She prayed to Saint Francis and acquired the grace of being able to use her tongue and speak.

In the town of Nicosia in Sicily, there was a certain priest who woke up as usual to go to Matins. When the lector asked him for the blessing, he answered him in a vulgar way, which I cannot express here. He was out of his mind and went back home and lost his speech for one whole month. After taking the advice of a man of God he offered himself to Saint Francis, and was instantly freed from his insane condition and could speak again.

Persons cured from disabilities

A certain girl was taken to the tomb of Saint Francis. She had suffered a deformity in her neck so hideous that her head rested on her shoulder and she could only look up sideways. She put her head for little while beneath the ark¹⁸⁶ in which the precious body of the

185 1C 149 (FAED I, 307).

186 The body of Saint Francis was placed in an ark during the period of his burial in the church of San Giorgio in Assisi, that is between 4th October 1226 and 25th May 1230, when the relics were transferred to the new basilica and buried in a

Saint rested. Through the merits of the most holy man she was immediately able to straighten her neck, and her head was restored to its proper position. At this the girl was so overwhelmed at the sudden change in herself that she started to run away and to cry. There was a depression in her shoulder where her head had been when it was twisted out of position by her prolonged affliction.¹⁸⁷

A certain Nicolò, a citizen of Foligno, was so crippled in his left leg that it caused him extreme pain; as a result he spent so much on doctors in his endeavour to restore his health that he went more deeply into debt than he could ever hope to pay. Finally, when the help of physicians had proven worthless, he was suffering such extreme pain that his neighbours could not sleep at night because of his moaning cries. Then dedicating himself to God and to Saint Francis, he had himself carried to the tomb of the saint. After spending a night in prayer at the saint's tomb, his crippled leg was cured and, overflowing with joy, he returned home without a cane.¹⁸⁸

A boy had one leg so deformed that his knee was pressed against his chest and his heel against his buttocks. He came to the tomb of the blessed Francis, while his father was mortifying his own flesh with a hair shirt and his mother was performing severe penance for him. Suddenly the boy had his health so fully restored.¹⁸⁹

There was in the town of Fano a disabled man, who was crippled with his legs bent over under him. They were covered with sores that gave off such an unpleasant odour that the hospice staff refused to take him in or keep him. But they he asked the blessed father Francis for mercy and, through his merits, in a short time he rejoiced in being cured.¹⁹⁰

There was also a little girl in Gubbio; her hands and all her limbs were so crippled that for over a year she was totally unable to use them. Carrying a wax image, her nurse brought her to the tomb of the blessed father Francis to seek the favour of a cure. After she had been there for eight days, on the last day all her limbs were restored

travertine stone sarcophagus, as they are to be seen to this very day.

187 1C 127 (FAED I, 298).

188 1C 129 (FAED I, 299).

189 1C 130 (FAED I, 299).

190 1C 131 (FAED I, 299).

to their proper functions so that she was considered well enough to return to her activities.¹⁹¹

There was a boy from Montenero lying for several days in front of the doors of the church where the body of Saint Francis rested. He could not walk or sit up, since he was completely paralysed from the waist down. One day he got into the church and touched the tomb of Saint Francis. [208] When he came back outside, he was completely cured. Moreover, the young boy himself reported that while he was lying in front of the tomb of the glorious Saint, a young man was there with him clothed in the habit of the friars, on top of the tomb. The young man was carrying some pears in his hands, and he called the boy. Offering him a pear, he encouraged him to get up. The boy took the pear from the young man's hand, and answered: "Look, I am crippled and cannot get up at all!" He ate the pear given to him, and then started to put out his hand for another pear that the young man offered him. That young man again encouraged him to stand up, but the boy, feeling weighed down with his illness, did not get up. But while the boy reached out his hand, the young man holding out the pear took hold of his hand and led him outside. Then he vanished from sight. When the boy saw that he was cured, he began to cry out at the top of his voice, telling everyone what had happened to him.¹⁹²

Another citizen from Gubbio brought his crippled son in a reed basket to the tomb of the holy father. There he received him back whole and sound, though before he had been so crippled and deformed that his legs were completely withered and drawn up under him.¹⁹³

A donkey returned after being lost for three years

There was a certain man from Amiterno. His donkey had been stolen and was lost for three years. So he turned towards Saint Francis and began to invoke him with many tears and by prostrating himself. One night, while he was sleeping, he heard a voice telling him: "Wake up, go to Spoleto and bring back your donkey from there." He

¹⁹¹ 1C 132 (FAED I, 299).

¹⁹² 1C 133 (FAED I, 299-300).

¹⁹³ 1C 134 (FAED I, 300).

woke up amazed at such a voice and went to sleep once more. That voice called him again and he had the same vision as before. So he turned towards that vision and asked who was that person. He got this answer: "I am Saint Francis, to whom you have been praying." That man was still afraid that it was an illusion, and so he refrained from carrying out that command. But for a third time he heard that voice, and this time he devoutly obeyed, went to Spoleto and found his donkey safe and sound, and led the beast back home as if it had been freely restored back to him. He recounted this miracle to everybody and became a perpetual devout servant of Saint Francis.

A man freed from an intoxication of poison

A certain cleric from Vicalbo, who was called Matteo, drank a deadly poisonous substance and he became so ill that he could not utter one single word and it was expected that he would die soon. A certain priest, who came to confess him, could not get one single word out of him. So that cleric prayed humbly to Christ in his heart, so that He would deign to free him through the merits of Saint Francis. When he feebly uttered the name of Saint Francis, as the witnesses there present testified, he vomited that poisonous substance.

Cured from a lethal illness of the cheek

The lord Trasimondo Anibaldi, who was once Roman consul, and who exercised his office in the city of Siena in Tuscany, was very fond of a certain blind man named Nicolò, who was always ready to help him and show him respect in every way. All of a sudden, however, Nicolò developed a very serious disease in his cheek, and the doctors had already foretold that he would soon die. Once he was drowsing, and had a vision of the Virgin Mother of Christ who commanded him to dedicate himself to Saint Francis and to go to visit his tomb. When he woke up the following morning, [209] he recounted the vision he had to his master. The lord was amazed and hastened to

help him to accomplish what he had been told. When he took Nicolò to Assisi, in front of the tomb of Saint Francis, the servant was cured. It was a marvellous thing that this man was healed, but it was even more marvellous to see how the Virgin deigned to bow down to listen to the prayers of the sick man and to see how he was cured through the merits of the holy man.

A woman cured from an incurable fistula

A certain noble lady from the castle of Galete had to suffer from a fistula between her breasts. The wound produced an unpleasant odour and made her suffer terribly, and she could find no solace or healing. One day she entered to pray in the church of the friars, where she noticed that there was a book containing the life and miracles of Saint Francis. So she read it with great attention to see what was written in it. Instructed to do so by the truth of the facts she had read the lady, shedding abundant tears, took the book and opened it on the place where she had the wound, saying: "Saint Francis, as these things which I read about you are true, in the same way free me from this wound through your merits." She continued to cry and insist in her devout prayers. When she took the writing from her breast she found out that she was confirmed in her health, and that she could not find any other sign of where it had been.

A similar thing happened in the region of Romania. A father had a son who was very ill with an infected ulcer, and he insisted in his prayers to Saint Francis, saying: "Saint of God, if it is true that your fame has spread in all the world, let me experience your clemency and piety in my son, for the praise of God." In a very short space of time that ulcer opened up, and in front of the eyes of all the onlookers, the flesh where the boy had the ulcer became so solid, that every sign of the wound disappeared forever.

A man was mortally wounded and was cured through the merits of the Saint

A certain man was mortally wounded in the head by an arrow, and the doctors could do nothing to help him, since that arrow had

entered through his eye and remained fixed in his head. He invoked with great devotion Saint Francis and dedicated himself to him. While he was resting and sleeping for a short while, he heard Saint Francis who told him in his dreams to draw out that arrow from the rear of his head. As he had been instructed to do in his dream, the following day he could draw it out without great difficulty, and was freed.

ARNALD OF SARRANT

**CHRONICLE
OF THE TWENTY-FOUR
GENERALS
OF THE ORDER
OF FRIARS MINOR
[1369-1374]**

English Translation by NOEL MUSCAT OFM
from the original Latin text

*Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,
in Analecta Franciscana ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum Spectantia,
edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae,
Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), prope Florentiam,
Tomus III,
1897*

Section 2
THE MINISTERS GENERAL
FROM JOHN PARENTI
TO SAINT BONAVENTURE
(1227-1274)

Beginning of the life of brother John Parenti (1227-1233)

[210] The second General was brother John from Florence, whose surname was Parenti.¹ He was a member of the Province of Tuscany. He was a holy, just and spiritual man and was strong and truly worthy of his office.² He was elected to the office of General during the general chapter celebrated at the Portiuncula, when he was Minister of Spain.³ We have not been able to find the exact date of the chapter's celebration.⁴

John had entered the Order in the following circumstances. When he was a lawyer and judge in Civita Castellana, he once looked out of the window and saw a certain guardian of a herd of pigs, who was not capable of making the pigs enter into that castle. Another man advised him to say the following words to his pigs: "Pigs, pigs enter into your sty, as lawyers and judges will go into hell." At these words that herd of swine immediately entered without a grunt. John was moved to divine fear at this sight, and he entered the Order of Minors together with his son.

When he was Minister in Spain a chapter of all the Spanish friars was celebrated in Soria, in the kingdom of Castille. The local people were suffering a great drought. [211] They came over and begged

1 John Parenti is presented as the "second" Minister General, since the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General* considers Saint Francis himself as having been the first Minister General. John was born at Carmignano, near Pistoia. For more information regarding John Parenti, cfr. R.B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government. Elias to Bonaventure*, Cambridge University Press 1959, revised paperback edition 2004, 123-136.

2 Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, c. 13, describes John of Parma as "a wise and deeply religious man and a man of great austerity." Translation in: *XIIIth Century Chronicles. Jordan of Giano, Thomas of Eccleston, Salimbene degli Adami*, by P. Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 152.

3 John Parenti was sent to Spain after the General Chapter of 1219 and succeeded Bernard of Quintavalle as Minister of Spain.

4 The General Chapter, which elected John Parenti was celebrated during Pentecost, on 31 May 1227, during the first year of the pontificate of Gregory IX, and succeeded brother Elias who had been vicar of Saint Francis since 1221.

him and the friars to pray to the Lord for rain. It is said that John, together with the friars, immediately obtained the gift of abundant rainfall.⁵

The same General possessed the gift of many tears, and visited a great part of the Order barefoot.

In the year of the Lord 1228 the lord Pope Gregory IX came personally to Assisi, and solemnly enrolled the blessed Francis in the catalogue of the Saints on the 17th day of the calends of August, which happened to be a Sunday.⁶

During the general chapter John established that the body of the Lord should be kept with the maximum reverence in a silver or ivory urn, which should be securely closed. He prohibited the friars to hang this urn over the altar, because it sometimes happened that when the people were present in the church, the chain that supported it would break loose and the urn would fall down, not without giving scandal to those present.

He also commanded that no friar should be called master or lord, but that all should be commonly referred to as brothers. He also gave the order not to accept apostates, or those whose orthodoxy of faith was in doubt, or those who publicly fell into the sin of fornication, or those who contumaciously violated the laws of the Order, even though they would have been sufficiently tolerated or corrected by admonitions.

The General also commanded that no novice priest could hear confessions of secular people,⁷ and that no one should be professed

5 The fact is referred to by the Seraphic-Roman Breviary regarding Blessed Andrew of Spello (†1254 at Spello), whose feast day used to be celebrated on 3 June: "When the general assembly of the Order met in Soria in Spain (in fact, no general chapter ever met in Soria, and therefore it was only a provincial one), the local people came full of fervour and aflame with a spirit of penance, since that year there was a great drought. They begged all the friars with many tears to pray. The same brother Andrew prayed with all the friars and rain fell in abundance. From that day the people used to call him brother Andrew *ab Aqua*."

6 Pope Gregory IX canonised Saint Francis on 16th July 1228 in the church of San Giorgio in Assisi, where he had been buried since 4th October 1226. However, 16th July did not fall on a Sunday in 1228, but rather on a Monday. On 19th July the same Pope published the Bull of Canonisation, *Mira circa nos*, from Perugia. See text in FAED I, 565-569).

7 Jordan of Giano, *Chronicle*, 28, explains this disciplinary provision: "In the

without licence from his Provincial Minister.

The lord Pope Gregory IX sent this same General to Rome, in order to encourage the Romans who rebelled against the Pope to return to peace and obedience. When these refused to do so, he prophesied that they would shortly go through a terrible experience, and then they would be terrified and would be compelled to make the peace, which they now were refusing with determination. In fact, after some time, the river Tiber overflowed its banks, and inundated the city of Rome in a terrible way. The Romans were terrified and were compelled to make peace and promise reverence to the lord Pope and to the Church. In this way they realised the prophecy and desire of the same General.

[212] In the year of the Lord 1230, the friars gathered for a general chapter, during which the body of Saint Francis was translated from the church of Saint George to the basilica built in his honour. It happened, however, as others have already noted, that some days before the friars had gathered, brother Elias, who was engaged in the construction of the basilica, with the help of the secular authorities, and without having called over brother John who was presiding over the Order, led by human fear, organised a secret translation of the relics. In this way, nobody would know where the body had been buried in the new church, except for a handful of persons. When the friars got to know what happened a great tumult ensued, since they had come over to Assisi principally to be able to get a glimpse of the holy body. Brother Elias, however, presented many reasons in order to justify his action. Nevertheless the celebration was held just the same with great solemnity. So many people had come over from the nearby towns and so great a multitude had gathered, that the town of Assisi could not contain them all, and they had to encamp outside in the fields like herds of sheep.

same year, which was the second year since the brothers had come to Germany, after Brother Caesar, the minister of Germany, had placed brothers in Cologne and in the aforementioned cities, there was a scarcity of priests, so much so that one novice priest celebrated Mass on solemn occasions for the brothers in Speyer and in Worms and heard their confessions" (*XIIIth Century Chronicles. Jordan of Giano, Thomas of Eccleston, Salimbene degli Adami*, Translation by P. Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 44).

Everybody was hoping that the aforementioned lord Pope Gregory would come to the translation. But instead he solemnly sent his nuncios, since he declared that he could not be present because of urgent business. However he also truly declared that a dead man had returned to life through the merits of Saint Francis. Through the same nuncios, he sent a golden cross, encrusted with precious jewels, in which the relic of the true cross of the Lord was enshrined. He also sent other ornaments and sacred vessels for the celebration of the sacred mysteries of the altar. He also sent many other solemn and rich vestments. He lavished the new basilica, which was being built with many costly gifts. It was Gregory who had placed the foundation stone of the said church, and he also exempted it from all kinds of jurisdiction lower than his own.⁸

[213] After the death of blessed Francis, brothers Pacifico and Umile, who were blood brothers, shone with marvellous examples of holiness. One of them died in the hermitage of Soffiano. His brother, who was staying in a remote hermitage, saw the soul of this friar go straight up to heaven. After some years had elapsed the brother, who was still alive, was living in the same hermitage of Soffiano, where his brother had died. At the request of the lords of the lords of Brunforte, the brothers changed their friary, and so they transported the remains of the friars who had died at that place. So that friar took the bones of his brother with great devotion, and shedding abundant tears he be-

8 The description of the solemn ceremony of the translation of the relics of Saint Francis, which occurred on 24th May 1230, is taken mainly from Julian of Speyer, *Life of Saint Francis*, 75-76 (FAED I, 419-420). Gregory IX had issued the Bull *Recolentes* (29th April 1228), announcing the building of the *specialis ecclesia* (special church) in which the relics of Saint Francis were to be enshrined. The construction work was entrusted to the expertise of brother Elias. By 1230 the lower church, or crypt, was ready and the relics of Saint Francis were translated there from the church of Saint George. In the Bull *Is qui Ecclesiam* (22nd April 1230), Pope Gregory IX declared the new church as *caput et mater* (head and mother) of the Order of Minors. The accounts of what really happened during the translation of the relics vary in the various sources. Seemingly brother Elias was in accord with the secular authorities of Assisi to prevent a stampede and a consequent damage to the relics of the Saint during the translation procession, and to keep the burial place of the Saint a closely guarded secret. What we do know is that the friars were indignant at brother Elias' behaviour, and that Gregory IX issued the Bull *Spe-ravimus hactenus* (16th June 1230), in which he condemned the actions of the secular authorities in Assisi during the translation celebrations.

gan to touch them with great reverence and kissed them and washed them with wine, and at last wrapped them in a white shroud. The friars who were seeing him were all scandalised since, although they regarded him as a holy man, they thought that he treated the remains of his brother with such honour as to appear that he was moved by worldly love. But he answered them and said: "Dear brothers, do not believe that I was led to show a carnal affection and reverence towards the bones of my dead brother. I did this because when my brother died, I was praying in a deserted place far from him, and I saw his soul ascend straight to heaven. Therefore I am sure that his bones are holy and will be in paradise, and should be honoured by others."⁹

During the time of this same General, as brother Bonaventure of Bagnoregio said in one of his sermons, the friars were assailed by great doubts regarding the contents of the Rule. The General was holding the Rule in his hands and was asserting that all friars should observe it in a clear and literal way. Nonetheless the friars went to the lord Pope Gregory IX in order to ask him for clarifications regarding their doubts. The Pope declared that he knew very well the intentions of Saint Francis and that he had personally collaborated with him in the writing of the Rule and its confirmation. So he issued a declaration regarding the obscure passages of the Rule on the 4th day of the *Calends* of October, during the 4th year of his pontificate, in the year of the Lord 1230, that is, after the celebration of the chapter of Assisi, in which the translation of the most glorious father Francis had taken place.¹⁰

The General, brother John, as the same brother Bonaventure once said, had to resign from the office of General because of these sad events, so that some say [214] that he stayed in office in a praiseworthy way for three years, and afterwards returned to the simple life of a friar. In another place, however, we read that he governed the Order for 6 years. The first opinion seems to be the more true, since it is clear that he resigned because of the various doubts which ensued before the papal declaration on the Rule. In fact, he had been elected General during the first general chapter after the death of Saint Fran-

9 The episode is taken from ABF 54 (FAED III, 537-538) and *Fioretti* 46 (FAED III, 643-644). The brother who died was Umile, while Pacifico showed respect for his corporal remains.

10 The facts refer to the publication of the Bull *Quo elongati* by Pope Gregory IX on 28th September 1230. See text and introduction in FAED I, 570-575.

cis, that is, in the year of the Lord 1227, and he resigned from office in the year 1230, when the translation of the relics took place. His successor governed the Order for 9 years, that is, until the year 1239, and he, in his turn, had brother Albert as his successor.¹¹

This opinion, however, raises the doubt regarding how could brother John travel to many of the provinces of the Order barefoot in such a short time. Brother Elias was removed from the office and deposed because of the great expenses he incurred in the construction of the basilica of Saint Francis, which the same brother Elias was in charge of. Now this could not have happened before the canonisation of Saint Francis, that is, in the year of the Lord 1228, since the basilica was not being built at that time. In the life of brother Juniper we read that, after the translation of the relics of Saint Francis, out of love for God, this brother given away in charity the silver bells hanging in front of the altar frontal, on the occasion of the feast of the

11 These historical notes are not correct, since John Parenti was minister general of the Order from 31st May 1227 until the chapter held in Rieti in 1232, when brother Elias became minister general. It is true, however, that during the chapter of 1230, according to Thomas of Eccleston, the friars who supported Elias wanted to remove John Parenti and place Elias instead: "The first minister general after Blessed Francis was Brother Elias, who had been a notary at Bologna. Brother John Parenti succeeded him; he was minister of Spain, a wise and deeply religious man and a man of great austerity. He was dismissed from office by the partisans of Brother Elias, and Brother Elias was made general again. In the chapter held at the time of the translation of St. Francis' remains, the partisans of Brother Elias, whom he had permitted to come to the chapter – for he granted this permission to all who wished to come – wanted to make him general in opposition to the ministers provincial. Wherefore they carried him on their arms from his cell to the door of the chapter room, and there, after they had broken down the door, they wanted to put him in the place of the minister general. When the good Brother John saw this, he stripped himself before the whole chapter; and thus finally they were confounded and gave up after a very great disturbance. For they did not listen to St. Anthony, or to any minister provincial. The people, however, thought that the discord arose because the body of St. Francis had been translated already on the third day before the fathers had convened. Five novices, who had been soldiers and who were present at the chapter, saw everything, and they wept and said that this disturbance would work great good for the Order, because an Order could not put up with such disorder. And thus it happened that all of these disturbers were scattered amongst the various provinces to do penance. But Brother Elias, going apart to a certain hermitage, let his hair and beard grow, and by this pretence at holiness was reconciled to the Order and to the brothers" (*XIIIth Century Chronicles*, 152-153).

Nativity of the Lord. Now the Minister General on that occasion was brother John. However one could also state that brother John had visited many provinces of the Order when he was Minister Provincial of all Spain, and not when he was General. Also one could think that, since Saint Francis had been buried in a church belonging to secular priests, the aforementioned basilica could have begun to be built before his canonisation, so that he would be buried in the place of the friars, since they were all hoping that he would soon be canonised. Regarding the life of brother Juniper, one could state that during the time in which brother Elias was in charge of the construction of that church and was in charge of the friary, brother John was General. But instead it could also be that brother John, although he resigned from office, accepted for some time the post of vicar of the General, and that is why he is mentioned as General in the life of brother Juniper.¹²

In the year of the Lord 1228, Louis, the king of France, through the lord Roman Cardinal and Legate to the kingdom of France, established the faculty of theology in the [215] University of Toulouse, so that the masters of the Sacred Texts would lecture in that faculty. He also ordered the same masters to offer lectures in the subsidiary sciences of theology, namely, philosophy and grammar. The count of Toulouse was obliged to pay these masters for their work by handing over to them a certain amount of silver marks. The lord Pope Gregory confirmed all these agreements, with a Bulla bearing his own seal.¹³

In the year of the Lord 1229 many students and masters of theology in Paris transferred to Toulouse and began to study theology there, while the masters lectured theology in the same place.

Regarding the removal of the aforementioned brother John from the office of General, we read in another place that, during a certain general chapter brother Elias summoned all the friars of the

12 This uncertainty in the information, which Arnald of Sarrant gives is nowadays resolved, since we know that John Parenti was Minister General for 6 years, from 1227 to 1232. Brother Elias was vicar from 1221 to 1227, since the title of Minister General is normally given to the superiors of the Order after the death of Saint Francis. Elias became General in 1232 and remained in the office until he was deposed in 1239.

13 Saint Louis IX, king of France, was born circa 1215, son of Blanche of Castile. He died during a crusade in Tunis on 25th August 1270. The count of Toulouse was Raymond VII. The king obliged him to pay over 4000 silver marks to 14 lectors (professors) of theology in the University of Toulouse, during a ten year period starting from 1229.

Order who supported him for the assembly. One day, while the General together with the Ministers and Custodians were all gathered in the chapter hall, the friars who supported Elias arrived. They broke down the door of the chapter hall, and making a great tumult they introduced brother Elias carrying him on their shoulders and placed him on the seat where the Minister General stood, affirming that he had the right to be General, since Saint Francis, before dying, had chosen him as the head of the Order. When he saw this brother John stood up very humbly and, taking off his habit, he prostrated himself on the ground and renounced the office the General, pleading with the friars and asserting that he was not worthy of governing the Order. Then he put on his habit and went out of the chapter. In this way Elias was elected more by force of shouting than by a canonical election. He immediately began to excuse himself by saying: "Most dear brothers, do not impose upon me the whole burden of being General, since I cannot follow the common life, and I cannot walk, because of my many infirmities." At that point his supporters began to speak in a loud voice and tell him that he could eat gold and keep a horse, as long as he would govern the Order.

The friars were thus divided among themselves, since some wanted as General the aforementioned brother John, while others wanted brother Elias. The matter was referred to the lord Pope Gregory IX, but it was all in vain, since a few friars wanted brother John Parenti as General, while the Community of the Order was demanding that brother Elias be General, but he was refraining from accepting this offer. When the lord Pope heard what had happened, he confirmed brother Elias in the office of General. In this way Elias' supporters were elated, while the other friars were in great tribulation.¹⁴

14 Arnald of Sarrant has here confused things quite a bit. As we now know, John Parenti remained in office as Minister General in 1230, until 1232, when Elias was made General. Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 143-144, the chapter of Rieti might have been just a provincial or semi-general Cis-montane Chapter, since the next general chapter was due in Pentecost 1233. Elias was not canonically elected, and maybe he became General with the force of direct papal intervention. So it is not true that Gregory IX confirmed Elias as General during the Assisi chapter of 1230, although the account of the plot of Elias' supporters to install him by force is in agreement with what Thomas of Eccleston states. John Parenti resigned from office in the chapter of Rieti in 1232, and retired to the Vicariate of Sardinia, where he died in 1240. The Franciscan Martyrology places his commemoration on 1st January, and says that he died in Monteraso, Corsica, in 1250.

The time of the generalate of brother Elias (1233-1239)

[216] The third Minister General was brother Elias of Assisi, who had already been in the office of Minister before the aforementioned brother John, [217] and thus he is sometimes considered to be the second General. He was a man famous for his human wisdom, and people like him were rarely to be found in Italy.¹⁵

Elias sent visitators, in order to make a meticulous visitation of all the provinces in head and members. As Minister General he often appointed and deposed Ministers Provincial, Custodians and Guardians at will, and he also took decisions regarding many other issues.

When Saint Francis was still alive, brother Elias had a vision in the friary of Foligno. A priest appeared to him, with white vestments, and told him that Saint Francis would die in two years time, as indeed happened.¹⁶

This General was extremely haughty in his character and he greatly wanted to govern the Order with the help of human wisdom, and therefore Saint Francis often scolded him.

When the lay brother William of England, who had been a most perfect friar in the Order, was buried in the basilica of Saint Francis, he began to shine with his great miracles. So brother Elias, enkindled with zeal for the cult of Saint Francis, went to the tomb of this holy brother and with great trust and faith commanded the dead brother not to overshadow the glory of Saint Francis with his miracles. From that moment, brother William refrained from working any wonders at his tomb.¹⁷

In the year of the Lord 1231 the blessed father Anthony from Lisbon departed from this life full of outstanding virtues. He immedi-

15 When Saint Francis was still alive, Elias was Vicar of the Order (1221-1227). For a thorough account of the life and deeds of brother Elias, cfr. R.B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 83-105; 137-177. An official document regarding brother Elias is that by J. Germek, Min. Gen. OFMConv, *Letter on the 750th Anniversary of the Death of Brother Elias "of Cortona"*, Rome 2003.

16 1C 109 (FAED I, 277).

17 William of England died in 1232.

ately began to shine with the wondrous miracles that were happening at his tomb. The following year, that is 1232, he was declared a Saint in the town of Spoleto, on the holy day of Pentecost, during the fourth year of the pontificate of the lord Pope Gregory IX. On that occasion the Pope immediately solemnly intoned the antiphon: *O doctor optime*, etc.¹⁸

[218] Under this General the master Alexander of Hales¹⁹ became famous and distinct for his wisdom in the entire world. He entered the Order of friars Minor in the following circumstances. Once he was praying with great devotion in front of the blessed Mary. He was asking her with a great sentiment of love that, if it were possible, she would listen to his prayers in order that he would accomplish what a certain lady knew he had dear at heart, namely that he had an intimate affection towards the white monks²⁰ and the friars Preachers. One day that lady went to the white monks and told them: "Go to master Alexander and ask him whether he would like to enter into your Order out of love for the glorious Virgin. You should firmly believe that he would immediately accomplish what you ask of him." The monks marvelled at these words, knowing the great man that Alexander was. On the other hand they trusted the words of such a devout and truthful lady, and therefore they went to approach master Alexander. He welcomed them with great courtesy and spoke to them at length about many matters, but God ordered otherwise. In fact, they

18 For a detailed account of the process of canonisation, and the celebration of the canonisation of Saint Anthony, cfr. Anonymous, *Legenda Assidua*, c. 29. This Legend was composed by a friar whose name remains anonymous, and was presented in 1232, just after the canonisation of Saint Anthony. The antiphon *O doctor optime* is the one used in the Office of the Doctors of the Church. The papal Bulla of canonisation of Saint Anthony was published by Gregory IX on 1st June 1232, *Cum dicat Dominus*.

19 Alexander of Hales was born in Gloucester, England, in circa 1170-1180. He became master of theology in the University of Paris in 1220. In 1234 Alexander entered the Order of friars Minor as a doctor of theology, and thus the Franciscan school in Paris became a faculty of theology, just like the rival faculty at the Dominican school. Alexander is author of a *Summa Theologica*, and together with Eudes Rigaud, Jean de la Rochelle, Robert de La Bassé, and Godefroy de Brie composed the *Expositio quatuor magistrorum super Regulam fratrum Minorum*. He died on 21st August 1245, and was one of the professors who taught theology to Saint Bonaventure.

20 The white monks are the Cistercians.

forgot to speak to him about the principal aim of the mission they had come to fulfil, and they returned back to their monastery.

That lady believed that he had dismissed the monks with contempt and with a lack of faith, and therefore she tried to convince the friars Preachers to approach him. These rejoiced and came to master Alexander. While one of them who was the prior was speaking to him, a certain lay brother from the Order of friars Minor came to beg for alms, carrying the haversack with a sling around his neck, and asked for some bread for the love of God. When he saw master Alexander speaking with the friars Preachers, with a divine instinct, completely forgetting that he was begging for alms, began to speak to Alexander with humility and to tell him: "Reverend Master, until now you have served the world with the great fame (of your wisdom). Since our Order does not have any master, I beg you, out of love of God and of the blessed Virgin Mary, and for the salvation of your soul [219] and the honour of our Religion, that you accept to be clothed with the habit of our Order." The friars Preachers were amazed at these words. Master Alexander was also astonished and frightened at hearing these words. God, however, moved him to inner devotion that very moment, and he answered: "Brother, go, and I will immediately follow you and do what you have asked." In this way the friars Preachers retreated with shame, and master Alexander accepted the habit of our Order.

After some time Alexander was troubled by the devil and tempted to leave the Order. One night he decided that the following morning he would leave. But that same night he saw Saint Francis who was carrying a wooden cross, which was very heavy, and had to go up a certain mountain with it. The master wanted to go and help him carry that cross. But the Saint was indignant and sent him away saying: "Go, you miserable man. You cannot even carry a light cross made of cloth, how can you carry a heavy cross made of wood?" Alexander came to his senses when he heard these words, and he was strengthened in spirit and persevered in the Order.

One day, after a disputation in the house of studies of the Paris friary, where Alexander began to lecture, and where he received the title of bachelor from the University,²¹ he entered into a church

²¹ According to the statutes of the University of Paris, there were various grades, which a student had to acquire before becoming master (*magister*). The first grade was that of *baccalarius cursorum*, during which the student had to comment the Bible and the Books of Sentences of Peter Lombard, and thus

to pray in order to prepare for his presentation to receive this academic grade. He saw in a chapel, dedicated to Saint Fronto, who had been the apostle of Perigueux,²² a certain friar who was also praying, and who had a luminous globe above his head, which was making the whole chapel radiant with a marvellous light. He waited for that friar to go out, and when he saw him he immediately recognised him as brother Jean de La Rochelle, [220] from the Province of Aquitaine, who was from Perigueux and was famous for his profound wisdom. Master Alexander regarded this as a sign from God that he was worthy to receive the title of bachelor, and therefore presented himself to the chancellor as a candidate for this title. Afterwards he became a great master and a preacher, and was famous for his religiosity, wisdom and discretion, and for many other gifts, and among the masters of the Faculty of theology he became one of the most subtle in the art of preaching and lecturing, which he handed over in a magnificent way to his disciples.

The master who succeeded Alexander of Hales was the venerable brother and father Eudes Rigaud,²³ who was famous for his knowledge, but even more so for his good moral life. He was subsequently compelled to accept the archbishopric of Rouen and became a most famous preacher, in such a way that he excelled in the art of governing with his life and doctrine, and is regarded as an example to prelates.

become *baccalarius biblicus* and *baccalarius sententiarum*. The second grade was that of *baccalarius formatus*, by which he completed his theology curriculum and was promoted to the degree of *licentiatus*, which gave him the faculty to give public lectures. The highest grade was that of *magister*, or doctor of theology, which gave him the prestige of the *cathedra* or chair in the University.

²² Saint Fronto was the first bishop of Perigueux. His feast is celebrated on 25th October (*Martyrologium Romanum* and *Acta Sanctorum* 25 Oct.). Tradition holds that he was ordained bishop by Saint Peter, and that he assisted Saint Mary Magdalen before she died.

²³ Eudes Rigaud (Odo Rigaldi) was a *magister cathedratus*. He was born in 1200-1205, entered the Order in 1236 and became a master of theology in 1241, becoming regent master of the Faculty of Theology in Paris. Innocent IV (1243-1254) made him archbishop of Rouen in 1247, where he died on 2nd July 1275. Cfr. Bernard of Besse, *A Book of the Praises of St. Francis*, 134 (FAED III, 63).

Around the same time the lord Ralph, master of theology, shone with great reverence and perfection. He came from England and was bishop of Hereford.²⁴ [221] One day he was praying to God and was lost in ecstasy. He was present in heaven and was noticing that there were many Saints from many Orders, but he did not see one single friar Minor. So the most beautiful among women, the blessed Mother of God, appeared to him, and requested that he tell her what he was asking in his innermost thoughts. The bishop answered that he was greatly surprised that he could not see any friars Minor in that eternal joy of heaven, since so many of them had laboured hard in the Church. So the Mother of God answered him: "Come with me, and I will indicate the place where they are staying". So she showed him the friars Minor who were close to Christ with great familiarity, and said: "Look, your brothers are staying under the wings of the Judge, so come to save your soul together with them". When the bishop considered this vision and the advice he had received from the Mother of God, he entered into the Order of friars Minor, with the consent of the lord Pope Gregory IX.

Besides him, there were two other Ralphs, both doctors of theology, one of whom entered the Order at Paris in this way.²⁵ One time while he was studying, he fell asleep at his book. The devil appeared to him and threatened to take away his sight: "I will blind you with dung." He woke up but fell asleep again, when the devil again ap-

24 Brother Ralph of Maidstone was bishop of Hereford before he became a friar Minor in 1239. He was vested with the Franciscan habit by brother Haymo of Faversham, Minister of England (1239-1240), and renounced his Episcopal see on 17th December 1239. He died on 8th January 1246. Cfr. Bernard of Besse, 11 (FAED III, 54). Thomas of Eccleston, 14 (*XIIIth Century Chronicles*, 172-173): "Brother Haymo ... clothed with the habit of the Order the lord bishop of Hereford, Ralph of Maidstone, in accordance with a vision he had of him when he was still archdeacon of Chester; namely, that a certain boy came while he was seated and arranging the clergy in a synod and threw water into his face, whereat the boy was immediately changed into a miserable young man. And Ralph came to the bed where Brother Haymo lay, and he asked him to let him lie there; and this he did."

25 The first of these is Ralph de Corbrigge, a Master of Theology at Paris, and later, Lector at Oxford. The other may be Ralph of Rheims who, in 1232, was sent by Pope Gregory IX to the German Archbishop of Constantinople with Haymo of Faversham and two others. According to Luke Wadding, it is not certain that he was Master of Theology, cfr. *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1233, n. 8.

peared to him and repeated the same words. He drove him away by putting his fingers to his eyes: "You will not blind me," he said, "I will blind you." On the following day, while he was sitting in the professor's chair, he received from England a thick letter from a bishop offering him revenue. Interpreting the money as the dung with which the devil wanted to blind him, he entered the Order of friars Minor, scorning everything.

During the same time, in the town of Valencia in Catalonia, which was under the dominion of the Saracens and was totally inhabited by infidels, two friars Minor were preaching the faith with great fervour. They were condemned by the law of Mohammed and received martyrdom confessing their faith. Their bodies are venerated in the friary of Turol in the Province of Aragon.²⁶

Saint Elizabeth, who was the daughter of the king of Hungary,²⁷ and a unique mother and daughter of the Order of friars Minor, shone not only because of her noble lineage, but also because of her love for God and her holy way of life. [222] It happened once that, when her husband was still alive and she was living her marriage vows under his yoke, her husband noticed that she was looking sad and dejected. So he asked her the reason for this, and she answered him that it was a long time since she had seen the servants of God (the friars) and she had been deprived of the nourishment of the words of God. That was why she was feeling so changed in her inner and outward appearance.

26 Brothers John and Peter, martyrs in Valencia. The account of their martyrdom is given in the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General* (AF III, 186).

27 Saint Elizabeth was the daughter of king Andrew II (1201-1235) and Gertrude of Andechs-Merania, and was born at Sárospatak in Hungary on 7th July 1207. At age 4 she was taken to the court of the rulers of Thuringia in central Germany. When she was 14 years old, in 1221, she married Louis IV, landgrave of Thuringia, and was a holy mother. In 1223 the Franciscan friars arrived in Thuringia, and Elizabeth became familiar with the ideals of Saint Francis. She dedicated herself to charitable works. Louis was not upset by his wife's charitable deeds and distribution of the family's wealth to the poor. After the death of her husband by plague during a crusade at Otranto, on 11th September 1227, Elizabeth dedicated herself to the care of the poor and sick, for whom she had built a hospital near Wartburg Castle. She entered the Order of Penance of Saint Francis, and lived a penitential life under the direction of the inquisitor Conrad of Marburg. Elizabeth died at Marburg on 17th November 1231. Pope Gregory IX declared her a saint in Perugia on 26th May 1235, solemnity of Pentecost. She is venerated as the patroness of the Secular Franciscan Order (Third Order of Saint Francis).

So her husband asked two friars Minor to come to her that very moment, and according to her wish, she spoke to them about God. The brothers saw that she became radiant with joy. She was then walking with one of the brothers along a river. That friar was a man of great perfection. Elizabeth was speaking to him with great fervour regarding the salvation of her soul. Among other things, she told him: "Most dear father, one thing stings my conscience more than anything else, namely, that I experience in me the danger that, because of my sins, I hardly have any love for God, even though I try as hard as I can to love Him with all my strength. Therefore I am very afraid that He will discard me as a person who is not worthy of His love."

That brother, full of the Holy Spirit, answered her that God loved her incomparably more than she could love him. He said: "If you truly want to become a Saint, you should not permit your misery and sadness to separate you from God for one single moment." While that brother was asserting these truths with strong and numerous arguments, the Saint pointed her finger towards a certain tree which grew on the river bank, where they were walking, and said: "This very moment I believe that that tree can transfer itself to the other side of the river, just as I believe that God can free me from my present sadness, and that the more I will love Him, the more I will remain in His sweetness". A marvellous thing happened! As soon as she had uttered those words, the tree immediately uprooted itself and was transplanted on the other bank of the river. The maidservant of Christ was astonished and fell on her face in front of the brother, giving abundant thanksgiving to God.

Saint Elizabeth built a hospital, in which she served the poor with great devotion. She would never receive any sick person freely, however, if that person would not first of all go to confession, since she knew that the sinner is not worthy to eat the bread of charity. One day she refused to accept a blind man who would not go to confession. He was confused and began to blaspheme the name of the Lord. The Saint, however, together with a certain devout friar Minor who was there, scolded him, and then he confessed and was received in the hospital. That friar told the Saint: "My lady, just as you are feeding him with bread, give him back his eye sight." She answered him: "You are asking for much, but now you go and pray that one of his eyes will be restored, and I will work for the rest." After having received that mandate, the friar went to pray God, who restored one eye to the

blind man, but that eye was very small. The Saint prayed God that He would restore another eye to the blind man, but a bigger one. In this way that man could see perfectly. The unequal size of his eyes maybe showed the variety of the two prayers and the unequal merits of the two persons who had asked God for this gift.

After the death of her husband Elizabeth entered the Order of Penitents under the third Rule of Saint Francis. She used to wear a small cord and a short mantle and dedicated herself to worthy fruits of penance. After her death she shone with miracles and Pope Gregory IX enlisted her in the catalogue of the Saints. After some years her sister, whose name was Kinga, entered into the Order of Saint Clare. There she shone with a holy way of life [223] and after her death was radiant with so many miracles, that the Roman Curia treated in a solemn and serious way her process of canonisation.²⁸

In the beginning of the Order there was a certain lay brother who lived in a certain friary, who hardly knew and understood how to read. Since the Rule prescribes that no lay brother should be anxious to learn,²⁹ and that brother greatly wanted to be able to learn how to read, he acquired a psalter for himself. When his Guardian came to know what he did, he commanded him to consign his psalter. That brother, however, answered him that he did not have a psalter. So the Guardian told him: "I want you to tell me where it is, if you know the place, and you must reveal this to me immediately." But the brother did not want to obey. In the meantime that miserable brother became ill. Still he remained obstinate, and did not want to reveal

28 Saint Kinga of Poland (also known as Cunegunda, Cunegundes, Zinga) was born on 5th March 1224. She was the daughter of king Bela IV of Hungary, niece of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and great-niece of Saint Hedwig. Kinga's sisters were Saint Margaret of Hungary and Blessed Jolenta (Yolanda) of Poland. Kinga married Boleslaw V, and became queen when her husband ascended the throne as king of Poland. Despite the marriage, the couple made a vow to live in chastity. During her reign Kinga was involved in charitable works, such as visiting the poor and helping lepers. When her husband died in 1279, she sold all her possessions and gave the money to the poor. Then she decided to join the Poor Clares in their monastery at Sandeck. She spent the rest of her life in contemplative prayer, and died on 24th July 1292. Pope Alexander VIII beatified her in 1690. On 16th June 1999 Pope John Paul II declared her a saint during a pastoral visit to Poland.

29 *Later Rule*, X,7-8: "Let those who are illiterate not be anxious to learn, but let them pay attention to what they must desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity."

to his Guardian where that psalter was to be found. So the Guardian, knowing that the brother who possessed the psalter would take a long time to reveal to him where the psalter was, and that he would not give it back to him, commanded him to do so in virtue of obedience. But that brother continued to persist in his hard-heartedness and died without obeying in such a trivial detail.

After his burial, the sacristan was ringing the bell the following night, in order to call the brothers for Matins. He felt a kind of heavy and oppressing shadow come upon him, and he also heard a grave and expressionless voice uttering unintelligible words, and he was terrorised and fell to the ground. Since the brothers noticed that the bell had only been rung once, they were surprised, and came to him. They found him lying on the ground. When they heard the reason why he had fainted, they tried to console him. As soon as the bell had rang again and the brothers began to pray Matins, that terrible shadow came once more, and was speaking with its horrible voice as if it was an empty bellowing of discordant and unintelligible sounds. Since that voice was disturbing the brothers during the divine office, the Guardian commanded the brothers to keep silent, and spoke out to the shadow: "I command you, by the merits of the passion of Our Lord, to tell us who you are and what you are here for." That shadow answered: "I am that lay brother, whom you have buried today." The Guardian then said: "Do you want our suffrages and prayers? Is this why you have come?" But the voice answered: "I do not want any suffrages, since they will not do me any good. I have rather come because of the psalter, which I did not want to give back to you out of my disobedience, and for which I have now been condemned to eternal punishment." So the Guardian said to him: "I command you, in the name of the Lord, since we cannot command you through obedience any more, that you go away from this place immediately and that from now onwards you do not come back to trouble the brothers." That shadow immediately disappeared, and no one heard that voice any more.

Another brother, who was devoted to God and to Saint Francis, saw in a vision a certain brother, who was in agony. This brother was assailed and surrounded by demons, and they were telling Saint Francis that the brother belonged to them, since he had always held in low esteem the vow of poverty he had promised to live. Saint Francis told the demons: "If that brother is truly yours, I will not permit you

to carry him with my habit." He snatched the hood from that brother and placed it in the hands of evil persons. [224] The brother who had the vision woke up and went in haste to the infirmary, and found that friar dead and without his hood.

Under the government of brother Elias lived brother Electus, who was a lay brother. Thomas of Celano believed that this brother was worthy to be venerated among the Martyrs.³⁰ When he was taken by the Saracens to his martyrdom in order to give witness to his faith, he held the Rule in his uplifted hands, and kneeling humbly, said to his companion: "Dear brother, I proclaim myself guilty before the eyes of Majesty and before you of everything that I ever did against this holy Rule!" The stroke of the sword followed this short confession, and with this martyrdom he ended his life, and afterward shone with signs and wonders. This brother had entered the Order so young that he could hardly bear the Rule's fasting, yet even as a boy he wore a hair-shirt next to his skin. Oh happy teenager, who began happily, that he might finish more happily!

During the time of the same General lived brother Benedict of Arezzo,³¹ who had once been one of the most famous among the companions of Saint Francis. There is a story regarding him, namely, that once he was on a ship crossing the sea, when such a ferocious storm broke out, that all those on board were despairing that they would remain alive. Brother Benedict, however, after he had prayed, said to

30 Thomas of Celano, *Memorial in the Desire of a Soul* [2C] 208 (FAED II, 381): "This teaching (to keep the Rule always present) was not forgotten by a certain lay brother whom we believe should be venerated among the martyrs, since he gained the palm of glorious victory. When he was taken by the Saracens to his martyrdom, he held the Rule in his uplifted hands, and kneeling humbly, said to his companion: "Dear brother, I proclaim myself guilty before the eyes of Majesty of everything that I ever did against this holy Rule!" The stroke of the sword followed this short confession, and with this martyrdom he ended his life, and afterward shone with signs and wonders. This brother had entered the Order so young that he could hardly bear the Rule's fasting, yet even as a boy he wore a harness next to his skin. Oh happy child, who began happily, that he might finish more happily!" This brother Electus (Eletto) was executed at Tunis before 1246, and probably when Francis was still alive (according to Wadding as early as 1219).

31 Benedict of Arezzo entered the Order in 1216 and died around the year 1280. He was the first Minister of the province of the Marches of Ancona (1217) and then he was Minister of Greece (1220). It was Benedict who requested Thomas of Celano to compose the *Legend of Saint Francis for the use in the Choir*.

the sailors: "If you want to avoid death, throw me in the sea, otherwise the storm will not calm down." When they had done as he had told them, and had lowered him down sitting on a raft, after he had disappeared from their sight that storm abated and the sea became very calm.

The same leader and brother Benedict, after having journeyed far and wide by sea and by land, arrived safely on foot underneath a most high mountain. There he encountered a young man who had a very good-looking face. After having spoken briefly to him, he told the young man that he wanted to go up to the peak of that mountain, where he could find a place of shelter. So he started going up and arrived at the peak of that mountain, where he found a most solemn and beautiful dwelling place. He knocked on the door, and an old man with a long white beard opened it for him. When he saw brother Benedict he asked him who he was and why he had come up that mountain. Benedict answered that he was a religious, and he also told him what had befallen him, and pleaded that in that place they would welcome him out of love for God. The old man answered brother Benedict, and told him that that place was the garden of paradise, from where the first man had been sent away. He also told him that neither he himself nor any other mortal person could make him enter that place. Finally he told him that he was the prophet Elias, of whom we read in the Scriptures.³²

After some time, another old man came over. He was Enoch.³³ He was followed by a multitude, since he and Elias were responsible for checking the state of mortal men. These persons were dressed in a variety of habits [225] of different religious Orders, and each one was showing which habit he had chosen in religious life and therefore which rule he had professed. Since Benedict had chosen the habit of the friars Minor, the two men asked him whether it was true that that Order had been founded. He immediately replied in the affirmative, and continued to insist that he was a member of that Order. When those two old men heard these words, they lifted their hands up to heaven, and began to praise the Lord, since this was a sign that the end of the world was close at hand. They then told Benedict that he should return back along the way he had come from, since he would

32 2Kings 2:11 and Sir 48:9.

33 Gen 5:24 and Sir 44:16.

have an Angel to accompany him. Benedict glanced at that paradise and saw the beauty and sweetness of the trees full of fruit, which grew there. Then he descended to the foot of the mountain, where he met the aforementioned young man, who told him to go back to the raft and return to his companion without lingering. When he did this, Benedict found that he was being carried on the sea with great speed and he was covering a lengthy distance, until he arrived at a certain port, where he found his companion and, after having embraced one another with joy, they praised the Lord and returned to their friary.

During the same time there were many other friars who led a venerable life, and who shone in various provinces of the whole world for their doctrine and miracles. Brother Bernard of Besse, from the Province of Aquitaine, speaks about them in a certain Legend of Saint Francis.³⁴ Brother Soldanerio was like the sun giving light to the world, and his bones rest honourably in the friary of Viterbo.³⁵ Brother Roger glittered with such evident holiness that the lord Pope Gregory IX approved and confirmed him as a saint, and granted that his memorial be celebrated at Todi where his relics lie. But he did not proclaim a feast with solemnity as is customary in such cases; because of this we have heard that the cult of this holy man is now being neglected, even though the examination of his miracles was done under the mandate of the aforementioned Pope Gregory IX.³⁶

Brother Nicholas also shone forth as a most holy man. Among other miracles, it is said that he rose from his tomb and gave the gift of life to a dead man in his bed, and he also restored new eyes to those who had been deprived of them. His body rests in the church of the friars in Bologna.

Brother Ambrose was famous for his miracles and is venerated in Orvieto.³⁷

Brother John de Laudibus was a very strong man [226] and led a most holy life. When Saint Francis was still alive, he merited to

34 Bernard of Besse (†1283) was a member of the Custody of Cahors in the Province of Aquitaine. He is the author of the *Liber de Laudibus Sancti Francisci* (A Book of the Praises of Saint Francis), English translation in FAED III, 31-74.

35 Brother Soldanerio died on 13th July 1241.

36 Brother Roger is regarded as a Blessed in the Franciscan Order. The Roman-Seraphic Breviary celebrates his feastday on 13th March. Cfr. FAED III, 36.

37 Brother Ambrose de Massa died at Orvieto on 10th November 1251.

touch the wounds of the stigmata. His body rests in the friary of Bettona together with Saint Crispolitus.³⁸

Another famous friar was Leo, who energetically led the Church of Milan as its archbishop.³⁹

Brother James had seen the soul of the holy Father Francis ascend straight into heaven like a radiant star on many waters, on the day of the saint's death. His body rests in the place of the Portiuncula.⁴⁰

Brother Augustine of Assisi, who was Minister of Terra di Lavoro, and who is buried in the friary of Capua, was a man of such sanctity, that when he was ill he saw the soul of Saint Francis ascending into heaven, and began to call out and say: "Wait for me, Father, wait for me." At that moment he immediately followed the most holy Father by departing from this life.⁴¹

In the year of the Lord 1237 there were many persons in various regions who became hard-hearted and did not want to believe the truth regarding the sacred stigmata of Saint Francis. [227] They were also publicly teaching that the stigmata were not true at all. So the lord Pope Gregory IX, in the ninth year of his pontificate, published strong letters and sent them to the prelates of the universal Church. In these letters he spoke about the truth of the stigmata of Saint Francis, as confirmed by various witnesses.⁴²

38 Bettona is a small town in Umbria, where there was an oratory dedicated to Saint Crispolitus, who is said to have come from Jerusalem, and was a disciple of Saint Peter, who gave the mandate to Saint Britius, bishop of Spoleto (†97) to consecrate him bishop of Bettona. He was also bishop of Foligno and Nocera and died a martyr's death under Domitian on 12th May 93.

39 Brother Leo of Perego was Minister Provincial of Lombardy. He was part of the group of brothers who went to Pope Gregory IX to request a papal interpretation of the Rule in 1230 (the group was composed of the Minister General John Parenti, Anthony of Padua, Haymo of Faversham, Leo of Perego, Gerard of Modena, Gerard Rossignol, papal penitentiary, and Peter of Brescia). The Pope answered with the Bulla *Quo elongati* (28th September 1230). Leo was elected archbishop of Milan on 15th June 1241 and died at Legano on 16th October 1263.

40 1C 110 (FAED I, 278). The name of this brother is not given by Celano, but by Bernard of Besse, c. 1 (FAED III, 35).

41 2C 218 (FAED II, 389).

42 Gregory IX, Letter *Confessor Domini*, written in Viterbo on 5th April 1237. Cfr. A. Vauchez, "The Stigmata of Saint Francis and Its Medieval Detractors",

During the same period of time the Pope wrote to the Bishop of Olmütz in the province of Bohemia, who preached contrary to this truth and was presenting arguments stating that one should not represent the saint with a cross in his hand, since he was not crucified. The Pope strongly reprimanded that Bishop for his pernicious preaching, and he commanded and appealed to him to preach that the blessed Francis truly had the sacred stigmata, in order to believe strongly that this was true, and to publicly revoke what he had been preaching.

During the same time the Pope wrote to the Provincial Priors of the Order of Preachers, that brother Evertandus, who belonged to the same Order, was to be declared blasphemous, since he had preached with many foolish and lax expressions in the Troppau in the province of Bohemia against the aforementioned stigmata. He was punished, by being deprived of the office of preaching, which he had merited to receive, for as long as he lived in that region.⁴³

In the year of the Lord 1237, on the vigil of the feast of Saint Bartholomew, Jaime, the illustrious king of Aragon, captured Valencia, which was under Saracen rule, but was inhabited by a Christian population. He erased from that town the cult of Mohammed, after many holy friars Minor had been killed for the faith of Christ in acts of vengeance. Their remains are venerated at Turol.

When the aforementioned lord Pope Gregory was still Protector of the Order, as brother Philip of Perugia states in the letter that he wrote to the Cardinal Protector of the Order, together with Saint Francis [228] he wrote in an orderly way a Rule for the sisters of San Damiano, modelled upon the Rule of the friars Minor.⁴⁴ When the Cardinal was writing this Rule he shed many tears out of devotion and compassion, since he was aware of its strictness. When he became Pope later on, he showed so much love and devotion towards this Or-

Greyfriars Review 13 (1999) 61-89. Pope Alexander IV published the Bullae *Benigna operatio* (19th October 1255) and *Quia longum esset* (28th June 1259), in which he attested that he had personally seen the stigmata of St. Francis.

43 Gregory IX, Letter *Non minus dolentes*, written in Viterbo on 31st March 1237 (*Bullarium Franciscanum*, ed. Sbaralea, I, 211-214).

44 Cardinal Hugolino wrote a *Forma Vitae* to Clare and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano in 1219. See English text in: *Clare of Assisi. The Lady. Early Documents*, Revised edition and Translation by R.J. Armstrong, New City Press, New York – London – Manila, 2006, 75-85.

der that the same Pope commanded that on the day of the Lord's Supper, when there was the custom of washing the feet of poor people, he wanted them to be vested in the habit of the friars Minor. Since the brothers normally used to help the Pope in this act of kindness, some of the poor people, who normally received this honour from the same Pope, although being unknown to him, would refuse his services and would request it from the other friar, while telling the Pope: "You do not know how to wash our feet well. Permit this brother to do the service, since he knows how to do it better than you do."

The same Pope sometimes used to go to visit devout places in Rome dressed with the habit of the brothers, and accompanied by them, in order not to be recognised.

When he was still a Cardinal, Saint Francis had foretold that he would arrive at the summit of the pontifical dignity. Francis would address him in writing in this way: "To the venerable father, Bishop of the whole world."⁴⁵

Brother Bernard of Besse, in his *Chronicle of the Generals*, says that, roughly in the year of the Lord 1238 or 1239, brother Elias convoked the general chapter in Rome, after he had finished the work on the church of Assisi, together with the building of the belfry and the installation of the bells, and he was absolved from his ministry during this chapter. The lord Gregory IX presided over this chapter. He approved the conclusion of the mandate of brother Elias, and confirmed the election of his successor, which was held in his presence.⁴⁶

The cause of the absolution of Elias from the office of General is, however, expressed in a different way in other sources. After the conclusion of the chapter in which Elias had been elected, as we have seen above, he went to the lord Pope and asked him to be able to collect enormous sums of money for the building of the church of Saint

45 L3C 67 (FAED II, 107).

46 The general chapter in which brother Elias was deposed was convened not by him, but by Pope Gregory IX himself, and was held in 1239. In this same *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General*, Arnald of Sarrant wrote: "Brother Bernard of Besse from the Province of Aquitaine wrote ... a third work containing three principal parts: a life of Saint Francis with many miracles, chronicles of the General Ministers, and some miracles and divine testimony in approbation of the Three Orders of Saint Francis" (*Analecta Franciscana* III, 377). This *Chronicle* is sometimes known by the name *Chronicle of the 14 or 15 Ministers General*.

Francis and many other privileges besides, especially the privilege to be able to receive money through intermediaries, directly contrary to what the Rule states.⁴⁷ He also sent visitators in the Provinces in order to tax [229] the same Provinces and make them offer money towards the building of the basilica of Saint Francis. Elias therefore began to hoard money and he possessed a strong horse, and kept servants to wait on him and led a comfortable life.

Brother Bernard of Quintavalle once saw brother Elias riding his horse, and he began to run after him and, breathless though he was, he shouted and said: "What a strong and magnificent horse you have! This is not what the Rule says!" Then Bernard began to imitate a haughty attitude of one who kicks at the saddle in order to make the horse gallop along. When brother Bernard saw how Elias was having a lavish dinner in the privacy of his room, he was filled with zeal. Therefore he rose from the table in the refectory, and holding in his hands bread, a knife and a bowl, he knocked hard on the door of brother Elias' room. When brother Elias opened the door to him, he entered and sat down at table next to the Minister and said: "I want to eat this providence of God together with you." The General was inwardly inflamed with anger, but since he knew how all the brothers of the Order greatly respected brother Bernard, he tried not to show his true feelings.

When the general chapter was convened under this General, the same Minister wanted to show to the brothers the many privileges, which he had obtained from the lord Pope for the Order, as well as the dispensations against the Rule, particularly that which regarding the permission given to the friars to receive money through intermediaries. He tried to persuade the friars present with many subtle and rational arguments, to consent to these relaxations. He could not minimally get the friars to agree with his desires, not even through threats and fear. Moreover, two great lights in the Order, that is brother Anthony of Padua, who is now reigning gloriously in heaven, and brother Adam of Marsh,⁴⁸ stood him courageously in the

47 *Later Rule* 4 (FAED I,102): "I strictly command all my brothers not to receive coins or money in any form, either personally or through intermediaries."

48 Adam Marsh (Adam de Marisco), was born about the year 1200 in the diocese of Bath. He was educated at Oxford under the famous Robert Grosseteste. Adam entered the order roughly in 1230 in the friary of Worcester, and in 1238 he became a lector at the Franciscan study house in Oxford (Thomas of

face, [230] since they could not accept that the Rule would be ruined in such an outrageous manner. Other friars also secretly supported them; among who there was brother Albert of Pisa, at that time Minister of England, who immediately succeeded Elias in the office of General, and brother John Bonelli of Florence, Minister Provincial, who presided over the chapter of Arles, when Saint Francis appeared blessing the brothers at the same time that Saint Anthony was preaching about the title of the cross. However, none of the brothers had the courage to speak out against Elias, because they were afraid, that is, except the aforementioned brothers Anthony and Adam, who defended the truth of the Rule with evident arguments.

At this stage, a great tumult ensued in the chapter, with many friars asserting that these two brothers were trying to divide the Order. Since it was evident that these two brothers were fighting strenuously in order to preserve the purity of the Rule, even though Elias was presenting them as accomplices who were persecuting him, they appealed to the apostolic See. The General wanted to capture and imprison them, but a certain brother, who was confessor of the lord Pope,⁴⁹ defended them, so that they managed to escape from brother Elias and go to the lord Pope Gregory. Brother Elias was terrified

Eccleston, *Tractatus de adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, c. 11). He died 18th November 1259.

49 According to Thomas of Eccleston, c. 13, it was brother Arnulph the Englishman, papal penitentiary, who helped the friars oust brother Elias from office. But Arnald of Sarrant is not correct when he states that it was Saint Anthony of Padua who appealed to the Pope, together with brother Adam Marsh. Anthony had already died way back in 1231, and these facts happened in 1237-1239. It was Haymo of Faversham who spoke out in front of the Pope and it was an English cardinal, Robert of Somercote, who defended him. Indeed, the dismissal of brother Elias could be referred to as "an English plot" which saved the Order in a critical moment of its history. This is the account of Eccleston: "Afterwards, because Elias had upset the whole Order by his worldly living and his cruelty, Brother Haymo moved an appeal against him at Paris; and though Elias was unwilling, many ministers provincial and many of the best brothers from the Cismontane provinces gathered to celebrate a general chapter, Brother Arnulph, the penitentiary of the lord pope Gregory IX, acting on behalf of the Order at the Roman curia. Therefore, after a long consultation, brothers were chosen from the whole Order to provide for the reformation of the Order. When this was done, an account thereof was given in the general chapter before the pope, at which seven cardinals were in attendance too" (*XIIIth Century Chronicles*, 154).

when he came to know what they did, and therefore he sent letters in which he commanded to capture those two brothers immediately. The Lord, however, protected the two brothers and they arrived in Rome and presented themselves in person to the lord Pope. The lord Pope listened to their case and to the rational arguments they presented, and therefore convened a general and plenary chapter in Rome. In front of the Pope the two parties exposed their arguments. Saint Anthony appealed to the fear of being persecuted and to the fact that the General was ruining the whole Rule. He said that it was against the Rule to receive money, to ride a horse or to keep servants, and to procure all the other privileges that go against the same Rule.⁵⁰

Brother Elias answered that it was the brothers who had compelled him to accept the office of General, and he had told them that he could not travel on foot and could not live in community because of his many indispositions. The brothers had conceded to his wishes, and had even told him that he could travel on horseback and eat gold if his body needed gold. He therefore asked to have a horse, a servant and special dishes for himself, and these could not be acquired without money. He then said: "That is why I have permission to receive money. If I do this with a straight conscience, it is because I have asked for permission to do so from the apostolic See, and it was according to the intentions of Saint Francis, which are known only to me, that I built that church and that I have tried to come to the aid of the brothers in their poverty."

Saint Anthony answered him in this way: "If you had permission to do what you are stating and to eat gold if it were necessary, why is it that you have amassed a treasure? If you had permission to use a humble horse for your travels, why is it that you need to provide food for more than one solemn palfrey [231] and compel the brothers to serve you, and thus make them transgress the Rule?" Upon hearing these words brother Elias was outraged and started shouting at Saint Anthony in front of the Pope and telling him: "You are lying."

At these words the lord Pope was upset and he imposed silence upon the assembly. When all had been silent, the lord Pope did not utter one single word for half an hour, but with many sighs he would frequently lift up his gaze to heaven, and he was on the point

50 From Thomas of Eccleston we know that it was Haymo of Faversham who spoke out. Anthony of Padua had died in 1231.

of breaking in tears and finally broke the silence with these following words taken from Daniel: *O king, on your bed your thoughts turned to what would happen in the future* (Dan 2:29). Then he began to describe Saint Francis as having been the golden head of the beautiful statue, which Daniel had seen, and going down to the feet made of clay, he added: "We used to believe that, when Elias was General, the Order was pleased to have him. But now it is clear that he is upsetting the Order and will destroy it. Therefore we now absolve him from his office, and we want you to proceed directly to elect a new General."

The friars then elected brother Albert of Pisa, who was the Minister of England. At that moment the lord Pope commended Saint Anthony and those brothers who had adhered to him, and absolved them from all sentences, by which brother Elias had judged them and declared that these sentences were invalid. The Saint then asked the Pope to be absolved from all offices of government, in order to dedicate his time solely to contemplation and to compose his sermons.

Brother Elias was then compelled to profess the Rule confirmed by the lord Pope Honorius, since he had affirmed that he had been accepted in the Order under the other the lord Pope Innocent and had professed the other Rule, which had not received the papal seal. That was why he had not professed poverty according to the confirmed Rule, and therefore could receive money, as he had asserted.

We should, however, admonish our readers that, regarding this controversy, as we have presented it, we cannot totally verify whether it refers to the second time that brother Elias was absolved from the office of General. It rather refers to the first time, when the companions of Saint Francis protested strongly against Elias' infringements of the vow of poverty, and because he had commanded that brother Leo be flogged. Therefore, it was this chapter, or rather the Pope during the chapter, absolved brother Elias from office. Saint Anthony died in the year of the Lord 1231. The second dismissal of Elias from office occurred round about 1233. This shows that the Pope could not do anything against brother Elias the first time. Therefore, if we want to reconcile the events, we should say that brother Elias governed the Order as General from the year of the Lord 1224, for a period of two years or more, during which time Saint Francis was seriously ill before he died, and could not govern the Order. Elias then continued to govern the Order until the year [232] of the Lord 1230, namely, until the transferral of the corporal remains of Saint Francis,

as we have seen. The Legend of Saint Anthony says that, during that year, brother Anthony was absolved from all offices of government, in order to dedicate his time for preaching and writing his sermons. But, as we have seen, others have a different opinion regarding this. During the same chapter when the relics of Saint Francis were transported, brother Elias was dismissed from his office, after the protests of Saint Anthony, and brother John Parenti was canonically elected as General.⁵¹

It is doubtful, however, that the same Pope could have restored Elias to his office, after having considered for so long at removing him as a destroyer of the Order. To this we should add that, after his deposition, brother Elias showed such a good will to change his life to the better, that the lord Pope felt sorry for what he had done, namely to absolve him from office. Elias, in fact, let his beard grow long and wore a worn out habit made of sackcloth, and left the friary of Assisi, which the Pope had entrusted him to build, in the hands of brother John Parenti. From that moment he obtained licence from the Pope, so that together with some other friars who wanted to follow him, he could live a life of penance in some hermitage, which he himself would choose. He also stated that, henceforth, he wanted to live in a hermitage. That is why, after three years, or after six, according to others, during which brother John was General, brother Elias was elevated once again to the post and, after the resignation of brother John, with the good graces of the lord Pope, he resumed the office of General. If one counts the years during which Elias governed the Order as Minister, that is from the time Saint Francis was alive and after he died, until the year of the Lord 1238 or 1239, one finds out that Elias governed the Order for 9 years, and brother John governed it for 6 years. But if one holds, together with others, that brother John occupied the office of General for three years, then he has to count the number of years during which Elias governed the Order from the moment Saint Francis died. In this case he also arrives at 9 years,

⁵¹ Brother Elias was deposed from the office of Minister General only once, namely in 1239. He was Vicar of Saint Francis from 1221 to 1227, and then Minister General from 1232 to 1239. The Minister General during the time of the translation of the relics of Saint Francis was John Parenti (1227-1232). The information regarding Saint Anthony dedicating himself entirely to preaching is taken from the *Legenda Prima* or *Assidua*, 11, written in 1232 on the occasion of the canonisation of Saint Anthony.

whether brother John was General before or after the year in which the translation of Saint Francis' relics took place. These opinions can be verified according to different ways of counting the years. However, one cannot defend the argument that brother Albert was made General of the Order when Saint Anthony was still alive.

In the beginning of the Order, in the friary of Zaragoza, in the kingdom of Aragon, there was a most simple and perfect lay brother. This brother helped the friar in charge of the refectory to place the slices of bread on the table. But a great quantity of noisy sparrows came in to eat those slices of bread. That brother was very upset at this, since the birds used to dirty the table and the bread with their droppings. Try as he could, that brother could not make those sparrows go away. In fact, a great number of birds would fly inside the refectory and come to eat the bread with their noisy chirps. So the brother turned to the Lord in prayer, asking for a remedy. The Lord mercifully condescended to his pure simplicity. It happened that, when he was preparing bread on the table, a bird of prey called *nisus* entered and ferociously invaded the place where the sparrows were, and it scared them off or killed some of them, in such a way that it defended the table from their presence. This was a marvellous remedy to the problem. Whenever the friars would place the bread on the table that bird of prey would enter and stay there defending the table, and it would not go away from fighting any intruders, until the brothers would collect the leftovers of the bread. [233] The other birds would immediately fly away. When that brother would prepare the table, that bird of prey would also return to keep watch over it. It continued doing this until the sparrows were all frightened and would not dare to enter the refectory.

The generalate of brother Albert of Pisa (1239-1240)

[233] The fourth General of the Order was brother Albert of Pisa from the Province of Tuscany, who was a good and perfect man. At the time he was elected in the chapter, which was celebrated in the year of the Lord 1238 or 1239, he was Minister of England.⁵² The lord Pope Gregory IX himself presided over that chapter. The same Pope confirmed him after his election.

It was during that chapter that the first Mass presided by a General was celebrated.⁵³

Brother Albert reaped the fruits of his labour after a very short period of time. In fact, he remained in office for only 6 months, and he died round about the feast of the Nativity of the Lord.⁵⁴

[234] When he saw the Order without a Minister, the lord Pope did not linger, but convened a general chapter for the election of the future General on the following feast of All Saints.⁵⁵

During that time, the brothers began to multiply in Germany. Other brothers came over from Trent to Lindau. In that place two brothers were received into the Order, and were sent to the castle of Michelstein. The lord of that castle, although he was preparing him-

52 Albert of Pisa was elected General on 15th May 1230. Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 184: "According to tradition Agnellus of Pisa and Albert of Pisa were received into the Order together by St. Francis himself in 1211. Albert was probably Provincial Minister of Tuscany from 1217 to 1221, and of the March of Ancona from 1221 to 1223; certainly Provincial Minister of Germany from 1223 to 1227 and possibly of Spain, 1227-30; probably Provincial of Bologna, c.1230-32, of Hungary, c.1232-6, and certainly of England, 1236-9, in which year he was elected General."

53 Thomas of Eccleston, *De adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, c. 13, writes: "Therefore after the minister general (Albert of Pisa) had said Mass, the Pope said to the brothers who had not been part of the chapter: 'You have now heard the first Mass ever celebrated by a minister general of your Order. Go now with the blessing of Jesus Christ to your places' (*XIIIth Century Chronicles*, 156). Albert of Pisa was the first priest in the Order to hold the office of Minister General."

54 According to Nicholas Glassberger (*Analecta Franciscana* II,62) Albert died at Rome on 23rd January 1240.

55 1st November 1240. Haymo of Faversham was elected Minister General.

self for a great battle against his enemies, which was to take place the following morning, received the brothers with great devotion and welcomed them favourably to his table. After dinner, the lady of that castle begged them, with as much affection as she could possibly show, to pray the Lord for the health of her husband, and to free him from the dangers of war. The elder friar, enlightened by a divine oracle, answered her: "Lady, do not be afraid, but place your trust in our most holy Father Francis. Through his merits you will see that tomorrow the battle will not take place, but the Lord will give peace and concord to the two parties."

The following morning the two armies were ready to engage in battle. At the same time the two brothers, together with the lady of the castle, were praying fervently to the Lord for peace. And behold, that very moment the Spirit of the Lord came down upon one of the companions who were enemies of the lord of the castle, and who should have waged battle. After some time that man came to speak to that commander and said: "Lord, don't you realise that we have been doing stupid things for a long time? We have first destroyed our own lands and killed many of our own people, and now we want to kill ourselves. Wouldn't it be much better to make peace rather than wage war with our enemies? Don't you realise that war is worthless and generates only evil things and waste of money?" The lord was also moved by a divine impulse and answered: "Truly, my lord, what you are saying is true and you are asking for what is really useful. Therefore I am ready to do your will." In that way they agreed on peace terms without the need of any mediator, and with great joy each one returned to his own family, even though there had been war among them for 32 years. When the lord Bartholomew of Michelstein witnessed such a great miracle, he treated the brothers with great affection and devotion, and for 40 years the friars living in his lands were commonly known as the brothers of the lords of Michelstein.

After some years, the daughter of the same lord, who was married to a certain knight and was very devout to the Order and to Saint Francis, used to go for confession to brother Fredebald, [235] of the Order of Minors, who was a most devout and perfect man. After the death of this friar, one of the sons of this lady, who was a member of the Order of Crosiers, used to suffer from a tumour in his throat. In fact, he could not speak and everybody thought that he would soon die. The mother had lost all hope that her son would live. So out of

devotion she placed a hair of the aforementioned brother Fredebald on her son's throat, and tied it with that brother's amice. At midnight on the feast of the Nativity of the Lord she left her son with the maid-servants and went to the church for the divine office, although she was feeling desperate regarding the chances of her son to live any longer. While she was in church full of anguish and praying for her son's health, one of her maidservants came running to her with her face full of joy, and told her: "Lady, with the grace of God your son is totally cured." That woman woke up as if from a bad dream and went back home. With great astonishment and joy she discovered that her son could speak and that he was perfectly cured of his illness. When she went to take off the amice which she had placed on his throat, her son held her hand and told her that he would not permit her to take it off until she told him what that amice was covering, since it had rendered him healthy once again. His mother answered him: "My son, I have placed nothing there except one hair and this amice which belonged to our brother Fredebald." Her son answered: "It is true, my lady. In fact, immediately after you had left me, our brother Fredebald came to me, together with another small friar, and they both consoled me with their visit. That small friar said to brother Fredebald: 'In what part of his body is your son suffering?' He then indicated to him my throat as the place, which was sick. At that moment that small friar touched the tumour in my throat, and I immediately felt that a certain round ball, which was blocking my throat was going down inside me. In the palm of the hand of that small brother, I saw a black key, which penetrated my throat and produced a reddish wound. After some more time it seemed that he was applying some ointment to the wound, and as you now see, I was perfectly healed from my incurable disease." That same son, who before had been a courageous but violent man, entered into the Order of the Johannites close to the town of Speyer, between Mainz and Strasbourg.

Since in Germany the brothers shone with many perfections and miracles in various places and times, such as I have never seen anything like this before, under the government of the same General, for this reason I will now speak about the spreading of the same brothers in Germany.

In the Province of Saxony there was brother John, a man of great holiness. When he was in the friary of Lübeck he had the following vision. One night, while he was in his cell [236] praying Matins,

there appeared to him two most holy friars, who had died that same year in that friary. One of them was called Electus, and he had died when he was Guardian. The other brother was also called Electus, and had been the procurator of that friary. They appeared in great splendour, and were wearing shining vestments, which adorned them. Their faces, hands and naked feet were emanating resplendent rays, while the rest of their bodies were covered. The Guardian was radiant in a special way. God was rendering them radiant in an equal manner, and brother John could clearly look at them, and he was feeling himself strengthened with virtuous constancy, in such a way that he could speak with them without any fear. When the same brother John asked them who they were, they answered that they were Electus the Guardian and the other Electus, who had been procurator of the friary. They also added that they were now in heaven and were enjoying the beatific vision. He then asked them: "Did you pass through purgatory?" They answered him: "No brother who observes the Rule with purity of heart will have to go through the other purgatory, but he will be purified through the observance of the Rule and will fly directly to the Lord." Then the three of them went out of the cell and continued speaking to one another while they went through the entire friary. On the door of the brother who was at that moment praying Matins with the other friars in choir, they wrote the words: "Come, brother."

Brother John therefore asked them why they had written those words to him and not to the others. They answered him: "That brother will come to us in fourteen days time, since he will die." Having said this they disappeared. On that day, when brother John was in the friary with the other brothers, he told them that he had received an oracle regarding one of the brothers. Since one of those present began to ask him whether he was that friar, and brother John did not want to reveal this secret to him, that brother insisted until he began demanding this information from him with greater force. Then he began to beg and to ask brother John to reveal this secret to him, and finally brother John answered that, yes, he was the brother to whom the oracle referred. So that brother was full of joy and became inflamed with devotion, and said: "I now thank God, since it has been fourteen years that I have been praying the Lord that He would reveal to me the day of my death fourteen days before it occurs, and I am seeing that in His goodness He has satisfied my desire." When the day, which had been revealed, was approaching, that brother began to

become very ill, and on the fourteenth day he left this world and went to meet the Lord. After some time that brother appeared to brother John, and told him that, according to what the Guardian [237] and the procurator had said, he had been immediately introduced into the eternal kingdom. He also added: "Tell those certain two brothers not to continue making any more judgments upon me." When brother John had referred these words to them, the two brothers went to confession, made contrition for their sin and corrected their behaviour.

In the friary of Bremen, in the same Province of Saxony, there lived a young brother who was called Electus. He was a good cantor, and showed such a great devotion to the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, that during one year, he prepared himself with all his might to celebrate this feast with due devotion through fasting and prayers. During another year he became ill before this feast. In the hour of Matins he began to sing the following antiphon with a loud voice: *I am ascending to my Father and your Father* etc.⁵⁶ He sang this antiphon for three times at a higher pitch every time, and as he was finishing singing it for the last time, he perspired a lot and gave up his spirit to God the Father.

Also in the same Province there are many brothers who are buried, and who in various regions shone with many virtues and miracles. Among them we can mention brother Benedict in Erfurt, who in a certain vision saw himself as the cupbearer of the glorious Virgin. In Kyritz there was brother Conrad of Stegelen; in Magdeburg there were brother Gilbert, brother Simon, who was the first lector in Germany, brother James, who was the first custodian of Saxony, brother Ludolfus, brother Jordan from Italy. In Prussia there were brother Conrad and brother Voiszlus, who both accepted sacred martyrdom for confessing their faith. In Brandenburg there was brother John. In Oschatz there was another brother John of Nürnberg, whom God made glorious in life and death through many miracles. [238] In Meissen there was brother Theodore from Saxony. In Hildesheim there was brother Conrad, whose surname was *holy father*. In Mühlhausen there was brother Herman Gerstagen.

In the same Province rest in peace brother Pericleoldus, brother Perugens, brother Coholomannus, brother Henry of Munzzender,

56 Antiphon for the *Benedictus* on the Solemnity of the Ascension: *Ascendo ad Patrem meum, et Patrem vestrum; Deum meum et Deum vestrum.*

who was a lay brother. All these brothers were most perfect men and shone with great miracles.

In the Province of upper Germany or of Strasbourg many other friars shone with the example of their holy lives and miracles. Among them there was brother Berthold, who was a most famous preacher and is buried in Regensburg. Once he heard that a certain woman had committed a sin, and he began to preach fervently against that particular sin. The woman felt as if she were being pierced by an arrow shot from a bow, and she felt so much pain, that she immediately breathed her last. The people around her made a tumult, but brother Berthold ordered them to be silent and commanded everybody to pray, in order that the Lord might reveal his benevolent mercy after what had happened. That very moment he began to pray together with others, and that woman rose from the dead and said that she had been convoked to divine judgment, but being full of sorrow for her sinful life she was freed from eternal punishment. As soon as she confessed her sin, she was called back to life. Among other things she said that, at that very moment in which she had died, fifty thousand persons had also died in various parts of the world, among whom only three entered purgatory, whereas all the others were buried in hell. There was a brother Minor who went through purgatory immediately without suffering any pain, and who received the souls of two persons who had confessed their sins to him, and ascended with them to heaven.

[239] This same brother Berthold was once preaching with the authority of the lord Pope, and was imparting indulgences more or less according to the various times and places and the number of persons who were listening to him. One day he was imparting an indulgence of ten days to all those persons who were listening to his sermon. A certain noble lady, who was listening to his preaching, had been reduced to extreme poverty, and went to beg alms from him. The brother did not have any material things to give her, but instinctively, through the Holy Spirit, he told her: "Go to that seller, and sell him by weight the ten days of indulgence which you have received today." Now that seller despised the indulgences given by brother Berthold. That woman went to the man and asked him to buy by weight the ten days of indulgence. He began to laugh heartily and to ask her how much money she wanted him to give her. The woman answered him confidently, "Give me the amount of sterlings which the indulgence weighs."

That man accepted that deal. He brought the scales. The woman placed upon one of the scales the ten days of the indulgence by uttering these words: "I place here the ten days of indulgence, which brother Berthold gave me during his sermon." The seller placed one sterling upon the other scale. A marvellous thing happened! The other part of the scales, upon which the woman had pronounced the words of the indulgence, weighed much more than the sterling placed by that man. The seller was astonished at this, and continued to add money on the scales; but the indulgence continued to weigh heavily for a long time, until that man had placed on the scales the sufficient amount of money necessary for that poor woman, and it was only then that the two parts of the scales became even. That seller was therefore converted to God, and the woman was provided with what she needed because of her lack of means.

Another time a certain woman, whose husband had gone to cross the seas and did not return for a long time, began to believe that he had died. Therefore she married another man. After a time her first husband returned from his voyage. His wife recounted all that had happened to her, adding that he should stay in the cellar until she sent away the other man. The woman then told her second husband to go and kill her first husband in the cellar, and she would keep him for her true husband. The man, however, did not want to commit that crime, and thus the woman herself went into the cellar and killed her first husband. At last the dead man was found, and both the woman and her other husband were caught; the woman began to accuse her husband of having done the crime that she had, in fact, committed. Brother Berthold began to pray, so that the Lord would reveal the truth in front of everybody. He then commanded that the head of the dead man be cut off from his body. When it was brought to him brother Berthold commanded it in front of all those present to reveal who was the culprit of that crime. A marvellous thing to say! At his command the head sprung up and opened its jaws to bite the woman's breast with its teeth. All those present were astonished. Brother Berthold commanded her as a penance to carry that head with her all the time, until the divine inspiration would expressly command her to do so. In this way she received the just penance from Heaven, and the other man was declared innocent through a miracle.

In the same Province rest the remains of other friars who shone with holiness and miracles. In Augsburg are buried brother

David, a companion of the aforementioned brother Berthold, brother [240] Tetericus, who was Minister of the same Province; in the friary of Speyer is buried brother John, who raised the dead to life; brother Colin, who was once Minister of Strasbourg. In Hörter brother Hudo of Fribourg is buried.

In the Province of Cologne, in Kiel, rests brother Adolph, who was famous for the nobility of his lineage and for his holiness, and who was once count of Holstein. When he was close to the end of his virtuous life, the blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him, resplendent with light and accompanied by innumerable Saints. While he was in agony she told him: "My son, do not be afraid! Why are you feeling so anguished because you are going to die? Come confidently, since you are my son, and you have served me faithfully. I will give you an everlasting reward." In this way he joyfully departed from this life and flew to the Lord.

In the same place is buried brother Electus. While he was once praying the blessed Virgin Mary with the virgins Saints Agnes and Catherine appeared to him and revealed to him in all truthfulness the day of his death. There was another brother Electus who is likewise buried in that place. Another devout brother saw his soul being carried by two Angels up to the highest heavens in a splendid palfrey.

Brother Nicolas, famous for a multitude of miracles, is buried in Neuss, as is brother Electus, who used to cure the sick with a single touch of his hand.

In Brabant is buried brother Peter, who was a perfect man. Once he was celebrating Mass with great devotion, when, as was later revealed, a certain small boy saw that the host after consecration was changed into a most beautiful child. [241] It was that same boy who revealed the truth about this vision, saying that he saw brother Peter eating a small child when he was receiving Communion at the altar.⁵⁷

57 A similar story is found in Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, c. 15: "Brother Peter, the minister of England, also related how, when he was on the most familiar terms in the home of Sir Geoffrey le Despenser, it happened that he came once to that house, and the son of the lord, John by name, a small boy, came to him, as was always his custom, in a most friendly way. But after the boy had gone with his mother to the chapel and was present while the said Father Peter celebrated Mass, when the latter came again to that house, the boy fled from him, nor could he be compelled in any way by his mother to go up to him. When his mother asked why he fled in that way, he said that he saw him eat an infant in the chapel at the altar and

In the town of Münster rest brother Henry of Africa and brother John of Penna; while brother Hassus is buried in Torgau. All these were perfect men of great holiness and shone with wondrous signs.

Brother Bernard of Besse, in a certain book which he wrote concerning the three Orders of Saint Francis,⁵⁸ states that in the Province of Cologne there was a certain monk of the Order of Saint Benedict, whose name was Gunther of Brabant, who was not able to live the kind of life in his monastery that he wished. Therefore he asked to be transferred to another monastery. But even there he did not find the spiritual peace for which he hoped. He gave himself up to prayer, reading the psalter every day, and fasting, and beseeching the Lord to point out to him a way to salvation by which he would faithfully serve him. After several days spent in prayer and fasting, he saw blessed Francis in his sleep. Francis had before him the text of the Gospel and also the Rule of the friars Minor, which he had placed on the Gospel. The monk wondered about the Rule being placed on the Gospel, and asked the saint about this. Saint Francis answered him: "The Rule is upon the Gospel because it is based on the Gospel."

The monk prayed and fasted for many days, striving to know whether the state of life portrayed by the vision, was pleasing to God. He suppliantly asked that, if it were so, this vision might be given to him again. Blessed Francis appeared to him again as before with the Gospel and the Rule. Nevertheless, for a third time the monk repeated the usual praying and fasting, and in all his prayers he strove more and more to discover more surely whether the state of life shown to him was acceptable to God. Blessed Francis appeared to him in the same way as before and seemed to be receiving the monk into the Order. But the monk was suffering from a serious malady in his leg, and he said to blessed Francis: "The brothers will not have confidence in me, and therefore will not accept me." The saint replied: "Your leg has been cured, and this will be a proof of your sincerity." Aroused from sleep, he found himself cured just as he had experienced it in his dream. When the monk sought admission into the Order, he was put off by the minister as not being quite suitable. Then he recounted his

he was afraid he would do the same to him" (*Thirteenth Century Chronicles*, Trans. P. Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 184).

58 Bernard of Besse, *A Book of the Praises of St. Francis*. The episode is found in chapter 7 (FAED III, 60).

vision and the manifestation of the favour which had been given to him. After he had been received into the Order, he lived in a religious and holy manner in the Province of Cologne.

[242] Brother Bernard narrates a similar example in this way.⁵⁹ Some time ago I was travelling with the then celebrated Minister General (St. Bonaventure) throughout parts of Germany and Flanders. After many years I again had another meal with the brothers, one of whom had been a canon, a very venerable man, and who had been led to enter the Order by means of a remarkable cure and a vision. That canon was also a noble and respected person, who feared God and had a special devotion to the virgin Saint Euphemia. Although he was, at that time, weak and advanced in age, yet he was concerned about the salvation of his soul, which was accustomed to being jeopardized by his wealth. While wishing to put his hand to more heroic deeds, he desired to be shown the path of salvation, according to the words of the Prophet: *Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths. Show me the way in which I should walk, for to you I lift up my soul* (Ps 25:4; 143:8). Through that virgin whom he had taken as his advocate, he begged with continued supplication to be directed to a state suitable for his salvation. Finally, the Lord poured into his heart to renounce the world completely in the Order of Saint Francis.

He was sick, however, and had an ugly tumour on his throat. Because of this, the Minister of the brothers delayed receiving him and, as cautiously as he could, he withdrew from his intention. He recommended his state as honourable, wholesome, fruitful, one that was capable of doing good works for many persons. While he recognised the dismissal, and was deeply saddened because of it, he once more gave himself to prayer, and then fell into a light sleep. Then blessed Euphemia, to whom he was devoted, appeared to him in a vision with a brilliant company of virgins, and urged his entrance into the Order of friars Minor, removed the obstacle to his reception by curing him, and gave him an unequivocal sign that he could easily endure the Order. "Let this be a sign for you," she said, "that I am curing you of all your infirmity." Soon after the place of the swelling opened and every bit of that tumour was expelled, she closed the place of the tumour by the touch of her hand, and perfectly restored the man to complete

59 Bernard of Besse, *A Book of the Praises of St. Francis*, chapter 7 (FAED III, 54-55).

health. When he awoke, that lord found himself perfectly cured. And he was received to vows in the Order, and he was transformed there in a most holy way. He is said to have grown in such virtue before the Lord, that, impeded neither by age nor by usual weaknesses, he easily endured the hardships of the Order, and could travel longer on foot than he had been accustomed to do on horseback.

In another place we read how Saint Francis marvellously received into the Order a certain mundane and lascivious priest, called John. This priest showed a great love towards Saint Francis and his brothers, and he was liberal with them in giving them alms. Since he wanted to change to a better way of life he decided to enter the Order of friars Minor. The brothers, however, were afraid to accept him because of the fame of his way of life, since they thought that he would not persevere in his resolve to live in the Order. Saint Francis then appeared to him twice in a vision and told him: "Go to the brothers, and tell them on my part to accept you in the Order without delay." The brothers, however, did not believe that the vision was true and were hesitant about doing such a thing. Saint Francis, however, appeared to the priest a third time, [243] and commanded him to prepare his habit of Religion, and to ask the Guardian to send two brothers who would assist Saint Francis himself. When the priest diligently carried out this command, on the fixed day Saint Francis appeared to him, while those two brothers were also present, and gave him the habit of the Order and, after he had put it on, Saint Francis received the profession of his vows. While Saint Francis was promising him eternal life, that priest died in the arms of the Saint. The brothers marvelled at what happened, and they celebrated his funeral and laid him in the tomb, and gave him a devout burial just like any friar.

Brother Martin, who was a Bishop, became famous in the Province of Bohemia for his great holiness. After he had died in a most devout way, in order that God would show the holiness of his life, while he was still in the coffin, he rose and was seen blessing the people. Brother Odranicus was also famous for his miracles.

In Prenzlau, a town of the same Province, brother Gerard is buried. He shone with many miracles in life and after his death. Brother Marcardus is buried in Breslau.

In Wiener Neustadt, in the Province of Austria, brother Curardus is buried. He was a holy man and worked many miracles. Since he had not been buried with the brothers, the Minister commanded

him not to work any more miracles after his death, and from that moment he refrained from being a wonder worker.

In those days the lay brothers were not allowed to assume offices in the Order.⁶⁰ In the Province of the Marches in a certain friary there was a lay brother who was a most holy Guardian. In that place there was a certain brother, who had just entered the Order, and who became seriously ill. The Guardian therefore sent him to a certain brother confessor, in order that he would hear his confession and give him a worthy penance for his sins. That brother, after he had heard the confession, ordered him to do penance for his sins by accomplishing many acts of discipline, by praying the psalter, and by fasting.

[244] When the Guardian heard about that penance, he said to the sick brother: "Brother, be sure that myself and the other brothers will fulfil the penance which has been imposed upon you." So the Guardian divided the psalter among the clerics, while he himself and the other lay brothers took upon themselves the disciplines and promised to fast for him. Having done this the Guardian said to the sick brother: "Go, brother, and now I command you to ascend to the kingdom of God without having to go through purgatory, since your penance has already been satisfied by the brothers." What else can we say? That brother died, and since his penance had been done by the brothers in his stead, while those brothers were still awake in the dormitory, the same dead brother appeared to them and said: "Brothers, I thank you and the father Guardian, because according to his words you have fully accomplished in a charitable way the penance imposed upon me, and God has accepted it, in such a way that right now I am entering paradise without having to pass through purgatory."

There was also another brother who was so obedient that, whatever command was imposed upon him, he would obey and carry it out promptly and joyfully. When he became seriously ill, his Minister visited him and after having said some words of consolation, since he was seeing him so overburdened by suffering and sickness, he told him: "Brother, do you want to go to heaven?" He answered him: "Willingly, father." His Minister then told him, full of trust: "Brother, you have always been obedient in everything, and therefore I now command you that through the merits of your prompt obedience, you

60 The decision to exclude lay brothers from offices in the Order was taken by the Minister General Haymo of Faversham, in 1240.

go to see God this very moment." After having received the blessing of his Minister that brother slept in the Lord.

In the very beginning of the Order, when the friars began to multiply, some brothers came from Italy across the mountains. They all shone with virtues and miracles. Among them, in the friary of Vienne, there was brother Michael, who had changed water into wine. He was buried in that place and after his death worked many miracles. In the same place brother Drudo is also buried. Once an Angel had ministered to him while he was celebrating Mass in a deserted and abandoned church, and provided all that was necessary for the celebration of Mass. Another Angel had come to help him while he was walking, and led him on as if he were a horse running swiftly. Once, brother Drudo was walking with a companion along the road, and they were fervently talking about faith and miracles. [245] Drudo said to his companion: "If you have such a great faith, how come you do not work miracles?" His companion answered: "I would work miracles if it becomes necessary." After a short time a pack of large dogs came running towards them. His companion therefore said: "Now is the time for you to work a miracle, so that the dogs will not harm us." Brother Drudo answered: "It is not necessary to work miracles. We can defend ourselves." His companion, however, knowing that he would act, did not care to defend himself. Therefore brother Drudo, perceiving the danger, with great confidence commanded the dogs to retreat and stay quiet. The dogs immediately bowed their heads and obeyed. That very moment Drudo announced what would happen in the future.

Brother William is buried in Annonay. At his prayers the ships which were far out at sea and could not find a way to come to port, returned to the harbour. Brother Electus is also buried in the friary of Die. He led a perfect life and was famous for his miracles.

In the Province of Clermont brother Philip was famous for his holiness. When he came to the castle of Riom to preach, he often insisted with a public moneylender to make restitution of the money he changed with high interest rates and to confess his sins. Although he tried to persuade him many times, the moneylender did not despise his evil trade but said that he would do so in the future. When brother Philip of Montferrand became seriously ill, he was heard saying to many friars who were near him: "I cannot do this in any way; when I could do it you did not want me; now I truly cannot do it." When the

brothers asked him to whom he was speaking, he answered: "The soul of the moneylender from Riom is being carried to hell by the devils. He called me to go and help him; but I answered that I cannot do so now." The brothers then knew that the moneylender had indeed died.

Another friar called Martin appeared to a certain brothers, and among many secrets, he revealed that a certain rich man called Peter de Muta, who had been an employer of many moneylenders, had made penance and satisfaction for his sins at the end of his life, and that he would be freed from purgatory through the suffrages of Masses, by the merits of the most Holy Trinity, but only at the end of time, and not before.

When brother William of Piacenza was in agony and the brothers commended his soul before he died through their prayers, he could not speak, but began to shout loudly. When the brothers asked him why he was shouting, he answered: "The body of such and such a Bishop has just been buried, but I have seen his soul go to hell." It was just as he had said. That Bishop had indeed just died. After this brother William departed from this life and went to meet the Lord.

The times of brother Haymo the Englishman (1240-1244)

[246] The fifth General of the Order was brother Haymo the Englishman,⁶¹ a man worthy of great reverence, a famous theolo-

⁶¹ Brother Haymo of Faversham. Thomas of Eccleston presents him in his *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, chapter 6 (*XIIIth Century Chronicles*, Translation from Latin by Placid Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 120-122). Haymo was born in the town of Faversham in Kent, not far from Canterbury. While still a layman he lived in great penance. Eccleston describes how Haymo entered the Order: "A vision came to him in which it seemed that he was at Faversham and was praying in the church before Christ crucified; and behold, a cord came down from heaven and he seized it and held on to it and was drawn up to heaven by it. When therefore he saw the Friars Minor at Paris, mindful of this vision, he summoned up his courage and, setting himself against himself, he wisely induced his fellow master Simon of Sandwich and two other famous masters to ask the Lord Jesus Christ, while he himself was celebrating Mass, what would be most conducive toward their salvation. Since the profession of the way of life of the Friars Minor seemed good to all of them at the same time, they went for greater security to Brother Jordan (of Saxony) of blessed memory, the master of the Order of Preachers, and obliged him in conscience to give them his advice faithfully. He, as one truly inspired, confirmed their proposal by his advice. These four therefore went to the minister, namely, Brother Gregory of Naples, and were received by him at St. Denis; after Brother Haymo had preached on Good Friday on this verse: *When the Lord brought back the captives of Sion, we were like men dreaming* (Psalm 125,1), they were clothed with the habit amid great rejoicing. On Easter, when Brother Haymo saw such a great number of people in the parish church in which the brothers attended divine office – for they did not yet have a chapel – he said to the custos, who was a lay brother, Beneventus by name, that, if he might dare to do so, he would gladly preach to the people, lest perhaps they should receive Holy Communion in mortal sin. The custos, therefore, commanded him on the part of the Holy Spirit to preach. He preached, therefore, so movingly that many put off going to Holy Communion until they had gone to confession. Accordingly, he sat in the church for three days and heard confessions and comforted the people in no small way." Haymo was received in the Order probably around 1225. He became Custos at Paris, and took part in the general chapter of Assisi in 1230, having been chosen as a member of the delegation sent to Gregory IX to ask for an official interpretation of the Rule, the result of which was the Bull *Quo elongati* (28th September 1230). Haymo eventually lectured theology in Tours, Bologna and Padua. In 1233 Pope Gregory IX chose him and brother Ralph of Rheims as his personal legates to the emperor of Constantinople Vatatzes, and sent them to Greece

gian, and totally a mirror of an honest life. He was elected in the general chapter celebrated in the year of the Lord 1239, in which the lord Pope Gregory IX was present in order to accept the votes of the electors. It was the same Pope who confirmed this same election.

During the same chapter the division of the Provinces of the Order was restructured in such a way that the number of Provinces was limited, since the same lord Pope who was present had wanted this.

The same General also wanted his own powers and those of the Provincial Ministers and Custodians to be limited by the general chapter. In that same chapter the Custodians lost their power to institute and destitute the Guardians of the local friaries.

[247] During the time of Haymo's ministry, the general chapter of Definitors was celebrated at Montpellier.⁶² The subsequent gen-

to work for the union of the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic Churches. Eccleston also tells us that Haymo "caused Brother Gregory of Naples, one time minister of France, to be removed from office, as his merits demanded, and, by a just judgment of God, imprisoned him after those were freed whom he had unjustly imprisoned. Brother Elias too, who was minister general, he deposed with wonderful zeal for God, because of the scandals he had wrought and the tyranny he had exercised against the zealous members of the Order, for it was Brother Haymo who brought it about that many of the provinces appealed against Brother Elias in the presence of our father Pope Gregory." This is a reference to the general chapter of 1239, in which Elias was deposed. In that chapter Haymo was chosen as Minister of the English Province. On 23rd January 1240 the Minister General Albert of Pisa died, and Pope Gregory IX convened a new chapter for 1st November 1240, in which Haymo of Faversham was elected Minister General. He governed the Order until his death on an uncertain day between 25th December 1243 and May 1244. For a detailed account of Haymo's life and accomplishments as Minister General, cfr. Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government. Elias to Bonaventure*, Cambridge University Press 1959, paperback edition 2004, 195-209.

62 This chapter of Definitors was held in Montpellier in 1241 and again in Bologna in 1242. It was modelled upon the model of government in the Order of Preachers (Dominicans). Cfr. Rosalind B. BROOKE, *Early Franciscan Government*, 236-240. In page 237, footnote 1, the author explains the word 'diffinitor' (definitor): "There is an ambiguity in the word 'diffinitor' which has caused some confusion. The Dominicans used it both for the members of the select committee that managed the business of the Provincial Chapter and for the members of the General Chapter in the years when these were elected. The Franciscans applied it to the members of the committees of both their General and Provincial Chapters as well as to all the members of the Chapter known as the Chapter of diffinitors. The *Exposition of the Four Masters* is

eral chapters, however, ordered to do things differently.

In another general chapter of Definitors, held in Bologna, he ordered new rubrics regarding the celebration of Mass, which begin with the words: *The priest wears the chasuble*. He also corrected the divine office with diligence and inserted other new rubrics, which had been declared as privileges to the Order by the lord Pope Innocent IV.⁶³

According to the command of this same General, the two famous brothers Alexander of Hales and Jean de la Rochelle, who ex-

addressed to Haymo, Minister General, and the other diffinitors assembled in Chapter, and the Chapter of 1242 has therefore been classed as a Chapter of diffinitors. But probably the Four Masters were using the term to refer to the committee which they anticipated would consider their report, and so there is no reason to doubt Eccleston's explicit statement that the 1241 Chapter of diffinitors was the only one of its kind ever to be held in the Order." Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, c. 13, in *XIIIth Century Chronicles*, 157: "Brother Haymo the Englishman [...] took care to carry on what Brother Albert had begun. Under him was held the first and the last general chapter of definitors that was ever held in the Order because of the insolence of certain of them; they wanted by all means to send away from the place all the ministers provincial who were at the chapter along with the minister general. And this was done. Therefore, the ordinance that was made about such a chapter before the Pope at the time of the absolution of Brother Elias and about the canonical election of custodes and guardians was abrogated in the next general chapter because of the insolence of these subjects. For certain brothers wanted the custodes eliminated entirely from the Order, saying that their office was superfluous." The reason for the discontinuation of the chapter of definitors is given by Rosalind Brooke, in page 240: "Chapters of diffinitors and canonical elections did figure prominently in the Dominican constitutional system and these particular two were given a brief trial by the Franciscans and then abandoned; but their rejection was not the result of any reaction against Dominican influence as such. They were discarded quite simply because they had not grafted well. The more authoritarian Franciscan tradition did not take kindly to dictation from below."

63 It was rather Pope Gregory IX who had published the letter *Pio vestro collegio*, given at the Lateran Palace on 7th June 1241, correcting the rubrics of the divine office. Haymo undertook to correct the breviary according to these new norms. See the study of S.J.P. Van Dijk, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinal by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243-1307)*, 2 Volumes, Leiden 1963. Subsequently Pope Nicholas III (1277-1280) ordered that in the churches of Rome all the antiphonals, graduals, missals and other books of the divine office be changed, and ordered that the ones used by the Friars Minor be adopted. The privileges given by Innocent IV refer to the letter *Pio vestro collegio*, sent from Civita Castellana on 20th June 1244.

celled as masters of theology, and for their knowledge and deep religious life shone as two great lights, after having discussed matters with brothers Godfrey of Brie, Custos of Paris, Robert of La Bassée, Eudes Rigaud and many other discreets [248] and learned friars, composed a very useful commentary on the rule, which they then transmitted to the General and to the other Definitors in the general chapter.⁶⁴

In the year of the Lord 1241 Pope Gregory IX died, in the fifteenth year of his pontificate.⁶⁵

That same year, the lord Godfrey from Milan, Cardinal and bishop of Sabina, was elevated to the papacy, and changed his name to Celestine IV. But he only remained 27 days as Pope, and died. Subsequently, because of discord and ambitions, the Apostolic See remained vacant for 22 months and 13 days.⁶⁶

In the year of the Lord 1242, brother Stephen of Narbonne, a man who shone with virtues and grace, and who was very prudent and perfect in holiness, since he was an Abbot and a very important person in the Order of Saint Benedict, wanted to enter into the Order of friars Minor out of humility for the love of Christ. Some time before, the lord Pope had sent him as an Inquisitor in the region of Toulouse, which was infested with heresy. He proceeded with courage against the heretics and judged with prudence those who spread heresy. In that same year, during the night of the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, together with his companion brother Raymond of Corbonne, as well as with brother William Arnaud of Montpellier from the Order of Preachers, who was his colleague in the office of Inquisitor, and with two other friars Preachers, and with Raymond *Scriptor* from Lezat, archdeacon of the Church of Toulouse and prior of Avignonet, a monk from the abbey of Cluse, with Peter Arnaldi, a notary of the Inquisition, together with another three clerics, in the hall of the count of

64 This is the famous *Expositio quatuor magistrorum super Regulam fratrum Minorum* (*Exposition of the Four Masters*), which provides another commentary on the Rule, this time coming from within the Order. The Exposition defends the need to clarify some points regarding the Rule, by making recourse to the *auctoritates* of the pontifical decisions, particularly *Quo elongati*.

65 Pope Gregory IX died on 22nd August 1241.

66 Goffredo Castiglioni was Pope Celestine IV from 25th October 1241 to 10th November 1241. The Papal See remained vacant until 25th June 1243, when Sinibaldo Fieschi was elected Pope and took the name Innocent IV (25th June 1243 – 7th December 1254).

Toulouse, at Avignonet [249] in the diocese of Toulouse, while they were singing the *Te Deum*, all these brothers were cruelly killed by the heretics, enemies of the faith, and with the approval of the bailiff of the same castle, and thus they consecrated their lives with a glorious martyrdom.⁶⁷ The Lord glorified his martyrs with many miracles, which are narrated elsewhere. Brother Stephen and Brother Raymond were buried with reverence in the church of the friars Minor in Toulouse. Raymond, count of Toulouse, used to hang all those whom he regarded as being troublemakers and criminals.

During the same time, when the Roman See was still vacant, and there was discord between emperor Frederick and the Church, brother Elias of Assisi befriended himself with the rebel emperor, who would always ask for his counsels. Elias went to the region of Cortona, with a company of many friars who were his companions, armed with the privilege which the lord Pope Gregory IX had conceded to him, namely, that he could go wherever he wished in order to do penance together with those brothers who wanted to follow him. But then he ended up by passing over to the emperor's side. The emperor called him to his court and sent him to the emperor of Constantinople in order to make terms of peace between the two emperors. The emperor of Constantinople gave him a great quantity of relics and many other gifts.⁶⁸

67 The martyrs of Toulouse mentioned here were the Franciscans Stephen (Etienne) of Narbonne, and Raymond of Corbonne; the Dominicans William Arnaud of Montpellier, Bernard of Rochefort, and Garcias of Orense; Raymond of Lezat, archdeacon of Toulouse and Prior of Avignonet, and monk from the abbey of Cluse; Peter Arnaldi, notary of the Inquisition; and three other clerics, namely, Bernard, Fortanarius and Ademar. The count of Toulouse was Raymond VII, who supported the Albigensian heresy, and his bailiff was Raymond Alfarus. These clerics died as martyrs in the hands of Albigensian heretics on the vigil of the Ascension, 29th May 1242. Stephen of Narbonne had been sent as Inquisitor by Pope Gregory IX in 1234. The feast day of the martyrs in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary is celebrated on 7th June.

68 *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, Translation by J.L. Baird, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, Vol. 40, Binghamton, New York 1986, 152: "The tenth fault of Brother Elias was that after his deposition, he did not conduct himself with humility but rather attached himself wholly to the Emperor Frederick, who had been excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX. And while living at the Imperial court, Brother Elias accompanied the Emperor on horseback, although he continued to wear the robes of the Order (as did all the other members of his retinue), an act which scandalized the Pope, the Church, and

Afterwards the Order had to face a great dilemma, since some of the accomplices of brother Elias began saying that he had not been absolved from the office of General, while others said that they could follow him as their leader, since he had this privilege. In this way such a great division ensued in the Order [250] that it seemed that the words of Saint Francis became true, when he had foretold that in the future the Order would be divided into three parts. In fact, nearly two parties in the Order followed Elias, especially those friars who loved the world and material possessions.

While this schism was taking place, in the year of the Lord 1243, the lord Sinibaldus, who was from Genoa, from the counts of Lavagna, was elected Pope and took the name Innocent IV.⁶⁹ From Anagni, where he was elected, he came to Genoa. He was so saddened about the evils which beset the Order, that in the year of the Lord 1243 he commanded that a general chapter be convened. During the chapter, after a mature examination, the lord Pope became aware of the malice of brother Elias, and therefore he commanded that Elias be deprived of all graces and privileges which he had requested, in such a way that no one would continue to follow him. Elias did not accept this command with humility, and passed over to the side of the rebel emperor. Therefore the lord Pope summoned him, but, since there was nobody who could carry to him the apostolic letters, these summons never reached him. So he continued not to appear before the Pope, and the lord Pope excommunicated him, and deprived him of the habit of our religion.⁷⁰

his own Order. And all this in spite of the fact that the Emperor was excommunicate. And even during the siege of Faenza and Ravenna, this wretch remained with the Imperial army, giving the Emperor advice and support." Pope Gregory IX excommunicated Emperor Frederick II on 24th March 1239. In 1240 the Pope excommunicated Elias as well, since he was taking part in the siege of Faenza and Ravenna. The Emperor of Constantinople to whom Frederick sent Elias as his personal ambassador was John III Vatatzes.

69 Sinibaldo Fieschi of Genoa, Cardinal of St. Lawrence in Lucina, was elected Pope Innocent IV on 25th June 1243, and died 7th December 1254. He was Cardinal Protector of the Friars Minor and Poor Ladies of San Damiano, and convened the First Council of Lyons, in 1245.

70 Elias was excommunicated by Innocent IV probably in 1244. However, he had already been excommunicated before, by Gregory IX, in 1239. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 194: "Albert (of Pisa) began to undo Elias' work in Italy, where, says Eccleston, the havoc done had been greatest, but we have

When he was in Cortona, Elias became ill. His brother, who was a lay friar Minor, came to visit him.⁷¹ Since Elias showed great sorrow for what had happened to him, he begged him with many tears to go and tell the Pope that he was ready to submit himself totally to his obedience and ask for his pardon. Elias wept with many tears and sent this brother to the lord Pope, begging him humbly, out of love for Saint Francis, whose companion and vicar he had been, to pardon all his offences and to revoke the sentence of his excommunication. Therefore the lord Pope bowed down to his supplications, since he was greatly devoted to blessed Francis, and pardoned him his faults and absolved him from the sentence of excommunication.

Thus brother Elias died with many tears, having been absolved from his faults, so that the grace of the holy Father would not depart from his successor. In all this he had given great scandal to the Order, as the Saint had prophesied regarding the tribulation which was to come upon the Order, and which the friars had by now seen realised.⁷²

no details. The ex-Minister occasioned him much embarrassment. He resented his dismissal and felt it humiliating to be under obedience. He retired to Cortona, and there paid a visit to the Clares, which no friar was allowed to do without licence, under pain of excommunication. Albert required him to come to seek absolution, or at least to meet him half-way. Elias scorned his overtures, and when the Pope told him that he must obey the Minister General like any other friar he found his position intolerable. He joined Frederick II, whom the Pope had excommunicated in March, and was therefore publicly excommunicated himself. This caused serious scandal and Albert exerted his influence to try to effect a reconciliation. Elias, afraid to approach Gregory in person, lest he be punished for what he had done, wrote a letter explaining and excusing his conduct. He entrusted it to Albert, but the Minister was prevented by death from fulfilling this mission of charity. It was found upon his body, and, it seems, destroyed. Albert died at Rome on 23 January 1240."

71 Elias did not have a blood brother in the Order. The author here refers to a relative by the name of Giambonino.

72 Elias died reconciled with the Church and the Order on 22nd April 1253 in Cortona, vested with the Franciscan habit, and was buried in the church of St. Francis in Cortona, which he himself had built. Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*, Translated from Latin by David Burr and E. Randolph Daniel, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, NY 2005, 75-76 gives us another version, namely that Elias died without having been absolved by the Pope: "Elias was excommunicated by the same holy pontiff Gregory on account of the minister's support for the emperor. Elias died in that state of excommunication because of the guilt and negligence of his successor, Brother Albert, who ne-

[251] When brother Giles heard about what had happened to Elias, he prostrated himself on the ground and pressed his body hard against it. When the friars asked him why he was doing this, he replied: "I want to go down into the ground as much as I possibly can, since he (Elias) has fallen down so disgracefully after having been elevated so high up."

From this we can see that there was not one single word which came out of the mouth of Saint Francis, which was not fulfilled. In fact, it had been revealed to Francis that brother Elias was damned and that he would die out of the Order. Therefore the Saint was reluctant to approach Elias. He did not want to speak to him or even to look at him, as he normally did. Seeing this, brother Elias waited prudently so that he would not disturb him, but he wanted to ask him humbly the reason for this attitude. So the Saint told him about the revelation he had received regarding Elias' future damnation. So Elias became very afraid and with many tears pleaded with the blessed Father not to send him away as a lost sheep, but to imitate the ways of the Good Shepherd who frees his lost sheep from the snares of everlasting death. Elias said to Francis, "You should know that God will revoke his sentence, if a sinner would change his evil habits. On my part, I have such a great devotion towards you that, if I am in hell and you will pray for me, I think I would bear my punishment more lightly. Therefore, pray for me to the Lord, that I will not be damned, and that I will die a good death, even if I will die out of the Order." Indeed, all these words became true, since brother Elias died in Cortona without the company of the other brothers, even though, as others have stated, he had acquired the permission to wear the habit of the Order.

glected to present the letters of apology and of satisfaction that Brother Elias had sent by him to the pope, as Albert had promised Elias to do. Finally, only a few days later the successor of Brother Elias, namely Brother Alberto of Pisa died (23rd January 1240); and the letters of satisfaction sent to the pope were found in the sackcloth which he used as a habit. Thus as the truth about the customs of the holy brothers had been concealed from the Supreme Pontiff by Elias and his persuasive falsehood, thus his letters of satisfaction, declaring his intention and his obedience, was kept back so to speak and did not come to the Supreme Pontiff. But Elias died like one disobedient to the church and separated from the religion at the same time with his companions." The episode of Elias' absolution is also to be found in ABF c. 62 (FAED III, 553-554) and *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, c. 38 (FAED III, 629-631).

The General brother Haymo declared that the lay brothers could not be chosen for the offices of the Order, since up till that moment, they had exercised these offices like clerics.

Brother William shone with many signs and wonders. He resurrected three dead persons and cured from a most serious illness the lord John de Muro, Cardinal and bishop of Ostia, as we shall narrate later on. Brother William is buried in the friary of Todi, in the Province of Saint Francis. In the same place are buried brother Roger, which we have already mentioned, brother Peter of Gaglietole and brother Iacopone Benedetti,⁷³ who shone with many miracles during their lives and after their death.

[252] In the same Province rest in peace many holy friars, who were famous for their miracles. In the Sacro Convento of Assisi, together with our most holy Father Francis, are buried the following friars:⁷⁴ brother Bernard of Quintavalle; brother Peter Catanio;⁷⁵ brother Sylvester; brother Eletto who had the gift of many tears, and who foretold the day of his death to the lord Peter, Cardinal of Albano;⁷⁶ brother Leo, the confessor of Saint Francis; brother William of England; brother Angelo Tancredi from Rieti; brother Masseo from Marignano; brother Rufino Scifi, a cousin of Saint Clare; brother Barbaro;⁷⁷ brother Morico the short;⁷⁸ brother Philip Longo;⁷⁹ brother

73 Brother Iacopone Benedictoli (Benedetti) da Todi (1228-1306), a famous Spiritual friar and poet, to whom is attributed the liturgical Sequence *Stabat Mater*.

74 According to Bartholomew of Pisa, only 12 friars are buried in the basilica of St. Francis: Bernard, Sylvester, Eletto, Leo, William, Angelo, Masseo, Rufino, Guido, Giles and Valentine from Narni, whose name is here omitted. The four friars who are commemorated close to Francis' tomb are: Leo, who is buried on the left side facing the tomb; Rufino, on the right side facing the tomb; Masseo, buried on the left side behind the tomb; Bernard, buried on the right side behind the tomb.

75 Peter Catanio (†10th March 1221) is not buried in the basilica of St. Francis, but at the Porziuncola.

76 Brother Eletto died in 1253. Peter de Collemedio was created Cardinal by Innocent IV, and died before 30th October 1253.

77 Barbaro died circa 1232 and was buried at the Porziuncola.

78 Morico died circa 1236.

79 Philip Longo died on 14th March 1259 in France, at Montferrand of Auvergne.

John of San Costanzo;⁸⁰ [253] brother Bernard Vigilante;⁸¹ brother Morico, from the Order of Crosiers; brother Guido from Siena, a lay brother, who foretold his death to brother Leo, when he appeared to him after he had already died; brother Giles de Capociis.⁸²

In the Porziuncola are buried brother James,⁸³ who saw the soul of blessed Francis going up to heaven in the guise of a radiant star carried over a white cloud; also 6 friars, who also saw blessed Francis radiant as the sun; brother John the Simple.⁸⁴

In Perugia are buried: brother Giles, whom we mentioned before; brother Conrad of Offida from Isola Romana,⁸⁵ where he was buried during the time of war,⁸⁶ and then was transported to Perugia, and whose life will be narrated further on; in the friary of Montegiove is buried brother Simon,⁸⁷ a lay brother who led a very contemplative life and was rapt in mystical ecstasy; in Amelia is buried brother Simon of Torgiano,⁸⁸ famous for many miracles; in Alviano are buried brother Tentalbene, who cured sick people by touching them, [254] and brother John of Avellino;⁸⁹ in Terni is buried brother Peter of Poggio,⁹⁰ who worked many miracles; in Gubbio is buried brother Thomas,⁹¹ famous for many miracles; in Spoleto is buried brother Si-

80 John of San Costanzo died on 1st December 1209 and was buried at the Porziuncola.

81 Bernard Vigilante died at the Porziuncola circa 1236, according to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad ann. 1209, n. 37.

82 Giles de Capociis died on 22nd August 1270, according to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad ann. 1270, n. 26.

83 James died circa 1230. This reference and the others, which follow are taken by the Quaracchi editors from Wadding and other historians. We give just some indications.

84 John the Simple died circa 1223.

85 Isola Romana is the name of modern day Bastia Umbra, about 4 km from Santa Maria degli Angeli.

86 Circa 1320.

87 Died 24th June 1270.

88 Torgiano, near Amelia. He was a famous preacher, and died on 29th June 1270.

89 He was from the Province of Terra di Lavoro (Naples) and died circa 1313.

90 Died 23rd September 1300.

91 Died 24th May 1334.

mon, already mentioned above;⁹² in Castello is buried the lay brother James;⁹³ in Borgo San Sepolcro are buried the lay brother Rainerio and brother Angelo of Montecasale,⁹⁴ who was a nobleman, both of whom were two special sons of blessed Francis; in Foligno is buried brother Herman,⁹⁵ radiant with many miracles; in Narni is buried brother Matthew;⁹⁶ in Norcia brother Anthony;⁹⁷ in Cascia brother Pax from Rieti;⁹⁸ in Aquasparta brother Paul;⁹⁹ in Spello brother Andrew,¹⁰⁰ who was a priest; in Bettona brother John *de Laudibus*,¹⁰¹ mentioned above, together with brother Jordan of Gubbio. All these brothers shone with many virtues and miracles.

[255] Under this General brother Bonaventure from Bagnoregio entered this Order.¹⁰²

Brother Haymo governed the Order with great providence for five years. In the year of the Lord 1243, or roughly around that time, he died and was buried in the friary of Anagni. On his tomb is found the following epitaph:

92 Brother Simon, whose life is documented in the *Chronica XXIV Generalium*, is not this friar, but Simon of Assisi. This brother Simon is known as *de Comitissa*, or Colazono, who is said to have died in 1240. However, Salimbene de Adam says that the Minister General John of Parma (1247-1257) made brother Simon Minister Provincial of the province of St. Francis in the Spoleto Valley (Seraphic Province). Salimbene states that he was a personal friend of this brother Simon, and knew him in the friary of Marseilles in 1248.

93 Wadding says he died in 1232.

94 Died 1st November 1304.

95 Died 8th February 1256.

96 Died 8th June 1374.

97 Died 10th May 1340.

98 Died 7th June 1290.

99 Died 22nd October 1303.

100 Died 24th December 1270.

101 Matteo *de Prosperis*, not to be confused with Matteo da Narni who Francis left as vicar together with Gregorio da Napoli when he went to the Orient in 1219. He died 12th March 1251.

102 Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, II, ad ann. 1243, n. 2. Bonaventure entered the Order of Friars Minor in Paris in 1243, when he was 26 years old (he was born in 1217 in Civita di Bagnoregio, in the Lazio region of Italy). For a recent account of the life of St. Bonaventure, cfr. C. Cargnoni "Vita e Cronologia di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio", in *Dizionario Bonaventuriano. Filosofia, Teologia, Spiritualità*, Editrici Francescane, Padova 2008, 67-87.

Here lies the ornament and honour of the English, Haymo the Minor,

Who lived as a brother and governed the Order as a father,
Who was a famous lector, and the Order's General Rector.

In the region of Castile in Toledo, a famous and solemn city, when the friars began to multiply in the world, it happened that some poor friars, who were unknown to the world but well known to God, accepted a friary outside that town in a place,¹⁰³ which was very remote and distant. One day, as they did every year, the noble and powerful men of that town were engaging in their favourite sport, that is, driving to rage a large and strong bull. It happened that two of those friars came to the arena, and began to beg for alms, while the bull was becoming dangerous because of its rage. One of these aforementioned nobles said to one of them: "Brother, if you would like to capture this bull, it is yours for the love of Jesus Christ." After having said this, together with the other nobles and powerful men who were standing close by, he added: "If you will capture the bull, we will give you both the bull and the arena, in order to build your monastery in this place." That friar commended himself to God and to Saint Francis and went fearlessly to the bull and snatched it by the horns. The bull became as meek as a lamb and did not dare to move except when that friar let it do so. So that friar was full of joy in the Lord and said joyfully: "Lords, the bull is now ours and this arena is given over to us to build our monastery." Those nobles remained dumbfounded when they saw this miracle, and they handed over that bull and that arena to the brothers, as they had promised them. In that place the brothers remained for some time, while they were building the friary.

Since that place was situated just outside the estates of the royal castle, the queen,¹⁰⁴ who loved temporal richness, was afraid to see those poor friars so often. She could hardly look out of the windows of her palace overlooking that place, since she would gaze at the

¹⁰³ The name of the place was Bastida. Cfr. Francisco Gonzaga, *De Origine Seraphicae Religionis*, p. III. Provincia Castellae, p. 693: *fratres per aliquale tempus in maxima paupertate, regulari disciplina atque sanctitate perseverarunt*. The friary was founded by king Ferdinand III, after the year 1217, since Ferdinand became king on 21st August 1217.

¹⁰⁴ According to Francisco Gonzaga the queen was Maria of Castile and Toledo, wife of king Sancho.

friars with horror and indignation. One day the friars had no bread, and the procurator went to beg bread for them. [256] The queen was looking by chance at the friary where the brothers lived, when the time for lunch had by now been over. She saw a reed basket full of loaves of bread, and covered with a beautiful cloth, descend from heaven in the air and it was deposited at the friary door. That very moment there appeared a most handsome young man, who took that reed basket and, while the queen was looking, began to knock on the friars' door. The doorkeeper came, received those loaves of bread, and began to serve the brothers.

The queen was astonished and realised that that was a sign of the great holiness of the brothers. So she immediately sent a servant to beg the friars to give her some of that bread. The brothers handed over two remaining loaves and sent them to her with great joy. She received them with devotion and began to distribute pieces of those loaves to sick people, who were immediately cured of their illnesses. The rest of the bread she cherished among her relics. Inflamed with devotion towards the friars, she asked the king to offer that royal palace to her in order that she might do with it whatever she willed. He willingly accepted her request, and the queen handed over that entire palace to the friars as their new dwelling place. The palace was therefore given over to the friars as their convent, and nowadays the arena has become the garden of the friars.

Once three friars were staying in Morocco. The king of Morocco was at war with another Saracen king, and was preparing himself to wage battle. He had the Christians of Spain as his allies. Those three friars wanted to make a treaty of peace in the presence of the other king, if this was the will of the king of Morocco and the Christians who were his allies. So the king gave some guides to lead the friars, and they left to approach the enemy. While they were travelling in the desert they meet a lion coming towards them. They were terrified and thought that the lion would immediately devour them. But, behold, the lion became like a lamb, and swaying its tail and head it came meekly towards them. Since those lost travellers realised that the lion was now naturally accompanying them, they armed themselves with the sign of the cross and let themselves fall into the care of the divine will. The lion therefore went with them as if it were a tame dog and did not show any sign of ferocity against them.

And behold, there came about 25 Saracens robbers against the friars in order to plunder them and kill them. That lion began roaring against them and killed them all. When the friars were coming close to the royal city, they saw that in the outskirts there was a great army of Saracen soldiers ready to wage battle. Since those friars were strangers, they were afraid to cross through that army of soldiers. At that moment the lion, as if divinely inspired, started to roar very loudly. The horses were terrified, broke the ropes with which they were tied, and escaped with great speed from that place. When the Saracens saw this they also started to escape because of fear. Thus the brothers, leaving the lion outside, freely entered the town.

[257] Since according to custom that king welcomed courteously the friars as if they were ambassadors, he commanded his men to provide them with what was necessary. The friars told the one in charge to minister to them: "We have a lion in our company, that is still outside on the road, and we beg you to give it food." That man was astonished to hear this, but the friars recounted to him everything regarding how the lion joined them on their journey. When the king heard the story, he diligently sought to verify the facts, and when he realised that the story was true, he told the friars: "I see that you are men of God and that wild animals obey you and defend you powerfully for God's sake. Therefore, for the love of God and for the sake of your friendship I would like to make peace with the king of Morocco, since up till now I had refused to make peace with him." Thus, through the merits of the holy friars, peace was restored and the innocent blood of Christians was saved.

In Spain there was also a certain Custodian of the brothers, who lived a most holy life and was famous as a preacher. When he became seriously ill, one day the other friars went to eat and left him alone in bed, with just one servant to watch him. That servant eventually dosed off and slept. And behold there appeared to him a demon at his feet, under the guise of a Crucifix all covered with blood, and with blood trickling down abundantly from his wounds. When he saw this vision, that friar began to believe that it was truly Christ, and he began to suffer full of compassion. The demon told him: "Behold the one whom you loved, whom you preached, whom you served, in whom you hoped; now I have come to you, so that I will take you with me and immediately give you the crown of justice you have merited for your labour." That friar was deceived, and he could not decide anything,

but said: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" The demon answered: "It is enough for you to commit suicide, so that you will merit martyrdom and enter into my glory." But the Custodian said: "Lord, I cannot do this in no way; since, according to your law and my faith, whoever commits suicide merits to be damned." The demon then said: "This is true, according to the common law, but since I am above the law, I can dispense you from it. I am the one who is commanding you; I am the one who is promising you eternal life for such a death. Don't you remember that you read in the Old Testament how Samson and other persons committed suicide without any fault on their own part? Why are you, therefore, doubting my command?"

That friar was totally seduced by the devil. So he took a pillow and placed it hard upon his face, so that he would not breathe and thus die suffocated. When he was nearly on the point of dying, since he was shaking violently because of lack of breath, the servant who was watching over him woke up and immediately removed the pillow from his face. But that Custodian began to resist and to tell him: "My son, do not do this to me, since you are snatching away from me the crown of glory that has been promised to me." Since he began to recount the vision and the promise it had given him, that friar who was serving him answered: "No, father, this is a manifest diabolic illusion." So he called the other brothers, and all of them began to pray, that the Lord might enlighten him. They began to sing devoutly the *Salve Regina* with a loud voice, and they prostrated themselves with humility. The Lord showed that He does not despise the prayer of those who are humble of heart. The Custodian, in fact, through the merits of the blessed Mary and of the glorious Father Francis, realised that he had a diabolical illusion. So he went out of bed, placed his cord around his neck, and prostrated himself on the ground in order to confess his sin in front of all the brothers with humility, and especially to state that he had let himself be deceived by the diabolical illusion. And since he was lying there humbly and devoutly, full of contrition, he distinctly heard the voice of Christ in his ears: "My son, may you be blessed, since you have now come to know the truth, and finally you have not fell into the deception of the enemy of the human race. And I, whom am *the way, the truth, and the life* (Jn 14:6), will now show you the way by which you will come to everlasting life." And thus that friar slept in the Lord.

[258] Once there was in Spain a certain friar of our Order who went to visit his relatives. In their house there was a certain woman who used to serve him with great solicitude before he entered the Order. And behold, *the dragon, whose breath could kindle coals* (cfr. Job 41,12), tempted that friar with such ardour of carnal concupiscence, that he could hardly rest or sleep. Once he was won over by his temptation, and woke up from his bed and went to the woman. But while he was going a great flame of fire appeared in front of him, and he did not dare to cross it, because he was afraid that he would burn. So he went back to bed, but could not restrain his carnal impulse. He woke up a second time and hurried to that woman's bed, but again he saw that great flame of fire and was very afraid and had to turn back. When he tried to go the third time because of his carnal stimulus, he again met that flame of fire. With the help of God's mercy he became aware of the need to drive away that temptation. He therefore undressed himself completely naked, and in order to extinguish that ardour of concupiscence, he threw himself into that great fire. While his body was half-baked in the intense heat, his soul and mind were healed. So he rose up full of joy and called his companion, and without even saying goodbye to his host, he secretly withdrew from that place.

While the two brothers were going back to their friary, one early morning they entered into a church to pray Matins, but they met a demoniac in that place. And while the priest and the deacon, wearing the stole and praying according to the rite of exorcism, could not free that man from the demon, they begged the companion of that friars, who was older than him, to do likewise, but even his efforts were in vain. The demon then shouted: "I will not be forced to go out except by him who extinguished his ardour with fire." And since they could not understand what the devil was saying, that older companion asked that friar to explain to him the reason why they had departed in such a strange way: "Tell me, why did we leave in such a hurry today?" So that friar confessed the entire story of the temptation, which has been narrated above. So that older companion realised that the devil had spoken about his brother, and therefore asked the friar to wear the stole and to command the devil to go out of that man. As soon as he had done this, the devil could not bear his presence and immediately left that man, who was freed from diabolic possession. The brothers thanked God, and being founded upon true humility, they immediately left and hurried back to their friary.

A similar fact is said to have happened in Tuscany to another brother. While he was driven with a great stimulus of the flesh and desired a certain woman, he tried to resist his temptation through fasts, vigils and discipline. When all these means did not suffice to calm him down, and not even continual prayer could suffice, he realised, with the help of God's grace, that the powerful temptation that had been sent upon him could only be won over by great suffering of the flesh in order to repel that spiritual wound. Therefore, every time he was invaded by that temptation, he would tear away his eyebrows with great violence. Since not even this physical violence could make him win over this persistent temptation, while the brothers were sleeping, full of anguish he went out of the cloister against all dictates of reason, and it seemed that the diabolical suggestion was violently pushing him to go to find that woman. But God permitted him [259] to run headlong to this danger in order not to trust any longer in his own power to ward off temptation. When he became aware of his weakness he began to invoke God for mercy, and he immediately felt as if he were bathed with light illuminating a large plain all around him. He was terrified and dropped down to the ground as if he were a dead man. At that moment he heard a voice from heaven telling him: "Stand up, valiant victor, and go back in triumph into the cloister." He woke up from that place totally freed, and from that moment he did not feel any temptation of the flesh. He then heard that voice coming to him again and telling him: "Would you like to see that woman because of whom you were vexed with so much concupiscence?" That woman was shown to him in such a horrible and deformed appearance, that he could not help looking at her without feeling sick and he could not think of her any longer without being nauseated. And thus, after the vision disappeared, he remained full of consolation and internally cleansed he returned to the cloister.

In Portugal there was a certain girl who bought a mirror and looked at herself in it out of vanity. That very moment the devil himself invaded her and began to assail her. Many friars Minors and other Religious persons approached her and tried to free her from the devil with many prayers and formulas of exorcism. But since they could not succeed in their endeavour, a certain friar Minor tried to extort the devil in her to answer his question, namely, regarding why the devil was staying in her and why so many servants of God could not drive him out of her. The devil answered: "In this whole world

there is no one who can drive me out except one.” That friar asked the devil: “And who is this one?” The devil answered: “It is that friar Minor who lives in this convent.” The friar then asked: “And why is it that he is the only one who can drive you out?” The devil answered him: “He is able to drive me out because, if I am sent to him to tempt him against chastity, he will be able to win over me with manly courage.” That very moment, in the presence of that friar about whom he was speaking, that devil retreated.

[260] In the village of Estremoz (Extremos) in Portugal, there was a rich man named Pedro Bono, who was hungry for riches and an avaricious man. He never showed any mercy towards the poor and was cruel towards them. Among the poor people he cared less for the friars Minor, towards whom he was always indignant and never offered them any alms. Once the Guardian of the friary of Extremos could not find anything to offer for lunch to his friars for the following day. So he summoned the brothers and told them: “Brothers, I have found no human help in order to provide for our needs; therefore let us now turn to God and implore His divine help. Let us all wake up for Matins and carry out our duty of celebrating the divine office with all devotion.” So all the friars woke up in the middle of the night and solemnly sang Matins. And behold, according to the will of God, Pedro Bono woke up at that hour and, looking by chance towards the church of the friars, he saw over its roof 29 candles, all arranged in order and burning. He also saw that, every now and then, two of the candles would ascend and then descend back, and then another candle or more than one would again ascend up high, in such a way that it seemed an ordered process of candles going up and down.

He was very surprised at this sight, and he realised that the candles were representing those holy friars. So he called his devout wife, and narrated to her the vision that he had. She was astonished at what she heard and full of joy began to plead with her husband to let her prepare a dish for the friars the following morning, since she could provide for such holy men in their necessities. Her husband was reluctant to let her prepare that dish, but she persisted in asking, and as soon as morning dawned he went to the friary and called the Guardian. When he saw him, the Guardian began to wonder what would such a rival of the friars want of him at such an early hour. Pedro asked him how many friars were living in the friary. The Guardian answered that they were 29 friars. So the man was all changed,

because he realised that the number of candles he had seen in his vision corresponded to the number of friars, and he was confirmed in his love towards the Order. So he narrated his vision to the Guardian, and allowed his wife to prepare a good dish for the brothers, and after becoming a benefactor of those brothers he was finally buried in that friary. The brothers realised that, whenever those candles began to ascend during the vision, it was because the cantors had started to sing, or else the *hebdomadarius*,¹⁰⁵ or some other friars, and secondly that the friars corresponded to the number of candles which were burning.

There was in Spain a certain novice of great innocence, who was simple and virtuous. Every time the Guardian would command him anything, he would carry it out promptly and with great devotion. One day, out of his great simplicity, he committed a small fault, and as his penance the Guardian told him: “Go in front of the altar of the blessed Mary and ask her to reveal to you the words you should say in her honour in order to be most pleasing to her. And beware that, before she tells you these words, [261] you are not to go back from that place, and neither are you to eat or speak to anyone else.” That young man went to obey the command. He stayed there all night long, and he was crying and saying all the time: “Lady, please tell me what the Guardian wants to know, since I do not dare to go back from here until you do so.” That very moment the Virgin Mary appeared to him and told him: “My most dear son, go and recite the hymn: *O gloriosa Domina*,¹⁰⁶ since among the other prayers this is the one which pleases me most.”

In the Province of Aragon in Spain, there lived for a long time these friars who were famous for their holiness: brother Bernard of Moraria¹⁰⁷ and another brother Bernard, who was contemporary to Saint Francis and one of his companions; also brother Agnellus,¹⁰⁸

105 The *hebdomadarius*, in monastic and mendicant Orders, as well as in cathedral and collegial chapters, is an official charged with a special assignment for a week's duration, generally as leader of liturgical prayer during Mass and Divine Office.

106 The liturgical hymn for Lauds of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

107 According to Fortunatus Hueber, in 1219 in Spain there lived three holy brothers by the name of Bernard: Bernard of Umhali, Bernard of Moraria and Bernard *de Contemporaneis*.

108 Agnellus was bishop of Fez and died circa 1246.

bishop of Morocco, and brother Bernard of Umhali: these brothers shone with many examples and miracles.

In the Province of Castile there was another friar, who was a canon of Palencia. He was a most generous and praiseworthy man and was loved by all the brothers. He could not take upon himself the commitments of community life, because of his bodily infirmities, but he always wore a most poor tunic. Fifteen days after he died he appeared to his confessor in a poor and burnt out tunic, which seemed to be falling to pieces. Underneath that tunic, however, he was wearing a resplendent and most beautiful tunic. The confessor marvelled at this vision. Regarding his burnt out tunic the dead brother told him: "This poor tunic has been of great help to me. It has helped me to be cleansed by the fires of purgatory and then it acquired this beautiful tunic for me." When he had said this, that very moment he ascended straight into the heavenly palaces.

The times of brother Crescentius (1244-1247)

[261] The sixth General was brother Crescentius of Iesi,¹⁰⁹ who was a venerable elderly man, an honest person who gave proof of his zeal for discipline. He was elected during the general chapter, which was celebrated in the year of the Lord [262] 1244. During that same chapter the same General directed all the brothers to send him in writing whatever they could truly recall about the life, miracles, and prodigies of blessed Francis. Obeying this command brothers Leo, Angelo and Rufino, who had been companions of the holy Father, wrote down in the form of a Legend many events which they had seen or heard, either personally or through the witness of other trustworthy brothers, such as Philip Longo, Illuminato, Masseo of Marignano, and John, who had been a companion of brother Giles, and they faithfully transmitted this document to the same General.¹¹⁰ Many other brothers who recalled many miracles, which the Saint worked in various parts of the world, transmitted them for publication.

109 Crescentius Grizzi of Iesi, in the Marches of Ancona. He was Minister Provincial of the Marches of Ancona, and, according to the Quaracchi editors, who quote Wadding, he was elected Minister General in the Chapter celebrated on the feast day of St. Francis, 4th October 1244. It is more probable that the General Chapter was celebrated in Genoa on Pentecost, 22nd May 1244, since Haymo of Faversham had already died by then. Crescentius was deposed from the office of Minister General during the General Chapter of 13th July 1247. Although the Assisi cathedral chapter elected Crescentius as bishop, Pope Innocent IV refused to confirm his election. Crescentius was subsequently consecrated bishop of his native town of Iesi in 1252, and he died circa 1262.

110 This document, known as the *florilegium* of the three companions, was sent together with an accompanying letter, from the hermitage of Greccio on 11th August 1246. The letter of the three companions has been preserved in many manuscripts, as an introduction to the *Legend of Three Companions*, but the original documentary material of the *florilegium* is lost. However, we can safely assert that the documentary evidence of the companions has been preserved in various Franciscan Sources of the 13th century, particularly in the *Assisi Compilation* and Thomas of Celano's *Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, as well as in the *Legend of Three Companions*, even though the brothers explicitly state in the letter that they did not intend to write a legend. Further explanations in the introductions to the respective Sources in FAED II, 11-25; 61-65; 113-117; 233-238.

After some time, brother Thomas of Celano, under the command of the same Minister and General Chapter, compiled a first treatise or Legend of blessed Francis, about his life, his words and his intention regarding those things which pertain to the rule; this is known as the *Legenda antiqua*.¹¹¹ Thomas directed the prologue to this General and to the Chapter, in the words which begin: *It pleased the holy gathering of the last general chapter, and you, most reverend father, etc.* Afterwards brother Bernard of Besse, from the Province of Aquitaine, reduced this Legend to a more compendious form, in a document which begins with the words: *Full of virtues, etc.*¹¹²

[263] This General entered the Order when he was already old. He was an expert in canon law and medicine. Some time after he was elected Minister of the Marches¹¹³ he discovered in the Order a sect of friars who were not living according to the truth of the Gospel. These brothers despised the institutions of the Order and considered themselves to be better than the others. They wanted to live according to their own choices and attributed everything to the spirit. They also dressed differently, keeping their mantles short up to their buttocks. This Minister was intent in exterminating these brothers.¹¹⁴

111 This is a reference to the second biography of St. Francis written by Thomas of Celano in 1246-47, entitled *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*. Salimbene de Adam of Parma writes in his Chronicle: *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, Translation by J.L. Baird, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, Vol. 40, Binghamton, New York 1986, 166: "In the year of the Lord 1244, Brother Haymo of England, general minister of the Order of Friars Minor, died, and elected in his place was Brother Crescentius of the March of Ancona, who was an old man. Crescentius then commanded Brother Thomas of Celano, who had written the first Legend of Saint Francis, to write another book, because many things about Saint Francis had been discovered which had never been written. And so Thomas of Celano wrote a very beautiful book about the miracles, as well as the life of Saint Francis, which he entitled the 'Remembrance of the Blessed Francis in the Desire of the Soul.'"

112 According to the Quaracchi editors, this Legend exists in the Codex. Misc. of the Library of the University of Torino.

113 Crescentius was Minister Provincial of the Marches of Ancona. Thomas of Eccleston erroneously states that he was Minister of Verona.

114 This is a reference to the *Zelanti*, or brothers from the Marches of Ancona who considered themselves to be disciples of the companions of St. Francis, and who wanted to observe the Rule without any papal interpretations and to consider the Testament of St. Francis as binding in conscience. They were the forerunners of the Spiritual Franciscans of the last quarter of the 13th century.

In the same year, that is 1245, the lord Pope Innocent IV, convened the celebration of a general chapter in the town of Lyons on the feast of St. John the Baptist. The lord Pope summoned brother Crescentius to the chapter. However, the General excused himself because of his physical weakness and his lack of eloquence, and said that he did not dare to go because of these and other reasons. In his stead he sent his vicar, brother Bonaventure of Iseo, who was a man full of discretion and prudence.¹¹⁵

In the same year, on 21st August, the great and revered master of the university of Paris, brother Alexander of Hales, died.¹¹⁶

The same General also edited a certain document written in the form of a dialogue, on the lives of the holy friars Minor, which begins with the words: *The venerable deeds of the fathers*,¹¹⁷ which only some possess nowadays, since all the other exemplars have been lost because of carelessness. Among the many events it narrates, [264] we read that there was a certain brother in the region of Rieti, whose name was Rainaldo, who was a man who led a most perfect life. One day he was walking with a companion in the whereabouts of the town

They were against the process of clericalisation in the Order, and did not like the conventual way of life of many friars in the towns. The preferred to live in the remote hermitages like the early companions. Their manner of dressing also distinguished them as poor friars who wanted to return to the original inspirations of the early Franciscan fraternity. Crescentius persecuted them when he was Minister Provincial in the Marches, and also during his generalate. However, they continued to gain support, particularly later on, during the time of John of Parma, who sympathised with their ideals.

115 The chapter of Lyons was celebrated on 24th June 1245. Salimbene says that Crescentius did not go and excused himself of not being of good health because of his old age, and that he sent in his stead brother John of Parma, who would succeed him as Minister General. It is probable that both Bonaventure of Iseo and John of Parma were sent as representatives of the Minister General.

116 Alexander of Hales, known as *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, was born at Hales, Gloucestershire, England, circa 1183. He was educated in the monastery at Hales, and studied and lectured in the Paris University, becoming a *magister* in 1210. In 1236 he joined the Franciscan Order and introduced the chair of theology at the *studium generale* of the Order in Paris. One of his students was Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. He died in Paris on 21st August 1245.

117 This document is said to have existed, according to an inventory of the library of the Sacro Convento in Assisi, compiled in 1381. It eventually disappeared from the same library.

of Rieti, and they met a certain blind man. The blind man was walking with the help of a stick, and somehow he realised that friars were coming towards him. So he went down on his knees and saluted them and asked them to mark his eyes with the sign of the cross. Brother Bernard, who was the companion of brother Rainaldo, understood that the blind man had great faith and, knowing the holiness of brother Rainaldo, he commanded him by the vow of obedience to sign the blind man with the cross as he had requested. As soon as brother Rainaldo marked the eyes of the blind man with the sign of the cross, that very moment that man regained his sight in front of the brothers. Out of humility those two friars escaped, but that blind man followed their footprints, and began to kiss the ground and to cry out: "These two brothers are truly saints and friends of God, since they have given me back my sight, I who am a blind man."

After some time brother Rainaldo became ill and it was evident that he would soon die. Many of the brothers who were assisting him saw that his body began to perspire heavily. On his face and on his clothes there appeared to be the most beautiful flowers, as if they were growing out of the frost. The brothers who were assisting him were surprised at the amount of perspiration, and they were continually wiping his face from sweat. Every time, however, it seemed that the flowers were growing anew, and the body continued to present itself in this way even after he died and was placed in a tomb in Monte Compatri.¹¹⁸ After he had lain in the tomb for three days, it happened that the other brother who led a life of great perfection also died and was buried in the same place. During his funeral the friary of the brothers was filled with such a fragrance, that not only the friars living there, but even people living far away could smell that sweetness.

When the brothers opened the grave of brother Rainaldo, in order to place the body of the other brother together with him, they found the body of Rainaldo, who had been dead for three days, still incorrupt with his arms in the form of a cross, as if he had just been buried. Those who opened the tomb tried with all their might to move the dead body to one side, in order to leave a place to lay the other dead friar. Try as they could, they could not move the body. As the friars themselves said later on, they decided to place the dead brother upon the other one in the same grave. But when the friars arrived

¹¹⁸ In the Roman Province.

with the dead brother for his funeral, the body of brother Rainaldo sat up in the grave as if he were alive, and turned towards the friary of the brothers towards the west. He remained in that position for the space of a recitation of the Lord's prayer. Then, in front of all the brothers and the secular persons who were present there, he turned towards the east and reclined himself again on his side, and remained fixed in this position in such a way that the brothers could bury the body of the other brother alongside in the same tomb.

The same thing happened in the case of brother Eletto, who is buried in the friary of Rome. After having been for ten years in the tomb, in front of many who were looking on, he sat up and placed himself again in the same tomb.

[265] In the same friary there rest brother Juniper, who has been mentioned earlier, and brother Sabbatino, who was the fifth one among the first brothers of this Order.

In the same Roman Province are buried many friars who were famous for their sanctity and miracles. In the friary of Anagni is buried brother Andrew of Anagni, the nephew of the lord Pope Alexander IV.¹¹⁹ He declined the offer to be appointed Cardinal. Because of the many miracles he worked, Pope Boniface VIII said that he would be ready to canonise him, if he would die during his pontificate. In the town of Orte is buried brother Theobald of Assisi. In front of many onlookers, he easily crossed over the river Tiber when it could only be crossed by boat, and he seemed to be walking upon the river with only half of his legs under water. In Piperino is buried brother Leonard,¹²⁰ who cured a blind man and gave him his sight, and also healed a crippled man. In Civitavecchia is buried brother Ambrose,¹²¹ famous for his many miracles, as well as brother Morico, who was his master, and brother Severino. In Toscanella is buried brother William of Cordella¹²² who, while still alive, with the sign of the cross miraculously cured

¹¹⁹ Blessed Andrew came from the noble family of the counts of Segni, and was born in Anagni. He was buried in the friary of Pilei, close to Anagni, by his uncle Alexander IV (1254-1261). It was Boniface VIII (1294-1303) who appointed him Cardinal. He died in 1302 and his feast is celebrated on 4th February in the Franciscan calendar.

¹²⁰ Brother Leonard from Foligno, died 10th February 1290.

¹²¹ Brother Ambrose from Massa, who died on 10th November 1251 at Civitavecchia.

¹²² Died 1290.

a blind man and another man who was disabled. In the town of Pro-ceno is buried brother Tobias,¹²³ who had the spirit of prophecy. In Cetona is buried brother Guido,¹²⁴ who was famous for miracles and for his spirit of prophecy. The brothers once saw him elevated high above the ground. In Viterbo is buried brother Soldanerius,¹²⁵ who shone with his virtuous life and doctrine.

[266] In Monteleone d'Orvieto, together with brother Rainaldo, mentioned above, is buried brother Angelo from Monte Leone,¹²⁶ who was a most poor and humble friar, although he was also a lector. When he died a great number of friars came to take him, together with a friar who was solemnly adorned with splendid vestments, and who appeared full of light in a clear vision.

In the year 1245 the lord Pope Innocent IV sent brother John of Pian del Carpine¹²⁷ and brother Stephen of Bohemia to the king

123 Died 1270.

124 Cetona is a Franciscan hermitage belonging to the province of Tuscany. Brother Guido is said to have died 30th January 1305.

125 Soldanerius died circa 13th July 1241.

126 According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1390, n. 5, Angelo was lector of theology and a disciple of Paoluccio Trinci da Foligno (†1390), forerunner of the Italian Observants, in the friary of San Processo, near Monteleone d'Orvieto, where he died in 1399. This historical note is, however, doubtful, since the *Chronicle of the XXIV Ministers General* concludes with the year 1374.

127 The first Franciscan missionary to cross over into central Asia was brother John of Pian del Carpine (c. 1180-1252). John was born at Pian del Carpine, today Magione, between Perugia and Lake Trasimeno. According to Jordan of Giano he was Custos of Saxony (1223-1224), Provincial Minister of Germany (1228-1230), and Minister of Spain (1232-1239), before returning to Germany again as Provincial Minister. John was sent by Innocent IV from Lyons as a papal ambassador to the Great Khan Kujuk in 1245-1246. That means that this Franciscan pioneer was the first European to travel to the Far East, even before the famous Venetian merchants Niccolò, Maffeo and Marco Polo (1254-1324). The Great Khan welcomed him courteously, but with suspicion, and after having read the papal letters he made it clear that he would not convert to Christianity, nor would he recognise the Pope's authority. After receiving letters from the Great Khan, John returned to Innocent IV's court in 1247 and was sent as legate to King Saint Louis IX of France, and wrote an interesting diary of his adventurous journey, entitled *Ystoria Mongolorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus* ("History of the Mongols, whom we call Tartars"). After his return to Europe John was consecrated archbishop of Antivari in Dalmatia, where he died probably on 1st August 1252.

of the Tartars, in order to convince him not to attack and persecute Christian lands and in order to explore the ways of life, customs and religion of the Tartars. The king welcomed them courteously, and they diligently noted the ways of life of the Tartars, which the same brother John eventually wrote down in a voluminous book about the Tartars, which he composed. – Others, however, say that the Pope sent them in order to discover whether they could incline the king's soul to conversion. At that time Saint Louis, king of France, was crossing the sea in order to go on a crusade against the Saracens, and he would have liked to make an alliance with the king of the Tartars, on condition that that sovereign would accept the Christian faith.

[267] The same General we have mentioned above referred that in the Province of Penna¹²⁸ there was a certain brother called Peter, from Castro Sant'Erico, who wanted to visit his relatives, but could not acquire the permission of his Minister. So he said: "I will go just the same, and I will see who will be able to hold me back from my resolve." So he left and went out of the friary. The friars could not make him return in any way and could not change his intention not even with kind language. In the meantime, the brothers immediately started to pray, and sent two brothers to follow the footprints of the brother who escaped, so that they would either make him turn back, or at least to reach him and try to convince him to return. When brother Peter arrived at the entrance to a vineyard, he was overcome by tiredness, and therefore he could not proceed, but lay on the ground and slept profoundly. And behold blessed Francis, who was still alive, appeared to him in his sleep and told him: "Why are you going against the vow of obedience? Go back to your brothers." He did not want to return. So Francis took the staff he was carrying and began to hit him hard with it. That friar woke up because of the pain he was feeling from his wounds, and since he continued feeling sore even after having woken up from his sleep, he had to turn back and go to the brothers, who received him kindly and with compassion, and listened to the story of the vision which he told them.

In the same Province of Penna there lived brother Andrew, who when he was still alive, was certified by Christ as being worthy of receiving the crown of eternal life. He is buried in the friary of Atri.¹²⁹

128 The Province of Penna would refer to the Province of Abruzzo, dedicated to St. Bernardine of Siena.

129 Atri, in the diocese of Teramo. Andrew died on 19th February 1241.

In Abruzzo, which is the region covered by the same Province, is buried brother Francis of Sant'Omero,¹³⁰ who while celebrating Mass found a spider in the chalice, which already contained the blood of Christ after consecration. Trusting in the Lord he drank the blood together with the spider and did not suffer any harm. After having finished Mass, he felt an itching sensation, and when he started to scratch his body in the part that was itching, with his own eyes he saw that spider going out alive without causing him any bodily harm.

In Bucchianico is buried brother Benedict, who suffered from dropsy. Because of a sin of envy, which he committed, he was drawn to justice and condemned with many others, but through the prayers of Saints Francis and Anthony he was freed from damnation and restored back to corporal life. From that very moment he left aside his [268] envy, was changed into a new man, acquired infused knowledge and led a most holy life.

In the same Province of Penna lived brothers Gregory of Baldico, Melioratus and Mansuetus, who led most holy lives and were famous for their miracles.

In the year of the Lord 1246, since there were some doubts among the friars, the lord Innocent IV, while he was staying in Lyons, during the third year of his pontificate, issued a declaration on some obscure points in the Rule.¹³¹ In this declaration he conceded permission that the Ministers Provincial could delegate their vicars or other worthy friars of the council of discreets¹³² to accept friars in the Order.

130 Died 8th August 1305.

131 The Bull *Ordinem vestrum* of Pope Innocent IV (14th November 1245). See English text in FAED II, 774-779.

132 The discreets were the officials who formed the council of the Minister Provincial. Another term in use in Franciscan history is that of "definitors" or "diffinitors". According to Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 236-240, in page 237, footnote 1: "There is an ambiguity in the word 'diffinitor' which has caused some confusion. The Dominicans used it both for the members of the select committee that managed the business of the Provincial Chapter and for the members of the General Chapter in the years when these were elected. The Franciscans applied it to the members of the committees of both their General and Provincial Chapters as well as to all the members of the Chapter known as the Chapter of diffinitors. The *Exposition of the Four Masters* is addressed to Haymo, Minister General, and the other diffinitors assembled in Chapter, and the Chapter of 1242 has therefore been classed as a Chapter of diffinitors. But probably the Four Masters were using the term to refer to the committee which they anticipated would consider their

This had been prohibited in the declaration of the lord Pope Gregory IX.¹³³

The same lord Innocent, in this declaration stated that all the mobile properties acquired by the friars in a legitimate way, were to be considered as pertaining legally to the Church as its own property. – He also declared that the chapter in the Rule speaking about the prohibition of the brothers to enter the monasteries of nuns, should be understood in a special way to the enclosed nuns of San Damiano, and also refers to all other monasteries of nuns, as is explained in the declaration of Pope Gregory IX.

Once, while the friars were celebrating the general chapter, a certain man possessed by the devil, who had been a close friend of Saint Francis and the friars before the devil entered into him, and who would often come to the place where the friars lived even afterwards, one day said to the friars: "You should know that when you celebrate a chapter, the devils also never forget to celebrate another chapter against you. On that particular day, a great multitude of demons which cannot be counted is bound to gather against you on a certain mountain." When the brothers asked that demoniac how this happened and against what the devils would make a discussion, the demoniac answered: "The devil tries with all his might to turn all your Order upside down, by working against obedience, poverty and chastity. Since, in fact, your Order is still strong in the observance of these three vows, what the devil cannot attack directly it tries to gain by attacking obliquely. In fact, as people are now saying, the devil tempts you against poverty by making you build sumptuous and stately looking edifices. It tempts you against chastity by making you enter into familiar relationships with women and the young people you accept into your life. It wrecks your obedience through friendships with the great and powerful of this earth and through a variety of opinions which each one of you holds to adamantly."

After that demoniac had said this, it happened that two broth-

report, and so there is no reason to doubt Eccleston's explicit statement that the 1241 Chapter of diffinitors was the only one of its kind ever to be held in the Order." See also Lawrence C. Landini, *The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor (1209-1260) in the Light of the Early Franciscan Sources*, Chicago 1968, 77-81.

133 This is a reference to the Bull *Quo elongati* of Pope Gregory IX (28th September 1230).

ers had to travel outside and were crossing that particular mountain. When they were approaching it, one of them, who had heard [269] the words of that demoniac, upon seeing that mountain began to feel intensely afraid. So, trusting in God and in holy obedience, he confided what he knew with his brother who had heard none of those words, and comforted him by telling him not to be afraid if he would see anything strange. While they were crossing that mountain, they saw the demons under the guise of diverse forms of wild animals living in the forest. They were howling in a loud and terrible way. Those devils were following the friars, under the appearance of those animals, and they were saying: "Who are these who have the courage to go through this place?" The brothers meanwhile armed themselves with the sign of the cross and were going through that region. The demons realised that they could not harm them by their temptations, and thus they were defeated and had to retreat to where they came from.

Those friars were still going through that region, when they realised that a great danger was still awaiting them. They had to cross through a deep gorge of enormous rocks, which was a fissure in the mountain and looked like a profound valley in an abyss. And behold there appeared to them a demon under the guise of a hairy wild goat, with very large and terrible looking ears. Its aspect was horrible and it was running towards them. When that friar saw the wild goat, being a man of a most holy life, he said: "Go back, Satan, since you cannot do anything against us. Moreover, o miserable one, I tell you that the place which you have lost in your fall from grace, by the help of God will now be given to me who have won it, because the Trinity is now revealing this to me, just as is written in Deuteronomy, chapter eleven: *Whatever the sole of your foot treads all shall be yours* (Dt 11:24). The Gloss thus says regarding this verse: 'Whoever wins over the temptation of any demon, will obtain for himself whatever that demon has lost.'" When the devil heard these words he immediately retired in great confusion.

This General, as brother Peregrinus of Bologna writes in his Chronicle, being very frail in health in the carrying out of the duties of his office, remained only for three years as General Minister, that is, until the first general chapter celebrated after his election. He did not even want to take part in that chapter, and he had not even dared to go to the general council convened by the Pope, but commanded his vicar, Bonaventure of Iseo, who was a most prudent friar, to go in his

stead. In that chapter, because of his inadequacy both in eloquence and in other matters, he was simply absolved from the office of Minister. After this he was elected bishop of Assisi, but the same lord Pope Innocent offered the Assisi bishopric to brother Nicholas, from the same Order, who was the Pope's friend and confessor. Thus brother Crescentius died in humility.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ According to Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 255, "the main impression left by Crescentius was not one of sternness but of ineffectiveness." That is why Pope Innocent IV decided to depose Crescentius on 13th July 1247, when he failed to turn up for the General Chapter of Lyons convoked by the Pope himself. "No sooner had the Franciscans deposed him than the cathedral Chapter of Assisi elected him their bishop. Innocent IV refused to confirm the election and gave the see to another Friar Minor, brother Nicholas, his confessor. The clergy and people of Assisi would not at first accept his nominee and clamoured for Crescentius, but were forced to comply. Crescentius however had not retired. In 1252 he became bishop of Iesi, and he governed and quarrelled with this diocese until his death ten years later."

The times of brother John of Parma (1247-1257)

[270] The seventh General of the Order was brother John of Parma, who was a learned man and a shining example of holiness, as well as a great friend of poverty and humility. He came from the Province of Bologna. When he was reading the Sentences in the *studium* of Paris, about the year of the Lord 1248, he was elected in the general chapter to take over upon himself the responsibility of general minister.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ John was born at Parma in 1209, from the Buralli family. His uncle was the chaplain of the church of St. Lazarus in Parma, and became his educator. John eventually became a teacher of philosophy. He probably entered the Order of Friars Minor in 1233, which happened to be the year of the *Alleluia* movement. He was ordained priest and taught theology at Bologna and Naples. John studied theology at the University of Paris and assisted at the First Council of Lyons in 1245. The capitulars during the General Chapter held at Lyons on 13th July, 1247, and convoked by Pope Innocent IV, chose as General Minister brother John Buralli of Parma. During his ten-year period as General Minister John held three Chapters, one at Genoa in 1251, one in Metz in 1254, and the last one in Rome on 2nd February, 1257, when Bonaventure was chosen as General. John was a candidate who would have been acceptable to both the majority of the friars and the *Zelanti*. He led a very simple and poor way of life, and was held in great esteem for his holiness. Salimbene states that he was the first Minister General to make trips in order to visit all the various provinces of the Order, a fact which (with the exception of Brother Haymo who travelled to England, his birthplace) was never the custom before. John embarked upon a very humble and holy way of life, in order to give example to the brothers. His young age as General Minister (in his early forties) enabled him to travel widely in the Order, many a time on foot. He visited various Provinces, including England, France, Burgundy, Provence and Spain. In 1245 Innocent IV called him to Lyons in order to send him as his personal ambassador to the Eastern Empire. On 2nd February 1257 he renounced to the government of the Order during the General Chapter of Aracoeli in Rome, in favour of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, whom he himself indicated as being the best-suited candidate for the office of Minister General. He was suspected of nurturing sympathies towards the Spirituals, and had to retire to solitary confinement to the hermitage of Greccio, where he stayed until 1287. He intended to go as a missionary to Greece in 1289, but died at Camerino on 20th March of the same year. In the Franciscan Order he is revered as a blessed. Salimbene de Adam describes this General: "Brother John was generous, open, courteous, loving, humble, gentle, good, and long-suffering. He was a

[271] In the same year the lord Pope Innocent IV, during the fifth year of his pontificate, decided to modify the first rule of Saint Clare, and with the collaboration of the lord Rainaldo, who was Cardinal and Protector of the Order, he gave a more relaxed rule to the sisters of the Order of San Damiano.¹³⁶ The majority of monasteries of the Provinces of Aquitaine and Provence still live under this rule, as well as other monasteries in various other Provinces, which fall directly under the Order's jurisdiction and rule. The first rule of Saint Clare, in fact, had not received papal confirmation through a Bulla.

In the year of the Lord 1250, on the feast of Saint Lucy, the reprobate emperor Frederick, who had been deposed, died.¹³⁷ Under his tyrannical persecution, the Saracens [272] had invaded the monastery of Saint Clare, but were repulsed through the miraculous prayers

fine speaker, and as a man devoted entirely to God, he was pious, merciful and compassionate. He celebrated Mass daily, and he did so so devoutly that those in attendance could feel the grace of God in his person. He was so fervent in his preaching, both to the regular clergy and to the Brothers, that each time many in his audience were moved to tears, as I myself saw many times. He was extremely eloquent and never stumbled in his speech. A most learned man, he had been in secular life, a master grammarian and a teacher of logic; and in the Order of the Friars Minor, he was a great theologian and a master of disputation. He studied the Sentences at the University of Paris. He had been lector for many years in the convents in Bologna and Naples" (*The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, Translation by J.L. Baird, 297-298).

¹³⁶ On 6th August 1247 Pope Innocent IV gave to Clare and the *Ordo Sororum Pauperum Sancti Damiani* the Bulla *Cum omnis vera religio*, in which he includes a new Rule for the Clares. This new Rule obliges Clare and the sisters to observe the Benedictine Rule, but places them directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministers of the Order of Friars Minor. It, however, allowed them to have possessions, and thus went against the *Form of Life* which Clare had promised to observe at the very beginning and against the *Privilege of Poverty* issued by Gregory IX on 17th September 1228 through the Bulla *Sicut manifestum est* and addressed solely to the monastery of San Damiano in Assisi. For the texts of these documents, see *Clare of Assisi. The Lady. Early Documents*, Revised edition and translation by R.J. Armstrong, New City Press, New York – London – Manila 2006, 86-126.

¹³⁷ Frederick II died on 13th December 1250 at Ferentino, Puglia, when he was 56 years old. He died a penitent and absolved by the archbishop of Palermo, and was buried in the cathedral church of Palermo. Frederick had been excommunicated by Gregory IX on 20th March 1239, and again excommunicated and deposed by Innocent IV on 5th July 1245, during the First Council of Lyons.

of the same Saint.¹³⁸ Because of the persecution of this emperor many friars were expelled from their homeland or had to escape.

In the year of the Lord 1251 the lord Pope Innocent came back to Italy from Lyons. He had been staying in Lyons for about six and a half years.

That same year, at the university of Paris there arose a controversy between the clerics of the university and the poor Mendicant Religious students of theology. The trouble was started by William of Saint Amour, a doctor in theology, who lacked the wisdom of prudence, and published a malicious *libellus* against the state of the life of poverty of those Religious, in which he asserted that they did not live a way of life of salvation, and neither could their mendacity and poverty be of any merit to them, since they should work with their own hands. Therefore they could not defend their right to preach and hear confessions, by invoking the permission given to them by the Roman Pontiff or the diocesan bishops. Thus he judged them through these arguments and prejudices. His *libellus* was entitled: *A brief treatise upon the dangers of this contemporary time*, and it began with the words: *Behold those who look outside are clamouring*.¹³⁹

138 The episode of the attack upon San Damiano by the "Saracens," a band of Moslem mercenaries in the service of Frederick II appears frequently in the Sources for the Life of St. Clare (*Legend St. Clare* 21-22; *Acts of the Process* III,18; IV,14; VI,10; VII,6; IX,2; X,9; XII,8; XIII,9). It is an episode that can be dated with certainty: a Friday in September 1240, during the hour of Tierce. It is the episode that has inspired the subsequent iconography of Clare carrying a monstrance with the Eucharist, since it was the prayer of Clare and the Poor Ladies in front of the silver pyx enclosed in a small ivory casket that freed the nuns from certain death, when the mercenaries, for some unknown reason, retreated from San Damiano. Another attack on San Damiano was that by the troops of Vitale of Aversa, a commander of the armies of Frederick II, on 22nd June 1241, when Assisi was liberated through the fervent prayers of Clare and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano.

139 William of St. Amour was a canon of Beauvais, a procurator of the masters and students in Paris, a chaplain to Pope Alexander IV and the rector of the Paris University. The controversy between the secular Masters and the mendicants (Franciscans and Dominicans) at the Paris University started in February 1252, because of jealousy on the part of the Masters against the Mendicants, particularly against the Dominicans. The Masters issued a statute specifying that the Mendicant Orders had to be content with just one *schola* and each Order was to have just one regent Master. In 1253 the Mendicants did not accept the oath of allegiance to the University statutes, and were expelled from the University. Pope Innocent IV, in his letter *Amoena flore vir-*

[273] During the same time brother Bertrand of Baiona, from the Province of Aquitaine, who was a very famous master of theology, began to defend the Mendicant Religious with so much vigour and expertise, and to dissolve whatever William had stated in a logical way, point by point, that the same blasphemous master marvelled and said the following words: "Either you are an Angel, or you are [274] a devil, or else you are Strabus¹⁴⁰ of Baiona." In fact, brother Bertrand was truly hampered by cross-vision. The same brother Bertrand re-

tutum sacra Religio, of 1st July 1253, ordered the Masters to admit the Mendicants in the University. On 4th February 1254 the secular Masters began to accuse the Mendicant Orders, particularly the Dominicans, in front of the prelates of the Church. During the same year, a certain Franciscan friar at the University, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, published a treatise entitled *Liber Introductorius in Evangelium Aeternum*, in which he quoted the writings of the visionary abbot Joachim of Fiore (*Concordia novi ac veteris testamenti*, *Apocalypsis nova*, and *Psalterium decem chordarum*), which were considered heretical in some ideological circles of the University. Joachite doctrine asserted the coming of the third age of the Holy Spirit and a Spiritual Church, and announced the year 1260 as the point when the third age would commence. This was the occasion when William of St. Amour published his *Tractatus de periculis novissimorum temporum* against the Mendicants, who now became suspected of nurturing Joachist ideals. Gerard's treatise was sent to a commission of Cardinals for examination. On 23th October 1255, this commission at Anagni condemned Gerard's book as heretical. The Master General of the Friars Preachers Humbert of Romans, the Minister General of the Minors John of Parma, the Dominican doctors Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and the Franciscan doctor Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, all distanced themselves from Gerard's writings, but they staunchly defended the rights of the Mendicant Orders against the attacks of the secular Masters. Because of the condemnation of Gerard's book, both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure had to wait until 1257 before they could be reinstated in their respective chairs as *magistri* in the Dominican and Franciscan schools of the University of Paris. Pope Alexander IV sent a letter to the secular Masters, entitled *Quasi lignum vitae*, from Naples on 14th April 1255, dealing with the troubles that had happened at the Paris University. These declared that they did not want to renounce to their privileges, and did not want anything to do with the Mendicants, until on 12th May 1257 Alexander IV again obliged them to submit to his orders and recognise the Mendicants' rights in the University. Bonaventure had replied to the secular Masters' attacks with the *Quaestiones disputatae de Perfectione Evangelica*. Later on, as Minister General of the Order, he would continue defending the Mendicants in Paris with his famous treatise entitled *Apologia Pauperum*, published in 1269, against another secular Master, Gerard of Abbeville.

140 *Strabus*, in Latin, means a person who is hampered by a cross-vision.

turned to Limoges that same year, while in the Province of Aquitaine the brothers were celebrating their provincial chapter, and there he ended his days.

In the year of the Lord 1252, on 16th September, the lord Rainaldo, Cardinal and bishop of Ostia, as well as Protector of the Order with papal authority, while he was residing in the Curia at Perugia, confirmed the Rule, which blessed Francis had given to Saint Clare and her sisters to observe, and which was very similar to the Rule of the friars Minor, and stamped his seal on it, during the tenth year of the pontificate of Pope Innocent IV.¹⁴¹

In the year of the Lord 1253, the same lord Innocent, while he was residing in the Sacro Convento of Saint Francis in Assisi, out of his great devotion for Clare, who was seriously ill, came to visit her together with the Cardinals. After they had spoken to one another for some time regarding the salvation of their souls, blessed Clare ordered the sisters to prepare the table and place the bread for all, greatly desiring that the vicar of Christ would bless those loaves of bread. After having finished their collation,¹⁴² the most holy Clare with great reverence went down on her knees before the supreme Pontiff, and begged him to kindly bless those loaves of bread. The Pope answered her: "My most faithful sister Clare, I want you to sign these loaves of bread on the table with the mark of the cross." But Clare answered him: "Most holy Father, may your Holiness excuse me, because I feel that I am greatly unworthy to do such a thing, since I am just a poor woman, and I would be attempting to give a blessing in front of the vicar of Christ." And the Pope answered her: "And so, in order that

141 On 16th September 1252, Cardinal Rainaldo di Jenne, who was residing with the papal Curia in Perugia, approved the *Form of Life of Saint Clare*, which Clare herself had written upon the model of the *Regula bullata* of the friars Minor. In chapter 6 of the same Rule, Clare inserted the primitive *Form of Life*, which Francis had given her in 1212, just after she entered San Damiano. In the letter of approval Rainaldo states: "Acceding to your pious prayers, by the authority of the Lord Pope as well as our own, we, therefore, confirm forever for all of you and for all who will succeed you in your monastery, and we ratify by the protection of this document this form of life, the manner of holy unity and of the highest poverty that your blessed Father Saint Francis gave you for your observance in word and in writing" (CAED, 108-109).

142 In Latin *collatio*, a term indicating a spiritual conference which the abbot of a monastery would give to his monks, and here referred to the spiritual discourse between Clare and Pope Innocent IV.

you may not act out of presumption, but that you may acquire great merits, I hereby command [275] you with the vow of obedience, so that, as I have told you, you will now bless these loaves of bread." So the handmaid of Christ was compelled to obey this command and to bless those loaves. That very moment on each loaf of bread there appeared the sign of the cross. All those present began to eat those loaves with great devotion, but many kept them as relics because of the miracle that occurred. The Pope was impressed by the fact that the handmaid of Christ had truly marked those loaves with the sign of the cross. He first gave thanks to God and afterwards agreed to absolve her from all her sins after she asked for pardon and indulgence with great devotion, and blessing Clare left her greatly filled with consolation.¹⁴³

In the same monastery there lived sister Ortolana, who was blessed Clare's mother, and sister Agnes, Clare's sister, together with many other spouses of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit. It was to them that Saint Francis sent many sick people, so that they would make the sign of the cross over the sick. By virtue of the cross which they cherished with their whole heart, whoever they blessed with this sign was cured from illness.

That same year, and during that same occasion, the lord Pope whom we have just mentioned confirmed the Rule of Saint Clare on 9th August, and sent the document enclosed in a papal Bull to Saint Clare and to her sisters, in the eleventh year of his pontificate.¹⁴⁴ After three

143 This episode is found also in ABF 42 (FAED III, 516-517). Innocent IV was in Assisi in April-May 1253 and in June-October 1253.

144 Innocent IV confirmed the *Form of Life of St. Clare* on 9th August 1253, while he was residing in Assisi, with the Bull *Solet annuere*. Clare died on 11th August. The genesis of the Rule of St. Clare is rather complicated. (1) St. Francis gave Clare the primitive *Forma vitae*, in 1212, when she entered San Damiano. Clare eventually inserted this *Forma vitae* in her Rule of 1253, which she wrote after 1247, and which was approved by Cardinal Rainaldo on 16th September 1252, and confirmed with the Papal seal and the Bull *Solet annuere* on 9th August 1253. This *Form of Life of St. Clare*, or *Rule of St. Clare*, however, was destined only for the monastery of San Damiano; (2) In 1219, Cardinal Hugolino gave a new Rule to the monasteries of Poor Ladies of Umbria and Tuscia, which was modelled upon the Rule of St. Benedict, and in this way took all the new monasteries directly under papal protection. Clare and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano had to accept this *Form of Life of Cardinal Hugolino*, but on 17th September 1228, with the Bulla *Sicut manifestum est*, Gregory IX gave Clare and her sisters at San Damiano the *Privilege of Poverty*; (3) On 6th

days Clare's illness became very serious, and after having received the visit of Christ and his Mother, together with a splendid procession of virgins, Clare, the handmaid of Christ concluded her days on this earth. The lord Pope with all the Cardinals came to celebrate her funerals. The Pope commanded to celebrate the liturgy of the Mass from the Common of Virgins, as if he wanted to canonise Clare even before she was buried. But the lord Rainaldo, who was the Cardinal Protector, insisted that in such matters it would be best to act with prudence, and therefore the Mass for the dead was celebrated, in which the same Cardinal Protector preached publicly about her admirable life.

This general brother John, in the chapter celebrated at Metz,¹⁴⁵ prohibited the friars from reading or singing in the choir any of the texts contained in the Ordinary of holy Mother Church, in order to keep to what the Rule states, and commanded them to be content with what the general chapter had ordained,¹⁴⁶ except for the singing

August 1247, Innocent IV addressed to Clare and the Poor Ladies of the Order of San Damiano the Bulla *Cum omnis vera religio*, in which he included a new *Form of Life* or *Rule of Innocent IV*, stating that Saint Francis was the founder of the Order and that the sisters were to fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister General of the friars Minor, but conceding also the right to own property. Clare saw in this last provision a direct attack against the primitive *Forma vitae*, and started to write her own Rule, modelled upon the *Regula Bullata* of the friars Minor. The *Form of Life of St. Clare*, as we have seen, was confirmed by Innocent IV with the papal Bull *Solet annuere* on 9th August 1253, but only for the monastery of San Damiano in Assisi; (4) In 1263, ten years after the death of St. Clare, Pope Urban IV, with the Bull *Beata Clara* of 18th October 1263, gave a new Rule to all the Order of Poor Ladies, declaring that they were now to be called *Ordo Sanctae Clarae*, Order of St. Clare. The new Rule was again modelled upon the Benedictine Rule, and gave the sisters the right to own property in common. The return to the observance of the 1253 *Form of Life* occurred in the 15th century, when the majority of monasteries of Poor Clares in Italy were reformed by the saints of the Observant Franciscan movement, particularly St. John Capistran. The observance of the Rule of Urban IV, however, continued to be widespread, and some monasteries still observe it to this day.

¹⁴⁵ The Chapter of Metz was celebrated in 1254.

¹⁴⁶ R. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 262: "At the Chapter of Metz (John of Parma) issued a letter, to be distributed through all the provinces, ordering the brothers to conform strictly to the rubric of the Ordinals of the missal and breviary (as corrected by Haymo of Faversham). Among other details he forbade the singing of any hymns, sequences or responses not contained in the Ordinal, with the exception of some antiphons of the Virgin, which might be sung after Compline."

of the antiphons of the blessed Mary after Compline. During Mass, according to the rite of the same Roman Church, he commanded the priests to place the host to the left hand side of the priest, and the pall upon the chalice, and not together with the corporal. Some friars, out of a certain devotion, were following the liturgical usage of the secular clergy or of other Regulars, according to certain regulations and the way of following certain dangerous observances. So they were neglecting to follow the [276] rules of the divine office according to the laws laid down by the Roman Church, and they were introducing variations and thus creating division. Moreover according to our rules we have to venerate God and the Saints by not going against what the office indicates regarding the singing of the angelic hymn (*Te Deum*) and the symbol (*Credo*). One cannot go against the rule out of personal devotion, neither by adding to the norms, or by deviating from them. These customs could disturb common discipline. In the same way they are not beneficial to those who are sick, they also propose that which could be harmful and necessarily superstitious, and it seems that they want to order things in the office in such a way as to appear holier for their excessive zeal of devotion, in which they take delight, and they aspire to offer incense without being entitled to do so, as happened in the episode of Uzziah.¹⁴⁷

This General commanded with many letters brother Thomas of Celano, to conclude the life of Saint Francis, which is known by the name of *Old Legend*, since in the first treatise which he composed, upon the mandate of the above mentioned general, brother Crescentius, Thomas had only mentioned the episodes of the life and the words uttered by Francis, and had omitted the miracles. Thus Thomas composed a second treatise, which deals with the miracles of the holy Father, and he sent it to the same general, together with a letter beginning with the words *We have undertaken with religious care*.¹⁴⁸

In the same year 1253, the same lord Pope Innocent, residing in the Sacro Convento in Assisi, canonised Saint Stanislaus,¹⁴⁹ Bishop

¹⁴⁷ A reference to 2Chron 26:18, where King Uzziah "entered the great hall of the Temple of Yahweh to burn incense on the altar of incense. Azariah the priest followed King Uzziah in, with eighty brave priests of Yahweh, to resist him."

¹⁴⁸ This is the *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis*, composed by brother Thomas of Celano in 1250-1252, and approved during the Chapter of Metz in 1254. Text in FAED II, 399-468.

¹⁴⁹ Saint Stanislaus was born in Poland on 26th July 1030 and became bishop of

of Krakow, who had been martyred in Poland by a cruel prince. To honour the same Saint and celebrate his memory a chapel was dedicated to him on a high place in the same basilica.¹⁵⁰

[277] In the year of the Lord 1254 or whereabouts, the same lord Pope sent the same General to John, the emperor of the Greeks and to Manuel the Patriarch of Constantinople, in order to negotiate with them regarding the union between the Greek Church and the Roman Church.¹⁵¹ The Pope recommended the General with many letters, in which he called him *an angel of peace*. John greatly edified the emperor and his clergy, together with all the people, because of his holy life and learning.¹⁵² In order to bring about this union, therefore, the lord Pope strove to send this solemn Legation together with many collaborators and bearing letters to the emperor and the Patriarch. However, they were forced to return because of a legitimate impediment, with all the due solemnity with which they had gone; in fact, during that same year, when they were going to conclude the negotiations with success, both the emperor and the Pope died.¹⁵³ Therefore,

Krakow. He was martyred by the cruel king Boleslaus II (1058-1083) on 8th May 1079. He was canonised by Innocent IV on 8th September 1253, and his feast day is now celebrated on 11th April.

150 Innocent IV sent a letter from the Lateran, *Ad veneranda Sanctorum merita*, on 26th January 1256, in which he conceded an annual indulgence to all those who visit the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi on the feast day of St. Stanislaus. The memory of St. Stanislaus in the lower Basilica of St. Francis is found in the third chapel on the right. It is known as the *tribuna* of St. Stanislaus.

151 The date here is not correct. John of Parma was sent to the Eastern Empire by Pope Innocent IV as his personal ambassador in 1249. He went together with brother Thomas, a lecturer at Constantinople, who could speak fluent Greek, brother Salimbene, who had been sent by the Greek Emperor to the Pope in order to call John of Parma as ambassador, brother Drudo, and brother Bonaventure of Iseo. The Emperor was John III Vatatzes (1222-1255). The Patriarch of Constantinople was Manuel (1243-1254), who succeeded Methodius.

152 Angelo Clareno, *Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations*, 102: "Having been sent by the Supreme Pontiff as legate to the Greeks in the seventh year of his administration, he was held in such reverence and esteem by the emperor for the holiness of his life and his divine wisdom, and by the religious among them and all of the clergy and people, that they thought that they saw not just any prudent and learned man, but one of the ancient fathers and doctors, or one from Christ's disciples."

153 The Emperor died in 1255, while Pope Innocent IV died on 7th December 1254.

because of this unfortunate circumstance, they could not continue their negotiations.

During the same time brother Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, after having defended the truthfulness of the life of the Mendicants with great vigour, was elevated to the chair of master in the university of Paris.¹⁵⁴

[278] In the same year 1254, on the feast day of Saint Lucy, the lord Pope Innocent IV died at Naples, in the twelfth year of his pontificate.¹⁵⁵ In that same year the lord Cardinal Rainaldo, who was Protector of the Order, assumed the office of the papacy and chose for himself the name Alexander IV.

154 During the same year 1254, a certain Franciscan lecturer at the University, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, published a treatise entitled *Liber Introductorius in Evangelium Aeternum*, in which he quoted the writings of the visionary abbot Joachim of Fiore (†1202), *Concordia novi ac veteris testamenti*, *Apocalypsis nova*, and *Psalterium decem chordarum*, which were considered heretical in some ideological circles of the University. Joachite doctrine asserted the coming of the third age of the Holy Spirit and a Spiritual Church, and announced the year 1260 as the point when this third age would commence. This was the occasion when William of St. Amour published his *Tractatus de periculis novissimorum temporum* against the Mendicants, who now became suspects of nurturing Joachist ideals. Gerard's treatise was sent to a commission of Cardinals for examination. In the letter *Romanus Pontifex*, sent from Anagni in October 1256, this commission condemned Gerard's book as heretical. The Master General of the Friars Preachers, Humbert of Romans; the General Minister of the Minors, John of Parma; the Dominican doctors Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and the Franciscan doctor Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, all distanced themselves from Gerard's writings, but they staunchly defended the rights of the Mendicant Orders against the attacks of the Secular Masters. Because of the condemnation of Gerard's book, both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure had to wait until 1257 before they could be reinstated in their respective chairs as *magistri* in the Dominican and Franciscan schools of the University of Paris. Pope Alexander IV sent a letter to the Secular Masters, entitled *Quasi lignum vitae*, from Naples on April 14, 1255, dealing with the troubles that had happened at the Paris University. These declared that they did not want to renounce to their privileges, and did not want anything to do with the Mendicants, until on May 12, 1257 Alexander IV again obliged them to submit to his orders and recognise the Mendicants' rights in the University. Bonaventure had replied to William of Saint Amour's attacks with the *Quaestiones disputatae de Perfectione Evangelica*.

155 13th December 1254. The date is not correct, however. Innocent IV died on 7th December, and Rainaldo di Jenne was elected as Pope Alexander IV on 12th December 1254. He was crowned Pope on 21st December 1254, and died in Viterbo on 25th May 1261.

After some time the General with a group of friars requested the lord Pope to give them another Cardinal as their Protector, as the Rule prescribes. The Pope answered them kindly, and told them that, for as long as he lived, he wished to be their immediate Protector. In fact, he protected the Order with vigour and through him the Order received many privileges. One of the first things he did was to revoke a decree of his predecessor, which limited the freedom of the Order in its pastoral ministry in favour of the parochial clergy.¹⁵⁶

[279] The same Pope, while he was staying in Naples, during the first year of his pontificate, gave his special protection to Mount La Verna, because it was the holy place where the sacred stigmata were impressed in the body of Saint Francis, and declared that friary to be immediately subjected to the Church of Rome. He greatly praised this sanctuary as well as blessed Francis, and he empowered the friars

¹⁵⁶ This is a reference to the Bulla *Etsi animarum affectantes salutem*, published by Innocent IV in Naples on 21st November 1254, which greatly limited the Mendicant's acquired rights in their conventual churches. According to Lawrence Landini, (*The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor*, 72) the document had in mind the curb the abuses of the Mendicants, who were stepping outside the bounds of their privileges to the detriment of the diocesan clergy. These abuses included the opening of the churches of the mendicants to the parishioners, who would abandon their proper parishes in favour of the conventual churches of the friars; absolution of the faithful against the will of the local pastors; preaching in the conventual churches at the same time when the bishop was preaching in the cathedral church; preaching at the same time of the parochial Mass; depriving the local pastors of the donations of the faithful who deserted their parishes. The Pope therefore commanded the friars not to admit parishioners into their churches for divine services; not to absolve any faithful without the permission of the local pastor; not to preach before solemn Mass and on the same day when the bishop preached; not to preach in parish churches unless they have been invited to do so; not to keep for themselves the canonical tithes linked with burial rights, but to hand them over to the local pastors. *Etsi animarum* was definitely meant to put a stop to the ever-growing popularity of the Mendicants to the detriment of the local diocesan clergy. Fortunately for the Dominicans and Franciscans, the prescriptions of this papal document were only to last for a short while. Innocent IV was very ill and his end was soon to come. In fact, Innocent IV died on 7th December, 1254. Pope Alexander IV, Rainaldo di Jenne, who had been Cardinal Protector of the Franciscans before he was elected on 12th December, 1254, immediately reversed the provisions of his predecessor with the Bulla *Nec insolitum* of 22nd December 1254.

with a decree, which he sent them, in order never to leave that holy mountain.¹⁵⁷

In that same year, when the Pope was staying at Anagni, he sent a letter to all Christian faithful, according to the same tenor of the letters written by Pope Gregory IX, regarding the stigmata of blessed Francis. In this letter the Pope declared that he had seen the stigmata with his very own eyes.¹⁵⁸

The same Pope sent other letters regarding the stigmata to the bishop of Genoa,¹⁵⁹ commanding him to convoke the persons who maliciously destroyed the signs of the sacred stigmata in the image of Saint Francis venerated in the church of Santa Maria della Vigna and the monastery of Saint Sixtus, and to make them appear before him in order to receive the punishment for their misdeed. The Pope threatened them with the sentence of excommunication, if they would repeat such a wicked act.

In the year of the Lord 1255, upon request from the cantors of Paris, the lord Pope conceded to the friars the privilege of singing the angelic hymn (*Te Deum*) and the proper Sequences for the votive Masses of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, both during solemn celebrations as well as when they would celebrate privately, in spite of what the general chapter of Metz had decreed.¹⁶⁰

[280] In the same year, in order to defend the truth of the validity of the Mendicant Orders, the above-mentioned treatise written by William of Saint Amour was treated as a pernicious, wicked, malign and detestable document.¹⁶¹ The lord Pope Alexander IV, together with his brothers the Cardinals gathered in a consistory, placed

¹⁵⁷ This is a reference to the letter *Si novae militiae militantis Ecclesiae*, sent from Naples on 8th April 1255 (Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum* II, 29).

¹⁵⁸ This is a reference to the letter *Benigna operatio divinae voluntatis*, given at Anagni on 29th October 1255. See text in FAED II, 779-781. In 1237 Gregory IX had directed three papal documents in order to defend the authenticity of the stigmatisation of St. Francis. Pope Alexander IV also published another four letters on the same theme, such as the letter *Grande et singulare miraculum*, sent from Anagni in 1256. Cfr. André Vauchez, "The Stigmata of St. Francis and its Medieval Detractors," *Greyfriars Review* 13,1 (1999) 61-89.

¹⁵⁹ The bishop of Genoa was Gualtiero (1253-1274).

¹⁶⁰ See above [275].

¹⁶¹ The year was not 1255 but 1256. The *Tractatus de periculis novissimorum temporum* was condemned by Pope Alexander IV at Anagni on 5th October, in the letter *Romanus Pontifex*.

this document under anathema, and condemned all those who held on to what its articles declared and did not want to revoke it. After this, in front of the most pious king of France, the blessed Louis,¹⁶² who is now enlisted in the catalogue of Saints, a great multitude of persons gathered and the book was solemnly thrown in the flames in the royal gardens. The author of the book, William, was then expelled from the entire kingdom of France. Thus this miserable man had to swallow all the persecutions, which he had levelled against the Order. In fact, he had incited against the Order all those malicious members of the clergy in Paris, together with the Church Prelates, and these had defended him, and thus the friars had to endure much suffering and harm in many countries. However, as is now evident, the culprit finally had to swallow the fruits of his malice and cunning, and of the confusion he had sown.

In the same year the same lord Pope approved and commended the doctrine of the master Alexander of Hales.¹⁶³ He asked the mas-

162 St. Louis IX, king of France, reigned between 1226 and 1270. He was born from Blanche of Castile on 25th April 1215 in the castle of Poissy, near Paris, and died at Tunis, during a Crusade, on 25th August 1270. Pope Boniface VIII declared him a saint on 11th August 1297.

163 Pope Alexander IV wrote this letter during the first year of his pontificate. William of Melitona was, since 1248, a successor of Eudes Rigaud as regent master in the Franciscan school of studies in Paris. Alexander of Hales was born in Hales, Shropshire, in England. In 1200 he left for studies at the university of Paris. He became bachelor of arts in 1210 and a *magister regens* in 1220. He remains famous for his *Commentary of the Book of Sentences of Peter Lombard*. In 1229 he appears as one of the most outstanding philosophers and theologians of the Paris university. In 1231 he went to England, where he became canon of Linchfield and archdeacon of Coventry. In 1236 he was back in Paris, where he joined the Order of Friars Minor. In this way he introduced his university chair of professor into the Franciscan School. In this way the Friars Minor acquired their own chair in the university. Alexander of Hales is also famous for the *Expositio regulae quattuor magistrorum*, a commentary on the Franciscan Rule, which he wrote in 1241 together with other masters of the Franciscan School of Paris, especially Jean de La Rochelle and Eudes Rigaud. Alexander took part in the Council of Lyons in 1245 and died in Paris during the same year. His main philosophical works include his *Summa Theologica*, the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* and the *Quaestiones Alexandri*. William of Melitona was regent master in theology at the University of Paris, taking over in that capacity in 1248 from Eudes Rigaud, who had been named archbishop of Rouen, before being replaced himself by St. Bonaventure in 1254. Little is known of William's life, except that he was part, along with ten other masters of theology, of the commission

ter William of Melitona to perfect this master's theological works, and wrote to the Minister of France so that he would choose some [281] worthy students from his Province in order to help this master of theology in faithful way to bring this work to completion.

In that period, in the regions beyond the sea, close to Antioch,¹⁶⁴ about eight miles away from the city, there was a convent in the place known as *The Black Mountain (Montana Nigra)*.¹⁶⁵ This friary was surrounded by a very thick forest, [282] about two miles wide, which encircled it all around. In that place dwelt a group of holy friars, whose beginnings were as follows. Before them in that place there was an old monastery belonging to the monks of the Order of Saint Benedict. The Abbot and monks considered with attention the way of life of the friars Minor, who had arrived in those regions. They were inflamed with the divine Spirit, and they left all the property of that monastery in the hands of the Patriarch of Antioch. The monks kept the monastery as the dwelling place for them and for the friars, and they all received the habit of the Order of friars Minor. In the meantime a few years passed. Various friars from diverse Provinces came to that place to serve the Lord with devotion. That region was then populated by Christians and was under Christian rule. The Guardian of the same friary one night went out of the friary door after Compline in order to pray. He saw a resplendent light shining in front of him, and also a multitude of persons, who were all wearing red robes and holding candles in their hands. They all bowed their heads before him, and after venerating him, continued on their way.

After having marvelled at what happened, he was still in deep reflection, when he saw another multitude wearing very delicate yellowish vestments. After that crowd there passed another crowd of people, wearing decorated clothes. There were ten men who were re-

that condemned the *Talmud* in 1248, and also that he was put in charge by Pope Alexander IV in 1256 of supervising in the completion of the *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales along with other friars from the Franciscan Province of France.

164 Antioch on the Orontes river was in Crusader hands until 1268, when Baibars laid siege to it and captured it on 18th May. Boehmond of Taranto had captured it in 1098 during the march of the First Crusade on Jerusalem.

165 This place was known as Monte Negro, and it was situated close to Antioch on the Orontes river in Syria (nowadays in Turkey).

splendent more than all the others, who were all wearing red clothes and were holding candles in their hands. They made a bow of reverence to the Guardian in the way we have described above, and continued on their way as before. After these there appeared a certain lady who was full of ornaments and resplendent in light. She was accompanied by two men among the most honourable, one of whom seemed to be an elderly man and another one a young man. They were also carrying candles and, after having saluted the Guardian, they continued on their way. At that moment the Guardian was truly marvelling at this vision, and he spoke to the lady and said: "O lady, I beg you for the love of Him who died for us, that you deign to tell me who are you and who are all these persons who are accompanying you, and who have passed in front of me. Who do they represent and where are they going?" The mature-looking lady smiled gracefully and said: "I am the Mother of Christ, and this elderly man, who is here with me, is Peter the Apostle, while the younger man is John the Evangelist. The first crowd of people you saw dressed in red robes are the Martyrs, the second crowd of people are the Confessors, and the third crowd of people are the Virgins. The ten men whom you saw in the fourth place are the other Apostles of Christ. We are all going to Antioch to take with us the soul of a certain brother of your Order who will die tomorrow at the hour of Tierce, in order to accompany his soul when it goes out of his body and take it with us to the glory of heaven. After eight days we will return to this place and we shall render the same honours to the soul of another brother who will die, in order to present it to the Creator." After having said these words, that vision disappeared.

After the hour of Matins, the Guardian immediately sent two friars to Antioch, so that they would diligently ask whether there was a sick brother, according to what that vision had indicated. Since the command of the Guardian had been urgent, those two brothers hurried to the friary in Antioch and they truly found a certain friar who was in agony. When the hour of Tierce had come, in front of these two brothers who were present, that brother passed away from this present life. So they returned to the Guardian and told him everything they had seen. The same Guardian then convoked all the brothers, and he narrated to them the vision he had and [283] told them what the Virgin had promised regarding that brother who lived in that place, namely that she would return after eight days and transfer his soul to heaven with great honours. He then said: "Therefore, my

most dear brothers, let us all prepare ourselves with a pure confession and devotion, since one of us will surely die, as I am profoundly convinced." In this way, all those brothers prepared themselves for death with the greatest devotion. And behold, after eight days the Guardian, after having said Mass, began to feel a throbbing pain in his head. That illness increased in intensity and at the hour of Sext he also died, and entered from the heavenly gates with that multitude as had been shown to him. It was brothers James and Rainerio of Montepulciano, who told this story. They were members of that conventual community, and were entirely trustworthy witnesses.

Brother John, the Minister General, composed a devout treatise entitled: *The Exchange of Poverty*.¹⁶⁶ In this treatise he shows how blessed Francis diligently sought Lady Poverty, and when he found her she invited him to be her spouse. In this work John uses many devout parables and enigmatic declarations.

During the times of this General there lived a most perfect man, namely brother James of Massa, who was a lay brother from the Tuscany Province. Regarding him, the holy brother Giles of Assisi, together with brother Matthew of Montone, brother Juniper and brother Lucidus, who were all very holy men, used to say that God opened all the doors of his mysteries to brother James, and that nobody in the entire world had a higher knowledge of the revelation of divine realities than him.¹⁶⁷

It happened once, that brother James, during the time in which brother John of Parma was General of the Order, was rapt into God while praying and remained rapt in this ecstasy for three days, suspended from any bodily feeling, and he remained there so unaware that the brothers began to wonder if he was dead. After this

166 This is a reference to the allegory *Sacrum Commercium Sancti Francisci cum Domina Paupertate* (The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty). Scholars still debate as to its date of composition. The translators in FAED I, 529-554 opt for the years 1237-1239. Various authors have been suggested, among them John Parenti, Anthony of Padua, Bonaventure, Caesar of Speyer and, in this case Arnald of Sarrant suggests it was John of Parma, since the treatise seems to be sympathetic to the cause of the *Zelanti* in the Order.

167 *Fioretti*, c. 48 (FAED III, 646-648). The same episode occurs in the fourth tribulation of the Order, as narrated by Angelo Clareno, *Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations*, 118-120.

ecstatic experience, brother Matthew, who at the time was Minister of the Marches, commanded James by the vow of obedience to reveal what he had seen during his ecstasy. At last, James said that God had revealed to him the future state of the militant Church. He saw in a vision a beautiful and very large tree. Its roots were golden, and its fruit were all friars Minor, while its main branches were divided according to the number of the Provinces of the Order, and each branch had as many brothers as there were in the Province designated for that branch. And the aforementioned brother James then knew the number of all the brothers of the Order and of each Province, and also their names, their ages, their conditions, their important duties, their dignities, and the graces of all, their merits and their faults. [284] And he saw brother John of Parma, who was General at that time, at the tip of the middle branch of this tree; and on the tips of the branches around this middle branch were the Ministers of all the Provinces. And after this he saw Christ sitting on a very large, dazzling white throne, and Christ called Saint Francis and gave him a chalice full of the spirit of life and ordered him: "Go and visit your brothers and give them to drink of this chalice of the spirit of life, because the spirit of Satan will rise up against them and strike them, and many of them will fall and will not rise up again."

And so Saint Francis came to that tree to offer the chalice of life beginning from brother John of Parma, who took it and quickly and devoutly drank it all, and immediately became all shining like the sun. And after him Saint Francis offered it to all the other brothers, and there were few of them who would take it and drink it all with proper reverence and devotion. Those few who took it devoutly and drank it all quickly became as bright as the sun; and those who poured it out and did not take it with devotion became black and dark and deformed like demons, and horrible to see. Those who drank some and poured out some of its contents, became part shining and part shadowy, more or less according to the amount they drank or poured out. But brother John was resplendent beyond all the others, he who had most fully drunk the chalice of life, and so he contemplated most deeply that abyss of the infinite divine light, and in this he understood the adversity and the storm which was to arise against that tree, breaking and displacing its branches. Because of this that same brother John left the top of the branch on which he was standing and, descending below all the branches he hid himself at the foot of

the tree's trunk and stayed there, very pensive. And brother Bonaventure, who had taken some from the chalice and had poured out some, went up onto that branch to the place from which brother John had come down. And while he was standing in that place, his fingernails became fingernails of iron, sharp and cutting like razors; and at this he moved from the place to which he had climbed, and with force and fury tried to throw himself against that same brother John to harm him. But brother John, seeing this, cried out loudly and entrusted himself to Christ: and Christ, at his cry, called Saint Francis and gave him a sharp flint, and told him to go and cut brother Bonaventure's fingernails, and brother John was thus able to remain in his place resplendent as the sun. When this was done, a windstorm arose and struck the tree so hard that the brothers fell from it to the ground; and the first to fall from it were those who poured out the whole chalice of the spirit of life, and they were carried off by the ministers of darkness to dark and painful places. But those who had drunk the whole chalice were transported by the angels to a place of life and eternal light and blessed splendour.

Brother James, who saw this vision, knew and discerned specifically and distinctly all that he was seeing, regarding the names, the conditions and the status of each with clarity. And that storm lasted long enough that the tree fell and was carried away by the wind. And then, as soon as the storm ended, from the tree's root, which was golden, another tree sprung up, all of gold, which produced golden leaves and fruit, [285] which exceeded all the fruits of the first tree regarding fecundity, fragrance, virtue and beauty. The same brother James added that, after the Order, regarding its reformation, met with great tribulations which had been clearly predicted by blessed Francis, and had been reduced nearly to naught, because of persistent sins, there would come a time when it would be reformed in a marvellous way to resemble its pristine state. For the Spirit of Christ would choose uneducated youths without a guide, simple, lowly, contemptible persons lacking any example or teacher, persons in fact who were opposed to the views and behaviour of the teachers. He would fill them with holy fear and the purest love of Christ. And when he had many of such people in various places, he would send them a guide and leader, entirely divine, entirely holy, innocent and in conformity with Christ and to blessed Francis.

In that same Province there are buried many friars, who enlightened the whole region of Tuscany in various times with their holiness and miracles. In Florence is buried brother Umile from Perugia, who was famous for many miracles, and who entered the Order through a divine admonition. In fact, when he was already very famous for his holiness, Christ appeared to him and commanded him to enter the Order. So he asked Christ what kind of life he was to lead in the Order, and Christ answered him: "Keep steadfast to community life and escape from the brothers, and do not judge anybody regarding his deeds."

Brother Accursius is also buried in that place.¹⁶⁸ He was perfect in excessive piety and shone with many miracles. Among other events regarding his life, he was once ministering as a nurse to the sick brothers in the same friary of Florence, and was dedicating a long time to prayer in the chapel, when the blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him, together with Saint Anthony of Padua and another brother, who was called Placidus. While brother Accursius was thus consoled in an indescribable way during that familiar dialogue, he heard [286] one of the sick brothers calling him to come and nurse him. So he was filled with great compassion, and decided to leave the Virgin Mother of God, and ran to the sick brother and administered to him the care of which he was in need. The blessed Mary was grateful for what he had done, and she remained there to console him with her sweet words. – In the same friary is also buried the lay brother Benedict from Mugello, who shone with great miracles.

In Arezzo is buried brother Benedict, who is said to have been led by an Angel to the garden of delights, from which the first man was expelled. He was also a companion of the holy Father Francis. In Massa is buried brother Bernard,¹⁶⁹ who was famous for many miracles, and also the same brother James of Massa, who was a man of unique holiness.

On the sacred Mountain of La Verna is buried the most perfect friar John of La Verna, or of Fermo,¹⁷⁰ whose life we shall narrate

¹⁶⁸ In the friary of Santa Croce in Florence.

¹⁶⁹ Wadding says that he died on 15th October 1241.

¹⁷⁰ John of Fermo or La Verna (1259-1322) entered the Order when he was only thirteen years old, in 1272. He spent much of his life in the hermitages of the Marches of Ancona and Fermo. He eventually moved to La Verna, where he died. He was beatified in 1880.

further down in due time. The other friars who are also buried there, include brother William, who was a lay brother from Radicofani.¹⁷¹ Once a great fire appeared on his head, while he was praying fervently. Brother Clement, a man perfect in all holiness, is also buried there.

In Montalcino¹⁷² is buried the lay brother Philip. Among the other miracles he worked [he accomplished the following miracle, that is,] that during the transfer of his bodily remains it was raining heavily, but not one drop of water fell upon those who were carrying his relics. Brother Roland of Florence is also buried there.¹⁷³ While he was praying, he was assured that the crown of eternal life had been prepared for him.

The Minister General, brother John, on the occasion of the convocation of the general chapter at Rome, in the year of the Lord 1256, starting from the feast of the Incarnation, or else in the year of the Lord 1257, for those who compute the year from the Nativity, on the feast of the Purification of the blessed Mary, in the presence of [287] the lord Pope Alexander IV – who governed the Order as Protector, since he had been bishop of Ostia, and when he became Pope he did not want to give this office to anyone, but retained it for himself – with all kinds of persistent arguments, tried to be absolved from the office of Minister General, because he considered himself inadequate.¹⁷⁴ Neither the insistent appeals of the general chapter,

¹⁷¹ Radicofani is a town in the province of Siena. Brother William died on 17th May 1241.

¹⁷² Montalcino is town in the province of Siena.

¹⁷³ He died 27th October 1241.

¹⁷⁴ R. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 270-271: "When Gerard's book was condemned as heretical on 23 October 1255 Alexander IV ordered the bishop of Paris to proceed with the utmost circumspection so that no blame or dishonour should attach to the Order because of it. The Pope also forbore to incriminate or condemn along with Gerard's extravagances the genuine utterances of Joachim of Flora that had inspired them. Nevertheless John of Parma's manifest Joachimism could not but be regarded now as somewhat discreditable and the Pope intimated to him privately that he wished him to resign. Once this had been said to him John felt he could not continue in office any longer, and he summoned the General Chapter to meet early so that he could lay down his charge as soon as possible. The brothers assembled at Rome on 2 February 1257, in the presence of the Pope, and John announced his intention to abdicate. So popular was he that the Ministers refused to accept his resignation and argued and pleaded with him for a whole day, and

nor those of the Pope or the other Cardinals could make him go back from his decision.¹⁷⁵ The chapter therefore continued for two days in this process, until finally the capitulars had to proceed to elect another Minister. John therefore resigned humbly from office while he was reverently present in front of the proceedings of the chapter, not because there was any sense of contempt regarding him, but because he regarded himself inadequate to continue carrying out the duties of his office.

Brother Peregrinus of Bologna says in his Chronicle that, when this General returned from the legation sent to Greece, many friars who were his adversaries accused him in front of the lord Pope Alexander. The same Pope therefore commanded him in secret to renounce to his office and not to accept in any way the decision of the Ministers, if they wanted him to hold on to it. Brother Peregrinus

at length John had to explain to Peregrinus of Bologna, who was acting as intermediary, that he was not free to accede to their desires on account of Papal objections. The Ministers had then no choice but to release him, but as a mark of their confidence in him they requested him to designate his successor. 'Father, you have visited the Order and know the character and condition of the brethren; assign us one suitable brother, whom we may appoint to this office in your stead.' John promptly nominated St Bonaventure, saying that in the whole Order he knew of none better than he, and the Ministers agreed to elect him forthwith."

175 *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, Translation by J.L. Baird, 309: "Brother John of Parma was elected Minister General in the general chapter held at Lyons in 1247, in the month of August, with Pope Innocent IV in attendance. And he ruled the Order laudably for ten years. He hastened the end of the last general chapter that he presided over, because he no longer wished, by any means, to remain Minister General. This chapter was held in Rome, during the feast of the Purification in the year of the Lord 1257. And the business of this chapter was completely stalled for one whole day because the Ministers, the Custodians, and the Delegates did not want to allow him to step down from his office. Finally, Brother John went into the chapter meeting and made known his full desire according to his understanding of the situation. Then, seeing the anguish of his spirit, those whose duty it was to see to elections, said to him, though against their will, 'Father, you have travelled throughout the Order and you know the ways of all the Brothers very well indeed; therefore, you select a suitable Brother to succeed you.' And immediately he selected Brother Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, saying that he knew not a better man in the entire Order. And they all immediately agreed, and Bonaventure was elected. But they asked Brother John to continue to preside over this his last chapter, and it was so done. And Brother Bonaventure ruled for seventeen years and did many good works."

told me personally: "I was acting as an intermediary in the chapter between him and the Ministers."¹⁷⁶

The lord Pope not only honoured this chapter with his presence, but he also preached to the friars and filled them with many sweet blessings. He absolved the friars who were present and those who were absent, and imparted to them a plenary indulgence of their sins. If, by chance, he had not extended his provident arm to concede a full indulgence, he ratified and confirmed it with his full powers. He called the Ministers to his own room in the Lateran palace and spoke to them in very familiar tones, and thus demonstrated [288] the great affection he had for the Order. The Reverend Cardinals also showed great familiarity and grace towards the Order. These facts are narrated by brother Bernard of Besse, who asserts that he was present in that chapter.

Therefore, after the venerable father John had governed the Order in a provident way for 8 years,¹⁷⁷ as had been foretold by brother John of Massa in his revelation, John descended from the fortress of the generalate in order to stay in a more secure way as a humble subject in a stronger edifice. – Brother Peregrinus of Bologna says in his Chronicle, that he remained in office for 9 or 10 years. Both possibilities can be verified, since he governed the Order for 8 complete years and beyond; in fact, from Pentecost until the feast of the Purification of the blessed Mary there is a space of seven months.¹⁷⁸

There was once in England a certain friar, who was a very capable preacher, and was a great researcher in philosophy and theology. According to the polished style of a great scholar, he was preparing himself to preach a sermon by making use of philosophical arguments. But while he was praying during the night Christ appeared to him holding a most beautiful book, written in beautiful golden characters; on its margins, however, the book was covered with mud stains which were foul smelling, while the book's cover was ugly to see. When that brother was asking Christ, among other things, why

176 The accusations against John of Parma were those of being sympathetic to the cause of the *Zelanti*, especially in their upholding the apocalyptic doctrines of Joachim of Fiore.

177 In fact, John of Parma governed the Order for 10 years (1247-1257).

178 John was elected on Pentecost, 19th May 1247, and resigned from office on the feast of the Purification, 2nd February 1257.

that book was so ugly and yet so beautiful to behold, Christ answered him: "The golden letters indicate the words of theological truth, the foul smelling mud stains indicate the sayings of philosophers, the exterior ugliness indicates the appearance of curiosity in study, by which you deform my words in many ways." So that friar came to his senses, and immediately changed the theme of his sermon. He laid aside all his sophisticated words and style, and was only content to make use of Holy Scripture and the doctrine and sayings of the saints, while he abandoned once and for all the philosophical doctrine in his sermons.

Another friar left the Order and entered into the Order of Cistercian monks, since he wanted to make progress in it.¹⁷⁹ But he was immediately blinded and could not even go up to the altar. When he was telling the monks that he had become blind and they did not want to believe him, they took him close to a hole and left him alongside it. That friar went towards the hole and fell down headlong in it, and therefore showed them plainly that he had become blind. So the monks told him: "Brother, return [289] back to your Order, since the Lord strongly wants you to end your days in it." As soon as he did this, that brother immediately regained his eyesight.

One of the companions of Saint Francis told the story of a certain Spanish friar who, while he was with Saint Francis praying for a long time, had told him that during his prayers Christ had revealed three things to him regarding the Order: firstly, that no true friar Minor would die as a damned man while wearing his habit; secondly, that even if the whole world would suffer hunger, the friars, although they would have to suffer poverty, for as long as they would have trust in Christ, he will always provide for their needs; thirdly, that even if the Order will have to go through many tribulations, Christ will finally protect it.

It happened then, that while these things were being discussed among the friars, one brother did not believe what he was hearing, and he said that he would never believe in the first promise. After

179 Gregory IX had published a Bulla, *Quo vos in Christo*, in Perugia on 19th May 1235, in which he prohibited the Cistercian monks from receiving friars Minor in their Order without leave from the Pope himself or from the General Minister. He also commanded them to compel those friars who had entered their Order to return to the Order of friars Minor.

some days that unbelieving brother miserably left the Order by himself and escaped. Two friars went out to follow him, and they saw that he was being followed by an ugly and horrible-looking dog that was running at his heels. Those brothers therefore began to call him, and warn him to be aware of the dog. He looked back and saw the friars behind him, and left his habit and cord on the ground and continued to flee. The dog, however, had not dared touch him when he was still wearing the habit as a friar. Now the dog flung itself against him as if he was a man without any protection, and it began to attack him and maul him with its jaws, biting him on the neck, and before the friars could reach him he had suffocated.

This same General brother John of Parma, used to celebrate Mass every morning. When he was staying in a certain friary, there was a young friar, who was very devout, and who would go down very early in the morning to the church, so that he would assist the General while he celebrated Mass. Once it happened that the young friar was very tired after having prayed Matins, and fell asleep at dawn. Brother John therefore went looking for him, but he could not find him. In the meantime he continued waiting for him, and prayed the hour of Prime and began to prepare himself to celebrate Mass. And behold an Angel of the Lord came to him under the appearance of that young friar, and served him very solicitously and devoutly at Mass. When John had finished celebrating Mass that young friar was still asleep, and it seemed to him that brother John was calling him for the third time. So he woke up all in a hurry and went to him and said: "Father, do you want to celebrate Mass?" So when brother John heard that young friar who explained to him that he had been asleep up till that moment, he realised that it was the Angel of the Lord who had served him at Mass, since that young friar was sound asleep, tired as he had been from the long time he had spent in prayer. And especially because of his singular diligence and devotion, which he demonstrated when serving Mass, and because of the great spiritual consolation which brother John had felt, he was changed in such a way that he increased in holiness more than ever before.

How a man who was devout to the Order was mercifully freed from death

During that same time a marvellous event occurred, as broth-

er John the Englishman¹⁸⁰ narrated. He had been sent by Pope Innocent IV as a Legate in England, [290], and was a most trustworthy man. He said therefore that a certain Abbot and an archdeacon from the region of Aquitaine used to meet every year during the hot summer months, and leaving the low lying plains they would go up to the mountains. Once they went up as was their custom, and during the night they had to sleep in a solitary place, that is, a derelict church, since its walls were crumbling down. After they had supper in this church, and prepared their beds, they went to sleep. The archdeacon, who had a particular devotion to blessed Francis and his Order and who used to go to confession to the friars Minor, had the following vision.

He saw that the universal judgment was prepared, and that Christ was the judge. He separated the good from the evil ones, and placed them respectively on his right and on his left. Since he saw that the Abbot with his servants and arms bearers were all placed on the left, he was very afraid. And he also saw that, when Christ pronounced the judgment, the demons condemned the Abbot and dragged him in hell and with him they dragged all his servants and arms bearers, who had been placed on the left, and whom he knew very well. In the meantime the devils began tormenting him with terrible and fearful sentiments. In fact, since the archdeacon was fat, one of the devils took him by his belly and tried to drag him away from his bed. Another devil also came to take him away, but he saw that the friar, to whom he used to go for confession, freed him from the hands of the demons. When he woke up he found himself out of his bed and was very afraid. So he went into his bed once again and slept. For a second time he was dragged away from his bed and was again freed by that friar. When he woke and found himself again out of his bed, he was shaken with fear, and he woke up his companions and told them: "Hurry up, let us go, and wake up the Abbot in order to go away from this place, since it is not good to stay in this place."

When the arms bearers went to wake up the Abbot they found him dead, together with two servants. The archdeacon, therefore,

¹⁸⁰ Brother John of Reading was the first visitor in Germany in 1229 and became Minister Provincial of Saxony in 1230-1232. With the letter *Quotidiana persecutionis instantia* of 12th October 1246, Pope Innocent IV sent him as Apostolic Nuncio to England, and recommended him to John of Hereford, Abbot of Saint Albans, in the diocese of Lincoln.

turned towards God in conversion, he gave orders regarding all his belongings, and distributed them to the poor, and then he went to the friars Minor and begged them humbly to accept him in haste in the Order. Since there was nobody who could accept him, although his reception was of great edification for all, out of devotion the friars were immediately drawn to accept him that very moment, and they gave him the habit of the Order. While he was narrating what had happened to him, he called his two arms bearers and giving to each of them his wages, he instructed them to go and make penance, since he had seen that they had been placed on the left. And he also wrote to many of his friends and relatives, clerics and other persons, whom he saw placed on the left, so that they would do penance for their sins. And what else can we say? Those two arms bearers began to fight over the offering, which the archdeacon had made to each one of them, [291] until they drew out their swords and killed one another. All the others, who were on the left hand side and did not make acts of penance, died within that same year a sudden death or perished in other fearful ways. Those, instead, who served God, concluded their life in a praiseworthy manner.

A similar story happened in Germany, and we shall recount it here. There were in Germany three Provosts¹⁸¹ or Priors, who used to invite one another for lunch by turns. One summer day it happened that one of them invited all the others for lunch. The one who invited the others was very devout towards Saint Francis and was a good friend of the friars. When they had eaten and were satisfied, they prepared their beds, and went to sleep in their individual rooms. And behold, the one who invited the others had the following dream.

He saw that the last judgment was prepared and that Christ appeared as a judge bearing the wounds of His passion. He was assisted by his ministers and was ready to pass judgment. Christ told his ministers: "Call to me that Prior," that is, one of those who had been invited for lunch. Christ then told him: "*Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer*" (Lk 16:2; Mt 18:32). That Prior was dumbfounded. Then Christ told his ministers: "Take him and cut his head off, and throw

¹⁸¹ The Latin term is *Praepositos*, which would indicate a Prelate at the head of a capitular chapter.

him in the infernal darkness.” As soon as they had done this, they called the second one. Christ said to him: “*You wicked servant, draw up an account of your stewardship. How did you get in here, and how did you take care of your administration?*” (Mt 25:26; 22:12). He also remained silent, and after receiving the sentence, he was also condemned like the first one to have his head cut and thrown into hell. When this was done, the one who was dreaming was gripped by a horrible fear. When he also was called to appear in judgment before Christ, he was despairing regarding his salvation, but nevertheless he began imploring in his heart Saint Francis to come and help him. Thus, trembling before the Judge, he heard Christ telling him: “*You lazy and dishonest servant, draw up an account of your stewardship.*” That Prior did not dare answer anything to the Judge, but continued to plead with Saint Francis.

So Christ said to His ministers: “Cut off his head and throw him in hell, since *every one of his delights and orgies is to be matched by torture or grief*” (Apoc 18:7). When that Prior was being tormented with terrible sufferings, he did not cease imploring Saint Francis to come and help him. So blessed Francis went and prostrated himself in front of Christ and told him: “My holy Lord, you are just, merciful and benign, have mercy on this Prior, since he honours me for your sake and loves my brothers very much. Give him the grace to do penance for his sins.” Christ immediately welcomed that petition. So the Prior’s sentence was suspended and he immediately woke up from his sleep. He called his servants and full of fear told one of them: “Go in haste and wake up the other Priors.” Those went and began knocking on the doors, but nobody answered. So the Prior, who was the proprietor of the place, ordered them to knock down the doors. When they entered they found both Priors dead. When that Prior understood the vision he had, he disposed of all his belongings and entered the Order of friars Minor, where he learnt how to repay and give an account for all his faults, and he progressed in all sanctity. I myself, who am narrating this story, have seen him and heard it from his very mouth.

[292] A nearly similar story was told by brother Raymond, bishop of Vence in Bohemia,¹⁸² where he had been Minister for five

¹⁸² The diocese of Vence (Venenensis) did not exist in Bohemia, but in Provence, in France, where Raymond was made bishop in 1328, after having been bishop in Ventimiglia, and where he had also been Minister Provincial.

years. The story occurred in that place, according to what a certain friar had revealed to him. In those regions there was the custom that clerics would invite one another to lunch and put on masks. It happened once, that a certain Provost invited other three Provosts, and these remained to sleep in his house. When they went to sleep, the one who invited the other Prelates, and who was a great enemy of the friars Minor, and ridiculed and persecuted them, began to toss and turn and snore loudly in bed. In that deep sleep he had the following dream.

He saw that there was Christ who was coming to judge the whole world. That judgment was carried out according to the customs of that region, from where the Provost was coming. Indeed, when someone was condemned by the secular tribunal, the judge would command to place a circle on the ground, and according to the quality and quantity of his misdeeds, the culprit who was condemned has to place his foot under that circle. The Provost saw that Christ also commanded to have a circle placed and He was seated in the tribunal, called his ministers and told them: “Bring here that Prelate.” One of the Prelates who had been invited for supper was brought forth. He was compelled to place his foot under that circle. When he had done that Christ said: “Take him out and let him do penance for two months, otherwise cut off his head.” The second Provost was brought forth, he also placed his foot in the circle, and like the one before him, he was condemned to spend a number of months in penance, and if he would omit to do so, his head would be cut off. When the third Provost was led in front of Christ and his foot was placed under the circle, Christ told his ministers: “Cut off his head this very moment.”

When he saw this, the Provost who had the dream, was terrified, since he knew that he was more guilty than the other three. When they compelled him to place his foot under the circle, he believed that he would receive the sentence to have his head cut off that very moment. So blessed Francis prostrated himself before the Judge and said: “Lord, you commanded us to pray for our persecutors. Since this man has been a great persecutor of my Order, according to your command, I now beg you not to let them cut off his head, but to give him time for repentance.” Christ accepted his petition, and gave the Provost six months, during which he had to make penance under the guidance of the Order of friars Minor, otherwise he would also be condemned to have his head cut off. When that vision disap-

peared, the Provost came back to his senses, and he woke up his servants and said: "I have worked very hard this night, since I have seen many things, and that is why I was tossing and turning in bed because of fear; go and wake up the Provosts right now." When they came to the room of the Provost whose head had been cut off, they could not go in, until they had broken down the door, and then they entered and saw him dead with great gaping wounds in his throat, as if his head had been cut off.

[293] When the Provost saw that vision, since he did not intend to make penance especially in an Order that he hated so much – and if he did penance he also had to wait for his last day – he did not want to indicate to the other Provosts the vision which he had, since he considered it a shame for him not to do penance, while the others would repent. Therefore, when the days assigned for their penance passed, they died according to the sentence of the Judge. When he saw this, that Provost was afraid. Nevertheless he refrained from doing penance in the Order until the very last day of the six months assigned to him. On that day he came to the friars Minor and said: "Give me your habit, since it is necessary for me to become a brother among you." The brothers believed that he was just making fun of them, and they sent him back. But he told them: "I need to fall in the hands of those whom I hated." He therefore narrated the vision to them, and they received him in the Order. Since he was very fat and incapable of hard work, the Lord comforted him by making him so robust, that one day, as Bishop Raymond narrated, he walked without any fatigue the long distance of nine leagues to come and see him. He used to say, among other things, that if God did not give him any other grace, except the one He had given him to be able to work and to take away his obesity, this would have been enough. Thus he lived a praiseworthy life in the Order and also died honourably.

Note, therefore, as I say, with what solicitude God realised what He promised when He called some of the friars who became anxious to serve blessed Francis. In fact, He called some to the Order by instilling fear in them, others He called through visions, others through spiritual food, and others through eternal food. God saved some by making them go through temptations, others who suffered ridicule from men, while others who suffered tribulations. All this becomes evident in what I have just written and in what I will write, although it has not been possible for me to find all the details regard-

ing the times that these events occurred. I will present other similar stories further down at the opportune time.

How God called some to the Order through frightening experiences

It happened that in Paris there was an impure cleric of loose morals, but he was famous for his learning, especially for this knowledge of philosophy. Now this cleric became very seriously sick. His companions tried to persuade him to go to confession and to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist. But since he was a hard-hearted man, he refused to do this. So his companions went to a very devout friar Minor and called him, pleading him to come and convince that man to show contrition for his sins, since it was clear that he would soon die. That friar immediately came and tried to persuade him to show repentance, but the sick man shoved him away as if he were desperate. So that friar returned to his friary and prostrated himself in front of the Crucifix, and began to pray God with great devotion for that sick man. That very moment, God looked down upon that sick cleric, and he saw a deep and open well close to his bed. From that well he saw a dragon coming up, which had its mouth wide open and exhaled fire and sulphur, and which seemed to want to devour the sick man. That sick cleric began to tremble with terror, and when he looked up in heaven he saw Jesus in the air, as if He were crucified, and the aforementioned friar who was praying at His feet. That very moment God deigned to have mercy upon that sick man. [294] Christ told him: "Go to confession and I will not refuse to forgive you." When the sick man heard these words, he was consoled. He came to his senses, and full of sweetness began to request the possibility of going to confession. So his companions immediately sent to bring that friar. When the cleric had confessed all his sins, he was healed that very instant, and entered into the Order of friars Minor. He lived a most holy and famous life in the Order.

In the Province of Burgundy there was a certain friar who lived a most perfect life, and who was called to enter the Order in the following circumstances. There lived in those regions a certain nobleman. He had a daughter who was devout towards the blessed Mary,

and who had vowed to consecrate her virginity to her. She would normally pray with great fervour and serve God diligently in the chapel of a certain hospice. Her father had a shield-bearer, who without her knowing anything, burned with an illicit desire for that virgin. One summer her father had to go away from the house with some other persons in another property which he possessed. He left his daughter behind in the house, because she wanted to continue living according to her vow, in order not to disturb her in her prayers. Then the shield-bearer was drawn to sin by the devil. He found an excuse to return back home, since he believed that it was the right occasion to satisfy his lustful desires. He found that virgin in the chapel, while she was devoutly praying to the Virgin Mary. So he began to speak lovingly to her and to express his impure desires and will to her. She was astonished and was terrified when she realised what he wanted. So she drove him away with indignation and scolded him with very harsh words. But he was burning with the spirit of lust, and drawing his sword he vowed that, if she would not consent to what he wanted, he would immediately cut her head off. So she presented to him her slender throat and said: "I would rather loose this present life, than be tainted with the offence of going against the vow I have made to the blessed Virgin." So that miserable man was full of rage, and he turned towards her and cut her head off. Terrified by what he had done, he ran to the Prior of that village, who was his paternal uncle, and who was preparing to celebrate Mass. He narrated to him what he had done. The Prior was very sad by what he heard, but he advised him to go and hide himself, until he would finish saying Mass.

In the meantime the Guardian Angel of that virgin came to her and joined again the severed head to her body, but left around her neck a golden thread, as the sign of the place where the head had been cut off and then miraculously joined to the body. So that young virgin arose, and after thanking the blessed Mary she went to the church according to her custom. When the Prior turned round to receive the offerings at Mass, he saw that virgin sitting in her usual place, and standing to come to give her offering. So he was astonished, since he believed that it was the devil in person who was appearing to him under the guise of that woman. So he received her offering with great fear, and after Mass, he called that virgin to him and asked her to tell him what had happened to her. When he asked her to speak, and she revealed all the truth, the Prior marvelled at such a miracle, and he

asked her to deign to forgive his nephew for what he had done. She answered: "I will forgive his unjust act on my part, but Christ and his Mother will have to vindicate and justify him at the end."

So the Prior called the shield-bearer, and he prostrated himself in front of that virgin and humbly asked her to forgive him. She said to him: "If you will not do penance and enter into a religious Order, in order to serve God in it for the rest of your days, you will soon feel very close to you the anger of God and of his most sweet [295] Mother." He answered: "Lady, I am ready to enter into whatever Religious Order you want me to, and there to serve the blessed Mary, who guides you in your life, and whom I have so seriously offended." The virgin then said: "If you will do this, I will pray God for you so that He will forgive you your offence. I therefore want you to enter the Order of friars Minor, but before doing so you are to go and confess your sins." The man immediately went and entered into the Order of the friars and there he lived a most exemplary life in front of everybody. That virgin remained steadfast in her virginity, and she always carried the aforementioned mark on her throat.

Another cleric who lived in Achaia, a city of Romania,¹⁸³ was also called to enter the Order in a similar occasion, drawn by divine fear. He used to live with a certain man who practiced usury, and who had accumulated great wealth. The cleric kept the accounts of this man. Once the one who practiced usury became seriously ill, and it was obvious that he could not regain his health. So that cleric admonished him to confess and take care to ordain his possessions by giving alms. But that man not only despised this advice, he attacked the cleric with many insults. The cleric brought to him a priest who was a curate. The man who practiced usury, however, showed contempt towards the words of that priest and did not show any patience in listening to what he was telling him for the benefit of the salvation of his own soul. When he was nearing death, that cleric and many others who were present, heard him saying these words coming from the interior of his soul: "O my soul, I see that you want to depart from me, when you should enjoy the good things you have acquired, since

¹⁸³ Achaia lies in the north-western section of the region of the Peloponnoese in southern Greece, where the city of Patra is situated. In medieval times, the name Romania designated also the Greek peninsula. The Franciscans had a Province of Romania, which included modern Greece.

you have acquired them with hard work, and now, when you should begin thinking of resting, you are going to deprive yourself of them. But now I tell you, that you will not take with you not even ten pounds, since you will not be able to take anything with you. It has been a long time, in fact, that you have reserved them and kept them in your purse. And I will now be snatched by God, from whom you have withheld all your belongings." Having said this, he raised his eyes to heaven and that miserable man began to blaspheme against God and to spit from his mouth. But when he opened his mouth in order to blaspheme, a great flame of fire went out of his mouth, and it seemed that it was going to burn that house and the entire village. In this way the soul of that man was taken away from this world to the infernal flame of the Gehenna in hell. When the cleric, who was standing there, witnessed this event, he began to tremble with a divine fear and that very moment he entered the Order of friars Minor.

Regarding the conversion of brother Troyllus the German

There was in Germany a certain knight whose name was Troyllus, who was also led to enter the Order out of divine fear. He had a certain cousin who was a noble lady, but because of a hidden judgment of God, she was obsessed by the devil. It was evident that before she had been a good and devout woman, but she was now going through purgatory in order to expiate her sins. The surprising fact was that, every time she and her husband performed the marital act, she was not vexed at all from receiving the power of the Sacrament of matrimony. She would also come willingly and freely to the church and hear Mass. Once it happened that she was going out of the church. There were many secular persons there, among whom a certain Jew, who had met in front of the church. And behold that the priest was carrying the body of Christ [296] to take communion to a sick person. When they saw him, the obsessed woman and the other persons, who were standing there, except for the Jew, knelt down and showed reverence to the body of Christ. The Jew, however, remained standing up without showing any sign of reverence. That very moment, the obsessed woman began to hit him strongly on the face with her hand and to tell him: "O you miserable man, why don't you show reverence towards the Lord God the Creator of all?" The Jew answered her:

"There are many gods, because in every altar there is one, every time that a Mass is celebrated, even though there should not exist if not one true God."¹⁸⁴

The devil [in the woman] therefore took a sieve and placed it between himself and the sun, and said to the Jew: "Can you now see that there are as many rays as there are holes in this sieve?" He answered: "Certainly." And the devil continued: "And can you therefore say that there are as many suns?" The Jew answered: "No." The demon therefore answered: "The same thing happens in the Sacrament of the altar, since God is indivisible and invariable in all places, but the faithful can communicate everywhere they are to be found and partake at the Sacrament of His altar." The Jew withdrew confused and corrected.

After this it happened that the aforementioned knight Troyllus one evening committed a crime in a certain village, in which that demoniac woman was living. He, in fact, stole many animals and gave a hard time to the men who were living in that village. The following morning Troyllus went to visit that demoniac woman, who was his cousin. As soon as she saw him, she immediately received him gladly and said: "Welcome to our friend; you are now one of us, since this night you have delighted in doing things which we like doing also." When Troyllus began to consider these words, and realised that they referred to the crimes and stealing which he had committed the night before, he began to think that the woman could not possibly know the truth, if not through the action of an evil spirit who would reveal it to her. So he was terrified and confused, and went immediately to confess all his sins to the priest. After having made satisfaction, he returned to the demoniac. This time she was in no hurry to welcome him like before. Troyllus began to ask her whether she knew him. She answered, that she did know him, but not as before. The knight began to think that he had not yet confessed his sin. So he went to the friars Minor and confessed in a more perfect way that he had before. When he returned to the demoniac and asked her whether she knew him, she answered that she had heard good things concerning him. He therefore thought that he still had to make a perfect confession.

¹⁸⁴ This seemingly anti-Semitic event has to be read within the historical background of the 14th century, during which it was written. Anti-Jewish sentiment among Christians was taken for granted, in the same way that the "infidels" or Saracens were regarded as enemies of the Christian faith.

Driven by a divine fear, he entered the Order of friars Minor and again confessed his sins in a most perfect way. After this he returned to the demoniac. When he asked her, as before, whether she knew him, the demoniac answered that she did not know him and had never seen him before. Troyllus said to her: "But you certainly know me, since I have come other times to visit you, and I am your cousin." She answered him: "I recognise you as my cousin, but not as my friend." Therefore he was perfectly converted and lived a most praiseworthy life in the Order and then departed from this present life. That very morning when he died, two friars were returning from another region to the friary where he had died. When they were still walking early in the morning, they heard in a certain wood the voices of demons who were flying in the air and uttering these words: "Troyllus has been snatched away from us, he has been taken away." The friars were terrified when they heard these voices, and they hurried to the friary, and they came to know that brother Troyllus had migrated to the Lord the very hour they had heard those voices. – Therefore note that there are three Sacraments, [297] namely Matrimony, Eucharist and Penance, and consequently the approval of the Order of Saint Francis, in which Troyllus entered, and through which the demons lost all control upon him.

We have read another story regarding how a man entered this Order out of divine fear. There was a certain cleric who was a student in Paris. He had a maternal uncle who was a Bishop, and whom he loved greatly. This Bishop then died, but since he was a carnal and venal man, that cleric felt very sorry for him, and would have liked to know everything regarding him, namely, whether he was damned or saved. In order to get his information he went to consult a sorcerer of necromancy, who lived in Paris. The man who practiced necromancy answered that he was not very good in getting him the knowledge he wanted, but since the cleric had such a great desire to know, he sent him to a certain master of magic in Toulouse, and told him that if he arrived on that same day at the hour of None, he would certainly acquire the information he was asking for. That cleric immediately answered that he wanted to go. So the sorcerer, with his art, managed to bring a horse and made him ride it. He said: "Ride this secure horse, but be aware above all that you are not to sign yourself with the cross." That cleric therefore rode the horse, and that very moment the horse began

to run so fast that it seemed to be flying in the air, and in a short time it took the cleric to Toulouse. As soon as the cleric arrived, the horse vanished into thin air. The cleric began to search until he found the master of necromancy to whom he had been sent. After he explained the purpose of his visit, the sorcerer promised him to do whatever that cleric wanted, namely to know the state of the soul of his maternal uncle. With his art that sorcerer called the demons. That cleric saw them in front of him, and asked them whether they knew where that Bishop was at that very moment. The demons answered that they did not know, but that they could call another demon to reveal this to him. When that demon was called, it answered that it also did not know where the Bishop was, since it was occupied in other business. The demon, however, told the cleric: "There is a demon who continually patrols the bottom regions of hell, and he will certainly give you the information you are asking for." When that demon appeared in front of him, and the cleric asked it to give him information regarding the Bishop, the demon answered: "I do not know him, since there are so many Bishops who enter into hell every day. I do not know the man you are talking about."

The cleric then said: "If I were to see him, I would recognise him, since I know him very well." The master of witchcraft then told him: "If you go into hell, you will never have any more joy in this life, because of the horrible things you will see." But the cleric said: "I want to go in by all means, as long as I can come back out safe and sound." The sorcerer then commanded those demons to take him with them to hell and to bring him back safe and sound without harming him in any way. The devil therefore accepted that cleric and led him to hell, saying: "Look carefully and diligently in all places, in order to see whether you can find the person you are looking for." Entering into the various regions of hell he found many farmers, dishonest artisans, weavers, merchants, burghers, kings and knights in such a quantity, that they cannot be counted, and persons coming from every state of life, including clerics and religious, who were suffering various punishments and were all deformed and ugly to look at. In the meantime they also entered a kind of pontifical curia, in which there were countless Bishops and Prelates who were being burnt and tortured. The Bishop whom he was searching for, however, was not to be seen among them. [298] A very great demon then asked them whom they were so diligently searching for. They answered: "We are looking for

that Bishop, who has died recently.” The demon then said: “You will find him in that room; in fact he came here on that particular day.” So they entered that chamber and found there many demons, that were building a great throne, and his maternal uncle was sitting on a decorated throne, and beside him there was a splendid bed. Close by there was another throne similar to his, and a bed which was decorated in like manner.

When the maternal uncle saw his nephew the cleric, he asked him how and why he had entered that place. The cleric narrated all the experience he had gone through, and then said: “Are you saved or damned?” His uncle answered: “I am damned for eternity.” His nephew then asked: “Why then are you staying in such a comfortable position?” The Bishop answered: “Wherever you look in this place, you can only see infernal punishments.” And he showed him how, all around his throne and bed there was a great flame of fire and sulphur; on one side of the bed there were worms, the mattress and pillow were made of fire and sulphur, and the blankets were made of frogs and serpents. The cleric asked him: “Can I help you in any way?” The Bishop answered: “No way.” The cleric then asked him why his throne and bed were decorated in that way. The Bishop said: “These are the same things I had reserved for myself in life.” “And whose is the other throne the devils are building?” asked the cleric. The Bishop answered: “The throne was awaiting the arrival of another Bishop who was my superior, and who spent all the patrimony of Christ in reckless and unjust ways, and you finally come to know who he is because of certain conjectures on your part.” After this the devil led the cleric back to the sorcerer. He was terrified and went to that major Prelate and handed him all the churches and properties, which his maternal uncle had bequeathed him out of special love for his nephew. And thus despising everything and leaving it behind him, according to the advice given to him by his uncle, that cleric entered the Order of friars Minor, and died in it within the same year.

Who can count the many instances in which persons were inspired and called to enter the Order through visions! There was a cleric who was very ready and inclined to live a carnal life. The more God frequently invited and inspired him to do penance, it seemed that he resisted these divine provocations and continued to defer the time of his penance. One night the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him un-

der the form of the crucified and showed him his wounds, from which blood was dripping in abundance, and told him: “I have bore these wounds because of your sins and I have let my body be pierced in order to call you to put an end to your sinful life and do penance. But you are answering me like the crows, saying: *Cras, cras*,¹⁸⁵ and in this way you are deferring indefinitely the time of penance for your sins.” When the cleric heard these words, he immediately entered the Order of friars Minor.

In like manner other friars have been nourished with corporal food, as we know from continual experience. Thus we shall present some examples, even though there are many others, which are to be found in other parts in this collection. There were therefore a certain brother and a novice, who out of fear [299] of their relatives, were constrained by obedience to ask to be transferred to another friary. For one whole day both of them had nothing to eat, and they were suffering hunger. When the night approached, since they were still in a deserted place and could not see that anybody would be able to come and help them, that friar began to advise the novice to trust in the Lord. That very moment a most gracious shield-bearer appeared in their presence, and he advised them to follow him. Then he led them through that deserted region to a certain small house, recently constructed with new tree branches, and all covered with foliage. In that house they saw a clear and good fire, and a table prepared for them, upon which there was bread and wine. That man told them: “Warm yourselves in the meantime, while I will prepare something else for you.” After half an hour he came back carrying a most beautiful fish taken from the sea, even though the sea was at a great distance from that place. He prepared the fish for them, and the two friars began to eat. They felt, however, that they were satisfied more by looking at that gracious shield-bearer, than by eating that corporal food. After they had eaten he prepared beds on the ground with white sheets for them, and before leaving them said: “You now have beds according to the custom of your Order; rest and tomorrow I will return to you and will show you the way.” They therefore slept there and were very consoled. The following morning that shield-bearer returned. He con-

185 In Latin *cras* means “tomorrow,” but here it has the onomatopoeic sound of the crow’s cry.

tinued to accompany them along a great distance, until they went out of that deserted region and that forest, and arrived in a plain. At that moment the shield-bearer left them. And when the friars looked at that entire plain, they could not find him anywhere. So they believed that he had been the Angel of God, who had come to administer to them in their needs. The novice was very comforted in the Lord.

There was in Perugia, a town in Italy, a very strict Guardian, even though he was exact and ordered in his character. One Christmas vigil a certain nobleman asked him to send two friars to him. The Guardian commanded these two friars, with the vow of obedience, to depart immediately and go to the house of that nobleman. They, however, had just come back from outside and had fasted that day, and the hour was already late. The friars placed their necks under the yoke of obedience, and departed. Outside it was bitterly cold and they were famished. When they were still half way to their destination, a most dark night settled upon them, and they were unable to see the road which they had to follow. They were anxious and afflicted at their situation, but they heard the marvellous ringing of a bell in a certain wood. So they directed their steps to that sound which they were hearing, and arrived at a certain monastery which seemed to be very beautiful. When they knocked on the door, they saw the monks coming to welcome them in a very charitable and familiar way. When they entered they found a good fire, a table arrayed with all kinds of good food. The monks also asked them to come with them after Matins to the chapter hall in order to preach to them the word of God. When they accepted the offer, they were taken to their rooms in splendid beds, where they rested. At midnight the bell for Matins began to ring. The monks then gathered in the chapter hall and called the friars to hear them preaching. They entered the chapter hall, and the senior friar began to preach fervently on this theme: *A child has been born to us* (Is 9:6). [300] While he was explaining in such a clear way the humility of Christ in the Incarnation, all the monks, except the Abbot, began to leave the chapter hall one after another. That friar then asked the Abbot why the monks were going out. The Abbot answered: "Brothers, you are touching upon the theme of material reality, which we cannot listen to, namely, by speaking about Christ's humility and His Incarnation. We are all demons, and we have been compelled, because of your act of obedience, to serve you when you

were in this wood." As soon as he had said this, the monks and that entire edifice vanished into thin air. And the friars found themselves in an orchard in that wood, and began to praise the Lord.

How the brothers were nourished with spiritual food

The food of the spirit is a source of great nourishment and consolation for the soul. There was a certain novice in the Order, who was weeping with devotion in front of an image of the Mother of God. The blessed Virgin came and visited him humbly and comforted his soul with her sweetness. What was more marvellous, she even wiped away his tears.

Another friar was very devout towards the Mother of God. Whenever he would salute her, he would be aflame with such great devotion that it was hardly possible for any human person to fathom it. One day some friars saw the glorious Son of the most blessed Virgin descend from the bosom of His Mother, and go to that friar who was praying the Virgin, and place a fragrant rose in his hand. The fragrance of that rose so inflamed that friar with devotion that all the other friars marvelled at him.

There was another friar in Montpellier, who frequently used to pray in front of the altar of the Virgin Mother of God. One night, while he was praying, he saw the blessed Virgin standing close to him, together with many virgins who were her handmaids. These holy virgins were asking the Mother of God to enlighten them with truth regarding many doubts they had. She was trying to enlighten them with very wise and clear explanations. That friar felt great sweetness in his spirit when he heard those words. Then one of the virgin handmaids asked the Mother of God regarding the state of that friar who was having the vision. The glorious Virgin answered: "He is a good friar, but he recites his Hours hurriedly and not devoutly." When the friar heard these words, from that moment onwards he began to take much more seriously the duty of praying the divine office, and grew in all perfection in such a commitment.

How the friars were nourished with the food of glory

We still have to look at the third aspect, namely, how the observance of the Rule is nourishment for eternal life. There was once

a certain cleric who was rich and possessed one hundred marks. Out of devotion he entered into the Order, and immediately began to feel seriously ill, in such a way that five days after his entry it seemed that he would soon die. When he was in this state of agony [301] and everybody believed that he was dead, behold that a certain friar who had invited him to enter into the Order entered the room in order to see him. That very moment the brothers saw the dead friar rising from his bed and humbly prostrating himself at his brother's feet. Other brothers thought that he was acting this way because he was suffering from a high fever, and took him back to bed. At that moment the friar, who was still a novice, opened his eyes and said: "Most dear brothers, listen attentively to what I have to tell you. I was truly dead, but I have been resurrected by divine mercy in order to come and tell you my experience. When my soul went out of my body, behold two Angels came and took me to the glory of paradise. But one was keeping the other from hastening to the heavenly abode, saying that my soul had to be transported to heaven with greater honour and glory, since I had left so many material belongings behind me in order to enter this Order. That very moment a multitude of Angels appeared. They brought with them a golden table, which was hanging by four silver ropes with golden knots just like the ones we have on our cords. Then I heard them proclaiming that my soul should be placed upon that table, and thus that multitude of Angels carried it with the table and all in great joy to heaven. At that moment I was taken back to this life and I saw the brothers, who had invited me to enter into the Order, and I went out of bed to prostrate myself at his feet, since I wanted to thank him. In fact, through his ministry, he prepared for me so much glory, which the Lord reserves for those who leave behind them all their material belongings and with a free will follow Him in poverty." When he had uttered these words, his soul was again absorbed into the radiant light, and everyone believed that it had gone up to heaven together with that golden table.

There was in Paris another novice who, as soon as he had entered the Order, became so seriously ill that, eight days after his entry he died. His body was brought and placed in the choir from the hour of Matins until the following day. There was a certain friar who was keeping watch in prayer, since he could not sleep or rest in his bed. He heard in the air the horrible cries of many different kinds of beasts

and especially the howling of dogs. He was terrified, because he was afraid that the novice was damned. But he also heard a voice coming down from heaven and saying: *The Lord bends down to listen to me when I call* (Ps 114:2). In this way the friar was confident that the dead brother was saved and he felt very consoled regarding his death.

In the friary of Paris a certain brother Angelicus died. He was called with this name, since his life appeared to be more angelic than human. In the same friary there was a regent master¹⁸⁶ who was very devout and who was a most perfect man in all holiness. Now, according to the statutes of the Order, he knew that he was obliged to celebrate three Masses for every friar who died in that friary. Since he was aware of the holy life of that friar, however, he thought that he was not obliged to pray for him in that way, since he would not be in need of so many suffrages, having lived such a holy life. He was convinced that his brother was already in possession of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore did not celebrate any Mass for the repose of his soul. After three days this master was walking in the garden, lost in meditation, when that dead brother appeared to him and said: "My good master, for the love of God have mercy on me." The master then said: "What do you lack [302] brother?" The dead brother answered: "I am still in purgatory. If you celebrate three Masses for my repose, as you are obliged to do, I will be immediately freed from all my sufferings." The master then told him: "Truly, I will celebrate them this very day, but I did not believe that you were in need of these suffrages." The dead brother said: "Master, nobody knows how exact is God in His judgments and how rigorously He can punish." Having said this he disappeared. That master went and, with many tears, celebrated three Masses for him with great devotion. When celebrating the third Mass, he was informed by a divine oracle that his brother had been totally freed from his sufferings and was now enjoying beatific vision. In this way that master was consoled beyond all expectations.

In that same convent of the friars Minor there was a certain sick brother, who suffered day and night from abdominal pain and incontinence, and was exhausted and very sad because of the incon-

186 A *magister regens* of the Franciscan school in the *magna domus studiorum* (great convent of studies) of the Paris University.

veniences caused for himself and for the brothers. So he resolutely began to pray God from the bottom of his heart, so that He would deign use mercy and call him from this life. Once an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him that he had been sent on God's part, to make him choose one of two proposals: either he would die instantly and stay for one day in purgatory, or else he would bear patiently with his sickness for one year and then go straight to the Lord without passing through purgatory. That friar immediately chose to stay for one day in purgatory. The Angel then told him: "Prepare yourself for death and receive the Sacraments of the Church." When he had done all this, that friar immediately departed from this life. The Angel took his soul to purgatory, where he had to undergo great sufferings. When he had been in that place for barely one hour and saw how great were the sufferings he had to endure, he realised that it was not possible for him to stay there any longer, since it seemed to him to have been in purgatory for more than one year. Therefore he began to call the Angel and to tell him that he had been deceived, since he did not realise how much suffering he had to endure in that place, even if only for one day. When the Angel heard him complaining he came to him and asked: "Why have you called me without a reasonable cause?" He answered him: "You have deceived me when you promised me that I would not stay here longer than one day. Behold now I have been here for more than one year and I still have not made satisfaction with all my sufferings." The Angel then told him: "Believe truly that you have been here for hardly one hour, since your body has not even been taken for burial yet. However, if you prefer more to suffer your infirmity than to go through this great suffering of one day, this very moment the will of God permits you to go back into your body." Since he chose this, that friar was immediately led back to his body. In front of all the onlookers, he immediately woke up and narrated to them the vision he had. For one year he continued to live in that illness, and when the time was over his soul flew directly to the Lord.

There was a certain devout friar, who was a Guardian. One Holy Thursday, the body of a certain dead brother was taken for burial. When the Guardian was celebrating the Mass of that feast day according to the usual solemnity, during the commemoration of the dead, being a very devout man, he prayed with great fervour of spirit and shed many tears. He prayed Christ to contemplate his infinite mercy

and, through the power of the Sacrament of the Eucharist which He instituted on that very day, he might give a special privilege of charity to the soul of the dead brother, who had just been buried, and to the souls of all the friars, who were in purgatory, and free them out of his boundless grace. The following morning, a certain sinner who felt deep contrition for his sins, went to the same Guardian in order to confess his faults. In the beginning of his confession, he narrated a vision that he had had the night before. [303] He said that a certain friar who had just died had appeared to him, and began to insist and tell him: "Go to the Guardian and confess your sins, because you have been found lacking, and try to accept and freely do the penance you will receive. On my part tell him that *he tore the net and we escaped* (Ps 123:7), but not all of us." The friar repeated these words three times, in order that the friar might refer them to the Guardian without any shadow of doubt. Since that dead friar was his close relative, he spoke to him in familiar terms and asked him the meaning of what he had told him. The dead friar then said: "You are not to worry about understanding them, but the one I am sending you to, in order to announce them, will certainly and fully understand what these words mean." When that man had referred to the Guardian all these words, the Guardian immediately understood that the one who sent that man was the friar for whom he had prayed in a special way, and that the other brothers, although not all, had been freed from the sufferings of purgatory through the power of the celebration of Mass.

There was a certain monastery close to the city of Paris. A certain monk, who was famous for the holiness of his life and for his contemplation, lived in that monastery. One night he was praying and was rapt in contemplation. He saw in front of him a great and most beautiful army passing by. He could hear the playing of various musical instruments and the sweet melodies of voices singing in marvellous harmony. That monk was enjoying such sweetness at what he was seeing and hearing, that he believed to be in the joys of paradise. So he went up to one of those who were passing by, and asked him what that venerable army was and where was it going. That man answered him that it was the great army of heaven, and that it was the great emperor, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, who had sent it to Paris in order to receive the soul of one of His foot soldiers. The monk looked and saw that there was a most beautiful horse in that army,

which was magnificently adorned, which was being led by the reins, but without a saddle and a rider. So the monk asked to whom that horse belonged. The answer he got was that the person, for whom that army was being sent, was the one who would solemnly mount that horse. When the monk asked who was the person for whom such a solemn procession had arrived, he was told that it was a certain friar Minor who had died recently, and who had chosen to be foot soldier for Christ in his life, and whose glorious retribution would now be demonstrated in the dignity of riding gloriously on that horse. And he was also told that the vision appeared in order to reveal to him all these things. When that army passed by that monk remained sad and full of tears, since he could not follow it. But after a short time he saw the same army coming back to him with greater joy and solemnity than before. The same monk saw a most handsome friar Minor who was splendidly riding that horse, which had passed by before, without any saddle or rider. And then the vision disappeared. The monk came back to his senses and the following day went to the friary in Paris and revealed to the Guardian the time and details of the vision he had the night before. It was discovered that, during that very hour, a certain simple friar had left this life and passed on to the next.

[304] A confessor of a certain lady, who was a friar Minor, went to the provincial chapter that was going to be celebrated shortly. That lady was very devout towards him, and was afraid that her confessor would be transferred to another place. So she prayed with devotion to the blessed Virgin, to let him remain in that friary, so that she would not be deprived of the consolation of such a confessor. While she was fervently praying in front of the altar and the image of the Mother of God, she saw in her spirit the same Virgin sitting on a throne, and the friar kneeling down in front of her. The blessed Virgin placed a golden and beautiful crown on the head of that confessor and, turning to the lady, she told her: "Behold, I have listened to your prayers. He will remain in that friary and will not be sent anywhere else, because it is in this place that he will gain such a crown." These words later on came true.

We shall now see how God preserved the friars of this Order from temptations and evil. There was in Paris a certain novice, who hesitated in his faith regarding the divine essence and the unity of

the various persons of the Trinity. He had been often present to the lectures of the masters Alexander of Hales and Jean de La Rochelle regarding this truth. Nevertheless he was assailed by a diabolic temptation, and remained in his doubts as before. He was very sad and suffered because of this, but he could not prevail against the temptation, although he was a very devout and obedient friar. Once he was eating during the second shift at table, since he served during the first shift. While he was listening to the spiritual reading and his mind was occupied on holy thoughts, he felt somebody saying to him in the spirit: "Stand up and go to the Church and you will be visited by a heavenly light." So he went to the church that very moment and prostrated himself in front of the altar, and with many tears began to plead with the Lord in order to deign enlighten his mind with His divine light. At that moment he heard in his heart a voice, which was telling him: "Arise and go to your bed, and there the Lord will visit you."

Therefore he rose immediately and went to bed. While he was lying down upon his bed, he began to pray to the Lord with many tears regarding the doubts he had, and in this way he fell gently asleep. In his dreams he saw the whole University of Paris gathered, and the cross of the friars Minor, which hang in the middle of the choir, presiding on high over this assembly of the whole University. At the foot of the cross the novice saw brother Alexander of Hales, who was explaining the question regarding the Trinity, and who was saying that that novice had doubts regarding this truth. The novice saw that the master was making such a subtle theological disputation regarding this argument, that at the end the same master offered all the solutions, declaring them publicly and removing all doubts. After this he saw that the Crucifix was turning to him and saying: "You are to firmly believe all that master Alexander has determined in his explanation." After this all his doubts were gone, there remained however one doubt: whether it is possible that, in the essence of the three persons, one person could be incarnated without another. When he was thinking about this doubt in his heart, the novice saw that from one side of the face of the Crucifix a great quantity of blood was gushing forth, in such a way that when he touched that face his hand was all marked with blood. He woke up that very moment and came to the church. In the light he looked at that hand, in order to see whether it was truly stained with blood. But he did not see any blood there, but that very moment he was freed from all doubts and was filled with so much

consolation, that from that moment on he could not have any more doubts regarding these truths. The same novice then narrated this vision in front of the brothers, recounting what he had heard [305] during that theological disputation, and he remembered by heart in a perfect way all the arguments used by master Alexander. Therefore this doctrine of the same master seemed to have been approved by Christ himself, and all held it to be authentic doctrine.

Brother William the Norman, who was cantor at Paris, had some hesitation in his beliefs regarding the most holy Trinity, even though he resisted this doubt with all his might and frequently prayed the Lord to make him avoid it. Once, when he was in Paris, he had the following vision. He was looking and in front of him he saw a great Pontiff wearing white vestments, together with many other ministers, all of who were adorned with white vestments. They were in the friary, and were preparing to celebrate Mass. Brother William was inviting the brothers to enter the choir, telling them that the lord Bishop was ready to start the celebration. So the friars came in great numbers and filled the entire choir. Many other friars came to assist at that Mass, and it seemed that they had come from different Provinces. When the cantors intoned the *Introit*, and gave a sign to the other friars in order to continue singing, brother William and the other brothers could not understand a single word of the *Introit*, and they remained totally silent until the *Kyrie eleison*. At that point the friars understood the words and continued to sing with the ministers. The Bishop then intoned the *Gloria in excelsis*. Again the friars did not understand the words. In fact, it seemed to them that the singing was in Greek, and they could not sing any part of it. When the Pontiff turned towards the choir and said: *Pax vobis*, all the friars remained dumbfound, since they could not understand anything or answer in any way. It seemed that the Pontiff was not simply a man, but that he was truly God and man. Brother William was filled with such sweetness, when the Bishop said *Pax vobis* that it seemed to him that he was being taken out of this world into heaven. Since the friars were astonished and dumbstruck, because they could not answer the Bishop's salutation of *Pax vobis*, the same Pontiff encouraged them to answer, but they told him: "We do not know how to answer your Reverence." Then the Pontiff told them: "When I salute you with *Pax vobis*, you are to answer: 'And also with you O Trinity.'" Therefore,

when the friars answered in this way, the Pontiff continued to celebrate his Mass. Brother William saw that the Pontiff consecrated three hosts. When the Pontiff received communion, brother William saw that he was placing one host in his mouth, and the other two hosts one in each hand. At that moment the Pontiff opened his sides and the two hosts flew from his hands and entered into his bosom on both sides, while the third host entered into his mouth, in such a way that he received three hosts but one Sacrament. The vision then disappeared, and brother William felt that all his temptations and scruples also vanished. Some time later a certain friar came to Paris from another Province. When he saw brother William they looked at one another and asked one another: "Where have I seen you? And I, where have I seen you?" They both answered one another: "Yes, I have seen you in this choir, and you were staying in that place, and I was staying in the other place." They both agreed that they had had the same vision, in such a way that it was revealed to them both in a uniform way at the same time.

There was a certain master in theology, a friar Minor, who was a man of a praiseworthy wisdom and life. While he was explaining the doctrine of Mass and was also thinking about writing a theological treatise upon this mystery, every day, when he would humbly assist at Mass wearing a surplice, [306] he would pray the Lord to enlighten his mind upon certain points of doctrine. One day it happened that he was filled with a divine and radiant light. While the priest was elevating the host, he saw within the circumference of the host the body of the Lord Jesus contained totally within it, without exceeding it in size. He was very much consoled and left very good arguments in his writings in order to show the truth of this Sacrament.

In the Province of Aquitaine there was a certain friar who had a strong temptation of the flesh. As a remedy he went to prostrate himself in front of the image of the Crucifix, which was held in great devotion, and which had the images of the glorious Virgin and the Evangelist John assisting it on both sides. The friar began to pray to the Lord, in a rather tepid way, to deign to have mercy upon him and free him from that impulse of the flesh. In his sleep, it seemed to that friar that the Crucifix always avoided looking at his face. So he earnestly prayed the Mother of Christ and Saint John, to intercede for

him. But even at their prayers Christ did not want to look from that image, but was profoundly holding back His gaze and saying: "My most sweet Mother, how can I have mercy upon him who neglects to have mercy upon himself?" When the brother heard these words he was astonished, and like a desperate man he rose up in the hour after Matins and went out of the friary like a drunken man, with the firm proposal of committing the sin of fornication and leaving the Order once and for all. But that very moment God looked upon him, and made him turn to compunction, and in this way he went back to the friary feeling sorry and contrite for the sin he intended to commit. Moved by divine grace, he prostrated himself in front of the image of the Crucifix yet another time, and with many tears begged pardon and forgiveness, and prayed to have a remedy for his temptation. At that moment he slept, but he heard the blessed Mother and the disciple intercede for him, and Christ answering them in these words: "Now is the hour and time for mercy. Therefore, through the merits of your prayers I will now accept him and have mercy upon him, and I will give him forgiveness for all his sins." So the one who, some time before, had enkindled his tepid heart with the firm proposal of committing fornication, woke up immediately full of joy, and he was totally freed from that temptation. From that moment he lived a good life and ended his days in the Order in a praiseworthy manner.

A certain man who had lived a comfortable and delicate life while he was still in the world, where he received many honours, decided to enter this Order. Immediately upon entering, however, he was assailed by a strong temptation, since he realised what a great change had occurred in his life. Since he had been accustomed to have all the good things of life, rich food, comfortable beds, splendid clothes, straw mattresses and large and warm tunics, now he found himself having to choose poverty instead of riches, humiliations instead of honours, a harsh life instead of the good things he had before. The devil would often tempt his heart with all these things, and continually proposed to him to despise all the perfection of the Order and detest it, and return to the life from which he had come. Divine piety looked down upon him, however. In fact, many a time he proposed to take the opportunity to go out of the friary, but every time he tried to leave the Order it seemed that he became blind and could not find the road he had to follow in order to leave that place. Thus he was

often kept back from his evil plans. One day [307] he decided to leave by all means. Before chapter he resolved to leave, but he stopped to recommend himself to Christ in front of the image of the Crucifix, knelt down and began to pray. At that moment he had a vision in which he saw the Son of God with his Mother, who appeared to him and asked him why he wanted to leave the Order. The brother reverently answered: "Lord, when I was still in the world, I had all the good and refined things of life, but now I cannot bear up with the harshness of this Order, especially regarding food and other things." At that moment Christ showed him the open wound on His side, which was stained with fresh blood, and said: "Place your finger here and touch the blood of the wound on my side. Then go, and touch with this blood whatever seems to you to be too harsh to bear, and all these things will be changed into great sweetness for you." That friar went and did as he was told, and he would recall to mind the passion of the Lord and His memory in everything he would do, in such a way that he found all things had become sweet and gave him delight.

Brother Alexander of Hales says in his Fourth Book (of the *Summa theologiae*) that there was a certain religious who was a priest, and who had great doubts and a very shaky faith, since he could not believe that the entire body of Christ could be contained in a small fragment of bread. When he was in the choir, together with his brothers the friars Minor, he often used to pray to the Lord so that He would deign show him this truth. One day, during the elevation of the body of Christ, he saw with his bodily eyes the figure of a small child filling the entire form of the host, and this figure was not greater nor smaller than its circumference. So the friar priest immediately burst into tears, and with a loud cry ran towards brother William of Melitona,¹⁸⁷ who was a most prudent man, and who was a lecturer of theology in that place. He confessed to him his sin and revealed the miracle that had happened. Master Alexander, therefore, said that this article of doctrine can only be accepted through faith, since there is no example which can be found in the human intellect in order to explain it.

¹⁸⁷ William of Melitona succeeded Eudes Rigaud as *magister regens* of the University of Paris in 1248.

How God protected the friars from diabolic illusions

Now we shall see how God preserved the friars from diabolic illusions. There was once in a certain Province a friar called Matthew, who wanted to go out of the Order. So he took a scissors, a needle and thread, in order to change his religious habit into secular clothes. When he was going out of the cloister, in order to carry out what he desired to do, he met the devil who started to drag him to a dung heap in the garden. He made him go upon the dung heap and from there showed him the place where he could freely go out of the friary. But the Angel of the Lord appeared to him at that very spot, and took him by his head, pushed him back down and started to shake him with all his might until he took him back to the friary and freed him from the grips of the devil. That friar realised that he had been saved through [308] divine mercy. He was greatly sorry for his sin and revealed everything to his Custos. He was absolved and rose up humbly and devoutly to serve the Lord.

There was a certain friar in the friary of Montpellier. The devil appeared to him at night in the cloister under the guise of a radiant Angel, and tried to deceive him and to attract his attention. One night it appeared to him and told him: "You are sinning, since even though you are without sin, you go to confession frequently. Therefore you do not have any trust in God, who preserves you from sin." That friar believed those words and was deceived. So he remained for a long time without going to confession, since he was afraid that he would sin if he would confess, having judged himself to be sinless. For a long time the devil continued to deceive him in this way, in order to make him fall headlong in a more serious way. One late evening it appeared to him while he was praying and told him: "Behold, I have been sent to you by God, so that you will now receive the crown as a reward of your labours. Now I want you to follow my footsteps wherever I lead you." Since that friar began to follow him, the devil began to fly and took him towards a certain well, which was in the old cloister of the friary. Now this well had a very wide opening, and it was impossible to jump from one side to the other of that opening without falling down headlong into the well. The demon stood beside the well, and said to the friar: "Follow me straight ahead, without wavering to the right or to the left." At that time another devout friar was praying in the cloister,

and he was seeing what was happening. When he saw that his brother had been deceived by the devil and was running towards the well in order to jump, having believed that diabolic illusion, that friar began to invoke God, the blessed Virgin and Saint Francis, and ran to the brother and held him back by his tunic, so that he would not jump, since he was sure that he would have fallen headlong into the well. The brother who had been deceived was immediately enlightened by God, and realised that the devil had tried to destroy him, and he immediately confessed his sin and abandoned those vain thoughts.

In the very beginning of the Order, in Montélimar, in the Province of Burgundy, there lived some friars who served the Lord with simplicity and humility. The hermitage where they lived did not have any enclosure. One night, while the friars were praying, the devil appeared to one of them under the guise of the Guardian, and gestured to him, inviting the friar to follow him. That friar believed that it was truly the Guardian, and immediately went after the devil. The devil made the friar go out of the hermitage and took him to the bank of the river Rhône, in the place where there is a direct crossing point to Viviers. Since there was no boat to be found at that hour, the devil began to cross the river Rhône by walking on the water, as if it were dry ground, and invited that friar to follow him. When the friar saw this he was very afraid, since he did not presume that he was worthy of doing such a thing, that is, crossing over the water, and therefore he did not want to follow the devil. When the devil saw that the friar did not want to obey him, even though he had called him many a time, all of a sudden the devil began to appear so gigantic on the water that the friar could not even look upon him, and he was terrified. Since he realised that he was being deceived, that friar armed himself with the sign of the cross, and commended himself to God and returned to the friary, thanking God for having freed him [309] from the devil's snares. He then narrated the whole story to the Guardian and the other friars. That is how God freed this friar, through the merits of obedience, since he had followed the devil, which deceived him out of obedience. But he had placed his own will in the hands of the devil, while thinking that he was serving the will of God.

In Spain there was a certain novice, who was virtuous and always occupied in prayer, and who afflicted his body harshly with

special acts of abstinence. But he always refrained from the common life, and he would stay by himself in some corner or another lonely place, and thus separated from all the other brothers, he would lead a solitary life. His master frequently admonished him to follow the life of the community. But he did not want to obey in any way, but became obstinate in his will in everything. One day he was praying in the church. The main door of the church was closed, but from a crack or fissure in the door he saw a most beautiful and radiant lady approaching him. In fact, it was the devil, which appeared to that friar telling him that he was the Mother of God. So the novice began to venerate the vision and said: "Lady, what do you want me to do?" She said: "You are to persevere in your abstinences and in your usual works of penance, and you are not to believe your master, who tries to persuade you to do the opposite." The vision then disappeared. From that moment the novice became even more obstinate in following his own will. The demon had given him a sign, saying: "Whenever you see a hand appear in front of you on the table in the refectory, you are not to taste food in any way; when the hand does not appear in front of you, if you wish, you may eat."

That friar remained in that state for days on end. When the Guardian heard the friars who were grumbling about that novice, he admonished him to obey his master and observe the form of life he would indicate to him. The novice, however, answered, that he had a better master. Whatever he would hear contrary to his will, that novice would consider it a deception. The devil appeared to him a second time under the guise of the Mother of God and in a more radiant glory than before, and said to him: "My son, you are doing a good thing not to obey and go against my own advice; so continue to persevere and do not obey your Guardian." The devil then appeared to him a third time, with much greater splendour than before, and told him: "Now is the time that you enter the glory of my son and receive the crown of justice, which has been promised to you. In order to receive such a glory, I want you to die crucified, just like my son. This night, while the brothers are sleeping, you are to enter the kitchen and shut the door behind you. In the kitchen you will find two planks of wood, which you are to join together in the form of a cross. On the two extremities of the transversal plank you are to fix two large nails, and you are to do the same thing in the lower part of the other plank, and thus you will make the cross stand firm on the ground. Then you are

to place a footrest in order to help you go up the cross. You are then to start hitting hard with your hand on the nail of the extremity of the transversal plank; and then you should repeat the same thing on the other side with your other hand. After having removed your footrest, you are to remain suspended, and in a similar way you are to hit the nail with your feet and fix them to the lower part of the vertical plank, in such a way that you are fastened. Thus you will die crucified and you [310] will receive the eternal kingdom together with my crucified son." That miserable man did exactly as he was told. While he was in the kitchen and hanging on those wooden planks, the cooks who were passing close by heard noises in the kitchen and since they suspected that something strange had happened to that friar, since they had seen him when he entered the kitchen, they threw open the door and found the novice hanging in that way. They rang the bell, and all the friars gathered in that place. They let him down from the cross, and admonished him not to take any notice of those diabolic illusions. He narrated to them the visions he had had, but still did not want to believe that they were illusions, and continued in his obstinacy as before. What else can we say? That very moment he was taken away by the devils from the presence of the friars, and he was not to be found anymore.

Against diabolic illusions

A certain devout man entered the Order and was so obedient that, whatever job he was commanded to do, he would promptly do it. But when the body of Christ was consecrated, he had a diabolic illusion, since he could not look upon the host, but tried to avoid his gaze as much as he could. The brothers marvelled at this, and they often tried to enter into a discussion with him on the topic, in order to make him answer them. They asked him why such a thing happened to him, but he answered that he did not know why. Many wise persons also asked him the same question, but they never succeeded in giving him any counsel in order to convince him to shake off that illusion. In the meantime his Provincial Minister came to that friary. When he heard about that story he called the friar to his presence and asked him where he was born. The friar answered that he came from the regions beyond the sea. So his Minister asked him whether he had been

baptised. The friar answered that he did not know. He also added that his parents used to live in a town inhabited by Saracens. When they heard this the friars, as a precaution, made him receive baptism according to the canonical form. After he had received baptism that friar began to look at the body of Christ and adore it, like all the other friars.

A similar fact happened in the Province of Tuscany. There was a friar who was very respectful, but when it came to praying the Office or saying the *Our Fathers* he used to stammer, and it seemed that he could not utter one single word, although he would normally speak fluently. In order to face this problem the General Minister then sent him to a certain friary, where there lived a friar of unique holiness, to whom that problem was revealed. So that devout friar raised his hand and blessed that friar who stammered. When he was blessed, that friar behaved like a person who was out of his mind. He began to turn his head round and round, and began to roll over on the ground. Then he began to hit the walls with his head so strongly, that he seriously wounded himself until blood began gushing forth from his bruises. In the meantime that devout friar began to ask him from where he came. He told him that as a child he had been abandoned and reared by someone who found him outside. So that prudent friar told him that maybe he had not been baptised, and therefore he administered baptism to him [311] according to the canonical form. In order to do this he had to compel him violently to enter the church. As soon as he had received baptism, his tongue became loose and he could recite the *Our Father* and the Office in a very dignified and devote manner, like all the other friars.

There was a certain canon who was very devout to the Mother of Christ. When he entered the Order, the greater he grew in holiness, the more powerfully he was tempted by the devil. One day the devil himself appeared to him in a most terrible vision, in order to disturb his devotion. That friar, however, began to invoke the name of the blessed Virgin with great devotion, and that very moment the devil vanished. The friar continued to make progress in holiness, in such a way that he would drive out demons, restore many sick people to perfect health, and raise the dead to life.

A certain man was very prone to make money with dishonest actions and was full of the spirit of envy. The more he grew in power and in riches, the more he decided to consign his body and soul to the devil, so that he would be able to prevail of his adversary through diabolic assistance. He would be so obsessed about thinking about this possibility, that the devil ended up promising him that he would give him whatever he was desiring. The man answered that he was ready to be without scruples, if the devil would be able to give him what he was planning in his mind, namely to realise the vow he made against his rival. So the devil convinced him that he should first deny his faith in God, and obliged him to offer his body and soul to him, as much as he possibly could. The devil, therefore, possessed him, and as it deemed necessary, it imprinted on his arm its own sign and confirmed that man in the obligation he had assumed. The devil, therefore, marked him with a particular sign on his arm. From that moment that man would often go to a certain secret place outside the village, where the devil would appear to him and he would render him homage as if he were his lord. That man began to grow immensely richer and he began to increase his attempts to oppress his rival.

One day a certain friar Minor came to that place in order to preach fervently regarding the virtues and efficacious powers of the Sacrament of penance. That man, who was the servant of the devil, listened to that sermon, and he was moved to profound contrition in his heart. After that sermon he called that friar to him and asked him whether all the words he had uttered in that sermon regarding penance were true. The friar asserted that those words were true and told him that one had to be ready to be a servant of the truth, if need be, by being even prepared to die for it. So that man added: "I want to make an experience of all the things you are saying." He therefore asked that friar to listen to his confession. When he had done so, the friar absolved him and comforted him with many examples of the holy Fathers of the Church against the devil. But that man told him that, until God would not delete from his flesh that mark of the devil imprinted on his arm, he would never have peace in his conscience nor would he feel that he had remission for his sins. So he asked that friar to go with him to that place, where he would normally meet the devil, in order to see whether the devil would try to harm him further, or else he would try to bind him even more by that sign and by his obligations.

[312] That very moment the brother and his companion, fervent in spirit and confiding in the Lord, went together with that man to the place where he asserted that he normally had the diabolic apparitions. The friars went down on their knees, and they began to pray to the Lord, with as much fervour as they possibly could, that He might deign delete that diabolic mark from that man. They also prayed the Lord to deign give total remission to that man for the evil deeds he had committed. While they were praying, they raised their eyes and from a distance saw the devil who was coming with such power in the turbulence of a storm, that he was violently uprooting the trees and was filling everyone with terror. So that man began to tremble and prayed the friars, to invoke the Lord with the greatest devotion they could possibly have, to protect him, since that was truly the devil to whose homage and sign he had committed himself. The friars comforted him and marked that man with the sign of the cross, while they prayed him not to be afraid, but to have trust in the power of the Passion of the Lord, and he would be freed from the devil that had overpowered him. In the meantime the devil was approaching them and was encircling them with his powerful violence. However it seemed that the devil had become blind, since he could not approach them, but was calling loudly to the man who had been possessed. That man was strengthened by the words of the friars, and comforted in the Lord answered: "I am the one you possessed, and I am the one who denied the Lord and obliged myself to serve the devil. However, by the power of the Sacrament of confession I am now reconciled to the Lord and I have renounced you and all your pomp. Therefore I am not afraid of you any more, since I am now defended in a powerful manner through the merits of the Passion of my Lord Jesus Christ." As soon as he had uttered those words, all of a sudden that mark on the flesh of his arm began to disappear until it was deleted, and the devil vanished as if he were smoke. In that place, however, the devil left such a foul smelling odour, that the onlookers could hardly bear up with it by holding their nostrils. Therefore, the one who could blind men by making them sin, was now rendered blind through the ministry of the friars and the sincere penance of that man.

There was a certain man in Aigues-Mortes, who lived with a certain woman, who was his concubine, but whom he falsely called his wife. Both of them used to welcome the friars Minor willingly and

devoutly to their house, every time they would come to visit them. Once that woman became very ill, and two brothers, one of whom was a cleric, and the other one lay, were going to leave that house, but first they strongly admonished that woman to prepare her soul and order the state of affairs in her house. She answered that she would abide by all they had told her. When the friars had entered her bedroom, the lay brother who was downstairs, but still outside of the room where she lay, began to hear a great tumult. So he stood up from where he was, and when he looked, he saw a great multitude of demons who were calling one another with loud voices. There was one among them who seemed to be their leader, and he was commanding them and saying: "Enter the room of the sick woman and carry her soul with you; that soul belongs to us, since she has not confessed her sin, but she is still hiding the fact that she is the lover of the lord of this house." One of the demons then answered, regarding the friar who was seeing this vision: "Lord, this one is a Pharisee, and I am afraid that he would now go and induce her to go to confession." The leader of the demons answered: "Attack him and hit him hard, so that he will not be able to do this." When they had been commanded the demons began to hit that lay brother and they gouged out [313] one of his eyes. The other friar, who was a cleric, heard the terrible and anguished cries of his terrified companion. So he rose immediately and went to him. His companion told him what had happened to him. So the friar cleric hurried and entered into the room of the sick woman and told her what was happening, in such a way that he invited her to make a perfect confession of her sins. That woman felt sorry for her past life, and immediately confessed her sins to the brother. In this way she was freed from the devils and went to meet Christ. The brother companion, who had been bruised by the blows given to him by the demons, was carried by the other friar to the friary of Lunel, where after some days he gave forth his spirit to God the Father.

Regarding those who were freed by the friars from diabolic illusions

There was a certain knight in the Province of Provence, who became seriously ill. When the men who had come to visit him wanted

to enter the house, they saw that there were many ravens¹⁸⁸ gathered on the house. These birds were defending the entrance to the house with their wings and beaks, and thus those men could not enter. The son of that knight realised that that was a diabolic illusion, and so he entered to speak to his father and began to plead with him to go to confession and ask forgiveness for his sins, since during his life he had been prone to do acts of vengeance. His father, however, got angry and said: "Why are you so worried about this? Take the shield and the lance and other arms necessary for battle and go and fight like a man against your enemies, and send away the friars Minor who come to preach here." So his son was terrified and answered: "Lord, there are many ravens gathered on our house and they are doing strange things; in fact, I am afraid that they are demons that have come to our house. So please arm yourself against them by receiving the Sacraments of the Church." When his father heard these words he became fearful and full of sorrow for his sins he immediately called the Guardian of the friars Minor to come to him. When the friar wanted to enter the house, those ravens began to oppose him in such a violent way, that he could hardly find his way through, and had to be helped by others. Therefore he trusted in the Lord, armed himself with the sign of the cross and, even though he was aware of that diabolic illusion, he entered. When that knight began confessing his sins, for every sin he confessed one raven began leaving the house and went back to the fields, and thus, one by one, the ravens began to fly away as if they indicated that the man was being cleansed from his individual sins. When the confession was completed, there was not one single raven left. In this way that knight was armed by the Sacrament of penance and left this world.

A similar story occurred in another place, but nearly in the opposite sense. There was a moneylender who became sick. He had a noble wife, who bore many sons. A certain friar came to visit him and terrified him by his words, trying to convince him to give back the money he had stolen by his dirty business. He promised him that he would be forgiven all his sins if he gave back the stolen money. So

¹⁸⁸ The raven is a large bird belonging to the crow family with glossy black plumage, a wedge-shaped tail, and a large beak. It is found throughout the northern hemisphere, chiefly in upland regions, and is a subject of legend and folklore, being often perceived as a bad omen. Latin name: *Corvus corax*.

that man confessed his sins, and having called a notary, commanded him to write down his last will in which he promised to give all his possessions to the friars. When that friar went away, and his noble wife had heard what he had promised to do, she took all her sons [314] in front of him and with many tears begged her husband to have mercy on them, since they would now die of hunger and would live in dire misery. When the moneylender heard this and saw his wife crying he was moved and placed his family's wellbeing before everything else. So he called the notary once again and ordered him to rewrite his testament, thus giving back to his sons all the possessions, which he had revoked from them. The notary then told the friar what the moneylender had done. So he returned to the moneylender and tried to induce him not to deviate from his original intention because of what he felt for other creatures, in order to save his soul from eternal damnation, as he had promised him. But that man strongly affirmed that he could not in any way leave his sons without possessions, and thus make them live in poverty and want. So that friar, when he saw that the man remained rigid in his will, with great fervour of spirit addressed him loudly and said: "Since you are affirming that you want to revoke whatever you had ordered for the salvation of your soul, therefore I hereby revoke the absolution I gave you for all your past sins." That very moment, in front of all the onlookers, a raven came back to the bed of that sick man, and placed its beak on his mouth, shutting it hard until that miserable man died in great sorrow, and the raven immediately snatched his soul from him.

In France there was a very beautiful woman, who lived a very dissolute life. For seven years she lived as a concubine and chose to give homage to the devil, and tried to pray daily in order to render her homage to the demons. In the seventh year the devil came to visit her, first under the form of a donkey, then under the form of a dog, then under the form of a male servant, and in this way nearly every day she would have sexual intercourse with the devil. After fourteen years had passed, it happened that a certain friar Odo, from the Order of friars Minor, who later on became archpriest of the cathedral church of Rouen, and who came from Orléans, arrived there to preach about the good effects of penance and virtues. When that woman heard him she said: "Brother, if penance has such great power, as you are affirming, I want to try to see its effects upon me. My past life has been such

and such a succession of sins; now, can I truly be freed from the power of the devil through the virtue of penance?" The friar answered her: "Daughter, do not be afraid, but you are to feel sorrow for your sins and to confess them. Do not doubt, because you will be instantly freed from them, and the devil will never be able to prevail against you."

When she had done this and brother Odo had absolved her, he told her: "Trust in the Lord, since now the devil will not dare harm you in any way." But when the woman was alone in her room, the devil came and began to threaten her, but did not dare touch her or molest her in any way. The devil returned a second, and a third time, and said: "Brother Odo has just received a letter, ordering him to go to live in Paris, and therefore he will not be able to help you any longer, but I will now take back the freedom I enjoyed before." When she heard these words that woman was terrified and went to brother Odo, who had truly just received the letter from his superiors, ordering him to transfer to Paris. So the woman began to tell him with many tears and loud cries what the devil had just expressed in front of her. Brother Odo answered her: "O woman, who has absolved you from your sin: God or brother Odo? Is it not God? Therefore go and tell the devil, when he returns to you: 'Brother Odo is going wherever he wants to go, since it is God and not brother Odo who has absolved me from my sin.'" So when the woman told the devil these words, to which we have just referred above, [315] the demon was furious and receded by saying: "Cursed be that friar, who has taught you how to answer me." From that moment the devil did not return to her, and did not dare molest that woman in any way.

A certain man came full of fear and affliction to one of our brothers in the friary of Montpellier, and asked him for counsel saying that the devil would often come to him, whenever he was alone in his room, and that the same devil would embrace him and afflict him in various ways. The brother then answered him: "Every time the devil comes to you, you should name the Lord Jesus with devotion, and the devil cannot withstand the power of that name." When he had done this, after having also confessed his sins, the devil did not dare to molest that man any longer.

The General also referred to me that there was a certain famous and beautiful noble lady in Germany, who after having been

drawn to many acts of carnal lust, one day she was admonished by a certain friar Minor to begin living a chaste life. So she was converted and chose to live as a perpetual recluse, since she said that she could not avoid the occasion of sin, except by avoiding all company with men. After she had confessed her sins, she went to live as a recluse. The devil, however, found her and tried to assail her with many illusions and violent temptations. Since she had memories of her past delights of the flesh, which continued to trouble her with strong temptations, she called that friar to come back to her, and told him that she could not resist such strong temptations, and that therefore she had decided to go out of her life as a recluse and return to her previous life of carnal pleasures. That friar tried to exhort her in many ways and, after having imposed upon her some harsh penances, commanded her that, every time she would be assailed by those temptations, she should call upon the name of Jesus with great devotion and trust. The woman believed the friars' words, and whenever she was tempted, she would first start calling upon Jesus, but without great fervour, until she would be compelled to call upon Jesus' name with greater fervour and strength of will. This custom was changed into such sweetness that she grew accustomed to call upon the name of Jesus, and whenever she wanted to win over her temptations, she knew of no other means than calling upon the name of Jesus. It used to happen that, in one day, she would call upon Jesus even up to ten thousand times.

I am now pleased to insert here the story of an illusion, which two friars Preachers encountered, and which regarded their relations with our Order. Once in England there was a certain devout friar Preacher who was travelling on the road with two other friars from his Order, one of whom was a cleric and the other one a lay brother. While they were walking they stopped for some time to pray. When they resumed their journey, that friar commanded them to start a disputation, and he asked the lay brother to discuss a subtle question with the cleric. That brother was astonished and therefore he joined them in the discussion. When the friar asked the lay brother to mention the theme, which he wanted to discuss [316], the lay brother answered in a subtle style, and that devout friar asked him: "Where did you get this knowledge?" He answered: "In heaven since the creation of the world." So that friar clearly realised that it was the devil appearing to him under the guise of that lay brother. And so he asked him: "When

you were in heaven, before your downfall, could you understand the incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity on which our faith is based and which we preach?" When the demon, which appeared under the guise of the lay brother, heard these words, it immediately fell to the ground as if it was terrified and said: "Alas! Why do you speak to me about my previous state of having intelligence beyond all human creatures and which is now a great sorrow for us, every time we remember that it has been taken away from us?" And it could not say anything else regarding this matter, but said to that friar: "Your companion, who is in front of you, is trembling with fear. I have sent to him one of our demons, who is standing in front of him and making him feel such a fear between his skin and his flesh, and which is instilling in him an excessive fear." That friar immediately approached his trembling companion and armed him with the sign of the cross, leaving him very consoled.

Since all the three friars were discussing the theme of the state of Religious life, and were highly commending the Order of Minors, the devil told them: "In the Order of blessed Francis the friars are like meat in a pot. Now as the more subtle pieces go up and eventually evaporate in smoke, and the other more material parts settle down in the bottom of the pot and remain crude, and the parts in between are cooked in such a way that they can be eaten and administered to those who are hungry, the same thing happens in that Order. Some of the friars who freely and proudly ascend to honours are cooked in the fire of tribulation, and whatever good things they accomplish, at the end they evaporate like smoke. The others remain crude and cannot be digested, since they become heavy because of their negligence and settle down in the bottom and are useless. Finally, the ones who allow themselves to be cooked through holy humility and obedience and chastity, and through a holy way of life, become good-tasting for God and for men." Having said this, that friar disappeared.

In the Province of Provence there was a perfect friar called Raymond Barravi, who is solemnly buried in the friary of Carcassonne. For the edification of the devout faithful it is narrated regarding him that, during the time that Peter of Trenal, another devout man, was Guardian at Béziers, the lord Bernard, who was bishop of the same city, was seriously ill at Luciennes. While he was praying, brother Peter entered into ecstasy and was taken in spirit to a most beautiful

palace, which was all adorned. There he saw many decorated thrones and upon them were sitting the radiant souls of Saints, who were enjoying the maximum spiritual delights. And while he was [317] looking attentively at all this, all of a sudden he saw a certain Bishop vested in pontifical white vestments, who entered with a sad look on his face from one door of the palace, and immediately went out of the other. After this brother Peter continued to follow the spectacle, and he saw Angels dressed in white who were cleansing the souls by immersing them in a certain fountain, and then transferring them to the palace. An Angel was pushing that Bishop and making him run ahead, and brother Peter also followed him. That Bishop arrived above a certain abyss, out of which came a foul smelling odour of sulphur. Brother Peter then saw the devils pushing that Bishop violently into that abyss. When brother Peter asked the Angel who was leading him what that vision meant, the Angel answered that the palace designated heaven, the fountain designated purgatory, and the abyss designated hell. The friar then said: "Alas, my lord, and who is that Bishop who has been thrown in hell?" The Angel answered: "That is Bishop Bernard of Béziers." Peter then said: "Lord, how come he was first wearing white vestments, and passed through the palace, and was then led hurriedly to plunge into hell?" The Angel answered and said: "God does not send away anybody without the merits of the good things he stands for. That is why divine justice wills that he wear white vestments as a sign of his virginity, but that for his confusion, since his soul is lost, he would just pass through heaven and then would be thrown for eternal punishment into hell. In fact, he could not gain more for his state, since he loved his poor nephews in a carnal way and gave them riches. They came from nothing, but in order to give them worldly honours he imposed upon them the title of Lumbin, the ecclesiastical castle, in order to make them known as if they were nobles." When brother Peter woke up the following morning, he discovered that the Bishop had really died at the hour during which he had the vision.

The Minister of Aragon recounted that, at Iaca, a town in Spain,¹⁸⁹ there was a certain man called John, who was very friendly towards the friars Minor. One Sunday he went to take a look at his vineyard. When he was returning back home, there were passing on

¹⁸⁹ Iaca or Xaca, a town in the province of Huesca.

the road two friars Minor, who he did not know, and who saluted him in familiar tone, and told him: "John, please come and walk with us for a short time." So he began to follow them for a very long distance, in such a way that he became tired and marvelled at the length of that road and said: "Brothers, where are we going? Is it not time to stop and have lunch?" The elder one among the friars told him: "Follow us, do not be afraid." When they had walked a league further, they arrived at a certain plain. At that moment John began to feel very tired and wanted to return back to where he came from at all costs. But the brothers continued to tell him to follow them and not be afraid. Then one of the friars said to his companion and to John: "You both go ahead, while I will wait here." So the other friar took John with him and led him up to a certain mountain. From that high ground he showed him that great plain, in which there was a very large and wide lake. From one shore to the other of that lake there was a burning and crackling flame on the entire surface. When John saw that sight [318] he was terrified. From that lake men came out every now and then. In fact, on the surface of the lake there appeared to be like human beings with their knees bent and their hands joined, and their faces imploring devoutly God's mercy with many tears and looking up to heaven. John saw five souls coming out in quick succession from that lake of fire. They were crying out and saying: "My God, have mercy on me." Then they were led to a lush region, where there was a great plain. In that plain there was a very wide and large lake, very horrible to behold, since it was made of fire and foul smelling sulphur. On the side of that lake there was another lake, whose waters were made of frozen snow. When those miserable men were submerged in the lake of fire and sulphur, it seemed that they were as black as burning coals. When they were submerged in the frozen lake, they assumed the white appearance of ice. The demons were submerging them in the lake of fire and sulphur, by pushing them with their iron forks, and then they would transfer them to the frozen lake. Thus each one of these men was suffering various punishments at one and the same time.

When he saw this spectacle John was greatly afraid, but the friar who was guiding him tried to comfort him by all means. In another area he also saw a most beautiful palace, in which there were many vestments of purple silk. Men would come and each one would receive the vestment that was most fitting for him. The demons would sometimes go to that palace and lead many of the persons to the lake

of fire and sulphur. In the meantime a great noise and confusion was to be heard in the lake, since there was a great army approaching from the north. When that army arrived at the lake, a great applause was heard, together with the words: "Welcome to the lord Archbishop." The demons immediately submerged him in this lake, and opened wide his mouth with the iron forks and filled it with sulphur and fire, while they said: "Lord Archbishop, you have governed very well your subjects and you have deprived the poor of their livelihood. Therefore now you will receive your just reward." Then they filled his mouth with so much fire and sulphur, that he did not stop from blaspheming God.

Then there was a great tumult in the lake and another army arrived from the north. From the lake the demons called and said: "Welcome, lord king." Then they placed the king in that lake, but not with the same violence with which they had placed there the Archbishop before him. Then from the lake came out a certain hairy and savage and horrible looking man with a cruel face, and said: "There is a mortal man here, go out and lead him in." When John understood that he was speaking about him, he was terrified, and fell down to the ground and all physical strength left him, and he hid his face with fear. Since the devils wanted to attack him, the friar said: "I now command you demons, on the part of God in heaven, that you do not presume to approach him any further." As soon as he had said this, those demons could not approach John or attack him in any way. The friar then comforted John, but he was so afraid that he could not be consoled in any way. So the friar led him to a most lush region, where the purified souls were transferred, but still he could not regain his strength or feel any security. Then the friar led him to a certain place, where John saw the most blessed Mother of God and the choirs of the virgins, and one of them was coming towards him and singing: "The Virgin has given birth to a son. Virgin, you are as chaste as a lily and you are full of grace." All the other virgins answered in sweet tones, in such [319] an indescribable melody of harmonious voices that it was filling everywhere with echoes of sweetness. Since he could still not be consoled, since he continued to be afraid that the demons would capture him, the friar led him to the plain, in which they had left the other friar. There the two friars told him: "Now we have accomplished what God has commanded us to do. Go back to your house." As soon as they had uttered those words, the two friars disappeared.

John started crawling back to his house with great difficulty on his hands and feet, since he had been so afraid that he remained very weak and could hardly see. When he arrived home, he told his wife: "Prepare for me my bed right now, because I need to rest." But she told him: "Let us first eat, and afterwards you can go and rest as you want." He answered: "Hurry up and do what I tell you, and go and call the friars to come here right now." The friars came and found him in bed. Then John with many tears recounted to them the vision he had. And from that day onwards, whenever they would ask him to recount that vision, he was not able to hold himself back from shedding many tears and weeping bitterly.

A certain brother wanted to preach in a village one morning. The people there were so lacking in devotion and used to live in such laxity, that they did not want to listen to him. Those people then gathered in a place where there was a large field, bringing with them musical instruments and indulging in every kind of dissolute and lustful behaviour. They did not want to listen to that friar, who had come to preach to them regarding vices and virtues. But the air was soon echoing with many voices and shouts. All those people could hear those voices, but they could not see anyone. So they marvelled and said: "We beg you to tell us who you are, and what you want to say to us." The voices answered: "We are demons sent to you from God, who has compelled us to tell you that the friar is announcing the word of God to you, but that you do not want to listen to him. You are to convert from your evil ways, otherwise on judgment day you will have no excuse in front of God." Those people were terrified and they converted and willingly listened to that sermon.

Regarding friars who were freed from the anguish of death

Lastly we shall see how God freed and protected friars from anxiety in front of death.

There was in the Order a certain procurator of a friary called Henry, who was on the point of death. He saw in his spirit that there was a ladder on the headrest of his bed. The top of the ladder was touching the heavens. The Angels were admonishing him to go up that ladder, in order to enter the heavenly palace. On the other hand,

the demons were placing coins on his eyes, in order to prohibit him from going up. All of a sudden he remembered that he still had to pay seven *denarii* of ordinary money to a poor woman who had sold him cauliflowers. So he asked a certain lady [320] who came to visit him out of devotion, to go and satisfy that debt, which the vision had reminded him of. As soon as this was done, the sick man received communion and left this life to go to the Lord.

There was a friar who lived a life of approved holiness and was a man competent in knowledge. He was sent to Spain for the office of visitation during the general chapter. While he was intent in carrying out this office, and was in a small friary, he became seriously ill and was about to die. Being alone in bed agony, he saw an Angel who led him in front of God to be judged. He saw the whole Trinity residing in what seemed to him to be a solemn palace. The Angel then said to the Lord, who was manifesting Himself as One in essence and as Three Persons: "Lord, I am offering you this friar, so that you will give him the crown of reward, since his merits are complete." And then he saw that the Divine Persons began to discuss together. The Son and the Holy Spirit said to God the Father: "Father, You give sentence, since in You resides the full power and the right to make judgment." The Father then said: "*The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son* (Jn 5:22), and therefore it will be the Son who makes judgment." That friar who was being offered to the Trinity remained in front of the Judge, without any fear and full of security and joy. The Son of God and true man, with the authority of the Father gave the following judgment, namely, that the soul of that friar was to return to his body and that the sick friar would still have to remain for some time in the miseries of the present life. That friar was instantly cured from his illness and for another three days continued his work until he brought it to completion, and after that he terminated his life in a praiseworthy manner.

Regarding a certain marvellous vision in Sicily

There was a certain brother in a friary of the Province of Sicily, who was once praying in the church. He had the vision of a woman

who was completely naked, but who was wearing decorated socks¹⁹⁰ in her feet, and who was being followed by two wolves with downcast faces, as if they were her knights. These wolves remained outside the church, while that woman entered the church in haste and began to pray in front of the altar, and then returned hurriedly to the wolves. That friar was astonished at that sight, and began following that woman and commanding her in the name of the Lord Jesus to tell him who she was, from where she was coming, and where she was going. She answered him: "I was a woman who spent all my time in vanities and in songs, and used to wear expensive and gorgeous clothes and ornaments. At last I made penance and confessed my sins and felt sorry for them, and the divine clemency sent me to purgatory. Since I used to follow ornate frivolities and songs and vanities with so much curiosity, now I have to go all over the world and visit the churches, dressed only in these ornamented stockings, since I had left all my other clothes under my bed and then gave them [321] to the poor out of compassion and divine charity. I do not have any other punishment to bear except my confusion and shame, since I have to appear naked in front of everybody. I do not suffer any temptations of the flesh, since these stockings preserve me. The wolves you are seeing were two priests, who were my pastors, and who never corrected me or anybody else from the way I used to insult God with my vanities. They now have to run with me everywhere I go under the appearance of wolves, who oppose the office of the shepherds. Now, therefore, go and pray for me." Even though that woman thought that everybody could see her, in fact it was only a few persons who actually saw her. Since there was nothing exterior in her punishment except her nudity, there was no lust aroused in those who beheld her.

Regarding how a friar converted a vain woman

There was a certain woman in Paris who used to wear jewels round her neck and many other ornaments. She went for confession to a certain friar Minor. He admonished her to lay aside her common

¹⁹⁰ The Latin word is *subtulares*, which would indicate socks reaching from the knees down to the feet, worn by the monks during the night in summer.

vanities and ornaments and to start serving God with humility. This was a very difficult task for the woman to do. So that friar did not desist from insisting with her, and he made her become afraid and, among other things, told her that those ornaments were the arms of the devil, with which he was able to snatch away the souls from the hands of God. When that woman was pierced with the sting of divine fear, she answered in fervour of spirit: "I will therefore pray the Lord that He will snatch away from me any ornament I am wearing and which against His will belongs to the devil, and thus give to the devil what belongs to him." That very moment a shadow descended upon that woman and it seemed that an invisible hand was snatching away all her ornaments and saying: "These are my arms." Thus the devil despoiled that woman of her ornaments. She was thus converted to the Lord and rejected all vainglory and served the Lord with humility.

Regarding how a certain friar converted a sinful woman

It was the custom of a certain friar Minor to humbly ask those he would meet to recommend him in their prayers, whatever their condition might be. It happened once that the friar was going into a town and he met a certain prostitute. He kindly asked her to pray for him, but he answered: "But how can my prayers be of any benefit to you, since I am a public sinner?" He insisted: "Pray for me, in whatever condition you are, to the Most Holy Mother of God." A marvellous thing happened! That prostitute went into that village and, according to her usual custom, she stopped in front of the image of the Virgin, placed upon the gate, bowed down, and remembering the words that friar told her she knelt down and prayed twice the *Hail Mary* for him. That very moment she saw in her spirit that the Mother of God was pleading with Her Son to listen to that woman's prayers. The Son answered his Mother: "How can I listen to the prayers of such an enemy who prays for my friend?" His Mother said: "My Son, you can make a friend of the soul which is your enemy, and thus give heed to the prayers of an enemy for your friend." When that woman heard these words she stood up feeling sorry for her sins and began to run behind the friar. She recounted that vision to him, and then received confession and was perfectly converted to the Lord.

[322] *How a certain woman avoided a diabolic illusion by heeding to the counsel given to her by a friar to invoke the name of Jesus*

There was a certain woman in Germany, who was very beautiful, but she used to run after carnal pleasures without any control. Once a certain friar Minor, who was a perfect man, began to argue with her regarding her lustful way of life. His words filled her with such power from the Holy Spirit, that she had perfect contrition for her sins, and rejecting all pleasures of the flesh, promised to dedicate herself perpetually to serve God. In order to accomplish this vow in a more secure way, that friar advised her to shut herself up as a recluse, in such a way that she would not be able to escape and would avoid all company with men. The friar therefore confessed her and shut her up in her cell. But the old enemy immediately assailed her with multiple temptations, when he found her alone, and invited her to *return to her vomit* (Prov 26:11). He made her remember the pleasures of the flesh and her old carnal lusts. She could not resist the temptations, and was on the verge of desperation. So she called that brother and told him: "I cannot sustain so many temptations, and therefore you have to allow me to go out of this cell, as I have decided to do." The friar then ordered her to do other penitential practices to discipline her flesh and, full of the Holy Spirit told her: "Whenever you are assailed by these temptations, you are to mention the sweet name of Jesus, and you will win over the pride of the devil." Whenever she felt those temptations, she began to call upon the name of Jesus, and the more she was tempted in the flesh, the more she would repeat the name of Jesus and in this way she managed to win over all diabolic temptations. And continuing to call upon the name of Jesus she began to feel such sweetness in her soul, that she lost all taste of any other material thing in this world. It used to happen that in one single day she would mention the name of Jesus more than ten thousand times with great devotion. She became very strong in the Lord and immediately calmed down having been freed from all temptations.

Regarding the purgatory for the friars Minor

A certain friar was very ill and was approaching death. Another friar who was very dear to him was resolutely praying the Lord that,

if it were His will, after his death that brother would appear to him. That brother did in fact appear to him as he had promised and, among other things, he revealed to him in a familiar way that when the dead friars Minor are led to purgatory, the ones already there would scold them and say: "Why have you wanted to come to this purgatory, when if you had observed the rules and statutes of your Order you would have been purged more easily from your faults?"

How the Blessed Mary commanded a certain cleric, who entered the Order of Minors

There was a certain cleric who was very devout to the Mother of God. One day the blessed Virgin appeared to him and commanded him to follow her. When that cleric began to follow her, the Mother of God told him: "I do not want you to follow me in this way, but be prepared to change your life and serve my Son for ever in another state of life, which I will teach you." She then added: "Tell the clerics that they should keep my altar clean and beware of blaspheming my name; if they do not do this, they will be gravely punished. I will now go to a certain castle, which is going to be burnt, since today my Son and I have been blasphemed in a shocking way in that place." That same day [323] that castle, in fact, went up in flames. On the third day the blessed Mary returned to that cleric and said: "Follow me by embracing the way of life of the friars Minor." When he heard this that cleric left everything behind him, and entered into the Order of friars Minor, where he always served the blessed Mary with humility and devotion.

Brother John, who was visitor in Spain, narrated that there were two monks in a certain abbey, who loved with a burning carnal lust a certain most beautiful woman. They promised one another under oath that, if they could go to her, they would not reveal anything of what they had done, not even in the sacrament of confession. When, at long last, they had satisfied their carnal desires with her, it happened that one of the monks died without having confessed his sin. That very night, the dead monk appeared to the other monks. He was totally black and terrible to look at, and he was holding a sword in his hand and said: "If I did not see the Angel who is your custodian,

I would surely kill you, since according to the oath which I took with you, that is, that I would not confess my sin, I am now damned.” The other monk was terrified and told him: “Do you want me to pray for you to the Lord, or to help you in any other way?” He answered: “No, since now it is impossible to help me in any way; but pray for yourself and confess your sin and make worthy fruits of penance.” So the other monk asked: “Tell me, what I can do in order to be saved in the best way?” The dead monk answered: “If you want to be saved, enter into the Order of friars Minor and you will attain the kingdom of heaven.” Having said this he disappeared. The following morning that monk went to the friars Minor and, after having narrated that vision to them, he was accepted in their Order. That brother John, the visitor, used to say that the monk lived as a friar a most holy way of life.

The times of brother Bonaventure (1257-1274)

[323] The eighth General was the famous father, brother Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, from the Roman Province. He was elected during the chapter of Rome held in the year of the Incarnation [324] of the Lord 1256,¹⁹¹ and celebrated on the feast of the Purification of

¹⁹¹ The date of the general chapter of Aracoeli in Rome, during which Bonaventure was elected General Minister, is 2nd February, 1257. The Quaracchi editors of the *Chronica XXIV Generalium* present a short biography of Bonaventure. He was born at Civita di Bagnoregio, in the province of Viterbo, in 1217 (the Quaracchi editors preferred the date 1221, nowadays no longer accepted as probable), and was baptised Giovanni Fidanza. He was miraculously healed from an illness through the merits of St. Francis and became a *puer oblatus* in the Franciscan friary of Bagnoregio (the Quaracchi editors say Orvieto). When Bonaventure was 17 or 18 years old, in 1236, he was sent to Paris to start his studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University. He frequented courses in theology given by other famous masters in the same school, namely Haymo of Faversham, Adam of Marsh, William of York. But it was to Alexander of Hales, whom he calls *pater et magister* (father and master) that he owed his intellectual preparation and eventually his entry into the Order. In 1243 Bonaventure acquired his bachelor's degree in Arts, and entered the Franciscan Order. After his novitiate year he began to frequent theological courses given by Alexander of Hales, until the death of this master in 1245. After having concluded the five years prescribed in the University statutes, in 1248 Bonaventure received the bachelor's degree in Biblical studies, after having commented upon the Gospel of St. Luke, and with special licence from the General Minister John of Parma, because of his young age. In 1250-1251 he began to write the Commentary on the 4 Books of the Sentences of Peter Lombard, as Alexander of Hales had done before him, and thus became a bachelor of the Sentences. At the end of 1253, when he was 35 years old, Bonaventure underwent the strenuous disputations in order to acquire his *licentia docendi*, or master's degree. He presented his *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*, and thus became the *magister regens* (regent master) of the Franciscan *studium* at the University, succeeding William of Melitona. His title of master, however, was only recognised by the University authorities on 12th August, 1257, because in the meantime the controversy between the Secular Masters and the Mendicant Orders present in Paris blocked much of the activity in the University, as well as the Dominican and Franciscan candidates Thomas of Aquinas and Bonaventure. Bonaventure was at Paris on 2nd February, 1257, when he was chosen as General Minister of the Order during the Aracoeli Chapter in Rome, in the presence of Pope Alexander IV. It was John of Parma himself who had designated Bonaventure as his successor.

the blessed Mary. The lord Pope Alexander IV was present at that

The news of his election reached Bonaventure quite some time afterwards. The first thing he did was to address an encyclical letter to the Order on 23rd April, 1257, in which he presented his programme for the generalate. Before embarking upon the intense work of reform of the Order during his seventeen years as General Minister, Bonaventure spent the autumn of 1259 on mount La Verna, on a spiritual retreat. The fruit of this retreat was the famous mystical treatise *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (*The Journey of the Soul into God*). During the general chapter of Narbonne, on 13th May, 1260, the first one of regular three-yearly chapters celebrated by Bonaventure, the General Minister elaborated a new set of Constitutions, which have survived as the basis of Franciscan legislation ever since. These were the Constitutions of Narbonne. The Chapter of Narbonne also entrusted Bonaventure with the task of composing a new legend of St. Francis. The Chapter decreed as follows: "Likewise, we order that one good legend of blessed Francis be compiled from all those already in existence." The order, however, seems to have been issued already during the 1257 Chapter, since there is no reference to it in the Statutes of the Narbonne Chapter of 1260. Bonaventure started working upon the *Legenda Maior Sancti Francisci*, in Paris after having participated in the transferral of the relics of St. Clare to the new basilica in Assisi, on 3rd October, 1260. On 20th May of the same year he celebrated the General Chapter at Pisa. During this chapter Bonaventure presented the new biography of St. Francis, which was unanimously approved. The success of the new life of St. Francis was such that, during the following General Chapter of Paris on 16th May, 1266, it was decreed that the *Legenda Maior* should be the official biography of St. Francis, and that all the preceding biographies were to be removed from all friaries and libraries in the Order, and possibly, even outside the Order, where these were to be found. In his last period of teaching in Paris, between 9th April and the end of May 1273, Bonaventure delivered a series of lectures, the *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, with the aim of refuting the arguments of Averroist philosophical theories. These conferences, however, remained uncompleted, since on 28th May, 1273 Gregory X nominated Bonaventure Cardinal and bishop of Albano. Between November 1273 and 7th May, 1274, Bonaventure worked hard on the preparation of the Council of Lyons, together with Pope Gregory X. At the same time Bonaventure continued to defend the Mendicant Orders in front of the Pope. During the last General Chapter he presided, this time at Lyons, on 19th May, 1274, Bonaventure resigned from the post of General Minister, in favour of Jerome of Ascoli Piceno. The Council had already started its sessions, when Bonaventure became seriously ill, and died on 15th July, 1274, assisted by Pope Gregory X. He was 57 years old. The Dominican Cardinal Peter of Tarantasia delivered the sermon during the funeral, at which the Pope and all the Cardinals present in the Council attended. Bonaventure was buried in the Franciscan church at Lyons, and Gregory X commanded all priests in the Church to celebrate one Mass for the repose of his soul. Bonaventure was canonised by the Franciscan Pope Sixtus IV on 14th April, 1482, with the Bulla *Superna caelestis patria*. The Franciscan Conventual Pope, Sixtus V, declared Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas doctors of the Latin Church on 14th March, 1588, with the Bulla *Triumphantis Ierusalem*.

chapter. During the chapter it was ordained that the feast of Saint Clare be celebrated with the rank of a double feast.

This General entered the Order when he was still a young man. He led such an honest and good life, that the master Alexander of Hales used to say regarding him, that it seemed that Adam had not sinned in him.

He was seen to make such progress in his ability to be enlightened with the knowledge of all sciences and especially in the knowledge of Holy Scripture, that he continually grew in the devotion of grace, to the point that all the truths which he perceived through his intellect, he was capable of transferring them in the form of prayer and divine praise, to which his meditation was continually directed with all the affection of his heart. It thus happened that after seven years since his entry into the Order he had read and commented upon the Sentences in Paris, and in the tenth year he received [325] the chair of regent master. In the thirteenth year of his membership in the Order, he was elevated to the office of supreme moderator of the Order. All his works echo the profound and subtle abilities of his intellect. All those who search for divine wisdom can fully find it and venerate it in his works, as well as seeing in them the proof regarding the vanity of the works of Aristotle.

In that same year, after the celebration of this chapter, that is, during the month of March, the aforementioned lord Pope Alexander conceded an indulgence of one year and forty days to all the friars and others who went to the general chapter. He also conceded an indulgence of one hundred days to those friars who went to the provincial chapter.

In that same year, on the tenth day of the *Calends* of March, the declaration of the lord Pope Innocent IV was empowered by the words of a Bulla.

In the year of the Lord 1258 the same lord Pope, during the fourth year of his pontificate, issued a Bulla in which he included a certain rule of the sisters of San Damiano of Brienna, in the castle of Ansa in the diocese of Lyons.¹⁹² The monasteries of Burgundy and Rennes and many monasteries of the Province of Aquitaine, who used

192 Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1259, n. 20 says that Alexander IV sent the Rule of St. Clare confirmed by Innocent IV in 1253, to the monastery *Humilitatis B. Mariae Virginis* founded in 1259.

to follow the rule included within the Bulla of the lord Pope Innocent IV, began to observe this other Rule.

In the year of the Lord 1259 the same lord Pope Alexander, in the fifth year of his pontificate, in his mercy mitigated the rigours of this aforementioned rule.¹⁹³

During that same year, the most devout General Bonaventure composed a treatise on Mount La Verna. The treatise is entitled *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. Afterwards he also compiled another treatise, which he called *Itinerarium mentis in se ipsam*.¹⁹⁴

[326] The same brother Bonaventure, before he became General, while he was regent master in Paris, defended the truth of the Gospel with many clear disputations and determinations. And while he was General, Bonaventure wrote an *Apologia* in an eloquent style. In this work he confounded with subtle arguments a most wicked treatise, which is thought to have been written by master Gerard of Abbeville.¹⁹⁵ This Gerard is damned and *God abandoned him to his unacceptable thoughts* (cfr. Rm 1:28), since while he was a doctor of theology in Paris he publicly preached against the poor Religious. Since he began to blaspheme freely against Saint Francis and the state of his Order, divine anger finally struck him, because he ended his days paralysed and covered with leprosy, and thus left an example to everybody, so that all might know that Jesus defends His poor ones.¹⁹⁶

It has been proved that it often happens that those who persecute the Order of blessed Francis end up by either converting them-

193 Bulla *Haberi percepimus* sent from Viterbo to the sisters of the Order of San Damiano of Civitanova on 27th August 1258.

194 The *Itinerarium* was composed after a retreat on Mount La Verna in the autumn months of 1259. The other treatise entitled *Itinerarium mentis in se ipsam* refers to Bonaventure's *De Triplici Via* or *Incendium amoris*.

195 In 1254, at the height of the poverty controversy between the secular masters and the mendicants at the University of Paris, Bonaventure produced the *Quaestiones disputate de perfectione evangelica* in defence of the poverty of the mendicant Orders. Later on Bonaventure had to face a new upsurge of anti-mendicant sentiment on the part of the secular masters. Two masters had published works against the Mendicants, namely Gerard d'Abbeville and Nicholas of Lisieux. Bonaventure answered them by publishing his *Apologia Pauperum* (*In Defence of the Mendicants*) in 1269-1270.

196 Gerard of Abbeville was archdeacon of the cathedral of Amiens and a famous master of theology in Paris. He died on 8th November 1271.

selves to love it, or else are greatly confounded in this present life. *I know that the Lord will give judgement for the wretched, justice for the needy* (Ps 139:13).

There was an Abbot who could have become a persecutor of the friars, but we have heard how he was attracted to them and converted through the following vision. He was an Abbot of the Province of Puglie and was a member of a noble family. He was, however, a very proud man, and the devil had tempted them in order to regard with contempt the friars Minor more than all other men. He used to send his soldiers to harass them by cutting their cords, stealing their hoods, prohibiting them from receiving alms, and binding them in order not to let them preach the word of God. The friars could not find a remedy to defend themselves from his wicked acts, from the injuries he inflicted upon them, and from his malice. The Most High ordained that, one night, the Abbot in his dreams saw that the good and evil persons were gathered for judgment. He saw himself and his brothers, one of whom was a Bishop, together with two of his clients, [327] who were his nephews, were assigned to stay on the left together with the evildoers. After this he saw two friars Minor, coming from the right hand side, who were pushing him and those who were with him to the right, and saying: "Come with us, since you have to be saved in our family and your names will be inscribed with those of the elect." The friars said this once, twice, and at the third time they pushed him with such force, that they took him totally out of his bed and left him naked on the ground. He woke up and found himself naked outside his bed, and was gripped by a great fear. That same morning, he escaped to go to the friars and, to the astonishment of everybody he became a friar Minor. His two aforementioned nephews and clients, while they divided among themselves the possessions of the Abbot on that same day, started to quarrel and wounded one another to death. The Bishop was admonished by his brother regarding this vision, but he did not want to take any notice of that dream. The other brothers of the Abbot were all killed in battle.

There was also a certain Provost in Piedmont, within the confines of Lombardy. He was an honest man and a most able preacher, but out of the love he showed towards the friars, he wanted them to preach to his congregation, and he himself refrained from preaching. A member of his family, however, provoked him to begin to hate the

friars, in such a way that he wanted to persecute them greatly, and because of him the friars wanted to go away from there and transfer to another place. That same night, preceding the day on which the friars had decided to leave, that Provost had a vision. He saw Christ sitting on a throne. The demons were carrying in front of Christ one of the family members of that Provost, who had incited him against the friars. When the Judge saw that he could not answer the devils regarding all the accusations they were presenting against him, He ordered the demons to throw him down into hell. As soon as this order was given, the Judge ordered that the Provost himself be brought before him. The devils objected that he had risen with malice against the brothers. When the Judge was pronouncing the sentence blessed Francis went beside Christ and said: "Lord, he would not offend my brothers if it were not for that evil servant who is condemned and who incited him. In fact, before this he used to love the friars very much, and therefore I beg you to have mercy upon him." The Provost then proceeded all trembling and prostrated himself at the feet of Saint Francis and offered himself to him and his Order in an irrevocable way. In that same vision Saint Francis received him there and then in the Order. When that Provost woke up, he believed that the vision he had was a dream. Nevertheless, he was angry because of his fear and began to call out loudly his servant. But he found him dead, and he became even more fearful. The following morning he came to the friars and he confessed his faults, narrated his vision, and received the habit of the Order. He lived a holy life in the Order and ended his days in a praiseworthy manner.

[328] In the year of the Lord 1260 the same General celebrated the general chapter at Narbonne, in which he gave a new form and order to the Constitutions.¹⁹⁷ The friars of the Province of Aquitaine

¹⁹⁷ The Narbonne Constitutions are, in fact, the end product of a long period of formation in the legislation of the Franciscan Order. Bonaventure gave a logical structure and order to the set of laws and decisions taken by various General Chapters, and published them as a new *corpus* of legislation in the Chapter of Narbonne of 1260. These Constitutions are a synthesis of previous Franciscan legislation, some of which went even back to the time of Elias, and which was dispersed in various *Institutiones*, *Mandata*, *Instituta*, *Memorialia*, *Diffinitiones*, *Ordinationes*, *Constitutiones*. It seems that Bonaventure had already started the work on this revision in 1257, if he was capable of presenting the end product in 1260. The Narbonne Constitutions are divided in 12 chapters, dealing with the entry into the Order, the quality of dress, the

celebrated the feast of Saint Martiale on the 7th day of July, as the chapter had ordained.

In the year of the Lord 1261 the same General composed a life of Saint Francis in a very polished style. He published it in its longer version and also reduced it into a shorter form. In this latter form he composed a series of nine lessons for each day of the Octave of the feast of Saint Francis. He therefore published this Legend, in which he did not include anything that was not certain and approved by trustworthy witnesses.¹⁹⁸

In that same year, on the feast day of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, the lord James, who was French and came from the city of Troyes, and who was at that time patriarch of Jerusalem, was elevated to the papacy and was called by the name Urban IV.¹⁹⁹

In the year of the Lord 1262, the aforementioned brother Giles, of holy memory died. The General brother Bonaventure used to say regarding him that the Lord had given Giles a special grace, so that he would help all those who would invoke him for anything regarding the good of their souls.

In the year of the Lord 1263 on the Octave day of Easter Sunday,²⁰⁰ the bodily remains of Saint Anthony were translated to the new church, which at the time was being built by the citizens of Padua in his honour. The General himself was present for the celebration. The tongue of Saint Anthony, which had been buried underground for 32 years, was found incorrupt and still reddish in colour, as if the most holy father had just died in that same hour. The devout General de-

observance of poverty, fasting and other religious practices, the manner of going about in the world, the work of the brothers, the correction of the brothers, visitations of the provinces, election of the ministers, the provincial chapter, the general chapter, suffrages for the dead. The General Chapter of Narbonne also issued a list of 28 Statutes. The influence of the Narbonne legislation on the history of the Order was unique, and formed the basis of subsequent legislation even in the reformed families, and was the direct code of laws up till the General Chapter of Perpignan in 1331.

¹⁹⁸ In 1260-63 Bonaventure composed the *Legenda Maior Sancti Francisci* and its abridged liturgical form *Legenda minor Sancti Francisci* for use in the choir during the octave of the feast of Saint Francis.

¹⁹⁹ Jacques Pantaleo of Troyes was elected Pope on 29th August 1261, and was crowned Urban IV on 4th September. He died in Perugia on 2nd October 1264.

²⁰⁰ The translation of the relics of Saint Anthony took place in Padova on 8th April 1263.

voutly received the tongue in his hand, and with his face bathed with tears, in front of all those present, he began to praise the saint with these words: "O blessed tongue, you always used to bless the Lord and also to invite others to bless him, now [329] it is manifest how many merits you have gained before God!" He then kissed the tongue very reverently, and commanded that it should be placed high up in a place of honour.

In that same year a general chapter was celebrated at Pisa, during which some new rubrics were added to the Breviary. It was ordained that the rubric, which states that, until the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord, the hymns are to conclude with the expression: *Glory to you, Lord, who were born of the Virgin* etc., should be extended up till the Epiphany of the Lord. It also ordained that the friars, during their sermons, should invite the people so that, when the bell is rung for Compline, they recite more than once the salutation of the blessed Mary, since it is the opinion of some solemn doctors that during that hour she had been greeted by the Angel.²⁰¹

After the celebration of the chapter, the same General requested the lord Pope Urban to obtain the services of the lord John Caetani, Cardinal deacon of Saint Nicholas *in carcere Trulliano*, by nominating him Cardinal Protector of the Order.²⁰² The same lord Pope, in fact, had wanted to give his nephew, Ancherus, as Protector to the Order; but since he was not accepted by the friars, the Pope accepted to nominate the aforementioned lord John, who afterwards became Pope Nicholas III, because of his fatherly care and special bond of love with the Order. John's father, namely lord Matthew Rossi, had been a member of the Third Order, and the same lord John, also when he became Pope, used to speak about their mutual affection and praise him in public. Regarding the lord Protector, Matthew used to say, according to what one of his servants referred to me, that when John was still a young boy, being his father, he had offered his son to Saint Francis. The same Saint had foretold that he would not become a fri-

201 It was a Franciscan custom that, during the ringing of the bells for Compline, one would pray the *Hail Mary* for three times. From this custom was born the prayer of the *Angelus Domini*. This is maybe the oldest reference to this custom, which dates back therefore to the time of Bonaventure.

202 His name was Cardinal Giovanni Gaetano Orsini. He was Protector of the Order (1254-1261) and Inquisitor General under Urban IV (1261-1264), and was elected Pope Nicholas III on 25th November 1277.

ar, but that he would be a future defender of his Order and lord of the whole world. When John was still very young and had not reached the age of reason, he recommended the Order to his father, who was greatly astonished. The same lord, his father, did not want to reveal how he knew all this beforehand, but he revealed these words in time, according to the saying of the Sage.²⁰³

When the lord John received the mandate of being Protector of the Order, it happened that the Ladies of the Order of San Damiano requested the ministry of the brothers of the Order. When the brothers gathered at the aforementioned general chapter [330], in which the Cardinal himself was assisting they themselves, or rather the Order, were absolved from this service towards the sisters by the lord Pope Urban, who issued a declaration in which he insisted that the Order was in no way bound to such a ministry. The same Pope preferred to entrust another Cardinal with the office of Protector of the Nuns, that is, the lord Stephen, bishop of Palestrina. However, since he wanted, nearly imposing his authority, to recall the friars to the service of the same Nuns,²⁰⁴ it happened that for another time the aforementioned lord John was entrusted with the office of Protector of both Orders. It was he who wrote the Rule, which is still in force, and in which there is no mention of the friars Minor, but the Nuns are immediately subject to the Protector of the Order. This Rule was published within the context of a Bulla of the lord Pope Urban in the 15th day of the *Calends* of November of the year of the Lord 1263.²⁰⁵

203 *Qui loquitur verbum in tempore suo* (Prov 25:11).

204 On 19th August 1263 pope Urban IV issued the letter *Inter personas* from Montefiascone, near Viterbo, and addressed it to Cardinal John and the Minister General Bonaventure. In the letter the Pope solved the issue between the Minors and the Clares who were demanding the services of the brothers.

205 The pontificate of Urban IV (29th August 1261 – 2nd October 1264) is an important moment for the legislative development of the Form of Life of Saint Clare and for the universal recognition of her Order as a unified family under one official name. In 1255 Isabelle, sister of Saint Louis IX, king of France, founded a monastery for nuns at Longchamp. She entrusted some Franciscan theologians, among whom Saint Bonaventure himself, to compose a Rule for this female monastic community. The end product was the composition of another Rule, which closely resembled that written by Innocent IV in 1247. In that Rule this religious family of nuns was to be known as *Sorores Ordinis Humilium Ancillarum beatissime Mariae virginis gloriosae* (Sisters of the Order of the Humble Maidservants of the most blessed and glorious Virgin Mary). As the name itself shows, there seems to have been no direct link with the

[331] In this Rule the Nuns were called by the name of *Sisters of Saint Clare*. All the monasteries of the provinces of Germany and Italy live under the observance of this Rule.

The same General, with the insistence of the lord Saint Louis, king of France, composed a most devout office of the Cross.

In the year of the Lord 1264, on the last day of September, the same lord Pope Urban died at Perugia.²⁰⁶ The lord Guido Fulcodio, Cardinal and Bishop of Sabina, was elected at the same place on the feast day of Saint Agatha of the following year, and accepting the office of Pope chose to be called Clement IV. He came from Provence, from the village of Saint Gilles.²⁰⁷

In the year of the Lord 1267 the Sultan of Antioch in Babylon, which is one of the most famous cities in the world, began to capture Christians, both men and women, or else he would kill them or confine them to remote places. Thus the friaries of Antioch and Monte Negro were ransacked.

The lord Pope Clement wanted to elect the lord brother Bonaventure to the prestigious See of the archbishopric of York.²⁰⁸ But

other monasteries of the Order of San Damiano. The Rule was approved by Pope Alexander IV on 10th February 1259, and was later definitively approved by Urban IV on 27th July 1263. Urban had preferred to change the name of the Order into that of *Sorores Minores inclusae* (Cloistered Sisters Minor). The plan of Urban IV was to unify all the monasteries of Poor Ladies under one Rule and one name. For this reason he entrusted Cardinal Giovanni Gaetano Orsini, Protector of the Order, who later on became Pope Nicholas III (1277-1280), to write a new Rule. The Rule of Urban IV was approved by the same Pope with the Bulla *Beata Clara*, of October 18, 1263. The novelty of the Rule of Urban IV lies particularly in two characteristic notes. First of all, the Pope addresses the Bulla to the cloistered nuns of the *Ordo Sanctae Clarae*. Thus, in 1263, all the monasteries of Poor Ladies were to be known by this name, which remained the distinguishing mark of the Second Franciscan Order ever since. Secondly the Pope declares that Clare could be considered as being the foundress of her Order.

206 Urban IV died on 2nd October 1264.

207 Clement IV was elected on 6th February 1265. His name was Guido Grossus, and he was bishop of Sabina, son of Fulcodio, and a member of a noble family in the region of Narbonne in France, and came from the village of Saint Gilles on the banks of the river Rhône. He was crowned Pope in Viterbo on 22nd February 1265 and remained Pope until his death in Viterbo on 29th November 1268.

208 Bonaventure was elected to the archbishopric of York through the letter of Clement IV, *Summo Pastori Iesu Christi Vicario*, published at Perugia on 24th

from Paris, where he was, Bonaventure went in the presence of the lord Pope and humbly and efficaciously begged him to refrain from promoting him to such a dignity. The same lord Pope agreed to accede to his request and sent him with these words: *Stick to your job, work hard at it and grow old in your work* (Eccli 11:21). [332] During the same year in winter, the same General lectured and commented the first chapter of the book of Genesis at the Paris University. His lectures were followed by a great number of students gathered for the occasion. Therefore, from the contents of his lectures, he composed a treatise, entitled *The Seven Visions or Lights*.²⁰⁹ But before having concluded the exposition regarding the fifth day of creation, he was elected to the prelacy and had to leave the work unfinished.²¹⁰

The aforementioned lord Clement desired for peace and concord between the friars Minor and the Preachers. In order to attain this end and avoid the seeds of discords he ordained that a professed Preacher could not be received into the Order of friars Minor, or vice versa. He also ordained that a friar Minor who was an Inquisitor could not examine for heresy and proceed in the judgment of a Preacher, or vice versa.²¹¹

In the year of the Lord 1266 a general chapter was celebrated in Paris.²¹²

November 1265.

209 The author is here committing an error. Bonaventure lectured at Paris his set of Conferences on the Commandments, *Collationes de Decem Praeceptis*, during Lent of 1267, his set of Conferences on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, *Collationes de Donis Spiritus Sancti*, during Lent of 1268, and his set of Conferences on the Six Days of Creation, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, in 1273, between Easter and Pentecost.

210 The *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* were left unfinished, since on 3rd June 1273 Bonaventure received the apostolic letter *A nostrae promotionis auspiciis*, in which Pope Gregory X elevated him to the rank of Cardinal and Bishop of Albano.

211 The two papal interventions regarding relations between the Minors and the Preachers were the apostolic letter *Quo vos in Christo*, published at Viterbo on 22nd December 1267, and *Paupertatis altissimae*, published on 12th June 1266.

212 During the General Chapter of Paris on May 16, 1266, it was decreed that the *Legenda Maior* should be the official biography of St. Francis, and that all the preceding biographies were to be removed from all friaries and libraries in the Order, and possibly, even outside the Order, where these were to be found.

During the times of this General brother John of Penna, the Provincial of the Marches, was famous. When he was still a boy in secular life, one night there appeared to him a certain boy who was very handsome and who told him: "O John, go to Santo Stefano, because there [333] one of my friars is preaching. You are to believe what he is teaching, since it was I who sent him. In the meantime you have a long way to go and afterwards you will come to me." John woke up immediately and he felt that he inwardly changed in a marvellous way. So going to that place he found brother Philip who was preaching very fervently with the power of the Holy Spirit. After listening to the sermon brother John said that he wanted by all means to enter the Order in order to make penance for his sins. Brother Philip told him: "Come with me to Recanati and I will take care to have you received in the Order." That most pure young man was thinking in his heart and convincing himself with these words: "This is the great way I have to follow and maybe afterwards I will go to heaven." So he went and was received into the Order, and began to believe that he would soon go to see God. Afterwards, in a certain chapter, the General Minister said: "Whoever among the brothers would like to go the Province of Provence, I will send him with my obedience." So John said in his heart: "Maybe that is the long road I have to follow, and afterwards I will go to see God." Therefore he obtained the grace from brother Philip to be sent to that Province. He began to live there and thought that he would die immediately, but he remained alive in all perfection for 25 years. Once he was praying and shedding tears, since he was seeing that his sojourn in this life had been prolonged too much. And behold, there appeared to him Christ Jesus, and at his gaze his soul melted. Christ told him: "My son, ask anything of me and I will give it to you." So he asked Christ to give him remission for his sins and whatever He would reckon would be for his greater good. Christ answered: "I have listened to your petition."

After these events the friars of the Marches obtained from the General the permission of making brother John return to the Province of the Marches in order to live there. So he saw this as an act of obedience, and said in his heart: "This is the long way I have to go in order to arrive in heaven." So he returned to the Marches, and remained for another 30 years waiting for this promise to be fulfilled. In the meantime he became famous for his miracles and his spirit of prophecy. Now it happened that, in the hermitage where he was liv-

ing, there was a certain brother novice, who desired to live a holy life. Once he went out and was going to succumb to youthful temptations, and he decided to leave the Order. Now this thing was immediately revealed to brother John. When the novice returned to the hermitage, brother John called him to come to him without hesitation, and told him: "My son, I want you to come to confession." So that novice narrated to him in a clear way the temptation he had. John invited him to accept everything only from God, and added these words: "Since you have waited to come meet me, and did not want to go out of the Order without my blessing, the Lord will now give you this grace, namely, that you will persevere in the Order to the end." And in this way the same novice was totally freed from all temptations and ended his days in the Order.

Brother John was always very calm inwardly and he rarely spoke. He was assiduous in his prayers and after Matins he never returned back to bed. One night after Matins, while he was praying fervently, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Brother John, your journey is now over. Therefore, on the part of God I announce to you that He has decided to give you the grace for which you prayed with so much trust and which you wanted. Therefore I offer you two possibilities, to choose one of them: you can either spend one natural day in purgatory, or else spent seven days in the affliction of sickness in this [334] world." Since he rather chose to receive afflictions in this world for seven days, John immediately began to feel very sick. He began to have a fever, and feel intense pain, as well as contortions of his members, and various other ailments in his body. And what was worse than everything was that a certain evil spirit would stand before him facing him, and would hold a large parchment in which were listed all the sins he had committed, and would tell him: "You are damned because of all these sins." That same brother John began to forget all the good and honourable things he had done, and he did not even remember whether he had once been a Religious, but esteemed himself to be damned, just as the devil had told him. Whenever the brothers would ask him how he felt, he would reply: "I feel bad, because I am damned." The brothers marvelled at all this, and so they sent to call brother Matthew of Monterubbiano,²¹³ who was a most perfect man and who loved brother John very deeply. On the

213 Monterubbiano is a village situated in the district of Fermo in the Marches.

seventh day of his illness brother Matthew came to him, and when he asked him how he felt he answered that he felt bad and that he was damned. So brother Matthew told him: "What is this that you are saying, brother? Do you not remember how frequently you used to come to me for confession, and also for how many years you served God in this Order and that God's mercy is much greater than all your sins and that Christ our Saviour has paid for us an infinite ransom? Therefore be full of trust, since you are saved." That same moment his temptation receded from him, and he came back to his senses. After some time the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him with great splendour and he was surrounded by a sweet smelling fragrance, as He had promised to appear to him in the opportune moment. Thus, full of joy and certain of the glory he would acquire, he joined his hands, thanked God and slept in the Lord.²¹⁴

This devout General for many days felt unworthy to receive communion of the body of Christ and did not celebrate Mass. It pleased the Lord to look upon his humility. One day, while he was hearing Mass with devotion, with the sole command of the Lord who wanted to comfort him, one of the particles of the host which the celebrant had broken flew and entered into the mouth of the same General and filled it with a most sweet taste.

Around that time there lived in Spain many brothers who became famous for their miracles and holiness. Among them there was brother Anthony from the city of Segovia. During his baptism he was called Gonsalvo. But as a sign of what was going to happen in the future, he changed his name, and was called Anthony according to the apostolic custom. In this way God made him take this new name and made him leave his first abode and homeland, in order that he might shun the world and accept the life of Christ in penance, and echo with a high voice through his works and doctrine, as a manifestation of future events. [335] When he saw how the world was falling into the evils of vice, he entered the Order of Cistercian monks in the reign of Portugal. There he lived in such a degree of holiness, that he would fervently gaze up to heaven and pray. Up till that moment he had never heard of the Order of friars Minor. Once there appeared to him

²¹⁴ John of Penna died circa 1274.

a most beautiful young woman adorned in splendid attire, and she invited him to go and live with her. He strongly refused her proposal, since he was a monk and wanted to profess chastity, and therefore it was not licit for him to marry. But she insisted: "It is necessary that you accept me as your wife. In fact I am wearing the cord of the Order of friars Minor, whose name I bear and whose habit I wear, in order that you may shortly know that the word I am telling you will come true, namely that you will enter the Order, you will be married to it and you will be saved in it. This Order, in fact, is more familiar, more perfect and more similar to the poor Crucified." When she had uttered these words, she disappeared.

Another time he saw Saint Francis and another friar with him, namely William of England, who was popular for his miracles and whose bones rest in the church of Saint Francis. He also saw a most beautiful bed. When he asked what it was, the holy brother William answered that it represented Saint Francis. So Anthony said: "I want to sleep in that bed, in order that I may say that I have slept in such a beautiful bed." After this same vision he saw the friars Minor, girded with cords, and wearing the habit which he had seen in the vision, coming to that place. They were admiring Anthony, seeing him raised up on high, since the monks wanted to elect him as their Abbot. But he entered the Order of friars Minor, as if it were the bed of Saint Francis. So the monks went to the Roman Curia and made recourse so that brother Anthony would be summoned to appear before them. The monks were stating that their Order lived in a greater austerity than the Order of friars Minor, and that he should not acquire license from his superiors to leave his Order. But Anthony answered: "They have not come to the Roman Curia as mendicants, and neither have they come walking barefoot, as I have come." So the Pope refused the request of the monks and sent them away, and Anthony remained in the Order full of great consolation. It is said that he lived in such great devotion, that he had the gift of tears and – a marvellous thing to say – he used to shed tears in abundance even in the midst of a noisy crowd of people.

Therefore, when he was returning from the Curia to go to his own country, he left his relatives behind him in Gascony, and remained in the friary of Acqui as if he were a poor hermit. There he obtained such a great degree of perfection, that hardly one idle word could be heard coming out of his mouth. Once he narrated the fable

of the fox, which was full of lice and had just entered the waters of a river. Up till that moment the fox had been carrying lice on its fur, and it immediately submerged itself underwater. The man of God, who had narrated this story as if it were a fable, did not permit that his words remain without fruit, and added with fervour: "The fox I was talking about and which was covered with lice, represents the sinner who is overburdened with the stains of sin, and whose heart is sour with the sense of guilt. When he confesses his sins, he realizes that it is as if he has bathed himself to drown the black lice clinging to his skin. When he confesses he cleanses himself from his faults, and it is as if he is drowning his lice in the waters of the Sacrament of penance."

[336] He used to speak with such fervour regarding God that sometimes it seemed that he was drunk, even though he only drank wine during the celebration of the sacrifice of the Lord, which was enough to make him fall into a spiritual trance. He was so inflamed with the fervour for the good of souls that he would never refrain from dedicating all his time to preaching and hearing confessions. That is why he would sometimes say: "If I were to find myself in heaven, I would still leave one of my feet outside in order to be able to hear the confession of sinners." He also used to preach the importance of confession, of fervent prayer, of avoiding idle words, and he would add that, if one did such things, he would arrive to accumulate many merits.

This friary was called Acqui by the people, because in this place this brother miraculously changed a certain spring of water into wine, and in memory of this miracle the place is known as *the fountain of Saint Anthony* to this very day. He died in the friary of Acqui when he was full of virtues, and there he was given an honourable burial. After a long time the friars left that place, which was situated outside the walls of the town. They left it because they were driven out during a war, but they gained a new friary. When they moved between one village and another they transferred the bones of the friars from the first cemetery to the second. They found the body of the man of God intact and whole, and totally incorrupt. They found his body leaning against a wall as if it were erect, much to the astonishment of all those who saw it.

In Spain, in the reign of Portugal, there was another holy brother Anthony from the town of Santarem. While he was still a student and was embarking on a military career, it is said that he fell in love with a very beautiful woman. But when Anthony began to mention the burning fervour of his love to her, she held him back and jokingly said: "Go first to the river Jordan and when you have washed yourself well and return spotlessly clean, you can then marry me, as you wish." That lady was refusing him as if she were joking, since Anthony was a man with a dark complexion on his face. When he heard these words, since nothing becomes difficult for those who are in love, as a sign of future good luck, Anthony, driven by the fervour of love, went on a journey and, as rapidly as he could, arrived in the Holy Land. He then went to bathe himself in the river Jordan. Returning from the river he took with him some of the water, because he wanted to carry it in order to present it to his beloved. When he came back and recounted what he had done, and showed her the water he had carried as a proof of his love for her, she began to show so much admiration for such a great act of love, that as a recompense for his love she accepted to become Anthony's wife. Therefore they celebrated their marriage, and after they lived together for some time, that woman died. Anthony then left everything behind him, and went and entered the Order of friars Minor, where he shunned the world and *crucified his flesh with all its passions and its desires* (Gal 5:24), and gave himself over totally to the regular discipline and progressed in the study of Holy Scripture in such a way that he soon merited to be called to the apostolic office of preaching. When he accepted this office, he [337] ploughed the field of his soul and overturned its arid soil with the power of preaching. He also bathed his face with the tears of compunction, with the effort of fervent prayer and with the fruits of contemplation. In this way he gave birth to abundant fruitful works and with his great care he rendered a full result of his fecundity.

Another time he was a Guardian at Evora,²¹⁵ where I believe he lived. It happened that he went to preach and arrived in a certain castle called Elvas. At that time there was a certain young man, who was a shepherd, and who used to go out with his sheep in the mountains. One day he was all by himself separated from his other companions. Now that day was a day of fasting. He arrived at a cer-

215 Evora is a town situated in the province of Alemtejo.

tain spring of water in order to quench his thirst, and he took out the bread he was carrying in his haversack. But when he tried to take out the bread, all of a sudden his hand became rigid and withered. He tried to place his other hand in the haversack, but the same thing happened to it. So he was very astonished and became terrified when he realised what had happened to him. That moment he saw a certain one-eyed young Ethiopian, who was also alone, and who lived close to the spring. The Ethiopian called him by name and asked him: "Dominic, what are you doing here?" Dominic answered: "As you see, I am sitting close to this spring of water." The Ethiopian then said: "If you will be cured this very moment, will you be my servant?" That young man said: "And who are you, that I have to become your servant?" The Ethiopian answered: "I am the devil." When Dominic did not answer him, the one-eyed Ethiopian asked him another time whether he would like to be his servant. When Dominic refused him in order to choose the Lord, the devil struck him with such serious blows and buffets that he remained totally maimed and contorted. Then the devil told him: "Now Dominic you know that I have rendered you a disabled man, in order that you will fall under my power. So if you will accept to be my servant, you will be immediately healed. In this way I shall glorify your name to such a degree, that you will become glorious among the people, and in you everybody will honour a saint and I will fill you with great riches." Dominic answered him: "If this is necessary and this is what you want, then let your will be done." And having paid homage to the devil, that very moment there appeared in the surrounding plain a multitude of demons all wearing clothes of armour like knights and they shouted with a great voice: "Dominic the holy Great One is ours." But that one-eyed Ethiopian mounted a horse, and bearing arms, he began to fight against them and say: "No, but Dominic the holy Great One is now mine." After they had waged a long battle, they began saying one to another: "We know that he is now a servant." When they asked him, he replied that he was the servant of that one-eyed Ethiopian. That very moment all the other devils retreated.

After this, that one-eyed devil said: "Dominic, now you are my servant, and I intend to glorify you. Come with me in that valley, and you will lie for seven whole days as if you are dead. Then you will have to go to your companions and as a dead man your sister will find you and take you to Evora for burial. Then I will create a great

trouble among the clerics regarding your burial and I will raise up your body. They will fight over your body, since they would want to possess your sheep." Everything happened just as the devil had said. The devil then continued: "When you will be taken for burial, you will raise up alive, and for as long as I will tell you, you will begin to utter prophecies. I will therefore show you what you should do and how you should answer the people, but be careful that you will not waver from my commands in any way."

[338] Therefore, when Dominic had been in that valley for seven days, as if he were a dead man, his companions found him and carried him to the castle of Evora. In that place, after a great dispute among the clerics, he seemed to rise from the dead and began to utter prophecies in front of the people. After this the devil told him: "Dominic, tell the people to build a church dedicated to the Great Holy One in that place, where the Angels will carry you, since you will work many miracles." When he began to announce this to the people, those persons, as is usually the custom, did not want to listen to him. So the devil told him: "Tell the people that it will not rain until they build that church." During that time, in fact, there was a great drought. When Dominic began to preach these words to the people, they answered that they did not have neither stones nor mortar. So he told them: "You gather the stones, and I will provide enough mortar for you." And he showed them a place where there was plenty of white clay, which had the appearance of mortar and could be used to bind stones together. When they had built that church, the devil told him: "Come with me and do whatever I will tell you." So that very moment the devil took him to Alcantara, and commanded him to stand in front of the church of certain friars belonging to a military Order, who were called the Order of Alcantara,²¹⁶ and told him: "Go in through that window and you will find three crosses on the altar. You are to take the smallest one and to carry it secretly, since I cannot look at it in any way." So he entered that church and carried that cross without hiding it. So when he went out he could not see the devil, and he began to call him repeatedly. The devil then answered him from afar and said: "Hide what you are carrying, since otherwise I will not be able to come

²¹⁶ This was one of the three military Orders founded in Spain in order to fight against the Moors. The first Order was that of Santiago de Compostella, founded in 1175, the second one was the Order "de Calatrava", founded in 1158, and the third one was the Order of Alcantara, founded in 1177.

with you.” So Dominic hid that cross, and the devil immediately came to him and hit him hard on the face and told him: “Did I not tell you that you had to carry secretly the thing I commanded you to take?” That very moment he made him go back to Evora and told him: “Dig a hole in that place, in order to hide in it that cross and cover it up diligently with a stone. When morning comes go to the people and tell them that it is the will of God that they build a church on the place where you placed that sign. You are to reveal to them that in that place there are precious relics that have been lying hidden since time immemorial. Tell them that a certain Bishop who was returning from the lands of the Saracens was killed in that place, and the faithful had hidden there this cross with many other relics, and that is why it is the will of God to reveal that they now build a church there.”

When he was announcing all this to the people, they all came to the place where the cross had been hidden. Dominic ordered them to remove the stone slab in order to uncover the relics. Many gathered to lift up that slab, but they could not do so, even though they tried with all their might. So Dominic went and with extreme ease managed to remove that heavy stone slab, as if it did not weigh anything for him. When he took away that slab, the people found that cross and they all marvelled at the novelty of this miracle. There was a great commotion and tumult among people and clerics when the cross was found. There was a certain assessor of the Order “de Calatrava”, who had a very good and swift horse, who snatched the cross and tried to escape with it. But his horse [339] could not move, as if it were tied, even though he was kicking hard on its reins. The people started to run after that friar and hurled stones at him, in order to kill him. In the meantime he was rescued by a superior power from that popular tumult, but he hardly evaded the stones. That friar was stating that he often had seen that cross in his church, and that he was trying to take it and offer it to that place. In the meantime the people were hurling abuse at that friar and pushing him back. The aforementioned Dominic the Great Holy One began to be praised and worshipped as if he were a saint. Many people began to come as pilgrims from various parts.

In the meantime, under the command of the devil, he began to pretend to live in abstinence, but he would also find lost sheep and ask the pilgrims to give them to him. He returned to the castle of Evora and the people and clergy invited him to enter in procession

into the church of the blessed Virgin with hymns and canticles, and offered him food and wine in the sacred chalice. But since he was led there in a violent way, he began to tell the people who were leading him that, according to the commands of the Angels, they could not keep him there or pretend to keep an eye on him as if he were under arrest, but would hide from the eyes of all. So the people ordered the custodians to close him up well in that church. So they immediately locked the door, lit up a fire, and began to watch over him with a great crowd who was there, keeping watch and talking about many things. Dominic however escaped from their gaze and went out of a small window and jumped over a wall in such a way that he was injured in his foot. He escaped to a castle called Virumencia, but his greatly false fame increased, and the people were coming to him from diverse parts to that castle and following his admonitions; in fact they were seeing that he also worked wonders. When he found the clay for the construction of that church, he kept part of that earth to him and gave it to a certain priest, saying: “Give this earth to the sick people in order to mix it with water and drink it, in order to be cured of their infirmities.” So according to the command of Dominic the sick people came to that priest and took that earth, and in fact they were cured of their sickness. When the amount of that earth finished, that priest reserved part of it secretly and began thinking in his heart: “It is a good thing to reserve part of this earth, because maybe you yourself will become sick, and you will need it to regain your health.” So he began to refuse to give any more earth to the sick persons, telling them that he had no more of it. When they went to tell all this to Dominic, he sent them back to the priest and told them: “Go and tell him on my part that the earth which he reserved for himself and his friends in a piece of cloth, in order to make use of it when he would be sick, should be given over to you in order not to impede your health.” When the people told the priest all those words, he was astonished and began to venerate the false saint more than ever before and began to give that earth with greater reverence, since it was evident that the saint did not keep the truth hidden from the hearts.

Therefore, when everybody was venerating him as a saint, it happened that brother Anthony came over to that place in order to preach. When he heard about the fame of Dominic, since by then the news of it had reached the ears of everybody, he began to interrogate him, since he was a holy man, full of the zeal of faith and discretion.

He asked him about his life and how he was educated. When he heard his answers, he turned to his companion and said: "Brother, I believe that all this show is made up, since [340] we should not believe all the things that are being said about this man. The Lord has led us to this land, in order that we uncover the false sanctity of this man and dissuade the people from this diabolic fraud. Therefore it is a good thing that we go to him and see with our own eyes whether the things that people say regarding him are true or false." They therefore called some knights, who presented themselves in that duchy, and they arrived at Virumencia, but Dominic was not to be found in that place, since he was living in another place as a shepherd. So the man of God brother Anthony preached in that place and, among other things, he admonished the people against their lax ways. He also told them many things regarding Dominic, since whatever they were praising in him, he asserted that it was false. The people got offended, and a tumult soon ensued, with many clamouring against the friars, and everybody was saying that they were malicious and jealous. Brother Anthony, however, persisted in his resolve, and he was not bent by the shouts or deterred by the false judgments. Brother Anthony then asked the people to send and bring Dominic from whatever place he was living. When the knights saw how the people were obstinate, they rather believed the friars and said: "We want to see that saint, and without doubt we will bring him here, in order to draw light on the truth of the facts we are witnessing."

While the knights went to bring him back, the aforementioned one-eyed devil came to Dominic and told him: "Behold that two friars Minor with hoods have come to Virumencia. Now I hate these friars, since they are the worst adversaries I have. One of them wounded my eye in Castile." In fact, the holy brother Anthony had been received in the Province of Castile, but was then transferred to the Province of Saint James. The devil then added: "The knights will come to look for you, in order to take you with them to the friars. You have to beware that you should not go with them. If they compel you to do so, beware of entering the church or of marking yourself with the sign of the cross, since if you do the opposite, I will immediately come to possess you and suffocate you." The knights in the meantime were travelling across the hilly country and were wandering on many roads looking for Dominic who was hiding from them. At last they found him in his hiding place, and they explained to him the reason for their

coming and the compelled him by violence to return with them to Virumencia. I believe that it was the time of Lent, since the brothers were occupied in hearing confessions. The knights led Dominic back with them to the church of the cemetery, where Dominic began to withhold his pace and would not in any way enter the church according to the command of the devil. So they called brother Anthony and told him that Dominic had arrived. The friars then asked the knights to make him enter the church and to wait for them there until they would finish confessing the people. The friars said: "If he is truly a saint, he should not be afraid of entering the church." Upon the insistence of the friars, that false saint was compelled with violence to enter the church. The friars looked at him with attention, in order to see whether he would mark himself with the sign of the cross when he entered the church, or whether he would show any reverence to the altar or to the cross. But when Dominic entered he did not mark himself with the cross, and he did not genuflect or kiss the altar stone, but he turned with his back to the altar. He looked at the friars and began to ask them why they had commanded the knights to bring him into the church so violently, and he began to call the friars jealous and malicious men, in order to incite the people to rise up against them with great tumult.

The friars therefore went towards him and began to speak to the angry crowd, telling the people that they did not cause any injury to Dominic, since all the Saints and friends of God love to enter the churches, [341] to venerate the cross and to adore the Crucifix in the most devout of ways. Dominic, however, when he entered the church did not arm himself with the sign of the cross, and did not care to show any respect to the altar or to the body of Christ. Having said this, brother Anthony asked Dominic in front of all the people to mark himself with the sign of the cross. Finally Dominic made the sign of the cross, and he was immediately possessed by the devil and fell on the floor, and began to roll over in a horrible way. Time and again the devil began to lift him up in the air to the height of a human person and then let him fall down again violently on the ground, in such a way that even many persons could not hold him firm. Brother Anthony was holding him fast, in order that the devil would not carry him to another place. Dominic was shouting at the people and hurling insults at the friars, telling them that they were guilty of doing tricks of magic. The friars were calling the manifest judgment of God against

the false saint in order to reveal his false holiness. Finally, when the people had calmed down, the devil, in front of all those who were listening, began to threaten brother Anthony, since he was making an illusion by pretending to be able to make judgment on him present in his servant Dominic. Indeed, brother Anthony invoked the name of Christ and made the sign of the cross. The devil refused to liberate the obsessed man, and began to work a diabolic illusion, by making the face and mouth of brother Anthony become deformed in a horrible way. Out of great fear all the people went out of the church and the companion of brother Anthony went to hide behind the altar.

Brother Anthony remained alone with Dominic, and began to invoke the help of God, so as not to permit to the devil to exercise such an act of tyranny. He marked his face and mouth with the sign of the cross, and that very moment they were restored to their normal form. He also marked the face of the false saint with the sign of the cross, and that very moment Dominic was freed from the devil. The people came in and witnessed the fact that he was publicly invited to confess his crime; but Dominic was saying that if he confessed his sin the devil would strangle him. In fact it seemed that the devil was wrestling with brother Anthony, and declaring that he would violently ruin Dominic. But brother Anthony comforted Dominic. So he gained trust, and confessed his sins and received the sacramental absolution from brother Anthony with great fear. But even while he was confessing his sin the devil continued to try to take him under his power. In the meantime, after he was absolved and given a penance, the devil did not dare to attack him any longer. At long last in front of all the people he confessed his fault and added publicly that for those seven days, during which he seemed to be dead, the devils were playing by poking him with their lances and crying out: "Dominic the Great Holy One is ours." They were attacking one another with their lances, but the one-eyed devil was always the winner. When the seventh day had ended, he was offered a black bread to eat, which seemed to have a canine taste and form. When he ate it because he was hungry, his mouth and face were stained with blood oozing out of that bread. From that moment the false miracles ceased.

Dominic therefore remained free, but the devil wanted to gain a wicked wage for what he had done, as is his usual custom. In fact, one day Dominic had the vision of many demons, under the guise of knights who were driving a great multitude of cows. They asked him

to lead the cow whose name was Peace or Badajoz,²¹⁷ in order to go and sell it [342], and they promised him a good wage if he sold it for a worthy price. Dominic was deceived and began to deal with those who wanted to buy the cow and was on the point of selling it, when the masters of the vow came and immediately caught Dominic and accused him of having stolen the cow. When he was interrogated regarding how he had received that cow, he answered that some knights had given it to him, and promised him royal judgment and protection for the act. The people led Dominic to the place where he had met the knights, but there were no knights to be found. Dominic was therefore judged to be a robber and was condemned to be hanged, as a price for the wicked acts he had accomplished, since he had deceived many persons through the initiative of the one-eyed demon who had become his master.

Meanwhile brother Anthony was preaching the word of God in such an efficacious manner, that he brought to concord all those who had been struggling one against the other. Once there was a woman who was so obstinate in her hating other people that she did not want to forgive her adversary in any way. After having admonished her with many words, brother Anthony lost his patience and commended her to the devil, and that very moment the devil possessed her as if she were his property. Another time brother Anthony went to visit persons who were slaves. With the power of God, as soon as he entered, all their chains fell and the slaves were rendered free by the power of the Most High.

There were many friars in various regions of Spain, who became famous, although I did not find all the information I had wanted regarding them, and regarding the General Minister under whose authority they lived. There was a certain brother who lived in a friary at Lisbon, in the reign of Portugal. His name was John, and God used to give him many spiritual graces. Among these graces he had received a special one, namely, that on particular feast days he would have secret revelations about his spiritual state during Vespers or Matins, or even after Mass. On the feast day of Saint John the Baptist he did not receive any revelation from God during Vespers or during Matins, and

217 The town of Badajoz is situated on the river Guardiania. The reference to Peace is that to *Pax Augustorum*, the name of Pax Augusta, or Placa.

even after Mass he remained without any spiritual gift from heaven. So he was very sad and desolate and remained in the choir until the hour of Sext, all by himself, and being afraid that God would not love him any more. So he was exclaiming with bitterness and sadness of heart the words *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mt 27:46), and was shedding tears and crying aloud. The friars entered and found him in the choir persevering in prayer and waiting for some consolation from heaven. That moment he heard a voice telling him: "Brother John, stand up, go in the refectory, and follow the other friars in their daily tasks in the friary, and do not think that you are better than them." So John became all red with embarrassment, bowed his head down, entered the refectory and sat down at table. Before beginning to eat, when he was praying the *Our Father*, John saw the heavens open and the Angel of God coming down and carrying a golden pen, a bowl, a towel, a stylus, and an instrument looking like a knife. The Angel entered the refectory and first of all marked the one who was reading with the knife from his breast down to his navel, he washed him with water and wiped and cleaned him with a towel, and on his heart he wrote the following words with letters of gold: *John is his name* [343]. In the same way the Angel marked all the friars and wrote on the hearts of each and every one of them, until he arrived at a certain brother, who had been a canon in an important church. The Angel refused to write anything regarding him and said: "This friar will go out of the Order this very night." And in fact that is what happened that night. Since the lector of the friary, who had gone out to preach with his companion, did not want to write down anything regarding the fact that the brother had gone away from the friary on such a feast day, on the insistence of the prayers of the same brother John, he finally accepted to write down all this. After everything had been done in this way, the Angel finally went back to the lector of the table, and joining his hands together he said: "His name has been confirmed." He did the same regarding all the other brothers and then disappeared.

In the same friary in Lisbon there was a certain friar, called Martin Martini, who was honourably buried there. In his life he was a most perfect man of sublime prayer and famous for his miracles. He was content with one habit, and always went about barefoot; his food was bread and water. He spent the nights in prayer, in tears

and corporal penance. There is a popular story regarding him. Once, when he was a cook, one day some noble secular people came to the friary and the brothers wanted to prepare a special dish for them. But he closed the kitchen and until the hour of Tierce remained immobile in the sweetness of contemplative prayer, in such a way that he hardly took any notice of corporal food. What else should we say? The Guardian came and found the kitchen closed, and so he immediately sent to call for the friar Minor who was the cook. When the brother came he opened the kitchen, but not even the fire had been lit. The Guardian was angry, and began to say that the secular people whom the friars had invited for dinner would be scandalised and offended. But the friar Minor placed all his trust in the Lord and humbly answered: "Father, do not have doubts, since the Lord will surely provide all good things for his poor." The Guardian went out of the kitchen and the friar Minor closed himself inside, and prostrated himself in front of the Lord and the furnace of his heart burned with the flame of prayer. And behold some Angels came under the guise of most handsome young men. They kindled the fire and in a moment prepared and cooked the entire meal. Then brother Martin told the Guardian: "Come in, since everything is now prepared." The Guardian entered unbelievably, but he saw that the food was prepared and praised God who worked wonders in his servant.

Another marvellous story happened in the same city of Lisbon. There was a young man, who was very devout to Saint Francis and his Order, but whose relatives had wanted him to enter the Order of Preachers. After a short time he became seriously ill. So he went to confession to his master, and full of fervour, after having finished his confession, he added these words with great affection: "O father, how I would die with greater consolation, if I could obtain to realize just one great wish!" The master said: "Tell me, my son, and I will try to console you most willingly in whatever you desire according to what I can do." The young man then said: "Father, I have always nurtured a singular devotion to the Order of friars Minor and to Saint Francis, and I would be greatly consoled if, when I die, I will be buried with their habit." But the master said: [344] "Beware, brother, not to talk about this subject, since we will not permit any friar to be buried with the habit of another Order." That young man kept silent and died, and was buried with the other friars Preachers. His confessor did not

reveal anything of what the young man had told him, in order not to make the other friars angry about what the dead brother had asked for. After two years the friars wanted to bury another dead brother. They opened the grave of that young friar and found his corpse dressed in the habit of the friars Minor. They were all astonished and began to think how it was possible that a friar Minor would have been buried in that grave. His master then said: "When he made his last confession to me, he revealed to me his most ardent desire, namely that of being buried in the habit of the friars Minor. Now it is clear that the Lord has satisfied his wish."

A similar event is said to have occurred in the same kingdom, in the town of Evora. In the castle of Monte-el-Novo, five leagues distant from Evora, there lived a married couple very devout to Saint Francis and his Order. When they welcomed the friars in their house, they used to have a servant who was brought up to love the Order from his childhood. Whenever the friars would come there he would receive them with great devotion and wash their feet willingly and serve them with all kinds of affectionate cares. It happened that, one day, this young man, whose name was John, went with his lady to Evora. There he became so seriously ill that it was just a question of thinking about his burial. When he saw that he was in extreme danger of dying, he said to his lady: "My lady, I have a great desire to be buried in the friary of the friars Minor wearing their habit; therefore, I beg you to deign to console me in realising this last wish of mine." The lady answered him: "My most dear son, the friars are not accustomed to dress with their habit any dead person, except when that person is a nobleman, or a powerful lord. Therefore it is best for you to be content to be buried in their cemetery." John then died and he was buried in the grave of poor and simple people in the friars' cemetery. After four years the friars wanted to place another person in that grave, and they opened John's grave. They found him wearing the cord and the habit of the friars Minor. The friars were astonished that a friar had been buried with their habit in the cemetery of the simple people. But that lady, who was by then living in Evora, revealed to them the last wish of the aforementioned John to be buried wearing the habit of the friars. So the friars believed that the habit, which the lady had refused to ask them to give to the young servant, on account of his lowly social condition, was given to him by God, on account of the nobleness of

his heart rather than on account of his social standing, and that God conceded willingly to John this grace.

In the same friary of Evora there also occurred a fact which is important to note against those who show no devotion. There lived in that place a certain friar from Lisbon, called Dominic Peter. When he was still young he became seriously ill, and because of the great summer heat he developed a high fever. Therefore he took off his habit, and lay down in bed with great affliction. Around Compline, while the servant went to the church to get a light, a great multitude of demons came over. They snatched the bed with the sick young friar lying in it, and carried it high up to the window of the dormitory, and it seemed that they wanted to throw it out of that high window, [345] or to make it fall out from it in some way. That friar began to shout full of terror, and the servant came in carrying the light and saw the bed high up in the air with the sick friar. The servant was also gripped by intense fear and astonishment. The sick friar then told him: "Hurry up and throw me my habit." The servant was trembling, but he threw up the friar's habit on to the bed. A marvellous thing occurred! As soon as the habit touched the bed, all the devils abandoned it and the bed fell down on the floor with the sick friar in it. Brother Peter immediately dressed his habit, although he was sick, and in this way he learnt the way how to avoid all the malice of the devil.

In the friary of Salamanca, in the Province of Saint James, there were two lay brothers who lived a most perfect and marvellous life of contemplation and ecstasy. One night they were praying fervently, one in the inner part of the church and the other one at the end of the church. Some secular people in the town saw like two large globes of fire on the roof of the church: one was burning on the area of the inner part of the church, whereas the other one was burning on the other end. They thought that the whole church was in flames. Therefore they hurried to the door and began to knock loudly on it, until the friars opened the door for them. They told them: "What are you doing? Your church is burning and you do not seem to take any care of what is happening." The friars told them that there was no dangerous fire burning in the church. But since the people continue to assert the opposite, the friars and the secular persons entered the church together and found the two lay brothers praying, one in the in-

ner part and the other one at the other end of the church. They were bodily uplifted from the ground, and were staying at the exact places where the diameters of the two flames had appeared on the roof. After their death, both friars were honourably buried and began to shine with many miracles.

In the friary of Toro in the same Province of Saint James brother Stephen, known as *corvus*, is honourably buried. He was a noble man, and used to dress extravagantly and in a provocative way. One day he entered the church of the friars Minor on Good Friday with his extravagant clothes, not without attracting the criticism of those present, who were all wearing penitential clothes. When he heard the sermon, he felt so pierced with the memory of the Passion of the Lord, that he could not hold himself any longer, and went to call the Guardian, and told him that he wanted to leave the world and take the habit of the Order. The Guardian tried to dissuade him from acting in such a hurry, but Stephen, driven by the Spirit, did not want to wait any longer. What else can we say? He was received in the Order and took the habit in front of all the others who had criticised his extravagance in dress. He showed himself to be marvellous in the imitation of the Lord, in such a way that he was converted from the carnal and mundane desires of the flesh and abandoned them totally. When he was living in the friary of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the same Province, and was praying fervently, the blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him. While he was speaking to her, a certain friar began calling him loudly, but he was so full of spiritual consolation, that he seemed to be cut off from reality, in such a way [346] that the friar who was calling him would pass frequently close by, but brother Stephen would not see or hear him and – what is more marvellous – that brother would not even realise that there was Stephen close by when he would call and pass by. He preserved in this way in God, and he was not disturbed in any way in such a consolation, so that *the daughters of Jerusalem would not rouse or wake the beloved* (Sg 2:7) from the task of contemplation.

While he was in the friary of Toro, and was scourging himself and praying, the devil appeared to him, and cunningly tried to keep him tied up with persecutions every day. When the holy man would say that he would oppose the devil's plans with all his might, the devil answered: "You should know that I will shortly take vengeance on you." After not many days, during a solemnity, brother Stephen was

going up the ladder in order to adorn the church with damask. The devil overturned the ladder and brother Stephen fell to the ground. He broke his thigh and from that moment he always had to walk with a cane. But a marvellous thing was that, every time he celebrated Mass, he remained standing up without his cane and without feeling pain. As soon as he would finish saying Mass, the pain would return, and he would have to walk again with the help of his cane.

There were two noble ladies, one called Maria and the other one Elvira, who were devout disciples of brother Stephen. One morning, brother Stephen was celebrating Mass and the two ladies were present. During the moment when he elevated the Body of Christ, the small boy who was serving Mass fell asleep. At the same time, while the two ladies were looking on, two Angels under the guise of two most handsome young men appeared and were holding lighted candles. As soon as brother Stephen had finished elevating the sacred species, they disappeared and left the ladies filled with astonishment.

One night, when brother Stephen was in the choir in the same friary of Toro, he looked at one of the choir stalls and saw that there was a friar who had his head covered with the hood. When he asked him who he was and why he was staying in that place at such a late hour, the friar answered: "I am a certain dead brother, who frequently used to recite the office in this choir, but without devotion. Now the strict judge has condemned me to this purgatory, but I beg you to pray for me, so that I will be freed from the sufferings which I am enduring." So brother Stephen prayed for him and the dead brother, as before, appeared to him again during the night, and revealed to him that his sufferings had been mitigated because of his prayers, and thanked him for having prayed for him. At the same time he told him that he would now be totally freed thanks to his prayers, and would fly up and go swiftly to the Lord.

The man of God would have to go through the cemetery of the friary whenever he went to his cell. Every time he would go through the cemetery, he would pray for the dead as fervently as he could. One night he was thus praying and saw in the cemetery a multitude of dead of both sexes, who appeared to him, and bowing down in front of him, thanked him for his prayers, which made them worthy to merit the mercy of the Lord.

In the same friary there lived a brother who came from a noble lineage, and whose name was Anselm. He had come to live there

from a remote region. He was devout in many ways, but he could not acquire the gift of shedding tears for his sins as he wished. So he pleaded with brother Stephen to beg the Lord to give him the gift of shedding tears. Stephen answered him: "You should also pray, and I will willingly pray for you." While they were both persevering in prayer, behold that brother [347] Anselm was given the gift of shedding tears in abundance. From that moment, every time he would pray or remember his sins, he would abound with the gift of tears, as had been promised to him.

When brother Stephen was nearing the end of his life, he became seriously ill. After having received with great devotion the saving Sacraments of the Church, at the hour of Matins, with all the friars around him, he joyfully slept in the Lord. At the moment of death, however, he fell from his bed on the floor. At the same hour the aforementioned lady Maria appeared to him, while he was still keeping watch in prayer, and brother Stephen told her: "Behold I am now dead and the friars have neglected to keep watch over me and take care of me, and I am now dead and have fallen down on the floor, and my body is still lying there. But I will soon go out of this world and ascend to reign forever with the Lord." So the lady Maria went to wake up the whole family, and with good company and many lighted candles she came during the same hour of Matins to the friars and, having called them together, told them: "Behold, brothers, that you are to take good care of brother Stephen! Now he is dead, and no friar being presently close to him, he has fallen on the floor during the hour of his death." The Guardian answered: "Lady, what you are saying is not true. I myself have gone to visit him and found him in a good state, just as I had seen him other times before." The lady then said: "You are to believe that what I have told you is true, since this is the way he appeared to me, and I know that when he died he fell from his bed and revealed to me that he would be going up to heaven." What else can we say? The brothers entered the room, where there was the sick and holy man, and as lady Maria had said, they found his body dead on the floor. So they took off the harsh hairshirt he was wearing on his flesh. When morning dawned, the friars took him to the cemetery for burial.

After some years had passed, the two ladies Maria and Elvira built a church upon brother Stephen's grave, because of the many miracles that the Lord was working through him. When they came to

transfer his remains and venerate his bones, the friars found that his right arm was raised with two fingers erect, namely the middle and index finger, as if he was in the act of blessing. Out of devotion they took his relics. But there was an unbelieving brother, who touched the bones not out of devotion, but out of derision, and jokingly said: "Behold I now am holding the relics of this saint." And when he said this, his hand which was holding the holy bones, appeared all stained with abundant blood. All the onlookers were astonished and they were inflamed with greater devotion to the saint. That brother was also cured from his lack of faith.

On another day the same lady Maria brought a certain disabled person to the tomb of the holy man, and placed him there with great faith and trust. While she was fervently praying for his liberation, that person was immediately totally restored to perfect health.

[348] During the times of this General the Minister of Aquitaine was brother William of Bayonne. He used to narrate that a certain man from the town of Chartres who was a master, had made a vow to enter the Order. His time limit for entering the Order had already passed, however. While he was playing chess in front of the church of the blessed Mary, all of a sudden he lost his sight. Since he did not become aware of why this had happened, he destroyed his chess game, called a small boy, placed his hands on his shoulders, and entered the church. He prostrated himself in front of the image of the Mother of God and with many tears promised her that, if she would restore his eyesight, he would enter the Order without delay. He received his eyesight there and then, and having fixed the date of his entry into the Order, he returned once more to his former life, namely, playing at chess, and was once again blinded. So he returned in front of the image of the Virgin and with many tears promised her again to carry out his vow, and regained his eyesight later than he did the first time. Yet again he continued to delay the entry into the Order and did not stop playing at chess as before. After having wept for a long time in the church, he regained his eyesight much later than before. Thus he was compelled to enter the Order, but even there he did not lay aside his former self. Under the pretext of necessity he always used to wear shoes, he wanted to use blankets for his bedding, and he used to go to eat in the infirmary. The brothers for two whole years bore up with his pretence of being infirm and tolerated him unwillingly. One night

Saint Francis appeared to him and said: "I beg you, my son, to carry me for a short distance." He answered: "I cannot, since I am weak and you are a weighty person." Since the Saint continued insisting with him and pleading to be carried, he took him by his feet and began to drag him with his head on the floor. Saint Francis began to shout and say: "You are hurting me, you are hurting me. You are not carrying me in a proper way." But the other one answered: "I cannot carry you in any other way but this." The Saint was suffering many bruises from his unkind way of carrying him. When that brother woke up, he narrated the dream he had in front of the brothers gathered around the fire. A certain discreet friar answered him and said: "What you have seen is all true. You surely harmed and carried roughly Saint Francis, that is, his Order, since you are dragging him on the floor because of your carnal and mundane life." That very moment that master was touched by God's gaze, and believed that the interpretation was true. So he lay aside his mantle and shoes, he did not eat any more in the infirmary and did not use any blankets, and abandoned all life's comforts. Thus he took upon himself the full commitments of the life of the Order, he was converted into a new man, and became a good preacher and gave many good examples.²¹⁸

In the reign of Portugal, there was a certain young brother called Idelphonso. Although he was a devout and virtuous man, and abounded in the grace of shedding copious tears, he was also prone to treat others with contempt and to have an inclination to anger. Although with difficulty, he promised a certain friar who was very close to him, that when he would die, if God would permit him, he would appear to him after fifteen days. In the meantime Idelphonso became seriously ill, [349] and also brother Peter of Stella, who was a lay brother and was perfect in all devotion and holiness, became likewise seriously ill. Both of these brothers, namely Peter and Idelphonso, died on the same day and were buried. That brother waited for fifteen days, but Idelphonso did not appear to him. After another day had passed, when that brother was looking on, brother Idelphonso appeared to come to the church and crossed in front of the altar. In front of the body of Christ he took off his hood and bowed down

²¹⁸ The episode is narrated by Bernard of Besse, *Liber de Laudibus*, c. 7 (FAED III, 57-58).

with great reverence. Coming to that friar, and having greeted one another, he told him: "I could not come before as I had promised you, because the Lord did not permit me to do so." The brother asked him: "How are you doing, father?" Idelphonso answered: "I am burning in great flames of fire. In fact, although I kept my virginity and had the gift of many tears, I was also prone to be indignant in nature and used to show contempt to others. Thus now I am suffering from infinite pains in purgatory. It is only through the merits of my mother, who was a holy woman, that now I have been freed from the most painful punishments I had to endure." The brother then asked him: "Where is brother Peter de Stella who died together with you?" Idelphonso answered: "He is doing well. In fact, the Angels immediately carried him very swiftly through purgatory as if he was an arrow, and with the help of Saints Francis and Anthony and many other glorious friars, he was carried up to heaven. And you should know that there is hardly one day, in which some of the brothers who happen to be there, are not taken out of purgatory and transferred to heaven." The brother then asked: "Are there many friars in purgatory?" Idelphonso answered: "Yes, there are many, but they only remain there for a short time." The brother asked him: "Did the Masses I offered for your repose do you much good?" He answered him: "No, because you celebrated them without devotion, and I have been rather helped through the merits of brother Peter of Stella. In fact, when his soul was taken up to heaven, there was a voice heard in purgatory, which uttered these words: 'Listen, o you friars Minor who are in purgatory, that through the merits of this brother the glorious God will now forgive you a third of your temporal punishments, which you had merited to undergo.'"

Brother Bernard of Besse narrates a similar story regarding the way that God accelerates the liberation of the friars from purgatory in the treatise on the three Orders of Saint Francis. This is what he says: "I heard the following story from brothers who had it from a brother religious who, we know, was well thought of in the Order. A Cistercian brother from a monastery in the diocese of Toulouse came to him and begged to be received into the Order of blessed Francis. The Cistercian told the brother that a deceased brother of his monastery, who during his life the Cistercian had as a beloved companion, had come one night and called him to a chapter of lay brothers. During the sufferings of his final illness this brother had promised to do this with the

permission of God. When [350] the living brother out of a feeling of affection wanted to embrace him, the deceased brother said: "You will not be able to see or touch me." When the deceased man was asked how he was and what he had to say, he replied: "I will be fine. It is living that is dangerous." "But are you doing well now?" he was asked. "Not yet," was the reply. He pointed out that he yet had to be purged, and that he needed prayers. The Cistercian brother again asked about the state of his Order and about that of some other Orders, and about some religious seculars known to him. The deceased brother replied that many, especially of some Religious Orders, were damned, and that all of those people about whom he had asked by name were also damned. While he was explaining the reasons for the condemnation of some, he revealed some very personal things. I am not going to reveal the circumstances and the reasons which he indicated about the condemnation of many, because everything that disparages others would better be kept hidden, unless there is a very urgent reason for making it known. All Orders are good, if their Rules are heeded. But when the Cistercian asked about the friars Minor, he said that he had seen none damned, and that those who went to purgatory were quickly purged and soared to heaven. The deceased man admonished his former companion to persevere, and he warned him to beware of certain evils with which he came into contact. Thus it was that in a few words the deceased man particularly extolled the present state of the Order of blessed Francis.²¹⁹

Also during the time of this General, there was another monk from the Cistercian Order, who used to live with the aforementioned Cardinal Protector.²²⁰ He asked him with all humility that, as a sign of mercy for all the services he had rendered him, the Cardinal would help him to transfer to the Order of friars Minor. When the Cardinal asked him the reason why he wanted to be received in the Order, he answered that when he was still a secular, even before he had seen other friars Minor, he had a dream in which he saw a crowd of people running towards the Lord Christ, and he was running together with them. He also noticed that Christ was wearing the habit of the friars Minor and was saying: "Whoever wants to come after me should walk

219 This episode is taken from Bernard of Besse, *Liber de Laudibus*, c. 7 (FAED III, 61).

220 John (Giovanni) Gaetano Orsini.

as I am walking." Since that monk had never seen friars Minor before, he thought that the habit, which Christ was wearing, was that of the Cistercian monks, since he had entered into that Order. But when he later on saw the friars Minor, he clearly recognised that Christ was in fact wearing their habit, and that He was inviting him to enter into that Order. And therefore, with the good will of the Cardinal, he was received into the Order.

Under this General, in the presence of the lord Pope Gregory X, the number of Provinces of the Order was doubled.²²¹

Under the same General, brother John of Parma, who was his predecessor, and who had been deceived into believing the doctrine of Abbot Joachim regarding the end of times, was compelled to appear in front of the lord Cardinal John Gaetano, Protector of the Order, and in front of the aforementioned General.²²²

221 The Chapter of Narbonne in 1260 decided to increase the number of Provinces to 34, with 7 Vicariates and 230 Custodies.

222 The trial of John of Parma took place in the monastery of Città della Pieve in 1257. According to Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Lesser Brothers*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 2005, 125-126: "After John's two companions had been examined and condemned, he himself was summoned before a chapter or gathering of *discreti* and principal brothers at Città della Pieve. All were shocked to see how they presumed to treat such a man so irreverently and iniquitously, causing grief and scandal to all who heard about it, to the opprobrium and confusion of the entire Order. Brother John arrived and was forced to swear as one suspected of heresy. The wise man was questioned by those less wise, the aged man by youths. One full of the Holy Spirit was examined by those who were not devout and who were following the desires of their own hearts. Then Brother Bonaventure's wisdom and sanctity were eclipsed and obscured, and his gentleness so transformed by an agitated mind into fury and wrath that he said, 'If I were not concerned about the honour of the Order, I would have him punished openly as a heretic.' Brother John stood before his truly ungrateful sons, and because they had nothing against him they asked him what he believed concerning the aforesaid question. In his response he took the role of the innocent man Christ, asserting that he believed (indeed, always had believed) on that question and all others only what the Church holds and the holy doctors teach. After they had asked a great many things and he had given very little response, having born patiently the wrath and mindless hostility of those who irreverently interrogated him, he finally shouted out, 'I believe in one God, Father almighty!' That made the brothers even angrier at him and – to sum it up in a few words – after much interrogation and response, Brother Bonaventure decided, with the advice of the council of brothers and the consent of Lord Giovanni Gaetani of beloved memory (who was then pro-

[351] In the year of the Lord 1269 or thereabouts this General celebrated a general chapter in Assisi. The chapter decreed that, in honour of the Virgin, every Saturday the friars were to sing a solemn Mass. The friars were also to preach to the people in Her honour, and when the people heard the ringing of the bell at Compline, they were to salute several times the same Virgin. The same chapter decreed that the friars were not to use pewter bowls at table, or to drink from glass goblets in the friary.²²³

The same General ordered that at the university of Paris students from all the Order should come for studies, and that according to four eights of the Provinces, namely those in Spain, Germany, Lombardy and Rome, there should be four assistants, who would humbly take care to propose all that was useful to the same students.

In the year of the Lord 1271, on the first day of September, the lord Theobald from Piacenza, archdeacon of Lüttich, was elected in Rome to the office of Pope [352], after the Apostolic See had been vacant for two years and nine months, while he was away overseas on account of a devotional pilgrimage, and he chose the name Gregory X.²²⁴

tector of the Order), to sentence John to perpetual imprisonment, just as he had imprisoned his companions.”

223 *St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, Introduction and Translation by Dominic Monti (*Works of St. Bonaventure*, vol. 5), The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure NY 1994, 241. The decrees of the Chapter of Assisi quoted here are numbers 6, 7 and 9. Some have seen the reference to the salutation of the Virgin during Compline as an indication that Bonaventure proposed the prayer of the *Angelus Domini* in the Order. This is not exact, since the Angelic salutation as we know it today was introduced by Blessed Benedict of Arezzo in c. 1250. See *The Angelus*, Translated by Paul Barrett, *Greyfriars Review* 6,1 (1992) 127-128.

224 Theobald Visconti was born in Piacenza on 26th October 1226 and became archdeacon of Lüttich. When Clement IV died on 29th November 1268 the cardinals remained in conclave for a long period and did not succeed in electing a Pope, due to divisions among the cardinals; the equally split French and Italian cardinals wanted a Pope from their country due to the ongoing political situation with Charles of Anjou. The deadlock was finally broken when the citizens of Viterbo, where the cardinals were assembled, removed the roof from the building where the cardinals were meeting and locked them in, only allowing them bread and water; three days later, Pope Gregory X was elected after the longest papal election in the history of the Roman Catholic church. The new Pope was elected on the advice of St. Bonaventure. Theobald, who was a Cistercian monk, was elected at Vitbero on 1st September 1271. He was

During the times of this General, the same lord Pope Gregory X sent some well-prepared and worthy men in the offices of the Order to the regions of the Greeks. These included brother Jerome of Ascoli,²²⁵ who was then Minister of Dalmatia, together with his companions. The same General asked them to convince the Greeks and Tartars to renounce their errors, and return into unity with the Church of Rome.

In the year of the Lord 1274,²²⁶ during winter, when the same General was residing in Paris, he was summoned by the aforementioned Pope Gregory X. The Pope compelled him to accept the nomination of cardinal and [353] bishop of Albano. A general council was being celebrated at Lyons, at the beginning of May of that year. The presence and wisdom of Bonaventure during that council was shown through his defence of the Mendicant Orders, which he prepared against many and great adversaries. During the period of that council there were also three famous Prelates who were friars Minor, namely the bishop of Tripoli,²²⁷ the lord brother Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen and master of theology, and the lord brother Bonaventure,

crowned at Rome on 27th March 1272, and was Pope until 10th January 1276, when he died at Arezzo.

225 Jerome (Girolamo) Masci was born at Lisciano, near Ascoli Piceno, in the Marches on 30th September 1227. He entered the Franciscan Order and was elected Minister Provincial of Dalmatia. In 1272 Gregory X sent him as his personal Legate to the Greeks. In 1274 he was elected Minister General of the Order, succeeding Saint Bonaventure. In 1277 Pope Nicholas III made him Cardinal priest of Santa Prassede and Latin Patriarch of Constantinople, whereas Pope Martin IV nominated him Cardinal bishop of Palestrina in March 1281. He was elected Pope Nicholas IV on 22nd February 1288 and died on 4th April 1292. As Pope he steered a middle course between the factions at Rome, and sought a settlement of the Sicilian question. In May 1289 he crowned King Charles II Anjou of Naples and Sicily (1285-91) and Philip IV of France (1285-1314) looking toward the expulsion of James II of Aragon (1285-96) from Sicily. The loss of Acre in 1291 stirred Nicholas IV to renew enthusiasm for a crusade. He sent missionaries, among them the celebrated Franciscan missionary John of Monte Corvino, among the Bulgarians, Ethiopians, Tartars and Chinese.

226 It was not 1274 but 1273. On 3rd June Bonaventure went to Orvieto, together with the Dominican Pietro de Tarantasia, where Pope Gregory X was residing. He had been elected Cardinal on 28th May, which was the Ember Saturday after Pentecost. For further details regarding the last years of Bonaventure's work at Paris and Lyons, see the first note of this section.

227 A certain brother Paul was bishop of Tripoli on the coast of modern-day Lebanon.

who was Cardinal as we have already said. On the command of the lord Pope they met in order to discuss the principal themes pertaining to the general council. While they were waiting for the council, out of jealousy, somebody composed the following rhymed verses regarding them:

The ring of Rouen and the prelate of Tripoli,
Together with Bonaventure discuss papal decrees,
Forgetful of the Order that renounces such honours.

In the same town of Lyons a general chapter gathered during the same time of the general council. During this chapter the aforementioned brother Jerome, who had returned from his legation, was unanimously elected as general to govern the Order.

[354] This General brother Bonaventure, according to the chronicle of brother Peregrinus of Bologna, governed the Order for around 16 years. But the common opinion holds that he governed it for about 18 years, that is for 17 years and beyond, since his generalate had commenced on the feast of the Purification of the blessed Mary and was concluded on Pentecost.

In Rome there was a cook who was a very devout man. When he was sick in bed, and was nearing death, he started to shout in front of the brothers, saying that he was damned and despairing. The brothers tried to comfort him as much as they could, telling him to trust in the merits of the Lord's passion. But the more he was comforted, the more he would turn his gaze from one side to another and continue to cry out: "I am desperate, because I am damned." The brothers therefore began to pray for him and to beg him with many tears to calm down a bit and to open his heart to his confessor. His confessor began to chide him and to add that he did not see any danger of damnation in him, and neither could he understand the reason for such a great fear because of some grave fault, since he had often heard him open his conscience in secret during confession. But that brother answered: "It is true that my conscience does not weigh upon me, except in these two things: first, that I always reserved for myself the best quality food that I used to prepare; and secondly, that I always willingly criticised my Superiors. That is why I am now seeing

the entire house full of demons, who are accusing him of these faults in my conscience, and that is why I am crying out, since I am despairing of these demons here present, and I want them to retreat." Therefore he confessed his faults and was led back to put all his trust in the Lord, while the friars comforted him fully in the Lord. While he was dying he was continually putting his tongue in and out, as if he were licking his lips, and therefore he died in this way. This story was narrated by brother Pelagius, the Minister of the Province of Saint James, who was there present and who asserted that he heard these words.

In a certain hermitage of the Province of Saint Francis there was a basin in which the brother priests used to wash after Mass. A seed of a chestnut fell in it, and was then thrown with the water out of the church, where the water used to flow along a footpath. There it germinated and grew into a small shrub, and eventually it continued to grow into a medium sized chestnut tree. What was more marvelous, in each and every leaf and in its bark and in the trunk of the same tree, which grew from that nucleus, there appeared the figure of the Crucifix, as if it were the seal or artificial stamp placed upon it. On any one of the sides of the leaves and bark this mark was to be seen, as if it were a kind of sign serving as a seal of the Crucifix, just as those who saw it considered it to be.

There was a certain brother called Simon, who used to have doubts regarding the truth of the article of faith regarding the Trinity, and would have similar vain thoughts. Thus he was persistently assailed by this temptation, and at last he slept because of his sadness. And behold the blessed Christ himself appeared to him and said: "*Simon, are you asleep?*" (Mk 14:37) He did not know that it was Christ, and since he was half asleep barely answered him in his impatience. When Christ repeated the question: "*Simon, are you asleep?*" he woke up and clearly saw that the one who appeared to him was not simply a man or any creature. [355] When he recognised the blessed Christ, he was astonished and full of great reverence he prostrated himself in front of Him. He told Simon: "Do not have these kinds of thoughts, neither about the Trinity in which you are doubting, but firmly believe in what you have heard being taught to you through the faith of the Catholic Church." Having said this Christ disappeared and brother Simon remained totally freed from that temptation.

Two brothers were staying overnight in the house of a secular person, and they spent the whole night in useless words and indulging in food, in such a way that they omitted Compline. The following morning, while they were returning from that place, one of them left before his companion and was separated from him. And behold it happened that, while he was on his way, he met a certain man carrying a staff, with a terrible look on his face, and wearing the clothes of a shepherd. When that brother saluted him, that man was intensely angry and answered him: "What do you mean by this salutation, you miserable man, who deviate from the way of your father Francis? Why have you left out Compline yesterday night when you were with your companion? Behold now is the third hour, and you have not even prayed Matins. You have neglected these and other things, and we will take care to write down diligently and record all your faults." When that man disappeared, that brother was terrified and fell on the ground. When his companion reached him he narrated to him the vision that he had. Both of them made contrition and confessed their faults, and changed to a better way of life.

A certain young man was very sick and once he told his confessor, after having confessed: "Father, pray God for me; I am in great need since I feel that I am on the point of perdition." That brother was totally enlightened and knew that the young man had kept some sin during confession out of embarrassment. Therefore he prayed fervently for him, so that God would open his bosom to have mercy on him. The following night that young man had this vision. He saw Christ sitting on a very high throne. Many friars were coming in his presence, and they would bow down and pray for him saying: "Lord, have mercy upon your servant." Then they would go on their way. At last his confessor arrived and he prostrated himself in front of Christ, and repeated the words, which the others had said. However, he did not go away, but rather persevered in his fervour and continued to pray for him. After seeing his perseverance Christ finally answered him: "Brother, stand up. Behold, as you have asked me, I will show mercy to his soul." The sick young man woke up and when he remembered that dream he immediately sent to call his confessor and narrated to him that vision. He also confessed in a pure and wholesome manner, and after having received the Sacraments of the Church he rested in Christ.

ARNALD OF SARRANT

**CHRONICLE
OF THE TWENTY-FOUR
GENERALS
OF THE ORDER
OF FRIARS MINOR
[1369-1374]**

English Translation by NOEL MUSCAT OFM
from the original Latin text

*Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,
in Analecta Franciscana ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum Spectantia,
edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae,
Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), prope Florentiam,
Tomus III,
1897*

Section 3
**THE MINISTERS GENERAL
FROM JEROME OF ASCOLI
TO MICHAEL OF CESENA**

(1274-1328)

**The times of Jerome of Ascoli
(1274-1279)**

[355] The ninth General was brother Jerome of Ascoli,¹ from the Province of the Marches. He was elected at Lyon in the year of the Lord 1274, during the time of the general council, [356] which was celebrated in that place. The lord brother Bonaventure, his predecessor, had convened the general chapter. At that moment brother Jerome had just returned from Greece, where he had been sent as a legate. Therefore, when the council had not yet been concluded, he returned with all solemnity together with the Greek nuncios, after having happily concluded his business. Through his efficacious initiative, the Greeks returned under the obedience of the Apostolic See. A total of 40 Greek Primates signed the act of obedience. Thus, those who had the authority over the Greeks, recognized the primacy of the Holy Roman Church and humbly subjected themselves to it. The lord Pope solemnly sung Mass, and the Greek nuncios were present, and they sang the article of faith in the Creed, which states that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and they accepted it peacefully together with all the other faithful. Thus the entire Greek Church returned under the obedience of the Pope and within the unity of the Church in all things. In the same Council brother Jerome led in front of the lord Pope the nuncios of the Tartars, who submitted themselves to the Pope and were baptised. In all this God gave great honour to the Order, since with the joy of all those present, it had worked so hard for the good of orthodoxy in the Church. After some time, however, under the authority of the lord Pope Martin, the enemies of peace succeeded in confounding all the previous agreements.

During the same time, when the Council was not yet over, the most reverend and worthy of memory in Christ, the father and lord

¹ Girolamo Masci da Ascoli Piceno was born on 30th September 1227. He entered the Order in the friary at Ascoli together with his companion blessed Conrad of Assisi. They continued their studies in Perugia, where they both gained their doctorate. Jerome became Minister of the Province of Slavonia (Dalmatia). He was then sent as Apostolic Nuncio to the Greeks. On 20th May 1274 he was elected Minister General in the chapter of Pentecost. On 12th March 1278 he was nominated Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Prudenzia. On 15th February 1288 he became Pope Nicholas IV, and died on 4th April 1292.

Cardinal Bonaventure, praised and glorified by all the council Fathers present, since we believe that he blessed that gathering, passed away, to the great unbelief and sorrow of all. The Greeks and the Latins, both clerics and laymen, followed his funeral procession with many tears and great sorrow, since everybody loved him. In fact, he had been gifted with so many divine favours, that it seemed that the Church of God would not find anybody to fill the void he left with his death. He died in the same year mentioned above, on the third day before the *Idus* of July,² when he was 53 years old. He was buried with all due solemnity in the church of the friars Minor of the friary of Lyon. The Pope and all the Cardinals celebrated his funeral.

During the time of this same General, the most famous Cardinal and bishop of Palestrina, the lord Vicedomino of Piacenza,³ seeing that he was approaching the end of his life, [357] accepted with great devotion to wear the habit of our Religion while he was still alive. After his death he was laid to rest as a Cardinal bishop and as a friar Minor in the church of the same friars in Viterbo. During his illness he gave a great example of humility, by admonishing his own confessor to examine him with great care, as if he were a simple sinful layman. He used to say, "We prelates should be examined more closely and with great diligence."

In the year of the Lord 1275, counted from the Incarnation,⁴ the lord brother Peter of Tarantasia, Cardinal and bishop of Ostia, from the Order of Preachers, on the feast day of Saint Agnes, in the town of Arezzo, was elected pope and chose the name Innocent V. He remained as pope for five months and two days, and then died in Rome in the year of the Lord 1276, on 22nd June.⁵

2 13th July. This is an error. Bonaventure died on the day before the *Idus* or on the *Idus* of July (that is, during the night between 14th and 15th July 1274).

3 (Guglielmo) Vicedomino de Vicedominis of Piacenza, was archbishop of Aix in 1257-1273, when he was nominated Cardinal.

4 That is in 1276.

5 Peter of Tarantasia (or of Champagne), was born in Moûtiers in 1225. While still a young man he entered the Order of Preachers in Lyon, or according to others, in Paris. He studied at the University of Paris and became famous for his prudence and doctrine, becoming a doctor of sacred theology. In 1265 and again in 1269 he was elected Prior Provincial of his Order. In 1272 he was elected bishop of Lyon and in 1273, together with Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, Pope Gregory X promoted him to the dignity of Cardinal as bishop of Ostia and Velletri. He was consecrated bishop on 15th November 1273. On 21st Janu-

During the same year, once again the same General was obliged to go to Greece, regarding some pending issues of his legation⁶ – I have not found out the real reason for his journey – and thus he was impeded from being present for the general chapter celebrated in Padua, but he sent his vicar brother Bonagratia, who then succeeded him as general. In the same chapter celebrated on Pentecost in the year of the Lord 1276, he sent letters in which he announced that he was resigning from office, since he was impeded from carrying it out in a sufficient manner due to the services he was rendering in Church business; nonetheless he was confirmed in office.

[358] This same General certified in a letter written to the same chapter, that Saint Francis had worked a miracle upon a person who went to Assisi suffering from total blindness because his eyes had been gouged out from his face, but afterwards they appeared smaller than before as witness that a miracle had occurred.⁷

ary 1276 he was elected Pope Innocent V and crowned on 22nd February. He was the first Dominican friar to be promoted as Cardinal and chosen as Pope.

6 It seems that the author of the Chronicle is not exact, since there is no evidence of such a legation. Jerome, together with John of Vercelli, sixth Master General of the Order of Preachers (elected 7th June 1264 and died in 1283) were sent by John XXI on a legation to France, to bring peace between the kings of France and Castile. They carried out this legation some time later, that is, in 1277, under the pontificate of Nicholas III. This would mean that the chapter of Padua would have been celebrated on Pentecost of 1277, which on that year fell on 16th May.

7 The letter was found in a codex in the library of the Sacro Convento in Assisi, and was published by Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1228, n. 59: "Brother Jerome, General Minister and servant of the Order of friars Minor, wishes health and peace in Christ the eternal Lord, to the Custos and Guardian of (the convent of) Saint Francis, both those now present and those who will come in the future. I have been informed by the beloved in Christ brother William of Rome, of a certain famous and great miracle, that God has worked through the intercession of our blessed Father Francis, in order to remind us of the words of the Angel Raphael, namely, that *the works of the Lord are to be praised and made known* (Tob 12:7). Therefore I do not intend to remain silent over this fact, that has been revealed to me by the same brother William, whom I called in my presence, in front of brother Guido, Minister of Rome, brother Conrad, Minister of northern Germany, brother Dominic, penitentiary of the Pope, brother Bonagratia, brother Monaldo, visitator in the Roman Province of the monasteries of the Order of Saint Clare, and other persons, who under the command of obedience and under the pain of excommunication, to be incurred *ipso facto*, if they would utter false statements, I interrogated in order to know the full truth regarding this miracle. Brother William, in the presence

[359] In the same year 1276 in the month of July, the lord Ottobono of Genoa, Cardinal deacon with the title of Sant'Andrea,⁸ who

of all these persons, humbly accepting the command I gave, said that when he was still a young secular man, he went to Assisi together with the lord Cyprian Matthew of Liperlioni, as his shield bearer, when this lord was called to govern that same town. When this same lord Cyprian was in the office of *podestà* in Assisi, a certain man whose name he could not remember, was accused of having stolen the cope or cloak of this same lord Cyprian. The *podestà* sent the accused to appear before the judge who came from Orte, and who sentenced him to have his eyes gouged out. The lord Cyprian sent his knight, the lord Ottone Ottaviani de Zacumdelta, to carry out this sentence; the same lord Ottone had to lead the accused with the help of his servants outside Assisi, and there gouge out his eyes according to the sentence of the *podestà*. The same brother William went and was present and saw how these servants gouged out the eyes of that man with a knife; the same brother William said how he inquired to see the eyes of that man, and that he touched them with his staff while they had been left lying on the ground. The blinded man was led to the church of Saint Francis, and there he recounted all his tragic mishaps in front of the Saint, reminding him that his family was poor and that he had been condemned unjustly. In that same church this man regained his eyes and could see once more through the merits of the holy Father. Since he was afraid that he would be blinded yet again, he fled to Foligno and there he took care to medicate his eyebrows that had been damaged. The same brother William heard that the man had regained his eyes and could see once more. He went to Foligno and met that man, who had been blinded in Assisi in his presence. He now had regained his eyes, but they were smaller than the ones he had before, but he could see everything clearly. William heard him decree in public that his eyes had been restored through the merits of our blessed Father Francis. Moved by this miracle that had occurred, William renounced his secular career and entered the Order of friars Minor. He also said that he could not remember the name of the man who was blinded or of those who blinded him, but that the lord Ottone had truly commanded that the man be blinded, and he had personally seen this happen and was present at the event, as has been stated. I have personally examined the witnesses of this case, in front of these friars, when I was in Rome, in the new infirmary, on the *Calends* of May of the year of the Lord 1276. I hereby sign with my own signature to confirm the truth of this miracle, which I have personally written down, and I am marking it with the Order's seal. Regarding the year in which this miracle occurred, the same friar said that he could not remember. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all those who believe and who venerate in a fitting way our Father Saint Francis. Amen. I hereby pray all those present who are reading this document, and all those who will receive this letter, to pray for me. Given in Rome on the third day of the *Nones* of May (5th May) in the year of the Lord 1276."

8 Ottobono Fieschi was elected Pope Adrian V on 11th July and died on 18th August 1276.

was a special father and lord of the Order, and a nephew to the lord Pope Innocent IV, was raised to the papacy and took the name Adrian V. He came from Rome to Viterbo, where he lived for the short period of his papacy, namely one month and nine days, and where he died and, out of the great devotion he showed to the Order, he was buried in the church of the friars Minor.

This General asked the lord John Caetani, Protector of the Order, that the friars should assist the sisters of Saint Clare not out of an obligation, but out of a spontaneous and loving reverence. In fact, the service to the nuns was becoming a tough responsibility on the shoulders of the General and the Order. So this true father, who was very friendly to the Order, could not resist to concede this permission but on one condition, namely, that when the friars would go to the monastery, they would present to the Abbess and to the entire convent a public declaration, in which it was stated that the friars would render their spiritual service to nuns not out of a sense of duty, but only out of a spontaneous act of the will and for the love of God.

In the same year the lord Peter Iuliani, Cardinal and bishop of Tusculum, who was Portuguese by birth, on 16th September was elected pope in Viterbo, and chose the name John XXI. He remained pope for eight months and eight days, since he was crushed to his death under the collapse of the new hall that he ordered to be built for himself in Viterbo.⁹

In the year of the Lord 1277, in the feast of Saint Catherine, the above-mentioned lord John Caetani, Protector of the Order, like all the other Protectors of the Order who had preceded him, was elected to the highest post of pontiff in Viterbo, to the great joy of the entire Order – since Saint Francis had foretold regarding him that, while he would reside in the Curia, [360] he would become a great Protector of the Order and the lord of the entire world, as was now clearly evident – and he chose the name Nicholas III.¹⁰

9 Pedro Hispano was Pope from 8th September 1276 to 20th May 1277, and died in the collapse of the scientific laboratory he ordered to be built in the pontifical palace at Viterbo.

10 Giovanni Gaetano Orsini, elected according to Salimbene, "roughly around the feast of Saint Andrew" (30th November), on 25th November 1277, crowned on 26th December 1277, and died in Viterbo on 22nd August 1280. His predecessors, Gregory IX and Alexander IV had also been Cardinal Protectors of the Order.

Under the government of this General, the lord Rudolph,¹¹ future emperor of the Romans, who nurtured great devotion to Saint Francis and Saint Clare, obtained for his daughter permission to consecrate herself perpetually in the Order of Saint Clare.

The aforementioned Pope Nicholas, during the first year of his pontificate, nominated brother Bentivenga of Todi Cardinal and bishop of Albano.¹²

This General brother Jerome, upon the counsel of many friars, condemned and distanced himself from the doctrine of brother Roger Bacon¹³ the Englishman, who was a master of sacred theology. His doctrine contained some suspect novelties, because of which Roger was condemned to imprisonment. The General ordered the friars not to hold on to any part of Roger's doctrines, but to avoid them as being condemned by the Order. The lord Pope Nicholas also wrote regarding this issue, and by his authority declared that the doctrine was entirely dangerous in its contents.

This lord Pope Nicholas had so much love for the Order, that while he was still Pope he uttered the memorable expression that, even if the friars could offend him, he would never be able to offend the friars; he was hardly ever to be seen [361] among the great ones of this world. The powerful easily offend and every single offence backfires on the community. These powerful people are normally companions of pride and its consequent indignation. For this reason the grace of power is unstable, except when those who are noble of heart and discreet in their benign spirit can truly make friends with it; that is why a strongly-rooted *love no floods can quench nor torrents drown* (Cant

11 Rudolph I of the Habsburg family was born 1st May 1218 and reigned from 1273 to 1291, when he died on 15th July. However he was never crowned emperor, since Honorius IV died in the meantime. He fathered five sons and seven daughters. The youngest daughter, Euphemia, entered the Order of Saint Clare.

12 Bentivenga de Bentivengis came from Aquasparta, entered the Order of friars Minor and became chaplain and confessor of Cardinal Giovanni Caetani. Pope John XXI, with the letter *Onerosa pastoralis* (18th December 1276) nominated him bishop of Todi, and he was promoted to Cardinal bishop of Albano on 12th or 13th March 1278, and died in 1290.

13 Roger Bacon was master at Oxford, known as *doctor mirabilis*, for his great scientific learning. He was born in Ilchester in England around the year 1218, and entered the Order before 1239. He died at Oxford on 11th June 1294, after having presented his *summa* of theology in 1292.

8:7), nor does the wise man hate the innocent because they are few in number.

In those times there was a certain brother John,¹⁴ a man of great learning and virtue, who became a most famous master of sacred theology. He commented upon the Sentences in a very useful treatise of disputed questions, which is a book with the title: *On evangelical perfection*, against those who were despising the Mendicant Orders. Upon the command of this General, John composed a life of Saint Anthony of Padua in a very polished style, even though it did not spread far and wide, since many things were already written down in the Breviary.

According to what brother Bernard of Besse states in his book, this brother John used to recount a terrible story against those who are ungrateful to their vocation. He used to say that there was a certain cleric in Paris, who had promised to enter the Order, moved by a divine inspiration. But when he was about to be vested, he was appointed a secular canon. Withdrawing from entering the Order, he was in his church for nearly half a year, when he contracted a serious illness. Warned by the canons to confess his sins, he refused to do so at all costs. Then some friars Minor came to the sick man to persuade him to confess his sins. But he finally answered them: "Brothers, do not try to persuade [362] me. For I am damned and cannot confess. Before you came to me, I was taken into the sight of God who showed me His awfully terrifying countenance and said: 'I called, and you refused; go, then, to your eternal punishment.'" And when he had said this, at once he ended his last day miserably.¹⁵

I do not consider it useless to present the following story that occurred in Paris, in order to commend and approve of the state of

14 John Peckham was born in Chichester, in Sussex, in 1232-1236. He studied in Paris under the regency of Saint Bonaventure before 1262 and entered the Order in the same city. He was promoted as doctor of theology in the University of Paris and became regent master in 1269 or 1271. He then transferred to Oxford, and was elected Minister Provincial of England during the Chapter of Padua in 1276. In 1278 he became the first *lector* of the Sacred Palace and on 28th January 1279 was chosen as archbishop of Canterbury, where he died and was buried in the cathedral on 8th December 1292. He is author of the life of Saint Anthony called *Benignitas* (c. 1280).

15 This episode is found in Bernard of Besse, *Liber de Laudibus Sancti Francisci*, c. 7: The Three Orders (FAED III, 58-59).

perseverance of our vocation. In that place a certain master of theology entered the Order. He used to give alms to his mother and provide her daily food, and thus he was accustomed to sustain her in her poverty. When his mother heard that he had become a friar, she called him and started wailing, and showed him her breasts and insisted that she had once nourished him with her milk although she was very poor, and now he would abandon her in her poverty. That friar felt his heart melt with pity and was so moved that he decided to leave the Order the following day. In the meantime, as was his custom, he went to pray in front of the image of the Crucifix, and feeling such an inner battle in his soul, he said to Christ: "I do not want to leave you, Lord, but I cannot abandon my mother, who nourished me with so much sacrifice, and I intend to provide for her needs." When he was uttering these words, that friar looked and saw that real blood was coming out of the wound of the Crucified, and he also heard the voice of the Lord telling him: "I have nourished you much more tenderly than your mother, and I have redeemed you with this blood, and therefore you should not leave me because of your mother." That friar was astonished at these words, and he proposed not to abandon Christ because of his mother, and ended his days as a friar in the Order.

I have also read a similar story. A certain friar, through the suggestion of the devil who convinced him with various arguments, decided to go out of the Order. So he prostrated himself in front of the image of the Crucifix, and full of anguish he tried to excuse his behaviour by expressing all those arguments, in order to state that he was leaving the Order. But that friar saw the image of the Crucified, whose wounds were shedding true blood, as if Christ was tearing away his hand from the cross and hitting him hard with it on his cheeks, while blood continued to go out abundantly from it. And he heard the voice of Christ, as if he were angry at him, saying: "Go then brother, and do not care about me." So that friar was truly terrified and violently flung himself on the ground, and at that moment the temptation receded from him and he was confirmed in his resolve to remain in the Order.

The following account shows how the devil frequently tempted a novice, under the guise of a good intention, and compelled him to go out of the Order. This young man, from Susa, a village in the Province of Genoa, whose father had died, had abandoned many riches and

entered the Order of friars Minor. Once he was praying, and the devil appeared to him in the form of his father, and told him: "Why are you making me, who am your father, suffer so much, if you can so easily free me from this punishment if you so wish? There is no one able to pay back my debts and the money I have acquired unjustly, and therefore I am being afflicted with severe sufferings in purgatory. Therefore, go out of the Order, and make amends for me." That novice was terrified and went running to his master to find comfort in the Lord. In fact, he felt that it was a diabolic temptation, as it truly was. Since the devil frequently appeared to the young man [363] and continually made his life more miserable, one night, while he was going to Matins, the devil appeared to him again in the entrance of the church under the form of his father, and he looked very upset and when he met him he told him: "Go out of the Order and do as I tell you." The young man signed himself with the cross and entered the church and discarded the devil's illusion. So the devil snatched him by his arm and started to drag him violently taking hold of his shoulders. While he was carrying him in this way, he violently constrained him to despair of continuing to invoke divine aid. After the devil carried him in other places, in which he held him as a captive, that young novice ended up feeling that half of his body had been burnt and totally destroyed. So he ended up in that state of sickness in bed. On a certain feast day he badly desired to go with the other friars in the choir for Matins. Saint Francis appeared to him and totally freed him from sickness in his body and soul. So he woke up and went with the others to Matins, and together with them he praised the Lord, full of astonishment at that miracle.

There was another novice in the Order, whose greatest effort was that of trying to serve the most holy Mother of God with the reverence of devotion and self-sacrifice, as well as with special prayers in her honour. While he was persevering in this practice, he was assailed by a temptation, which became a trial for him, because he began to think that the Christian faith was useless and was simply an illusion to deceive him. It seemed to him that, given that this could be the truth, it would be better to spend his time in comfort and worldly joys than to give himself over to the misery of penance in the Order. However, he went to find comfort and refuge in front of the Mother of God, praying her to enlighten his intellect and show him what he had to

do. While he was still undergoing this temptation, one night, while the friars were sleeping, he decided to leave the Order. He thought, however, that it would be better, before going away, to say goodbye to the Mother of God. Therefore he entered the choir and prostrated himself in front of her image, while he uttered these words in a low voice: "O Mother of mercy, I have come into this Order so that I would humbly serve you; but, since I see that you are abandoning me to my miserable state and that I will now undergo the punishment of hell, I am going away from your presence miserable and downcast." Then he began to sob and shed abundant tears in front of the altar of the Virgin. At that moment he had a vision. It seemed to him that above the altar he was seeing a most beautiful woman, who was holding a lovely and smiling young boy, and who was telling him: "It is not true that I am abandoning you, but this is just a trial for you. Therefore persevere in your Christian faith and firmly believe that it is true and that all those who believe in it will be saved. And in order to be sure of what you believe, accept this token which I am giving you as a sign, in order to prove the irrevocable truth of my assertion." Then the vision disappeared. The novice looked and found that he was holding in his hand an image. In the light of the lamps he could make out a most beautiful sculpture of that same lady who had appeared to him with her Son. Therefore he was consoled by this vision and from that moment he was totally freed from his perplexities.

[364] In the town of Lunel, in Provence, a Guardian scolded a certain friar and imposed on him a very harsh penance. That friar, who had been a rich man when he was still living in the world, became a different person in front of God, and after he had made the penance imposed upon him, in his anguish he went to the church and prostrated himself in front of the image of the Crucifix, which was placed at the entrance to the choir between two altars. The friar began to say the following words to the Crucifix: "Look, Lord, I could have been full of riches in the world and people would have honoured me, and now see how I am abject because of your love! See how many verbal abuses I have to bear with from the other friars and the Guardian!" The Crucifix answered him with a human voice: "Look, rather, how much I had to suffer for you. See the insults, the wounds I had to accept, even though I was innocent and without guilt!" That friar listened to those words full of astonishment, and he remained steadfast in his penance.

Once some brothers in a certain friary were praying Compline in the choir, but they were laughing out aloud, when the wooden Crucifix, which was hanging above the door leading to the choir, turned with a loud noise towards the friars and terrorised them so much, that many of them died in a brief time.

A certain dissolute and perverse brother rejected the penance imposed upon him by his Minister. In his anger he took off his habit and left the Order, but at that moment the devil possessed him. When he came back to his senses, he came to the Minister who absolved him before all the brothers, and gave him back the habit. When he put it on the devil immediately departed from him.

[365] Around the year of the Lord 1278, this General brother Jerome was sent as a Legate together with brother John,¹⁶ General Master of the Preachers, in order to bring peace between the kings of France and Castile, since a great quarrel had ensued between them.

In Paris there were many quarrels and scandalous divisions between the friars of the Order of Minors and the Order of Preachers, who were jealous of one another's achievements. So the discreets from the two Orders met in their respective counsels in such a way as to arrive at an agreement and publish a statute, in order to make sure that there would be mutual charity between the Minors and the Preachers. Among the other things they ordered that the friars of both Orders were to abstain from all kinds of mutual accusations and insults; that wherever they met, the friars were to treat one another with due honour, and that if they arrived in one another's friaries or were leaving them, they were to welcome one another cordially as brothers.

¹⁶ This General Master was John of Vercelli. He was the successor of Humbert of Romans (1244-1264), who died in 1277. Together with the Minister General of the Minors John of Parma, Humbert wrote an encyclical letter to all the friars Preachers and Minors, *Salvator saeculi, qui amat animas*, from Milan on 2nd February 1255, in order to encourage the two Orders to collaborate and not to work one against another, particularly in the light of the urgent necessity brought about by the conflict in Paris between the secular masters of the University and the mendicant Orders, who had *scholae* in the same University. It could be that the letter to which the *Chronicle* refers was, in fact, this one written in 1255, that is before the time of Jerome of Ascoli and John of Vercelli. However, John of Vercelli did write a letter to his friars during the Council of Lyon in 1274, concerning collaboration with the friars Minor.

If there would arise any doubts between persons or between friaries, which would be the possible causes of quarrels, that very moment the religious of both Orders were to refer the matter to their respective Provincials, so that they would solve the matter in a short time by discerning and applying the laws. And that wherever a friar would be found who had offended a friar of the other Order by words or actions, his Provincial was bound to make him make amends through penance, in such a way that the offended party would be satisfied. Both Generals wrote a letter regarding these matters. The letter by the two Generals to the two Orders was identical, and they addressed it to all their friars under their own seal.

This General inserted an appendix to the Legend of Saint Francis, which had been composed by the lord brother Bonaventure. The appendix regards the vision that the lord Pope Innocent the third had, when he had sent away Saint Francis from his presence as if he were unknown to him. The appendix starts with the words: “The Vicar of Christ was in the Lateran Palace, walking in a place called the Hall of the Mirror” etc. Jerome learned this fact from the lord Riccardo, Cardinal deacon with the title of Sant’Angelo, who was a nephew of the future lord Pope, who had in turn learned it from his uncle and recounted it with devotion.¹⁷

[366] The lord Pope Nicholas nominated this same General, while he was in Paris on the aforementioned legation, Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Prudeniana,¹⁸ during the second year of his pontificate. Some time afterwards Jerome was also promoted to the bishopric of Palestrina. In the Bulla, which the Pope sent him, he ordered that, as Cardinal Legate, Jerome had to receive a stipend from the clerics. This same General, who was a very humble man, tried to convince the lord Pope who had sent him the letter to accept his resignation from this office, since he considered himself incapable and unworthy of such a duty. In the meantime he did not want to accept any servants in his household, nor did he accept his clerical stipend,

¹⁷ This is a reference to Bonaventure’s *Major Life of Saint Francis*, III,9a (FAED II, 548). Jerome of Ascoli learned this fact from Cardinal Riccardo degli Annibaldi, a nephew of Innocent III.

¹⁸ Jerome became Cardinal on 12th March 1278, which was the Saturday of the Ember Days of Lent.

and did not want to change his status, until the Pope would expressly answer his plea with a letter.

In the meantime, since he began to doubt whether he could carry out the duties of the office of his generalate, the lord Pope wrote to him the following words: “Brother Jerome, Cardinal priest of the holy Roman Church with the title of Santa Prudeniana, who was once General of the Order of friars Minor.” The lord Pope answered his letter, and ordered him to assume the office of Cardinal, and to continue governing the Order as before, in the post of vice General Minister.

This same lord Cardinal continued to live the grace of humility, which had always shone in his person, and served his office with prudence, and in a marvellous way continued to act as if he were a common and humble person. He rather kept to himself the honour of the dignity of his most honest maturity. In fact, [367] his way of life in front of the brothers was greatly edifying. He often confessed, he was a very sober but sure man, and as he once said in a sermon, he would have preferred to serve in the friars’ kitchen than to preside with the glory of a Cardinal, since he was afraid of offending the Order.

He governed the Order for 5 years; although some other say that he governed it for 6 years. But since only five years had passed from the celebration of the Council of Lyon, or maybe some time more – since the council was celebrated in the year of the Lord 1274, when he was elected General – to the general chapter of Assisi,¹⁹ in which brother Bonagratia became his successor, I think that the first option is more true to historical fact.

¹⁹ Jerome convoked the chapter of Pentecost in Assisi on 21st May 1279.

The times of brother Bonagratia (1279-1283)

[367] The tenth General Minister was brother Bonagratia from the Province of Bologna, a very religious man who was gifted with abundant grace, as his name signified. He was elected in the general chapter of Assisi,²⁰ celebrated in the year of the Lord 1279. During that chapter the lord brother Jerome, Cardinal bishop of Palestrina, retained his apostolic authority of General Minister in the post of vicar, until brother Bonagratia could arrive.

When the Minister arrived in haste to the chapter, the same Minister was encouraged by the most holy father the lord Pope Nicholas III to confer with the other Ministers, so that, if it seemed useful to the good of the Order, he would go to the Pope's presence with all the other Ministers and discreets. The same Ministers and discreets proposed [368] to the Pope, in the name of the entire general chapter, that if it seemed pleasing to him, he would give the Order a Cardinal Protector, or else he himself would accept the post, as did Pope Alexander IV, who wanted to be Protector himself. The Pope answered favourably and prudently, stating that, although he would have wished to be the main Protector of the Order, nonetheless it was better to respect what the Rule states, that is, to have another Cardinal of the Church as Protector. The same Pope, after listening to the individual views of those concerned and after having made a secret ballot, chose his own nephew, the lord Matteo Rubeo,²¹ and entrusted him and commended him to the friars as the Order's Protector. I believe that it is better to touch upon this commissioning in a separate section, so that I can demonstrate more clearly the love of the lord Pope towards the Order.

When the lord Pope, in the presence of the General and the Provincial Ministers who had gathered for the occasion, constituted

20 The general chapter of Assisi was celebrated on Pentecost, 21st May 1279. Bonagratia (Tielci) was born in San Giovanni in Persiceto, a town near Bologna, around the year 1230. He entered the Order and became master of sacred theology. In 1272 he accompanied Jerome of Ascoli as legate to the Greeks. In 1277 he assisted as Vicar General to the chapter of Padua and was elected General in 1279. In 1282 he held a general chapter at Strasbourg, but died on 3rd October of the same year in Avignon.

21 Matteo came from the Orsini family.

the lord Matteo, Cardinal deacon of Santa Maria in Portico, as Protector of the Order, the lord Pope uttered the following words in the presence of the same Cardinal: "We now direct our words to you; we wish that you will take in due consideration the good deed we are now accomplishing, and that you may find even greater, more useful and more numerous acts of benevolence, since we cannot offer you a better pledge of eternal life than the one we are offering you right now. In fact, we are giving you a gift that will introduce you in paradise, namely, the prayers and merits of all the friars of this Order. We are giving you the best portion of what we possess, we are giving you all the inmost desires of our heart, and the apple of our eyes." With many other similar words of praise the Pope expressed the sweetness of love in his heart, and he did so with abundant tears flowing from his eyes, with many sobs and sighs, that I, who was present as a witness, can state that he could hardly end his speech because of his sobs, and such a mature man could hardly contain himself from exclaiming in a loud voice what he wanted to say. And it so happened that all those who were present broke also into floods of tears, and they were weeping loudly and in the end remained silent for a long time with him who was silent in deep reflections. In the meantime, when his spirit quieted down, the Pope resumed his speech and said: "We cannot linger any more on this matter, so as not to suffer inwardly." Then he extended his hand to the Cardinal, who took it and kissed the Pope's ring. The Pope then said: "We commit you with the care of the Order of friars Minor." Then he addressed to him what is declared in the Rule, namely, that he should be "the governor, Protector and corrector of this fraternity," and then he added: "The Order does not need your governing, since it abounds with the most wise and prudent persons, in a such a way [369] that it is capable of governing itself. You will not need to insist on correcting them, since the friars are so well disposed towards their superiors, that no defects are evident in them regarding this matter. They all have their Guardians. If these do not live up to their expectations, the friars can always make recourse to their Custodes and the Custodes can go to the Ministers, upon whom the General Minister presides, and even up to the general chapter, the maximum organ of government. But this is very unlikely to happen, namely that they would need to go beyond all these organs of government in order to need your correction. In one aspect, however, they need your protection. The friars do not own possessions and they are

poor, and many people harass them unnecessarily. They are not capable of defending themselves, and therefore they need the strength of your mighty arm as Protector. This is the most important issue in which you can assist them with your care.” With these words the Pope concluded his speech.

From that day onwards, in order to restrain those who were insulting the Rule and in order to clear any more doubts regarding it, the lord Pope, when he was residing at Soriano during summer, issued a new declaration regarding the Rule. Placing this duty before any other business, for two whole months, not without the admiration of the entire Curia, he worked in such a way that he wanted that nobody else would know the nature of what he was doing, except those who had been expressly called to collaborate with him. The same lord Pope called the General and the discreets of the friars, together with the expert advice and presence of the venerable lord brother Ben-tivenga of Albano²² and brother Jerome, Cardinal bishop of Palestrina, both chosen from within the ranks of the Order, so that all would discuss issues regarding the Rule of the friars Minor. The end result was the Declaration, which begins with the words *Exiit qui seminat*.²³ The document was the result of the collaboration of experts, including the lord Peter, vice-chancellor,²⁴ the lord Count of Milan,²⁵ collaborator of the sacred palace, who afterwards became Cardinal, the lord Angelo, a most famous lawyer of the Curia, and the lord Benedict,²⁶ proto-

22 Cfr. Section on Jerome of Ascoli, footnote 432.

23 Pope Nicholas III issued the Declaration *Exiit qui seminat* on 14th August 1279. During the generalate of St. Bonaventure this Pope had been Cardinal Protector of the Order, Giovanni Gaetano Orsini, and so was well informed regarding the problems the friars were facing regarding the interpretation of the Rule. For an introduction and English translation of *Exiit qui seminat*, see FAED III, 737-764.

24 Pietro Peregrossi came from Milan. He was vice-chancellor under the papacy of John XXI and Nicholas III, first as Cardinal deacon of San Giorgio al Velabro and then as Cardinal priest of San Marco. He died in Rome on 1st August 1295 and was buried in the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli.

25 Count Glusiano de Casate, archdeacon of Milan, was nominated as a collaborator of the sacred palace by Nicholas III. In 1281 he became Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Marcellino e Pietro. He died of plague in Rome on 8th April 1287 and was buried in the Lateran basilica.

26 Benedetto Caetani, from Anagni, became Cardinal deacon of San Nicola in carcere Trulliano in 1281. Nicholas IV made him Cardinal priest of Santi Sil-

notary, who afterwards became Cardinal and was finally elected as the lord Pope Boniface VIII. With extreme diligence, for many days they discussed these matters in front of the Cardinals, and afterwards before the entire Curia. At last, the Pope dictated the document to the lord Benedict, who solemnly promulgated it in the year of the Lord 1279. The same lord Boniface VIII, in his sixth book [370] of the Decretals, inserted this document under the title “regarding the meaning of words” and authenticated it for the whole world.²⁷ – The lord Pope Clement V, during the Council of Vienne, commended this interpretation “regarding the meaning of words” in his Declaration *Exivi de paradiso*.²⁸ The lord Pope John XXII, in his Constitution, which begins with the words *Quia quorundam exigit*, praised this declaration as a clear and lucid document, which was the fruit of great maturity.

During the same year the lord Pope sent a Bulla containing a Rule as a form of life given to the nuns of the monastery of Longchamp, in the diocese of Paris. The monastery had been constructed by the lord king of France. The Rule is entitled: “Rule of the enclosed sisters Minor of the Humility of the Blessed Mary.” These nuns are known by the proper name *Minorissae*.²⁹

The same lord Pope in that same year sent the Rule of the friars Minor with his own Bulla to various Provinces of the Order.

Always during the same year the lord Pope sent a letter to all Christians in the world, regarding the stigmata of Saint Francis, con-

vestro e Martino in Monte in 1288. He was elected Pope Boniface VIII in 1294 and died in 1303.

27 The Decretals, together with the book *Sexto Clementinis et Extravagantibus* (Lyon 1260). In the *Liber Sextii Decretalium dmni. Bonifacii Papae VIII*, and in the *Sexti Decretalium*, lib. V, tit. XII, *De verborum significatione*, cap 3., one finds the text of *Exiit qui seminat*.

28 The Constitution *Exivi de Paradiso* was published by Clement V on 6th May 1312. For an introduction and English translation of *Exivi de Paradiso*, see FAED III, 767-783.

29 This is a historical error. It was not Nicholas III who gave a Rule to the monastery of Longchamp, but Urban IV in the Bulla *Religionis augmentum* (27th July 1263). The Rule had already been given to the nuns by Alexander IV in 1260. The nuns were called *Sorores Minorum inclusarum*. The monastery of Longchamp, under the title *Humilitatis B. Mariae*, on the river Seine, was founded by Blessed Isabella (1225-23rd February 1270), who was the sister of Saint Louis IX, king of France. The king himself had supervised the construction of the monastery in 1259.

taining the evidence of true witnesses.³⁰ This testimony was also included in the aforementioned declaration on the Rule.

The lord Pope Nicholas obliged brother John Peckham to accept the archbishopric of Canterbury.³¹

[371] In the year of the Lord 1280, on the Octave of the Assumption of the blessed Mary,³² the same lord Pope died, to the great sorrow of the Order, during the third year of his pontificate.

Under this same General, brother Walter of Bruges, master of theology, and at that time Minister of Touraine, was compelled by the lord Pope to accept the bishopric of Poitiers, under pain of the sin of disobedience if he resisted to comply.³³ Even the pleas of the same General with the Pope not to take away such an able pastor from the Province of Touraine were in vain. The will of the vicar of Christ prevailed, since the Pope wanted to provide a worthy candidate for that Church, which was deprived of government. Walter was adorned with all virtues, he was useful in governing, and he was appreciated for his sociable character and exemplary manners. The common people often gave witness to the able way he governed that Church, and to the strength by which he defended the rights of that same Church. Nevertheless the lord Pope Clement V deposed him

30 The letter is entitled *Litteras felicitis recordationis Gregorii Papae IX* (25th August 1279). Together with the *Litteras felicitis recordationis Honorii Papae III* (21st August 1279) the document recognises and confirms the Bulla of Honorius III, *Solet annuere*, in which the *Regula bullata* of 29th November 1223 is included.

31 John Peckham was probably born in Sussex, England, in an unknown date. He received his education from the Cluniac monks of Lewes. In 1250 he entered the Order of friars Minor and was a student of St. Bonaventure. He became regent master of the Franciscan *studium* in Paris. In 1275 he was appointed minister provincial of England. He took part in the general chapter of Padua in 1276, and became *lector sacri palatii*. On 28th January 1279 he was nominated archbishop of Canterbury and primate of England. He died on 8th December 1292 and is buried in a sarcophagus in the northern transept of Canterbury cathedral, in the area close to the "Martyrdom" of St. Thomas Becket (†1170). Peckham is considered to be the author of the life of St. Anthony of Padua, known as *Benignitas* (c.1280).

32 Nicholas III died on 22nd August 1280.

33 Walter of Bruges, in Flanders, was born in 1230-1235. He was master in the University of Paris. On 4th December 1279 he was nominated Minister Provincial of France. Nicholas III nominated him bishop of Poitiers, since that Church had been without a bishop since 1271. He died on 21st January 1307.

from that bishopric,³⁴ while he (Clement) was [372] still archbishop³⁵ of Bordeaux, since both of them quarrelled defending the rights of their respective Churches, as we will show later on.³⁶ He was of such great holiness that, according to the lord Peter,³⁷ a canon of the same Church, who gave a trustworthy testimony, while he would be celebrating Mass, a snow-white dove would appear coming down from heaven and settling upon his head, to the astonishment of all those present.

Once he had bought a great quantity of clothes to give them to the poor. Since he did not have the money needed to effect the payment, he promised his creditors that he would pay his debts. Some time before the time limit for payment was to expire, a certain person came and presented himself as the procurator of the Bishop, and after having paid that price, cancelled the debt from the parchment. At the end of that period of time the Bishop sent the sum of money he had to pay to the merchant. But he was astonished and said that he had already cancelled the debt. When the procurator asked who else in the Bishop's household had gone to pay that debt, no one knew who that mysterious person was, and all believed that it had been an Angel, who was sent by God to help the Bishop in his goodness and piety.

This General sent many friars to the regions of the north, where unbelievers dwelt, and they spread their activity so much that, with great care, he created a Vicariate of the north.³⁸

In the same year 1280, on the feast of the Chair of Saint Peter, the lord Simon de Brie, who was a Frenchman from Touraine, who was a Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Cecilia, and who had been for many years a Legate in France, was elected Pope in Viterbo and

34 Walter was not deposed but was pressed to resign from his Episcopal see, as is evident in the letter *Pastoralis officii debitum* of Clement V (4th November 1306).

35 Bertrand de Got was archbishop of Bordeaux in 1299-1305, before becoming Pope Clement V. He excommunicated Walter, archbishop of Bruges, because of a conflict between them.

36 In the section dedicated to Gonsalvus of Valboa.

37 Peter of Bruges is the author of the life of Willam of Bruges.

38 In 1278 brother Bartholomew, archbishop of Grosseto, Bartholomew of Siena, Minister of Syria, Philip of Perugia and Angelo of Orvieto, lector of the Order, were sent as missionaries to the Tartars.

changed his name to that of Martin IV.³⁹ He showed great affection towards the Order, and it has been said of late that he absolved all the dead friars Minor, wherever they had been buried.

This same Pope, in the presence of brother Matteo d'Aquasparta,⁴⁰ who was nominated lector of the sacred Palace after brother John Peckham, confirmed the plenary indulgence of the Portiuncula [373], and in order to take away all doubts regarding it, he confirmed it once again on the day assigned to it, since it had not been so clearly defined before.

The same General brother Bonagratia commanded under obedience and under the pain of excommunication that, on the day of the aforementioned indulgence in the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, the brothers could not accept any money offerings, except for the offerings received for the expenses of the necessities of their lives. He ordered this, because of the danger of the friars being accused of hoarding money by those who were false and were jealous of the brothers, in such a way that the holy indulgence would not become less known and the devotion of the people would diminish.

39 Martin IV was elected Pope on 22nd February 1281, crowned in Orvieto on 23rd March 1281, and died on 29th March 1285.

40 Matteo of Aquasparta was nominated lector of the sacred Palace in 1281. According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1223, n. 3 and ad. an. 1281, n. 6: "When the chamberlain asked the Pope (Martin IV) to give him and many others of the papal household permission to go to Assisi at the end of July, so that they would receive the indulgence in that church (Portiuncula) on 2nd August, Martin IV asked Matteo d'Aquasparta, who afterwards became a Cardinal: 'Brother Matteo, what do you think regarding this indulgence?' He answered: 'It seems to me that it is true, just and holy, since Saint Francis acquired it from Pope Honorius and publicly proclaimed it, as many persons who heard Saint Francis, and who are still alive today, can testify.' The Pope immediately added: 'So it must be firmly believed to be true, since it is not possible that a man of such holiness and virtue as Saint Francis, would want to impose upon the Church an indulgence that is apocryphal. So we, on our part, and on the part of God and of the blessed Peter and Paul his Apostles, do confirm this indulgence, and if it has not been confirmed up till now, we hereby concede and want that it be received and be publicly known as true, and you, brother Matteo, can freely proclaim it in public.' Matteo then added: 'Saint Francis did not want to have any written document prepared for this indulgence, nor did he want people to give money offerings in order to obtain it.' The Pope then answered: 'What you say is right; so be it from now on, an indulgence which we orally concede for ever.'"

Under this General's government, the venerable father and brother Vitalis of Le Puy, Minister of Aquitaine, died in the year of the Lord 1281, after having celebrated the provincial chapter at Albi. In the same year, in the chapter of Agen,⁴¹ brother Raymond Rigaldus⁴² was elected Minister of Aquitaine on the feast day of Saint Andrew.

[374] In the year of the Lord 1282 this General celebrated the general chapter in Strasbourg, in the Province of northern Germany.⁴³ He commanded brother Philip, Minister of Tuscany, to inquire diligently, if he could find by any means, the exact day and time when the stigmata of Jesus Christ were impressed upon the body of Saint Francis. A certain lay brother, who was a most perfect man in all virtues,⁴⁴ had many revelations, in which Saint Francis appeared to him and told him that it was on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy

41 Agen, a town on the river Garonne.

42 According to Salimbene his name was Pietro de Falengaria. Others, like Marie-Léon Patrem, *Tableau Synoptique de l'histoire de tout l'Ordre Séraphique*, Paris 1879, 8, call him fr. Guillaume Fauger (Aquitain). He was *magister cathedralis*, and in 1287 became the third lector of the sacred Palace. Boniface VIII, with the Bulla *Ad regimen universalis Ecclesiae*, published in Anagni on 9th July 1296, nominated him archbishop of Viviers.

43 During the chapter of Pentecost of 17th May 1282, besides Rudolph, the prince of Austria, there were 33 Provincials present, plus 700 friars and some Bishops who belonged to the Order, namely Henry of Basle, Conrad of Strasbourg, and Albert known as "Insulanus".

44 Some editions mention that the friar was brother Peter John Olivi (i.e. *Petrus filius Iohannis Olivi*, Peter of John Olivi), who was born in 1248-1249 in Serignan, France. When still barely a teenager, when he was 12 years old, he was received in the Franciscan friary of Béziers in the Custody of Narbonne (Province of Provence). He studied in Paris under St. Bonaventure, but refrained from accepting the title of master in the University out of humility. Accused of erroneous doctrines in front of Bonagratia di San Giovanni in Persiceto in 1279, his writings were examined and partly condemned in 1283 by four masters in Paris. In 1287 the General Matteo d'Aquasparta invited Peter John Olivi to teach in the *studium* of the friary of Santa Croce in Florence. It was during this period that Peter John Olivi was living in Tuscany and thus might have received the revelations narrated in this episode. In 1289 the new Minister General Raymond Godefroy, who was more sympathetic towards the *Spirituals*, sent Peter John Olivi to teach in Montpellier. Peter John Olivi died on 14th March 1298. The persecutions against him continued even after his death. His doctrines were condemned in 1299, and this enkindled the anger of the *Spiritual* friars of Béziers and Carcassonne. A true cult developed upon Olivi's tomb, until in 1318 the Franciscan inquisitor Michele Monachi ordered Olivi's books to be burnt and his tomb profaned.

Cross,⁴⁵ early in the morning, that the Saint felt a great pain, and cried out aloud when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in the image of a Seraph, and miraculously impressed first his hands, then his feet, and thirdly his side with those wounds.

In the year of the Lord 1293 the same General, according to the orders of the chapter of Strasbourg, went on visitation of Paris. There he ordered that all those elements which were suspect of heresy in the doctrine of brother Peter were to be collected and examined by the masters of sacred theology Dorchen,⁴⁶ [375] Minister of France, John of Wales,⁴⁷ Simon of Lens, Arlotto of Prato,⁴⁸ as well as by brothers Richard of Middletown, Giles of Bessa, John of Murrovalle,⁴⁹ who were bachelors of theology in Paris. All these came to the conclusion, after mature deliberation that there were certain dangerous elements that were suspect of heresy in those writings. So they condemned [376] these writings after having examined them, and sealed a letter, which they sent to all the friars. This letter was known as *the letter of the seven seals*. The General, as a result of that letter, came to Avignon, in order to control the spreading of that doctrine and of those who were following it in a shameful way. Since he became seriously ill while he was there, the General commanded brother Gerard of Prato,⁵⁰ his companion, so that according to the decisions taken

45 14th September 1224.

46 Dorchen of Provins was guardian of the convent of Paris (1272), regent master in the University (1282) and Minister Provincial.

47 John of Wales, was a doctor of theology at Oxford and in 1282 master in Paris, where he died.

48 Arlotto of Prato was elected Minister General on 13th May 1285 and died in December 1286.

49 Richard of Middletown lectured first in Oxford and then in Paris. He went the Anjevin court as tutor to the two sons of Charles II of Anjou, namely Louis (later on Bishop of Toulouse and Franciscan Saint), and Robert (later on King of Naples and benefactor of the Franciscans in the Holy Land). John of Murrovalle was lector as the papal Curia and on 16th May 1296 was elected Minister General. On 15th December 1302 he became Bishop of Porto e Santa Rufina and died in 1312.

50 Gerard was the brother of the General Arlotto of Prato. In 1246 he was in Pisa with Salimbene of Parma, and studied in Toulouse after 1248. He then became lector in the Province of Tuscany. Urban IV sent him, together with brother Raynerius of Siena as his legate to the emperor Michael Paleologus in Constantinople. In 1278, together with brothers Antonio of Parma, John of

during the council of the aforementioned masters and bachelors of theology held in Paris, he would interdict and collect all the books of brother Peter John, and to command that no one was to express or hold on to any doctrine that had been condemned by the letter of the seven seals.

In that place, therefore, the same brother Bonagratia ended his days in great holiness.⁵¹ Without anyone having taken the initiative, the great bell of the friary of Avignon tolled in a miraculous way for his funeral.

During that same time brother Peter John approved the contents of the aforementioned letter of the seven seals, and confessed the opposite of what he had taught, by revoking it with his own words: "I brother Peter John, in obedience to the words of our masters, contained in the letter of the seven seals, which answer the questions forwarded to the same masters by the venerable father brother Bonagratia, who was at the time General Minister, and which they answered out of obedience, hereby declare that they acted with a sane mind, and that according to that sane intellect, which I believe is evident in the words they wrote down, I accept the contents of their words and I thus revoke whatever I have said, or written, or taught contrary to their affirmations."

This General governed the Order for five years.

[377] Brother Bernard of Besse from the Province of Aquitaine, listed the Generals of the Order in his chronicle on the Ministers General, up to the time of this General.⁵² He also published some devotional books. One was about the purpose of the Rule. This was written to silence the envious, and to instruct the brothers to live according to the Rule at the time when brother Bonaventure was General Minister. Another of his books, intended to instruct the novices, is

Saint Agatha, Andrew of Florence and Matthew of Arezzo, he was sent with letters to the great Khan of the Tartars.

51 Salimbene states: *Item supradicto millesimo* (i.e. 1283) *obiit fr. Bonagratia, Ordinis fratrum Minorum, Generalis Minister, in Provincia Provinciae in civitate Avignonis in vigilia beati Francisci, in dominica die, et fuit sepultus in ecclesia fratrum ante maius altare.*

52 Bernard of Besse, *Chronicon XIV vel XV Generalium Ministrorum Ordinis fratrum Minorum seu Catalogus Gonsalvinus dictus Generalium Ministrorum Ordinis fratrum Minorum*, in *Analecta Franciscana*, Collegium S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi) 1897, V, 693-707.

called *The Mirror of Discipline*. – He also wrote a third work containing three principal parts: a life of Saint Francis with many miracles; chronicles of the General Ministers; and thirdly some miracles and divine testimony in approbation of the three Orders of Saint Francis, namely the Minors, the Penitents and the Poor Ladies.

This General once recounted how, during the time when the lord Bonaventure was General, and there were thirty choir stalls indicated for the friars in the Paris friary, there was a certain woman who lived about 18 leagues from Paris. She was a woman of great perfection and was enlightened with many divine oracles. She once had this vision. While she was praying she saw that there were thirty friars Minor, who had died in the Paris friary. Of these friars only five were in purgatory, whereas the other 25 were led in paradise. The last friar among these thirty dead brothers had been placed among the Seraphs; his name, however, had not been revealed to her. So she recounted her vision to the Guardian of that friary and to brother Robert de Veli, and she asked them to pray the Lord so that, if that vision was true, He would certify it by revealing the name of that friar who was placed among the Seraphs. When the vision was confirmed during prayer, it was revealed that the friar who was placed among the Seraphs was called brother Venantius. So she inquired at the Paris friary and it was found that, among the thirty brothers who had died in that place, the last one was truly brother Venantius, who was a lay brother, and who was a man of great charity who distributed linen clothes as a tailor and took care of the habits of the friars when they were worn out.

There was in that same friary of Paris a most innocent novice, who was seriously ill, and who was on the point of dying, and was crying out in a terrible voice: “Ah! If only I had never been born!” After some time had elapsed he said: “Do ponder on these words seriously at least.” [378] Then he said: “Consider some of the merits of the passion of the Lord.” And he immediately added: “This is truly good.” The friars who were astonished, were asking themselves why such an innocent teenager could say such terrible things. He answered them: “I saw myself in front of my own judgment. All the idle words I had uttered were weighed with such a meticulous care, that all the good actions I had accomplished were nothing as compared to them. That

is why I uttered those first words. After that, since I saw that it is possible to meditate much on our sins, while we take little notice of our merits, I uttered the second expression. And when I saw that those merits were considered as nothing when it came to justification and glorification, except with the merits of the passion of the Lord, so it would be for me, that I will be saved only if I seriously consider these merits.”

There was another most devout novice in the Paris friary. When he was dying he saw the heavens opened and a ladder was placed. He climbed that very high ladder and came to the door of paradise. When he knocked on the door he heard this response: “You may not enter here for the time being, since the one who is serving you will have to enter before, and you will follow him.” That novice opened his eyes, and saw the brother who was serving him, and told him the whole story. That very moment that brother had a very high fever, and while the novice was still talking to him he expired. After some time that novice also died, and followed him to the eternal victory.

Once there were two friars who received the obedience to go away from Paris to another place. It was winter, and they had to travel in the mud and the rain. When night had fallen the elder friar, who was worn out during the journey, and was feeling very cold and hungry, and was on the point of exhaustion from walking in the mud, called his companion, and told him that he could not go on without danger of dying. That brother answered: “But here there is no place of refuge for us friars.” The elder friar said: “Why can’t we ask to be received in that house we see beside the road?” The other answered him: “No, we cannot, because that house belongs to a certain knight, who persecutes our Order and all the other religious Orders, and who is not God’s friend. In fact, people say that it has been thirty years that he has not gone to confession.” The elder friar said: “Let us go just the same to his house. Maybe the Lord will provide for our needs. I cannot walk any longer.” So the other brother was convinced and they both went to the door and knocked. The doorkeeper answered them: “The lord has not yet returned from hunting, but I will announce you coming to the lady while you wait her for a few moments.” That lady was a very devout and pious woman, and she told them: “Brothers,

if I receive you, I am afraid that my husband will insult you and then he will hit me and insult me with many rude words, and all of us will have to bear up with his rough behaviour towards us. But I also know that if I do not provide for your needs, I am to fear the cruelty of God's judgment. Therefore do come in and stay hidden, until my husband comes for supper, and afterwards I will try to secretly provide for your needs. In the meantime, I beg you to be patient."

[379] That knight then returned, while the friars were hiding. He entered his house and sat down at table in front of a fire and was comforted by the abundance of good food. His wife sat in front of her husband, according to the custom of the French. She was thinking about the needs of those two holy friars and considering the abundance of food on the table, and she was feeling very sad and could not eat and be merry with her husband as usual. Her husband noticed that she was behaving strangely, and he asked her whether she had received some offence, since he saw her so upset. She answered him with a deep sigh and said: "Lord, if it is pleasing to you, I will reveal to you the reason of my sadness." So he told her: "Do not be afraid, speak with confidence." His wife said: "Lord, I have received with fear two friars Minor who were travelling along this road, since they were hungry and cold, because I fear God's judgment if they die, since they are servants of God, and we are full of sins and can make use of God's abundant providence." Her husband said: "Do to them whatever seems best for you." That very moment his wife became radiant with joy, and sent to call the friars and placed them in front of the fire, so that they could warm themselves up. When the knight, who was a most harsh and cruel man, saw blood coming out of the feet of the friars, and their tattered and mud-stained clothes, as well as their emaciated faces, the hand of the Lord descended upon him, and he was moved to pity. He realised how sinful he was and became terrified and felt a sense of guilt, and became like a lion changed into a lamb. So he rose from table and prepared water to wash their feet. With his own hands he prepared the table and ministered to them with all humility, while they ate. Then he prepared beds for them, and with his own arms brought in the straw to prepare their mattresses. After the friars had rested, the knight drew aside the elder priest among them and told him: "Brother, can a great sinner, who has never confessed his sins, be saved, if he decides to go to confession?" The brother answered him: "Certainly, sir, as long as he does satisfaction for his

sins, since he is a great sinner, because if a sinner weeps over his sins at any time and feels sorry for them, he will live and not die." The knight then said: "Brother, I want to come to confession by all means, if it is not too tiring for you." That brother was feeling exhausted, and he knew that he would have to spend the greater part of the night confessing that man. He felt sorry for himself and said: "Sir, if it is pleasing to you, I can remain tomorrow morning and then I can listen much better to your confession." The knight said: "Brother, are you really sure whether tomorrow morning I will still be alive?" But since that friar looked too tired to listen to his confession, although he wanted to confess that very moment, he agreed to leave the confession to the following day.

But when that exhausted friar tried to go to sleep, he began thinking about the grave danger he would place that knight in, if that man were to die that very night. So he woke up terrified from his bed, and all sleep left him. He prostrated himself on the ground and began to pray with abundant tears that at least God would deign to conserve in life and in his good purpose that knight until the following morning. While he was thus praying, he was overtaken by sleep, and had the following vision. He saw that knight who had already died and the Angels and devils were fighting over the possession of his soul. The devils on their part placed upon the scales [380] the innumerable and shameful sins of that knight, while the Angels could only find traces of good actions. So there was nothing else to do but to pronounce the sentence against him. The Angels saw that his case was very dangerous, when the guardian Angel of the soul of that knight said: "Bring over the straw, which he personally carried with his own arms in order to prepare the beds for the friars." When the hay had been brought and placed on the scales as a witness, the scales began to weigh on the part of his merits. That very moment a favourable sentence was given to the knight and the Angels carried his soul with joy and praises to heaven. When that friar saw all this, he was overjoyed. He woke up from his sleep, and believing that the dream he saw would really come true, he woke up his companion, and told him that the knight was dead but saved. He narrated his vision in all details, while both of them went to call the lady of the house to come to the lord's room.

The lady and all the other members of her family went to the friars. When they had lighted a lamp the friar said: "The lord of his house has died, but do not weep or be afraid. God has forgiven him,

because of the mercy he has shown towards us, and he has given him the grace of all those sinners who repent and decide to go to confession. Since he has taken pity on us and welcomed us as his guests, the Angels have now accompanied his soul. So call all you relatives and tomorrow with joy carry his body for burial." The following day all the friends of the knight came over, and they buried his body, and began to spread the news of what had happened. They then made up for his sins by giving generous alms, making restitution of riches that had been acquired dishonestly. They encouraged many to do penance and to be hospitable, since they realised how the signs of divine clemency were evident in the case of that knight.

On another similar occasion, two brothers were travelling from Paris and were crossing Burgundy. A certain knight from a village in which the friars were passing, came out and started following them. When he reached up with them, he began to beg them insistently to accept hospitality in his house, in such a way that they could not say no to his pleas. When that knight introduced them to their room, he said: "Behold, the room of the brothers. You should know the reason why I am telling you this. When I was a young I was a man of loose morals. Once I received two friars in this room, out of reverence for Saint Francis. Since their habits were soaking wet because of the rain, I personally squeezed out the water from them and dried them diligently in front of the fire. When those two brothers had gone away, after some time I became ill and was in danger of dying. I was terrified that I would be damned, but I had the following vision. It seemed to me that I was standing on a very narrow bridge. I was afraid of crossing it [381] because it was so narrow and below it there was a roaring fire. But those brothers, whose habits I had squeezed and dried, appeared to me and comforted me, and I felt very consoled. Then one of them preceded me on the bridge and offered me to lead me by his hand. At that moment I was not afraid any longer because of the fire. It seemed to me that drops of water were falling from the brothers' habits, and extinguished that fire. When I woke up and was freed from my illness and from the danger of death, I corrected my way of life, and I believe that I converted to God into a better man. From that moment I became a good friend of the brothers and always offer them hospitality out of reverence to Saint Francis, since I have

trust in the merits of his brothers that I will be freed from the danger of damnation."

In the friary of Paris, a certain brother with a limping disability received the order to sprinkle the beds of the friars with holy water every night. One evening, all the friars were resting in their beds, except one of them, who was still praying. That friar (who sprinkled the holy water) saw the figure of a small Ethiopian boy who was standing in front of the dormitory door with a bow. Since he was standing there for some time, and could not go out or in the doorway, a certain large demon came over to him and asked him: "Why can't you enter?" The boy answered: "I cannot, because someone has sprinkled blessed water over all the beds in the dormitory in which the friars are resting." The demon then told him: "Jump ahead and shoot an arrow in the direction of that brother who has not been sprinkled with holy water, in such a way that he will become lazy and will not wake up for Matins." When the devil disappeared, that friar who saw the vision went over to the friar who had been pierced by the arrow. He woke him up and told him: "Here am I, father!" The other friar said: "What is the matter, brother?" "The devil tried to invade me when I was sleeping in order to make me fall into a nocturnal illusion." Lord, free us therefore from the flying arrow.

In the same friary of Paris is buried brother Julian the German,⁵³ a man of great holiness, who wrote down the lives of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony in prose and song. These lives are sung in the divine office of the Church. He was *corrector mensae* in Paris for

53 Julian of Speyer was born in the Rhine Palatinate in Germany in 1175-1180. The Franciscans had arrived in Speyer in 1221, and the chronicler Jordan of Giano arrived there from Strasbourg in 1222, and was ordained priest in 1223. Before becoming a Franciscan friar, Julian of Speyer was *magister cantus* in the royal palace of the kings of France Philippe II, Louis VIII, and also Louis IX. In 1226 he entered the Franciscan Order and was formed at the house of studies in Paris, where he held the office of *cantor Parisiensis et corrector mensae*. This office would imply the overseeing of the proper singing of the Divine Office, teaching music to the students and correcting mistakes during public readings in the Office or at table. In Paris Julian composed a *Rhymed Office* of Saint Francis and another one of Saint Anthony of Padua. He also composed a legend of Saint Francis and another legend of Saint Anthony, known as *Vita secunda*, or *Juliana*. Julian died in Paris circa 1240, when he would have roughly been 65 years old.

many years. – In the same Province of France is buried brother Peter Menes, who shone with virtues and miracles.

In the year of the Lord 1285 Pope Martin IV died in Perugia. In the same year, on the fourth day of the *Nones* of April, the lord Giacomo Savelli, Cardinal deacon, and a great father to the Order, was elected pope and chose the name Honorius IV.⁵⁴

The times of brother Arlotto (1285-1286)

[382] The eleventh General of the Order was brother Arlotto da Prato, master of the Province of Tuscany.⁵⁵ He was elected during the general chapter of Milan, celebrated in the year of the Lord 1285. In that chapter, brother Guillaume Fauger,⁵⁶ Minister of Aquitaine and master of theology, who presided in that same gathering, ordered that a new statute be written whereby a Vicar should govern the Order, whenever a General would die or whenever he would assume an office of government in the Church.

Brother Arlotto had his venerable father, who had been a knight, and three brothers from his own family, all members of the Order.

This General had to continue the trial against brother Peter John Olivi and his doctrine, began by his predecessor, on account of the confusion and scandal that Olivi's writings had brought. So he summoned Peter John to appear before him personally in Paris. But since the same brother Arlotto remained in office only for one year, and then died in Paris to be remembered among the venerable Fathers, this discussion never took place.

After Arlotto's death, according to the form laid down in the chapter of Milan, brother Guillaume Fauger was nominated Vicar General of the Order. [Since such an election requested candidates who would be qualified as bachelors in lecturing sacred theology], the election [383] of another who would be of an inferior rank was premature according to the orders and competence at that time. He was

55 In his *Chronicle*, Salimbene writes: "In the year 1285 the general chapter of the Order of friars Minor was celebrated in Milan during the feast of Pentecost, which fell on 12th May. All the Ministers took part and decided to adopt new constitutions, which were added and abrogated the older ones. Brother Peter, Minister of Aquitaine, who was a *magister cathedratus*, was the Vicar during that chapter, and it seemed that he would be the next General Minister, since he had been with brother Bonagratia, the preceding General; but the election was won by brother Arlotto da Prato from Tuscany, who was *magister cathedratus*, and lectured in Paris (1281-1283), and he was made General Minister of the Order of Minors."

56 Cfr. Footnote 462 under the section on Bonagratia.

ready to renounce his post in favour of another candidate. He also admitted lay officials into the friary in Paris.⁵⁷

Brother Guillaume summarised the work of Bonaventure on the Sentences.

The Life of brother Roger,
from the Province of Provence

There once lived a most perfect man, who had the gift of the highest contemplation and was immersed in sublime grace. His name was brother Roger and he came from the Province of Provence.⁵⁸ I would like to insert his life here, since I have found it in a document. He was just like purified gold, and he was chosen and elected from the midst of the fire of life just as if another Elijah was living once more, and it seemed that he was carried aloft on the chariot of love. As he himself used to say, he had been advised by divine revelation to enter the Order of friars Minor. At the beginning of his conversion the Lord permitted him to gain merits by being assailed by the strongest tempests of temptations, in such a way that he would tremble when he would just recall them, and he would fearfully assert that he could not imagine himself enduring greater temptations in this life. But with the help of divine grace he won over himself with manly courage, in such a way that the fullness of divine grace descended upon him. Thus he did not sin any more as long as he was alive, but even if a spark of some temptation would flare up in him, he would extinguish it immediately as if it were submerged by the ocean, as brother Raymond Peter, his confessor, would often experiment. But out of confession he would not reveal to anybody what kind of temptation he endured.

⁵⁷ Gratien de Paris, *Histoire de la Fondation et de l'Évolution de l'Ordre des Frères Mineurs au XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1928, 362, states that during the Chapter of Milan of 1285 it had been decided that, upon the death of a Minister General, the government of the Order was to pass over into the hands of a Vicar General elected by the Provincial of the Province to which the dead Minister had belonged, together with two Provincials of two nearby Provinces.

⁵⁸ Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, Tomus V (1276-1300), Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi 1931, ad an. 1287, IX, 161 calls brother Roger of Provence *vir perfectissimus frequentis extasis et profundae contemplationis*.

Once he familiarly opened his heart to his confessor, and told him that he had afflicted himself in such a heartfelt way for his sins, that all the sins he once committed had been forgiven by God, and he knew this surely by divine illumination. He reached such a peaceful state in his soul, that although he abounded in divine grace and people would praise him, he never let himself be agitated by the impulse of vainglory. His confessions were bitter, clear and frequent, and he would normally go to confession eight or ten times daily. Five or six times a year he would go to general confession, to express all the sins he had committed.

Regarding the chastisement of his flesh, he accomplished marvellous and wonderful deeds. Regarding food and sleep he seemed to behave normally according to the exterior man, whereas in his inner being [384] he was unique in his penance. Whenever he would eat a morsel of bread he would immediately lift up his mind to God and bless Him, and in this way his body would be drawn away from the urge of sensing the taste of food. When he could not distract his attention from tasting food, he would render his food totally insipid, as brother Raymond Peter could often truly see and experience when he saw him eating seafood or fish. He tried with all his might to practice abstinence, since it is much easier to conserve inner devotion through abstinence, and thus receive singular graces from the Lord. However, Roger would often confess that his greatest efforts lay in eating and sleeping. He exercised so much control over his exterior senses, that he never wanted to listen to a single idle word, and he fled with terror from murmuring and malicious words of religious as if he were fleeing from a serpent's venom. At table he always wanted to listen to sacred readings. He once scolded his own confessor, who was a perfect man, because he had indulged in some idle words. He convinced the Custos who was present to command him, for every idle word uttered by his confessor, to kneel down and recite the entire *Miserere mei Deus*, the *Salve Regina* and the *Credo in Deum* with an *Ave Maria*. However his Custos begged him to revoke what he asked for, or at least to modify it, but he did not want, and insisted on being obligated to say those prayers immediately on his knees. He used to refrain from looking imprudently at vanities with his bodily eyes, in such a way that he hardly ever looked a woman in the face, including his own mother, who was an elderly and most devout woman. Once he told his confessor that three years had elapsed since he had looked

a woman in the face. When his confessor asked him: "Father, why is it that you are so sure that you should fear women?", the devout and prudent man answered: "Brother, as long as a man tries his best to flee from sin and all occasions of evil with all his might, God who lives in him will not refuse to preserve that man from all evil. Therefore if you expose yourself to sin, especially in this matter, in which man is very much inclined to fall because of his corrupt nature with its vices, it is just that God will abandon you to your own strength, and you know very well that you cannot resist temptation even for a single moment without God's help."

Brother Roger would sometimes say that if he had to stay with women, that would render him more chaste. He felt such a horror in his heart to stay in their presence, that frequently, every time a woman would ask for a meeting out of devotion, he could not bear to meet her without great affliction.

Brother Roger was so much rapt in God, that he became nearly insensible to taste food, or appreciate the colour of clothes, or the value of things. Once the Guardian gave him a habit, which was made of a better fabric than the other habits, and he wore it for eight days. His confessor told him that he was wearing a good habit in order to comfort him, but the holy man was astonished at this, and when he realised it he immediately took off his habit and gave it to his confessor, while he scolded him for not having revealed earlier what he said to him.

Although this man of God had a benevolent and kind heart, out of zeal for souls and for divine honour, he was also very harsh and inflexible in correcting others, so that [385] the fear of correction might convert them to become innocent. Whenever he would correct guilty friars, the brothers would kneel down and beg him to show mercy, but they could hardly intercede on behalf of the guilty brothers, since he would answer them: "If the Angels themselves, or you, or whosoever would beg me with humility, I would not dare to refrain from giving this correction. If Moses pleaded because of the sins of the people, and yet punished them for their sins not through prayers, but by means of the sword, in the same way I know that I am bound to pray for the brothers who have sinned, but in order that God, whom they offended, might forgive them, they need to receive correction with a harsh discipline." In fact, all those whom he corrected so harshly, were marvellously changed to be better and to give him thanks eventually for his corrections.

He carried such a vehement fire of charity towards God that it seemed that he was exteriorly speaking to Him nearly all the time. In the church he would often sing, when he was sitting at table or speaking in public he would not be ashamed to lift his gaze to heaven. He would make devout gestures of reverence. His face would blush, he would express audible sighs as if he were speaking with God, and he would often bow down his head and his entire body. The man of God was never ashamed of anything that pertained to God or to the usefulness of his neighbour. He was so detached from vainglory that, as his confessor used to say, he possessed humility in a most sure way, without any air of self-exaltation. He used to say: "What does a man possess in order to find glory in it? Therefore, if one accepts everything as a gift of God, then it is rather in God that he should glory." Sometimes he used to say that, if he were the best man in the world, he wanted everybody to know that he wanted to praise the Lord above all for this gift, namely, that God had adorned him, who was just like a disgusting worm, with so much goodness. Once there was a certain brother who was praised for his humility, while he, out of humility, was rejecting that he was truly humble. The holy man scolded him harshly and said: "Go away, you miserable man. Why do you want to hide God's gift? Don't you realise that everyone knows that you cannot say that any goodness belongs to you?"

One day he was celebrating Mass as he used to do on a daily basis. During Mass he was overwhelmed with such an intense fervour of love that he immediately turned around and fell down headlong on the ground. After Mass he began gnashing his teeth and screaming and his hand became rigid and tense, so that those who were not aware of his devotion thought that he had become insane. His words were so inflamed with the ardour of divine love, that those who listened to his preaching were moved to amazement, or felt sweetness in their hearts, or experienced sour compunction and shed tears, and were changed in such a wonderful way as to be spiritually led to the desire of heavenly things. He did not dare preach about anything, if he had not first realised it in his works. Once he was preaching with great fervour to the brothers gathered in chapter on the vigil of the feast of Saint Francis. The theme of his sermon was: *I am forgotten like a discarded vase* (Ps 30:12). All the brothers of that friary [386] were moved with divine affections and they were as if inflamed with an interior fervour, and they begged him to be pleased to repeat the

same sermon after lunch. He agreed to do so, but was not able to preach again, because he was held by other commitments.

On another occasion he preached to the people in the friary on a Sunday after lunch. He was so much inflamed in his fervour, that he hardly had any supper and continued to preach to the friars. After supper he was still gripped by the same fervour, and after sending away the other friar, he took with him the Guardian and brother Raymond Peter, his confessor, and some other brother. He raised up his eyes to heaven, as if he were reading some book, and began to explain to them so many heavenly things pertaining to the illumination of the Spirit that he transformed them to be fervently full of love to God. One of the brothers there present became so inflamed inwardly, that it seemed that his body was on the verge of burning with that flame of love, and that he seemed to be breathing his last. He began to perspire so heavily, that it seemed that his death was imminent. So he told brother Roger that it was time to wake up for Matins, and that he should therefore stop preaching. After having said this to him for the third time, he seemed to be doing great violence to himself, and stopped preaching. When he was returning he began to marvel at the difficult words he had said, and told the brothers: "What would the brothers think of me if they heard what I said? They would say that I was speaking some barbaric language or Greek."

That friar who had been so inflamed asked brother Roger one day why his words had such great strength in them. The holy man answered: "Brother, the man who lifts up all his actions to spiritual elevations to God, and orders everything to this end, will find his God in everything he does. Therefore, when you want to read the sacred books, you should lift up your heart to God and say: 'Lord, this servant of yours, who is so unworthy, wants to come in and see your treasures. Please introduce this unworthy servant into your presence and give him so much love for your most holy words that he may come to know you, because if he does not know you, he can never love you, Lord my God! In this way, as soon as he opens the sacred book the first time he will find his God.'" Brother Roger did these things all the time, in such a way that the first time he would open the sacred book, his eyes would fall on a most noble verse of Scripture. He used to fill the margins of the Bible with many notes and other writings, and in this way he showed himself to be more learned than ordinary men would have thought him to be.

Once he went to Beaucaire,⁵⁹ where the friars asked him to speak to them about God. He answered them: "A most perfect man does not dare speak about God." His confessor said that he was amazed, and that he could not understand the truth of these words, especially since Gregory said that "the greatest satisfaction of a perfect man is that of speaking about God." So he asked him what he meant with his words, and Roger answered: "God's visitations are so high and great, that a perfect man who is in ecstasy cannot express [387] in a sufficient way through any words whatever he is knowing and sensing." Therefore he reluctantly spoke to others about this ineffable experience, so as not to decrease its intensity. Whenever God wants to reveal to a perfect man the indescribable mysteries of Sacred Scripture, he can only speak about them as if he were stammering, since it is better to keep them in one's hidden innermost being in silence than to express them with high resounding words. Therefore brother Roger used to say that, if he would come to the knowledge of God's greatness, the Sacred Scriptures would be as nothing to him. Although he nevertheless delighted in the words of truth, he tried to avoid as diligently as he could any untruthfulness in his words. Thus he barely used to utter any words in common if he did not pronounce them strongly. He frequently used to assert that, whenever God loves a soul, that soul would try to keep away from the most venial sin, as it would do so in front of a mortal sin.

Brother Roger received the light of divine oracles and revelations, and he was so nourished by the food of divine consolations, that he would often become rapt in God and therefore he would receive many hidden heavenly revelations. Indeed, his confessor revealed that at one time brother Berengarius Bertrandus, who was dead and had been a good friend of brother Roger, appeared to him. The holy man asked him how he was. He answered: "I am fine, since God has saved me through his grace, and now the Lord has sent me to you in order to show you how to make known to all men whether they are among the number of those who are saved." Then he told him: "Every man in whom you see that sign, is one of those predestined to life." So his confessor asked brother Roger with insistence to show him what that sign was, but he answered him that spiritual signs were not meant to be revealed to mortal flesh, without a special intervention by

59 Beaucaire, a town in the department of Gard, on the river Rhône.

God. Even though his confessor remained open to discover this sign, and to make him tell him what it was, he used to tell him that, even if he would see that sign in him, he would never want to reveal that truth, no matter how much his confessor would ask him.

On another night, while the friars were praying Matins, I think on the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian,⁶⁰ they were singing the verse of the following Psalm: *The Angel of the Lord pitches camp around those who fear him* (Ps 33:8), the same friars were astonished when they saw in front of brother Roger a luminous light, as if it were the light of a radiant sphere, which was large as a wicker basket. That light rested upon him for some moments, until the friars had sung the following verse, namely *taste and see how sweet is the Lord*. Then that light slowly crossed over to the other part of the choir and started going up to the highest part of the wall, where it disappeared. Brother Roger was rapt in ecstasy, and it seemed that he was sleeping and was standing immobile with his hood covering his head and his entire face. After None [388] on the same day his confessor, after hearing his confession, asked him whether he had seen that light. He answered him maturely with a smile that it was so, but at the same time he told him with a profound sigh: "There were some other brothers in the choir, who God was teaching about the most profound mysteries." Brother Roger was very surprised that his confessor had asked him this question, since he did not feel that he had received any special grace from God. But the very moment when his confessor had asked him what was that radiant light, the answer was finally reserved to the Angel of the Lord.

One day his confessor asked brother Roger why he, a man of such fervour, did not have the gift of tears, since his eyes did not appear red with crying. He answered him: "When a man has the gift of ecstasy, his soul is drawn so much into God and is lost in Him, that his body does not feel any of the consolations of the soul, and the soul does not feel any passions of the body." He also said: "It is not convenient that a rustic man like me be admitted to the table of the great King, as long as *our perishable nature must put on imperishability* (1Cor 15:53). It is the soul alone who is led into the bridal chamber of its spouse, because otherwise the body will attribute to itself the

60 27th September. The Vulgate edition states: *Immittit Angelus Domini in circuitu timentium eum*.

sweetness of God's liberality given to the soul. Once I did have that devotion to shed tears, and that is why I would often refuse to serve the priest during Mass. I was scolded for that during chapter, but I could not explain why I did it. Therefore I do not serve Mass willingly, since when the priest celebrates Mass I praise God so highly in my heart, that I would meditate upon the coming of the great King together with an infinite multitude of Angels, and therefore I would feel that I am not worthy to serve Him at that moment. When the priest elevates the body of Christ, I have to retreat from where I am, otherwise I would begin to scream so loudly that the priest and all those who are there present would pay more attention to me than to the Lord."

A sign of his fervour was the fact that his face was always reddish, that he would sigh and bow his head and his entire body. He would behave in this way everywhere, even during Mass, and without any embarrassment. He sometimes used to say that one does not truly love if he feels ashamed. Therefore his devotion was hidden from many, especially from those who did not know him, since he would make such gestures in front of everybody without feeling embarrassed, in such a way that they would think that he was more vain than devout. In fact, he would not show any signs of shedding tears, or to do any acts of mortification of his face or his eyes, as normally one would see in those who make harsh penances and are very pale in their faces. In his case, as we have already said, he appeared reddish in his face, in such a way that many of those who did not know him could not believe that his was a genuine devotion. They would rather think it was a question of bodily passions. His look was that of one who did not practice any special abstinence. In fact, he did not dare to lift up his soul to God and enjoy His sweetness, because of the rigorous penance that made him become so weak physically.

In the fervour of his soul, his heart would open itself to be enlightened and inflamed, in such a way to lift itself up to the most high God with an intuitive and nearly intolerable embrace, as was evident in his meditations, when he would instinctively describe that three things marvellously happened to him, with the hidden force of the Spirit, namely: [389] he would feel the presence of his soul, the presence of God, the presence of the world. Thus, when one day his confessor was reading out loudly to him, he was so inflamed with fervour at one single thought that came to his mind, that he could not listen

to any more reading of words, but with a high voice and many sighs he said: "If it is pleasing to God and possible for me, I would like Him to give you a thousand worlds, in order that God may show you where that man was, and when he was living in that state." For that whole day he could hardly keep himself from crying aloud. The second sign appeared in that consideration, which begins: Excess, introit, transitus, etc. The third one appeared in this last expression, which says: It is either what you are, or what you are not.

On another occasion this same confessor told brother Roger how great it is to be lost in ecstatic rapture with so much intensity, as to seem even greater than brother Giles. The holy man answered: "It is very easy to be lifted up to ecstatic rapture." He then continued: "I know a man who for a hundred times during Matins was taken into ecstatic rapture to the point of understanding the highest divine mysteries. That man had this experience for an infinite number of times, and sometimes he would have to do violence upon himself, to go back from God as if he were escaping from His highest embrace, and at other times, he felt that he was drawn to God once more." His confessor marvelled at the reason why this happened, brother Roger answered that sometimes God opens the abundance of his grace and goodness to man, in such a way that he sees everything in a most sure light, so that if he turns his eyes to look directly at that light, he would not return alive from where he was. When his confessor asked him why it was so dangerous that one could not return back to life, given that if one personally experienced that danger that meant that he could always be with Christ. The holy man answered: "This is a great danger. Just as that state is founded and secure when it is regulated well, according to what one can do in this life, so it becomes more dangerous, if one does not increase his discretion as well as his devotion. Do you consider it discretion, therefore, that a most unworthy servant goes with so much courage, every time he is called, to receive those highest embraces and kisses of the great King? May God place me among his sons, and therefore I will accede surely to those heights. But since I am still a servant in this human state, in which I can also be separated from Him eternally, I must take refuge with humility as an unworthy man from such a great sweetness and excess of mystical embraces."

Another time it seemed to brother Roger that he was in a certain temple of unspeakable beauty, and all those present were saying that it was the temple of the Trinity. In that place he saw a certain

Angel who was flying down from heaven in a marvellous way. When the Angel approached the ground, he looked in a benevolent way at brother Roger and flew around him in circles, and in this way he let off so much smoke when he was flying that all the temple was full of it, in such a way that brother could not see the Angel any more, except for the tips of his wings. In that way the Angel spiralled up back into heaven and brother Roger, in the wink of an eye, felt himself penetrating into the highest levels of heaven, and he was marvelling how it was possible for him to stay aloft in those immense heights, when he was so heavy and was not sustained by anything. After this he looked and saw that there was an open door in heaven, and brother Roger at this sight was full of joy and felt that he had acquired newness of life. When he was looking at that door [390] he saw Saint Peter the Apostle standing outside the door. He had an air of authority in the way he was looking, and it seemed that he was making a sign so that somebody might approach him. In this way all those present were preparing themselves to go and revere him. Then he went inside and Saint Paul came out, and did the same thing and turned back in. Brother Roger thought that this meant that the Lord Jesus Christ was going to come next, and he was standing there trembling and waiting. After some time those two Apostles came, together with the most holy Lord Jesus Christ, accompanying him one on His right and the other on His left. When they passed in front of brother Roger, he called out with fervour: "Lord, who are you?" He continued to repeat the same question and to follow Him with haste. And wherever he strove to go, he could not see Christ's face in any way because of his great reverence and fear. When he continued running after Him and calling Him, Christ turned around suddenly and faced brother Roger, who full of amazement and sweetness, fell down at His feet. He insisted on asking: "Lord, who are you?" Christ answered: "*I am who I am*" (cfr. Exod 3:14). Then He blessed brother Roger and said: "Come here, my son, since your sins have been forgiven. Persevere in my grace and you will be with me for ever." Then brother Roger took courage and with a great effort looked straight to Christ in the face. In that moment the image of Christ was impressed so strongly in his mind, that it seemed that he had it present in front of his eyes from that day onwards.

Another time he was enraptured in such a profound and clear celestial light, as if he was absorbed in an immense sea of Divinity, that he could see neither himself nor anything else except God.

The same year in which he was to die, on the feast of the Epiphany, the servant of the Lord was resting after a long prayer. Brother Bertrand appeared to him. He had been lector at Montpellier, and was famous for his holiness, and he had died three or four years back. He appeared in the habit of a friar Minor, and seemingly coming out of a veil of glory he began to slowly reveal that glory. When brother Roger saw him, he desired to die and go with him, and so he started calling out and saying: "Brother Bertrand, when do I go out of this life?" He continued repeating this question frequently. Brother Bertrand answered him: "This year before the feast of Saint Sylvester."⁶¹ Brother Roger said: "May that feast come this very moment." Brother Bertrand answered: "It will be as you are saying, since you will die in that time." And brother Roger told him: "Had God decided whether He will save me?" Brother Bertrand answered: "You should know that in heaven it has been decided that you will be counted among the saved." At that moment brother Roger saw in a vision that brother Bertrand was busily preparing himself to say Mass. When he disappeared, brother Roger was taken up to heaven, where he saw a most beautiful altar, and all the Saints were assisting God in an orderly way. Finally he also saw the Blessed Virgin Mary who was wearing a marvellous cloak, who received the consecrated Host, while all the saints were ministering to the Eucharist, according to the rules. Brother Roger then personally perceived [391] the Lord Jesus Christ. A certain Saint came from the left hand side and asked brother Roger to which Order he belonged. He told him that he was a friar Minor. So that saint took a Host from the altar and read the words inscribed on it, and said: "This is for you." That moment he administered the Eucharist to brother Roger, and he commanded him to go and preach to one of the nuns in Christ who was sick. So brother Roger went back to where he came from.

That same year on Holy Week he did not want to speak with the friars in the church or at table, because he was inflamed with a great desire to die. For the whole day he was running in the garden talking to himself all the time in a low voice. His confessor saw him, went close to him and heard him saying: "Lord, when am I going to die; Lord, when am I going to die?" Brother Roger was all red in the face, and he was inflamed inwardly, as if he was drunk, and his eyes were staring. His confessor was so astonished to see him in that state

that he did not dare tell him one single word. Brother Roger then came close to him and asked: "Brother Raymond, when am I going to die?" He repeated this question frequently. Brother Raymond, his confessor, took pity on him, and went after him and told him: "Father, why do you afflict yourself so much with the desire to die, when you know by revelation, that you are approaching the end of your life?" In fact, according to the revelation he had received, only nine months remained until his death. When brother Roger heard this, he began to shout: "I have been living long enough. I cannot bear any longer so much fire burning in such a miserable matter (which is my body)." Brother Raymond then told him: "Father, if you continue living you will increase your crown of reward." But brother Roger began shouting like an angry man and said: "And why should such a man continue living?" Then he said in figurative language: "Go away, go away." In this way brother Roger spoke with his confessor, since he was so far removed from vainglory, that it seemed that he was already on the verge of being glorified. When his confessor went away from him, the holy man continued to go around the garden and say: "When shall I die, Lord?" He remained in this state, weeping for three days, and among many sighs and sobs he would say: "*My life is worn out with sorrow*" (Ps 30:10). When his confessor asked him for two or three days why he was saying those words, finally he was won over by the persistent questions, and with great fervour answered: "Is it not good that the soul is informed with virtue, in such a way that it cannot bear being close to its Lord, but rather would like to cry out to Him: Lord, go away from me, because I cannot tolerate the abundance of your sweetness?" Having said this, he went away.

He often used to utter in the midst of tears the words of David: *The Lord is all my salvation: he has made an everlasting covenant with me; he brings to flower all that saves me* (cfr. 1Sam 23:5). Sometimes he used to say the following words with a hardly audible voice: *Return to your resting place, my soul, because the Lord has treated you kindly* (Ps 114:7).

On Easter Sunday of that same year, when he was feeling downcast in the friary of Usèz, brother Bertrand appeared to him, together with another Saint, with a glorious body. Since brother Roger was fervently desiring that glory that he had seen, he said: "Brother and father Bertrand, is what you have promised me really true?" Bertrand told him: "Yes, it is exactly as I had told you." Brother Roger

61 31st December.

then asked full of anxiety: "But when? Tell me, when?" And the other brother answered: "You will soon die; but for now you have to accept this state of purification." [392] Afterwards brother Roger asked him regarding a certain dead brother, whether he was saved; he answered him that it was so. He also asked him regarding another brother, and he answered affirmatively. But when he asked him regarding another brother, brother Bertrand told him: "Why are you asking me regarding all these brothers? All those who die observing the Rule in the Order of Saint Francis are admitted to eternal joy." Having said this he disappeared. The man of God narrated this vision to his confessor, who had persistently asked him, and he added: "I have narrated this to you so that you may know for certain that this year I will die." After two and a half months, during the month of September, roughly at sundown, in the friary of Usèz, brother Roger ascended from this world to the father. It was three and a half months before the feast of Saint Sylvester.

That same hour, in which he died, three men were coming to Usèz and were some distance outside the village. There they saw a great globe of light ascending into heaven from the friary. They were astonished, and went to knock on the door of the friary to see whether something new had happened. When they asked they were told that brother Roger had died. So they were all the more astonished, since they truly believed that they had seen his soul ascending to heaven.

After the death of brother Roger, there was a certain devout woman, who loved very much brother Roger when he was alive. One night she was kneeling down and praying tearfully the Virgin Mary because of an imminent necessity. She was afraid that, the following morning, which was a Sunday, she would have to postpone her communion, since if she went to communion, as was normal for her, others might come to know her devotion. That same Sunday, during the hour of Tierce, she saw brother Roger who was coming out of a large lake, surrounded by an ineffable glory. He carried vestments that were half red and half white, and in the middle of his vestment there was a braiding of gold. When she saw him she knelt down before him and confessed her sins saying: "Brother Roger, will God show mercy upon this miserable creature? I will now confess all the sins I have committed." When she had confessed her sins, it was evident that brother Roger absolved her. That very moment Saint John the Evangelist came out of that lake in all his glory, and he was holding the chalice

and the body of Christ. When he had administered the Eucharist to that woman, both he and brother Roger disappeared. That woman, *strengthened by that food* (cfr. 1Kings 19:8) went on her way and in the fervour of her spirit she arrived on the tomb of brother Roger, which was about ten leagues distant from where she lived. Although she was very weak in her body, so that she could scarcely walk one league, and certainly not two or three leagues, but with the strength she gained in her interior spirit, she felt so robust in her body that she walked all that distance from the ninth hour of Saturday to the third hour of Sunday. She also travelled along that road even though she had never gone through it before, and no one came to indicate the way for her. When she was still about two leagues distant from Usèz, it seemed that her feet were not touching the ground as she walked, but that she was driven by the fervour of her spirit. She was sure that it had been a miracle, and from that moment she used to visit the tomb of the Saint every year.

Beginning of the meditations of brother Roger from Provence⁶²

[393] Isaiah, in the third chapter of his book, says that it is a divine inspiration to speak about the joys of the just man: *Happy is the virtuous man, for he will feed on the fruit of his deeds* (Is 3:10). The one who Isaiah calls just, the holy David calls God's own property; he says: *I reflect on all you did* (Ps 76:13). He says that the just man is God's own property: in fact, He who fathoms the hearts, and sows His word in them, so that man's intellect will pass from idleness to heavenly meditations. That is why the Spirit abides in man's intellect, in such a way that It shows its most divine actions: *The Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God* (1Cor 2:10). Therefore the just man exults when he encounters his God, and announces to his people God's arrival, so that God's name will be seen as most high and all will search his face forever.

Pay heed, then, and see what the Church believes regarding God. Maybe the wise man will adhere to Him. *My joy lies in being*

62 The translation of this section has proved to be somewhat difficult. I am here offering a rather loose translation of this mystical treatise.

close to God (Ps 72:27). This good is therefore excellent goodness itself. Look and see where is your homeland and how this present exile is a miserable state. Pay attention, and see how you have to show reverence to God and to God made man. The reason of this God-made-man is that He has so much grace in comparison to all other men, that no man can ever go the depths of such a grace. Look and consider how you are a most despicable worm, how you are worthless dust, in your human state. Therefore you will know how you should keep yourself clean from every sin because of Him who wanted to glorify Himself in you, namely, God.

Look and see the desire of the Angels who fly, and who exalt even men more than themselves, since they see the high degree in which human nature has been placed, being regarded by God even greater than that of the Angels themselves. If the Angels, who are so many, nurture this great desire, how much more reverence should you show to every man, who has been created in the image of God! So consider yourself and look at yourself, and to the reverence you are to render to the Angel whom you have as your own custodian, and who accompanies you wherever you go, and through whom God gives you such innumerable good things.

Consider the words of the Psalm: *You reveal the path of life to me* (Ps 15:11), since the way is double: the way of divinity, by which we consider the qualities that pertain to God; the way of humanity, by which we consider men [394] in God. Be diligent and attentive, then, so that you will not receive anything that does not belong to you, since *from his fullness we have all received* (Jn 1:16). Consider then that God firmly dwells within you, and that He alone is and nothing else that exists is anything without Him.

Strive hard to keep your affections ordered, and do not be influenced by those who say they see, but do not see these things. Indeed, whatever they see is like shadows or fickle clouds without vapour. Those who say they see do not know anything. Consider and see how you can judge things in an upright manner, since you have to know the true worth of realities in order to accept them, and thus to know each thing in its own time, and it is better for you not to judge temporal realities. The invisible realities, on the contrary, are those that remain forever and enter into your heart.

Consider and see how it is a serious mistake to waste time, and not to dedicate yourself to prayer. Your one and only desire should be

that of being inflamed with prayer, since if you find tranquillity and peace for your soul, you will not want anything else to please you. For if you spend your time concentrating on other realities, you will be considered to be as a prisoner of your own desires.

Be careful to know that *where your treasure is there will your heart be also* (Mt 6:21). What other treasure could you possess besides God, and those things that are God's? Even though you are oppressed by the weight of your body, and even though you are preoccupied because this body has to die, keep your mind concentrated on heavenly things, where you will find your glorious treasure. Do not plant the sole of your foot on any reality that is below heaven. Be diligent in your awareness that, whatever you feel to be obscure, hard, annoying, sad or in a certain way disordered, and which keeps you feeling as if you are far from God, or else impedes your ascent to Him, all this belongs to you and do not refer it to God. You may only have this remedy, namely to go along trying to comprehend, to plead and to weep upon your miserable state as an exile.

Consider the wonderful works of all the Saints, of all the Angels, and all the wonderful actions that any creature can accomplish, if it only acts according to God's plans. You miserable man, what do you think you can accomplish even for just one moment? Your achievements are as nothing, when compared to what God can do for you. Consider how you are so subject to your own misery, in such a way that you have to take care of the needs of your body. In fact, is not our body like a pestilence that is abhorred? Consider therefore the punishment you have to bear like a slave. Be aware and attentive of your helpless state. Your heart is immovable, and yet it always rises against you. You do not know how to obey: God or the devil, the spirit or the flesh, the queen or the maidservant. It is a great punishment, a great humiliation and a great misery to serve or to obey the flesh.

Consider your vocation and your state of life. God has placed you in an excellent state, so that your life will be more excellent. How did you merit that God adopt you as a son, you who are an unfaithful and ungrateful servant? Consider and pay attention so that whatever you see, whatever you [395] hear, whatever you understand and feel, you refer back to God, according to your present state, accepting primarily the properties of things, secondly their spiritual sense, thirdly the ultimate end of love, and fourthly true affection.

Consider and see and always carry the stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ in your body, so that you may gain access to God. Consider your work and how you do it; whether it finally frustrates you, and whether it leads you to God. See how every creature will finally regain its end; are you not more miserable than everything that has been created? This kind of work in silence is your peace, and thus you will truly begin to live in this peace if you know how to work to gain it.

Consider and see how changeable you are, and how unchangeable is your God. Does not your heart become inflamed and faint, if it goes above itself in God? Or else, how can God change? He is present and does not change in you, but you can change in Him. See, therefore, who you are, where you come from, and what you have been before being in Him. All this and other things are incomprehensible to you in any way. Does not God enlighten darkness? Be enlightened, therefore, but remember that God is *a light that darkness could not overpower* (Jn 1:5). Consider how you cannot utter anything regarding God even if you try. Perhaps you can see less those inexpressible virtues, if your bodily tongue keeps silent? Be careful, therefore.

Consider how great is hope and how it does not come except through great merits. Consider and see that your desire must be God, and that you cannot find any other consolation except in Him. Perhaps your desire is *hope deferred that makes the heart sick*? (Prov 13:12). Therefore be afflicted in this way. If you are truly a man of desires, then you are truly in great affliction. Are you thirsty for God, since you cannot quench your thirst except in the spirit of delight and in the torrent of His abundant pleasure? So wait and see, since it is not enough for you to have any kind of virtue, but God wants to help you more to attain that perfection, which is founded upon a solid virtue.

Consider and see how delightful it is to be in the company of the Angels and the Blessed, and thus you should direct all your efforts in this direction, so that whatever you understand and feel, you will feel in it the inexpressible sensation of inexperienced sweetness. It is right to feel in the same way as the Angels and Saints, since you will be a citizen with them in the future, if you walk in all truth in God's presence. [396] He will give you the pledge of the highest sweetness. Does not God in His tender sweetness mitigate the sorrows of those who day and night cross the profound sea? How else could they endure the journey if God is not with them?

Consider and see the words of the one who writes: *I delight to be with the sons of men* (cfr. Prov 8:31). If God is so difficult to comprehend and so great, you should place all of your delights in Him, if you abide in Him, or if you want to possess Him, who is charity, and thus abide in His love. When should you do this? In that moment, namely, in which all my life is concentrated in that blessed instinct, in such a way that I would not now fall from that state, because I am not in a position to stay permanently in it. Indeed, I immediately fall away from it because I get distracted in so many things. I am always distracted and my whole life is a distraction in which I cannot remain. How can I be able to be different? It is possible to do so. But when? Only when I live totally in God and all my life is totally part of Him. Then I will be able to rise above myself so that I will not be compelled to return confused to my state, and I will not be inclined to want anything else. This is therefore the state of being in God without any other preoccupation.

Consider what the just man says regarding material delights: "Lord, I regard them as being so sour, that I realise that they are dangerous. I do not want to give myself to the care of my body, since I know that it is contrary to the spirit. I want to stand aloof from my body, since I know that it impedes me to comprehend the spirit." What is sweeter, to delight in God, or in food? This is a foolish comparison. Indeed, the delight in food is useful for the creature, but is it really useful? It is not. Only God is useful. Therefore I try to keep away from me all cares for material delights, so that no other reality would be useful to me except God. The true delight of the creature must be placed in divine sweetness, because true sweetness for the creature can only be found in delighting in God. "When one takes pleasure in the Spirit, he despises the flesh."⁶³

Consider and see that everything will be present for you, if God is present, if eternity is present, if the present and the future are in front of you, if the creature is present as spirit and body at the same time, if what has been, what is, and what will be is now present; if knowledge, reason and virtue are present, if everything that is created or could be created or produced is present, if what has been, what is now, and what will eventually be is present. What do you consider as greater in you, except love, which is always prompt to reflect upon

63 A quotation from St. Bernard, Epistle III, n. 3.

all this? I do not doubt that you are always capable of going outside yourself, to be in the Lord God of Hosts who is your only present.

Consider and see that you do not take much notice of what has been written, but you know the sciences that have been invented and handed down by men, but not the marvellous science of the Angels, which is not sufficient for the human condition. You should pay attention not simply to the marvellous knowledge of the Angels, but more to that investigation, which cannot be fully comprehended, of the fountain of the knowledge and wisdom of God, which cannot be sufficiently grasped in the condition of a creature. That is why, as that most revered Doctor [397] who contemplated the highest mysteries, namely Saint Paul, says with awe and admiration: *How rich are the depths of God, how deep his wisdom and knowledge* (Rom 11:33). That is why neither you, nor any man, or Angel, or any creature, can have the strength to bear all this weight, or to sustain the weight of so much virtue, whose knowledge is as nothing when compared to the weight of one's own weakness. In comparison with such virtues, everything is changeable, since its stability is total, and thus you should work to have the greatest degree of this virtue, so that in its extension, you will progress day by day and grow to new perfections and heights, which you cannot arrive at knowing fully.

Consider how the things that can be expressed by human language are few in number, whereas you can understand many things with your intellect. If, therefore, all those things that God has made are a voice without words, they are few in number, and can hardly ever tell you anything regarding God, and regarding His being. Therefore, it is only God's mouth that can indicate to you all the things that are. Thus, if one speaks, the others should keep silent? In fact, it is one who speaks, who calls everything by name and all things say in a marvellous way: *He made us and we belong to him* (Ps 99:3). O Lord, if only you could open my ears, so that they would listen to this inaudible voice of yours! O Lord, if only I could love you with such strength, as to die to myself!

Consider and see how everything is changeable and comes to an end, and how all realities are in eternal fluctuation and are never stable. You, therefore, even if all the other realities are changeable, should not accept any changes within you, because God resides in stability, and in all that which never changes. But, when you sense some change in yourself, you are to consider yourself as participating in all

things that are mutable, and you are not participating in His stability, which is unique. When, therefore, are you ready to become ardent and full of fervour? And if you are not so fervent, what is lacking in you? What is that which really belongs to you? It is your condition as a creature, when you think that you know more than your Creator. O how miserable you are when you think in this way! O how miserable do you feel, if you are feeling that you are wiser than He who made you!

Consider how human perfection consists, above all, in understanding realities without the need of expressing this in words, but it is not possible to understand always. If therefore your affection burns with the light of the intellect, you burn with the same fervour in both intellect and will. May you feel nauseated of this light food, which is so light that, if the human spirit fixes its attention upon this great and weighty virtue, it will arrive to exalt God's ineffable nature above itself. In this way our earthly life becomes celestial. Consider whether there is something that is not forgiven, that is neglected or circumspect regarding the custody of your own heart. Be careful, so as not to force your spirit to enter any other place or narrow spaces. Nothing should make you concentrate on the essential as only God can.

Consider how the end of men and Angels is one and the same, and that the acts that pertain to the Angels are most special acts. Is the being and are the acts of the Angels not aimed at divine contemplation? Certainly. Therefore the end and life of man's existence should be likewise, on a smaller scale, as if God on this earth could be reached as if He were the peaks of the mountains. You friar Minor, are you really a most high mountain? Consider this diligently, since this is your life. There is no one who is dead more than the one who lives without letting God fill him with life. The only bread is to be found in whatever is God, since *man does not live by bread alone* (Lk 4:4; Deut 8:3).

[398] Consider and see that, when you resist a temptation that comes from outside, and especially the suggestion of the spirit of fornication, it is important not to be familiar with him and frequent his company, since it will become all the more difficult to win over him. In this case it is not enough to have any kind of resistance, but you should strive to have perfect resistance, namely that given by God, which is strong enough to win over temptation, and gives you strength in your endeavour.

Consider the greatness of the fact that God himself, who has created the Angels, has also created the worm. In all the great works of God's hands, what is more great than the Angel, and what is more vile than the worm? For your sake God made the Angel great and the worm vile. But consider that God did not give the worm anything more than the ability to make it return to dust. Therefore may all of human pride tremble and fear. In this way may you find the way of delight in the right hand of God until the very end. Why therefore do you insist on searching for delights in miserable things that are not God?

Consider and say: "Lord, Lord, you did not create anything that is not well created, and you did not create it for me, but for you. And even if I do everything well, I will still be your useless servant." Indeed, is this not true, namely that your debt will remain always unpaid?

Consider how your intellect skims over all earthly realities, and at the same time does not understand anything. Why, therefore, don't you get sick of wanting to understand? Consider how God makes us glorious. Our solemnity and glory is the following: His birth, His resurrection, the mission of His Holy Spirit. Indeed, in this we see the brightness of the sun, the clarity of the moon, the splendid rays of the stars, the serene sky and all the other marvels, particularly the earth with all its ornaments and beauty, the sea with all its life, the pure air, and their well-ordered nobility in creation. Our annual solemnity is God, and we are continually celebrating Him. May God's solemnity therefore be continuous in you, but what did you tell me? Did you not say that when we are dead, it is then that we are glorified, that now is the time to celebrate with solemnity, that what we shall be in our heavenly homeland is already given to us with the good gifts of the Spirit, and that these examples will always remain true to us?

Consider how you can offer yourself to God the Father, who leads at the same time the entire world to Christ, who renews the heavens, and who fills all reality. Therefore you consider my soul to be blessed. Is it not so, when I offer to God such a grateful sacrifice? How much health do you consider that God can give to you, when he gave so much to the whole universe? My only salvation is one, namely my soul. Consider how the Saints found the peace of God in sufferings, and how they remain in this peace until the moment when they were united with the Only-begotten Son; yet were they abandoned in

these sufferings? Not at all. They had offered their souls to Christ, before the sun with its rays would be hidden for them, and before the earth would tremble and would render back its dead (cfr. Mt 27:51). And yet God did not create anything in this manner, and neither did the Saints do anything in this manner. It is useful, therefore, to see ourselves left abandoned in the most trivial realities, since God did not want to abandon us, but rather to gather us all together in His great mercy.

[399] Consider that all that God has done speaks with one voice to those who are unlearned, in such a way that divine and numerous virtues are magnificently called into being. See, therefore, that you understand this voice, and that everything will be a voice or a tongue for you, or else your ears, otherwise you will not be able to hear. Consider how God should be given honour in everything, namely in life, in being, and reasoning and in many other things. All these are marvellous things, but he has done even greater things than these.

Consider that if you are burning with lust, or else you are a miserable prey to want material things, or both, you have become a shameless prostitute. O my soul, if you are not inflamed by your Jesus, you will never become courageous in affronting these difficulties. I regard that you are not capable of loving, if you are feeling embarrassed. You miserable creature, you either have to feel ashamed at looking in the face of the Angels, you who do not love Christ, or else how is it that you are more embarrassed than loving? I regard you as frivolous. Blessed are those who have knowledge of everything in God. Whoever has God in him is blessed and this is spiritual bliss; he is blessed, because he is insensible to his corporal senses, which cannot satisfy him. He is blessed because he has been transferred into God, so that now he is no longer living himself, but God lives in him. These truths are great to meditate upon.

Consider, o man, you who have become lukewarm in praising God, all that He has done. The Most High is always new before you. Did He who created you not make you capable of praising Him? He did both things, and He did them well. Did He not create the sun that shines and the moon that absorbs its rays? Can He recede in any way from His own splendour? Is not He who created not only the stars but also the moon in such a way as to have its own variable phases, so that these creatures would serve him? Is it not He who makes the

earth blossom, and produce its plants; is it not He who gives various energies to the seeds, for the food that they will produce? Is not fire adorned with a hot nature? Try to touch it, and you will see how hot it is if you do not believe. Therefore, why do you believe only yourself? Everything has been created in order to satisfy its own goodness and in order to be grateful to God, and at the end it has to render Him homage by showing patience and waiting for His presence. All reality says that it would naturally be able to offer reparation to Him, if it would follow Him in that way. All creation places itself under God's power and is full of hope in Him. It knows God's open secrets, if it is carried away with its desire to serve Him and reserve for itself the glory of God's children. These therefore are the natural hopes of creation, which are part and parcel of its own nature, and patiently serve it to change and move forward. You miserable creature, look and see how all these creatures have been formed and at what point they have ceased to praise God.

O miserable man, retreat from yourself. You, in fact, have been created in God's image, and you can commend His inexpressible goodness because He gave you the grace of His own similitude. All the other creatures praise God in a magnificent way, and they never cease to break out in His praises. You miserable being, blush, be ashamed and be confused if you have forgotten to praise Him, and ask how is it possible that the creatures who are inferior to you can teach you how to praise Him. O man, you believe that God created the Angels, or even those good Spirits, who are all subject to Him since He made them, but you find that you yourself are so far removed from Him, while they are also far away. But if they are far away, it means that they have a greater desire to get closer to Him, and they do so by trying to praise Him magnificently. But He made you even more magnificent. Therefore, be embarrassed [400] you unhappy man, that they are so in agreement together. If only you would hear the cries of their reasoning! They unite together elements that cannot be united without being subject to Him. You, who are marvellous as a creature, want to disunite yourself from all this unity and despise being united with Jesus, who wants to unite your soul to Him through contemplation, and from that state to make you arrive at perfect union with the great God.

See how miserable you are, since even now, that you have gone far away from God, all other creatures are approaching Him. And in

what way do they condemn you? Indeed, if they get closer to God, they feel no contrary motion in them. Why then is it unworthy to get closer to oneself and far from God? It is unworthy until it becomes absurd. O, you miserable man, I shall weep when I tell you that, if I go out of myself, I will totally get closer to my God, and at the same time I do not doubt what has been said: *Turn to him and grow brighter and your face is never ashamed* (Ps 33:5). And how come you do not notice the tiniest motion in any creature, which you will never understand if you go away from your God, or if you forget Him totally, o my soul? Therefore I tell you this, since very few things are yours, and it is not the things you delight in which are perfect. O my dear: how much is your hope, for which you suffer with Him, who has suffered for you, o my soul! What can I say? On the contrary, yours is not a hope, but a debt; I repeat, it is such a great debt that you will never be able to pay it.

I confess that the Spirit has spoken. O Spirit, bring to an end what you have began. The beloved: do speak now, so that I may begin. I will tell you therefore that the more you choose bitter things, the sweeter will Jesus be for you. Therefore do not reject bitter things, since they are great, and they will give you abundant consolations. Is it not true that it is in bitter things that you feel his sweetness, and that He is able to change bitter things into sweetness? Say that it is so. The soul: Do not speak to me in this way, my beloved, as if you feign to be cold and do not know me. For me these words of yours are not bitter, but they are immensely sweet. Your consolations are true, since I consider it worthy to mortify myself to gain them. So give me the consolations you want, not the ones I would like. My life has its own author, and my spirit finds in Him consolation. Therefore I will restore myself to greater things, and I will begin to consider inestimable joys all the bitterness that I have experienced and that I was not educated enough to accept. What I am calling bitterness is in fact the way you promote my own good whenever you touch my soul. O, how much would I like to be constrained to have two desires, namely to suffer for Him, who has suffered for me, and to live for Him, who lives in me. But I bear with suffering with great difficulty, since I am afraid that, if I suffer, He will put an end to my life. I do not fear because of Him who lives in me, but because I experience in my own self how difficult it is to criticise myself. But tell me, what is that which is most gratifying, since I see that there is nothing better than serving God

and that there is no good in that way, except living in the best way for a long time. O, what shall you say? Why is it much better to interrupt one's life for his love and thus from this life-long imprisonment you can fly to the reign where you will learn how to love? Certainly it is so. Father, I remember those words of His that are written: *He who probes the inmost mind and the depths of the heart* (Ps 63:7). What are the depths of the heart? Do you not consider [401] how depths will lead to unfathomable depths? But I am not made in this way. I say deep, since everything that He has created is profound, even if it is tiny. I therefore said this, since the smallest but deepest things belong to me, and if your heart will go to these depths, as much as you possibly can, then you will understand the height of the greatness of God! Pay attention to this if you want to be great, o man. O, how strong are these words! The unlearned will never understand the hidden nature of things.

Consider how God has created in a marvellous harmony all things so that they may praise Him. Does not the divine word say: *God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good* (Gen 1:35)? And what is best, if not those creatures that were made best by Him who is the best? O, how much is it important for you to know how great is God in you, if you will ascend from the lowest level of this harmony to arrive at the last ring of the ladder that leads up to His summit. However, what I am now saying is just the minimum; in fact, you will be able to grow, in such a way that first you will be able to understand. See and try to learn, rather, that those things, which are God's property, they all knock in a marvellous way on your heart. Father, have mercy on the train of my thoughts. When I consider that I can love my God but I am still dwelling in my mortal body, I feel great sadness taking grip of my whole being. I therefore beg you, so that when you see me frequently lying in this dark prison, you will take me out and make me declare your holy name. If I consider myself to be unworthy, that the divine fire is burning in such a deformed matter, and that His light has enlightened my darkness to such a great degree, then I will know how great a dignity has our God.

Consider therefore that you do not desert Him who has made His fear dwell perfectly in you. The following words show you what you are to expect for all eternity: *And we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect; this is*

the work of the Lord who is Spirit (2Cor 3:18). See what a marvellous promise! What would you prefer to gain, this revelation reflected on your face, or remaining blinded with the veil of your human nature? Do you not desire that God will enlighten your face? He has spoken about the transformation into this image, since those who let God enter into their lives will be very close to Him. You have gone up very high, if you were able to enter into yourself, and to your intimate and hidden mystery. And what would you think that you would be, if God becomes part of your intimate being?⁶⁴ You have been led into darkness, but in how much more clarity would His Spirit lead you! If only you would come to know in most perfect manner those intimate and interior secrets, those intimate contemplations, those lucid illuminations, that fervent splendour, those pure rays of brightness, those pure flashes of splendour, those desires that fill you with life, those delights, those most delicious pleasures, that most peaceful wisdom, the things that are unknown and cannot be mentioned, all that you can experience: all this leads you up to great heights and elevates your soul to sublime pleasure. But we have only expressed ourselves in a few words, since we are speaking of elevations, which touch our intimate being and which change us; in fact, I can only utter a few words, at least regarding that which I can possibly know through human experience. No tongue can ever express anything regarding these mysteries, neither can the senses, nor the intellect or science. It is not a matter of touch, although these realities are there to be touched and experienced in a perfect manner, but above all it is a question of the touch of the intellect, in which everything can be explained, and although much can be revealed to it, I think [402] that very little can be said. Alas, I do not think that I have made such an experience, since my life is still full of darkness. O when shall I be able to see how life will be in the future glory? When? When? When? The greater the delay, the longer will be my weeping in this present state! O my God, when shall I be yours, and when shall you be mine? But what is not mine if you are present?

O man, the words that you have heard are audible to those who cherish silence, and they are so close to them, that no one can hear them if he does not live in silence. In fact, they cannot be heard except in the place where they resound, namely in the midst of silence.

64 Cfr. St. Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia*, VIII, 31, footnote 3.

Therefore enter into your own self, enter your interior silence, so that you will arrive at the divine silence, which cannot be understood, and of which I have spoken to you. The words you have heard are sublime, since they proceed from the secret abodes of silence, not a human or even angelic silence, but a divine silence.

Listen, o man, and do not search for what you have heard and desire to have in places where it cannot be found. In fact, these realities cannot be found in places where they do not exist. They do not exist outside God and silence. O how blessed is the man who dwells in God, who knows that there is in his heart. Therefore I will not say these things to you, if you do not cherish the high dignity of your name and state. I confess, therefore, that you will be humiliated with these words, but on your part you must accept them in order to become an instrument of mercy. O Lord, your eternal delights inflame me with flames of love; but why do I say that it is preferable not to feel any delight? I value it preferable not to feel any delight. Blessed is the man whom you know to be able to absorb this humiliation. Blessed is the soul, which burns with desires to attain eternal charity. May I know whether I am able to have these desires. All I know is that I am full of misery, and that the same misery dwells within me. O my soul, why are you confused, when the blessed can sustain this contact with the divinity? Maybe your eyes are so healthy, so strong, so acute in their ability to see, that they cannot fix their gaze upon these divine light? Can they not be stable in their inner strength, in such a way as to pay the price of their gaze? Can you be different from this state? I do not consider it so, since this is not according to the aim of the stability of virtue. You can have the courage to do great things, even the greatest things. Marvel, then, at what you are hearing, since I consider it great and stupendous.

O man, do you want to grow to become great? Follow John, Paul, David, Isaiah, Dionysius, Augustine and the Prophets, and keep firmly in your mind the desire to embrace with all chastity Him who is eternally united as a bride to his bridegroom in the Cantic of Canticles. Consider the nature of this mystical union, so that it will become a reality for you. O God, *Father of mercies and of all consolations* (cfr. 2Cor 1:3), who can refrain from praising you, when he is waiting for your wonderful deeds? Lord, lead our small souls into your presence. Lead us in this way, so that with the love of our neighbour we will become gradually inflamed and go up higher, in order to win over

all realities with your inner peace. But in order to arrive at your presence, may all things you have made be perfect, and may you perfect all that is imperfect, so that from you, who are the fountain fullness of all goodness, we can quench our thirst in a complete way with your abundant light, and we will be full of zeal for your completeness, since you fill all those [403] who are close to you in order to reflect your own light. Are not these the sign of your crown of victory? How can we be filled with wholeness if not with you? Can we be strong enough to fill others when we are so empty and void inside? Therefore, Lord, make your goodness abound in us, in such a way that we consider that whatever you gave us is totally yours, in such a way that goodness will not flow from any other person, except from you. My God, my soul does not want to love its own self, but you. In this way I will be able to find the double way of charity.

O God, if only you would come into my heart, to inflame it with your charity, and make it burn with desire to delight in you, so that it will burn with no other fire except your own, if you will come to dwell within me, so that I will become your most sweet abode, and you will find rest in my heart. Let me continually love you, may my heart be full of fervour so that through death I may pass over to live in you. If you will come in this way, in such a way that it is not you who establish yourself in my heart, but my heart will find perpetual stability in you, that even without your continual presence, it will be able to love you, its Lord; and if you want it to love you, one thing has to be certain, namely that you do not go away from it, since it is certain that my heart cannot love you without you making it capable of loving, so that my soul will love you for your own sake, my God.

When you feel that you are going far from God, tell Him always: Lord, if I can, I would like to do what you want, and I do not want to desire whatever you do not want from me, since this is truly best for me. I find my excess of contemplation, my entry into the divine mystery, my bodily weaknesses, my passing over into blessed tranquillity, my intimate knowledge of all causes, my motions of living in that silence, my calm goodness, my punctual vision of infinity. Do not be afraid, my soul, because you have opened your ears just in time. Therefore, whenever He wants and how He wants, God will open your heart in order that you may open yourself from limited realities to infinite glory.

Father, these are the things that I consider that men want in this miserable life. However, this life is not miserable but blessed for the just, to whom God manifests Himself. Therefore be greatly full of attention so that those who are not learned in these realities may not listen to these words. Their spiritual hearing examines them, and when they do not understand, they are ready to be disapproving. Their life, full of contempt, does not give them occasion to know these realities, since they are afar from what Christ has taught us. That is why it is important to hide this precious treasure in your heart, so that the love of the bridegroom, who has fixed his eternal abode in the sun, does not depart from you. You will find all your delights in this bright sun. There you will find pasture and you will rest at noontime in the bosom of your Jesus. Father, do pay great attention to these realities. If you place all your delights in the radiant rays of the sun, of which I have spoken, it will be impossible to feel frustrated and not to feel His most sweet presence. Therefore do see and consider what you have heard; keep watch and diligently meditate upon these things. The things you have heard are great mysteries, and they are so great, that you will never be able to feel anything more sublime. Do you therefore want to feel these things? Be careful and see that you will not be able to enter these hidden realities without first going out from yourself. You will not enter if you do not die first. You will not pass over in your *transitus* if you do not die. You will never comprehend if you do not pass over. You will never be transformed if you do not comprehend. You will not enter into divine intimacy, if you are not first transformed. You will not be able to move freely in that love, if you have not first entered within divine intimacy with all your strength. You will not rest in blessed silence, if you have not first been moved by love. After all this you will see [404] God. In the same way that you will have seen God in a certain way before, now His manifest vision will follow and you will see Him face to face. That is why I say: My God, how come that none of the senses is sufficient, not even the angelic senses, that continually experience you, in order to express your love in a complete manner? Lord, it is not enough to be sustained by one's own strength, in order to search for you, in order to see you manifest, and in order to pass over to you completely; we need your help, my God. Lord God, be attentive to my soul, and make it bear your brightness with the eyes of the spirit. In order to see you, we are thus admonished: *Pause a while and know that I am God, ex-*

alted among the nations, exalted over the earth (Ps 45:10), since see now that I am He, and beside me there is no other god (Dt 32:39); or who can bring the clean out of the unclean? Is it not you, who are along? (cfr. Job 14:5), for He has formed everything, and Israel is the tribe that is his heritage (Jer 51:19). Therefore, out of the truth comes the absolute truth, from the most perfect comes the highest light, and if the light of the soul is infused in the human person, with its proper rays it will be able to enlighten the true darkness. God says: *I Am who I Am. I Am has sent me to you* (Ex 3:14). This, therefore, is that radiant light that enlightens like a penetrating beam, the darkness of your soul. So keep close to Him who enlightens you with such great dignity. *Let your face smile on your servant* etc. (Ps 30:17). The ones whose faces are enlightened will say to God, namely God, namely the creatures, namely Christ, namely the Christian people, all the good in this world: "O, who are you! O, who are you not! O, who are you not! O, who are you not! O, who are you not yet! O, who are you now, that is, the holy one in the heavenly home. O who are you!" This ray of light will enlighten everything. This is the light that shines in the darkness, even though the darkness can never overpower it (cfr. Jn 1:5). By means of this light, my soul, you can enter into the sanctuary of God; in this way you will enter into the Holy of holies; this is your eternal life, your heavenly Jerusalem, in the Lord your God. Amen.

The end of the meditations of brother Roger of Provence.

In the same friary of Usèz, near the body of brother Roger is buried also a certain lady from Usèz, who was very devout to God and to the Order. She had lived a holy life, as the miracles that occurred continually through her merits showed in a very clear way.

In the same Province, in the friary of Marseilles, brother Hugh of Digne⁶⁵ is honourably buried. He was full of the spirit of wisdom

65 Hugh of Digne, a town in Provence, according to Salimbene, was "one of the greatest clerics of the world, a spiritual man, a great preacher and a great Joachite (*magnus Ioachita*), who lived an honest and most holy life." In his *Chronicle of the Seven Tribulations*, Angelo Clareno writes: "Brother Hugh of Digne thought the same as Brother John (of Parma) in every way on all issues. While he was travelling through Orvieto and Viterbo he said to John, 'On such and such a day, at such and such an hour, an angel of the Lord appeared to you in your cell and revealed to you such and such an understanding of Psalm

and intellect, and he lived a sublime life and taught [405] a doctrine full of marvellous value and which became a sign of his holiness. He possessed a most clear spirit of prophecy, and among the wonderful things he predicted the common people remembered him for two, which made him famous: the first one was that when he once went to the house of the Templars and saw the great refectory that they were building, he showed himself not to be happy at all with what he saw. In fact, the servant of the Lord began to pace up and down the long refectory as if he was measuring his steps. When he was asked why he was doing this, he stopped counting his steps and answered: "This will be a very good stable for horses." The Templars were very upset by what he said and remained greatly scandalised because of his words. But with the passage of time Pope Clement abolished that Order⁶⁶ and when the king of Sicily came to Marseilles with a multitude of horses, that refectory was in fact transformed into the royal stables. – Hugh also frequently predicted another thing, namely, that when women would become shameless in their behaviour, and one would not distinguish summer from winter except for the leaves in the trees, that would be the most evident sign of the final tribulations.

In the same friary where brother Hugh was buried, his most revered sister, called Douceline, was also buried.⁶⁷ She followed the

43.' At that point Hugh wrote out precisely what the angel had told John. And at Lyons, Hugh prophetically announced the following: "The pope will die soon, and the Crusade will not take place. The land beyond the sea held by Christians will be lost. Accon will be forsaken and the Order of Templars will be destroyed. Brother Bonaventure will ascend to no higher level. The Order of Brothers Minor will be divided. The Order of Preachers will seek to have possessions. An Order of chained brothers will arise who are of such perfection that the perfection of all other perfect (except that of the Preachers and Friars Minor) will seem cheap and worthless" (Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*, Translated from Latin by D. Burr and E. Randolph Daniel, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, NY 2005, 121). Hugh of Digne was a follower of the doctrines of Joachim of Fiore, and he composed a Commentary on the Franciscan Rule. He died in Marseilles in 1285.

66 The Order of the Knights Templars was abolished during the Council of Vienne by Pope Clement V on 22nd March 1312, with the Bulla *Vox in excelso*.

67 Saint Douceline of Digne, a famous Beguine, was Hugh of Digne's sister. Cfr. D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans. From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2001, 91-92. Salimbene writes: "Next to him (Hugh

example of her brother Hugh [406] in her exhortations to the world and in her life of chastity, wearing the religious habit and occupying herself in making worthy fruits of penance. Many married women and young virgins came to her to consecrate their entire lives to divine service. The aforementioned brother Hugh wrote for them a rule and some constitutions, which are very ordered and helpful for the devout service of God. From them was born the state of life, which in Marseilles is known by the name of *Ladies of Robando* to this very day.

The lady Douceline often melted with divine sweetness, and was frequently lost in the mystical enrapture in God. Once, on the day of Pentecost, while she was praying after choir in the friary of Marseilles, she saw in the spirit that, upon the single friars who were in the choir, the Holy Spirit was descending under the appearance of flames of fire. Sometimes, whenever the friars received Holy Communion, she saw their faces glow according to the measure of divine grace that they received. Some of them glowed more and some less. After her death she also shone forth because of her many miracles.

In the friary of Aquis there was a certain shield bearer called Rostagnus, who was buried with our habit. His perfect life was witnessed by the many miracles that occurred after his death. – Brother Bertrand Bollega, who was lector and famous for his holiness, died in Montpellier in the year of the Lord 1305. – Brother Electus, who was a lay brother, and who once liberated seven friars from various sicknesses in one single day, is venerated in Narbonne. – Brother Monaldus, who saw Saint Francis in the air blessing the friars gathered in

of Digne) is buried in a stone coffin his sister, the lady Douceline, who God rendered similar to him for the fame of her miracles. She did not enter any religious Order, but she lived her whole life in the world like a religious and in chastity. She chose as her bridegroom the Son of God and was especially devoted to Saint Francis. As a sign of her special love for him she used to wear a cord, and would spend the whole day praying in the church of the friars Minor. Not a single word of contempt could be heard regarding her, and no deeds of evil were ever attributed to her. All revered her, men and women, religious and seculars, because of her unique holiness. She obtained a special grace from God, in that she was often lost in ecstasy, as the friars Minor could see thousands of times in their church. If they would lift up her arm, she would keep it lifted up from morning until vespers, because she would be completely absorbed in God. She was famous as a mystic in the entire town of Marseilles and in the surrounding towns. She had 80 noble ladies from Marseilles who followed her as her disciples, in order to save their own souls, and she became their lady and their teacher."

chapter, while Saint Anthony was preaching on the inscription upon the cross, is venerated in Arles.

The times of brother Matteo d'Aquasparta (1287-1289)

[406] The twelfth General was a man of great fame and a worthy friar, namely brother Matteo d'Aquasparta,⁶⁸ who was a master of sacred theology and a member of the Provice of Saint Francis and of [407] the friary of Todi. He was elected in the chapter of Montpellier in the year of the Lord 1287, celebrated during the time in which the Roman See was vacant, since the lord Pope Honorius IV had died in Rome on Thursday of the Last Supper of the Lord.⁶⁹

This General was lector in the sacred Palace. Brother Guillaume Fauger from Toulouse, was his successor as lecturer and master.⁷⁰ He later on became bishop of Viviers. Brother Giovanni da Murrovalle then continued the work of lecturer in the apostolic Palace.

This same brother Matteo wrote a beautiful Treatise on the Epistle to the Romans and composed an alphabetical index on the Books of the Sentences, which proved to be very useful.

68 Salimbene da Parma writes in his *Chronicle*: "In this year (that is, 1287) the general chapter of the friars Minor was celebrated in Montpellier. Brother Matteo d'Aquasparta was elected General Minister. He came from Tuscia in the Spoleto valley. In this chapter, the will of the Italians prevailed, and against the custom of the other general chapters it was not a very well organised occasion. The vicar was Peter of Falengaria, who was later on sent to lecture in the Curia, when he was a *magister cathedratus*." Matteo d'Aquasparta was born in the family of Bentevenghi in 1235-1240. He was the blood brother of Bentevenga, bishop of Todi, and a famous doctor in Paris. He entered the Order while still very young and studied first in the friary of Todi, and later on became master in Paris and Bologna. In 1281 he was nominated second lector in the Sacred Palace. He was elected General on Pentecost Sunday, 25th May 1287. On 15th May 1288, vigil of Pentecost, Pope Nicholas IV nominated him Cardinal priest with the title of San Lorenzo in Damaso, and in 1291 he was consecrated bishop of Porto e Santa Rufina. He became Legate in Lombardy and Romagna as well as Protector of the Order of the Servites. He died in Rome on 29th October 1302 and was buried in the church of Aracoeli.

69 3rd April 1287.

70 Guillaume Fauger was nominated bishop of Viviers by Boniface VIII on 9th July 1296, and was consecrated by Matteo d'Aquasparta. In the Bulla of his nomination he is referred to as a most able theologian, a good man of government of the Province of Aquitaine, and as Vicar General who administrated the Order after the death of Bonagrazia (1286-1287).

In the same year 1287 counting from the Incarnation, on the feast day of the Chair of Saint Peter,⁷¹ the lord brother Jerome from the town of Ascoli in the Marches, who was then Cardinal and bishop of Palestrina, and who had been General of the Order, was elected Pope and chose the name Nicholas IV. He ascended to the summit of the papacy slowly, step by step. For he was first a very able lecturer in the Order of the friars Minor, then he was elected Minister in the Province of Slavonia, was chosen as Legate of the Church to the Greeks, was subsequently elected Minister General, elevated to the office of Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Prudeniana and bishop of Palestrina, and finally was elected to the office of Supreme Pontiff.

[408] This lord Pope, in the same year of the Lord 1288, revoked the statute of the chapter of Milan⁷² regarding the institution of the vicar general of the Order, who would govern the Order whenever the office of the Minister General was vacant. He ordered that no vicar general was to be appointed in these circumstances without the permission of the Apostolic See and the Protector of the Order. – During the same time the lord Pope ordered and declared⁷³ that all the Custodians of each Province were to have the right of one vote only. Some friars in the chapter of Montpellier, where the General was elected, wanted to introduce norms to the contrary, namely that this custom was to be upheld as in the past, at all times in the Order, that is, that all the Custodians of each Province would each have the right of one vote. – The same Pope, during that same year, ordered⁷⁴ that the number of Provinces that, under the lord Pope Gregory IX, present personally in a general chapter, was later on increased with

71 The feast day of the Chair of Saint Peter falls on 22nd February. It is probable, however, that Nicholas IV was elected on 15th February and then crowned on the 22nd. He died in Rome on 4th April 1292, and is known especially for his approval of the Rule of the Third Order of Saint Francis, with the Bulla *Supra montem* (18th August 1289).

72 The Bulla *Quoniam revocatur a vobis in dubium*, given at Rieti, 14th May 1288 (BF IV, 21, n. 25). In this Bulla the Pope says that “in the Order, from its beginnings, no other friar except one (Guillaume Fauger) functioned as Vicar General after the death of the Minister General.”

73 The Bulla *Ad statum pacificum vestri Ordinis conservandum*, given at Rieti, 13th May 1288 (BF IV, 19, n. 22).

74 The Bulla *Quia provinciarum Ordinis vestri distinctio*, given at Rieti 13th May 1288 (BF IV, 19, n. 23).

two other Provinces,⁷⁵ would henceforth remain unchanged, and that the Order had no faculty to change their number, or to decrease it or increase it, without licence from the Apostolic See and from the Cardinal Protector.

This General withheld the publication of a treatise against the papal declaration on the Rule.⁷⁶ The treatise was written with a lack of prudence by brother Nicholas, who had been Minister of France. The other friars who were favourable to this treatise against the declaration, were given penalties for their actions.

In the same time and year,⁷⁷ the Lord Pope Nicholas IV chose the same General and conferred to him the office of Cardinal priest of San Lorenzo in Damaso. Nevertheless, he continued to govern the Order, with the mandate of the lord Pope, just as the other Ministers General had done before him, until a successor was elected in his place. Afterwards he was made bishop of Porto.

During the same time brother John of Parma, who had once been General Minister, obtained permission from the same Cardinal and according to the will of the lord Pope, to go to the lands of the infidels, since he desired to spread the seed of truth among them. Just when he left with other companions and arrived at Camerino, a town in the Province of the Marches, he became ill [409] and died on that same day.⁷⁸ He was often publicly acclaimed for the many signs and miracles that occurred through his intercession.

In the same Province⁷⁹ are buried many friars who were most perfect in holiness, and who shone with signs and prodigies as stars brighter than all others, under various Generals of the Order. Among them were the following, namely: brother Lucidus the elder, who truly shone with sanctity and ardent charity, and whose glorious tongue, that had been instructed by the Holy Spirit, produced wonderful fruits in those who listened to his words. Brother Bentivoglia da San Severino⁸⁰ was seen by brother Masseo, his compatriot, lifted up very

75 Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1288, n. 43.

76 Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1289, n. 22.

77 15th May 1288. The other Ministers Generals who governed the Order even when they were Cardinals were St. Bonaventure and Jerome of Ascoli.

78 John of Parma died on 20th March 1289.

79 The Province of the Marches of Ancona.

80 Bentivoglia de Bonis, venerated as a Blessed. He died in 1262 and his feast

high above the ground, while he was praying in the woods. When he saw this miracle Masseo relinquished his ecclesiastical benefice and became a friar Minor. He was a man of such great holiness, that he worked many miracles and was buried in Morro in the Custody of Camerino. When he was living in the hermitage of Ponte la Trave,⁸¹ and used to take care of a certain leper, he was constrained by obedience to leave that place. Since he did not want to abandon the leper, he lifted him up and carried him upon his shoulders, and although he was weighed down by him, he travelled from Ponte la Trave to Monte Sanvicino from sunrise till sunset for a distance of 15 miles. He accomplished the journey as if he were an eagle. In fact, he could not possibly have carried such an enormous weight in such a short span of time if he did not receive a divine power.

In the friary of Fermo brother Adam,⁸² who was a great preacher, became famous. Once he was preaching and a multitude of rowdy swallows disturbed him. So he commanded them to go away immediately so as not to hinder him from preaching. They immediately flew out of the church and did not return. – Once, while he was lost, travelling on a road, he came face to face with a wolf, which led him by tugging at his clothes like a tame dog, and took him to a bridge that he wanted to cross, where it left him alone and continued to follow him. He was famous for many similar miracles.

In Recanati⁸³ brothers Compagno and Benvenuto flourished in marvellous holiness. – [410] Brother Simon and Brother Amato,⁸⁴ who were famous for their holiness, are buried in Ancona. – Brother John of Penna⁸⁵ is buried in Penna. He was a contemplative and

falls on 6th April in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1232, n. 20-21. This same episode is found in *Actus Beati Francisci* 63 (FAED III, 527) and *Fioretti* 42 (FAED III, 636).

81 Monte Sanvicino is known as Potenza Picena, a town in the province of Macerata.

82 Adam “Rufo” died in 1285.

83 Benvenuto of Recanati died during the Pontificate of Alexander IV (1254-1261).

84 Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1289, n. 27.

85 John of Penna features in the *Actus Beati Francisci* 63 and *Fioretti* 45 as one of the Spiritual friars of the Province of the Marches. Penna is Penna San Giovanni in the Province of Macerata and formed part of the Custody of Fermo in the Province of the Marches. According to Jordan of Giano’s *Chronicle*,

holy man. Many persons used to see him often corporally lifted up from the ground during mystical ecstasies. One day, on the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, while the cantor began to sing the hymn *Iesu, nostra redemptio*, this brother Giovanni, in the full view of all those who were in the choir, began to be corporally lifted up from the ground, in a gradual and progressive way, in accordance with the rising tones of the cantor’s voice. At this, the same brother Giovanni, sensing that he was being lifted up, prayed to the Lord not to permit his body to be elevated in that way, and his prayer was heard. In fact, whenever he was lost in mystical ecstasy, no matter how insistently the friars would call him, drag him, or even prick him, he would still appear insensible to all their efforts.

In the same Province lived brother Peter of Monticulo,⁸⁶ who was truly a holy man. Brother Servadeo of Urbino, who was at the time Guardian in the old friary of Ancona, saw him corporally lifted up in the air, and he was as high as the feet of the Crucifix, that is, five or six cubits above the ground.

Once this same brother Peter was fasting on the occasion of the Lent in honour of the Archangel Michael. On the last day of his fast, he went in the church in order to pray. Another friar also came in and hid himself behind the altar, in order to observe diligently and see what Peter would do. For the greater part of the night he heard him speaking with Saint Michael. Saint Michael was telling him: “Brother Peter, you have faithfully worked and fasted in my honour. Now I have come to console you and so that you may ask for the grace which you prefer most, so that I may obtain it for you from God.” Brother Peter answered: “O Prince of the heavenly court, you are the zealous servant of divine honour and protector of souls. I hereby request this grace, namely that you would deign to procure for me from God the remission of all my sins.” Saint Michael then said: “Ask for this grace

5, Giovanni was one of the brothers who went on the first missionary expedition to Germany. In 1231 he was sent to Paris to accompany brother John of Reading to Saxony, where he had been appointed Minister Provincial (Jordan of Giano, 60). He died in 1274-75. This section of the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General* mentions the Spiritual friars of the Marches as holy men.

86 Blessed Peter of Monticulo or Monticello, or of Treia, died in 1289 and his feast is celebrated in the Order on 14th March. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1289, n. 27. The same episode is narrated in *Actus Beati Francisci* 63 (FAED III, 527) and *Fioretti* 42 (FAED III, 636).

with confidence, since I will easily gain it for you.” Brother Peter did not request anything else. After having said many other words, Saint Michael concluded thus: “And I will now give you what you have asked for, and will procure for you many other graces besides.” Having said this he disappeared and left him very consoled inwardly.

Once he was living in the hermitage of Forano in the Custody of Ancona, together with brother Conrad of Offida,⁸⁷ who was his very dear friend and a most perfect man. One night he was moved to deep sorrow and compassion while meditating upon the passion of the Lord. In his spirit he was seeing Christ on [411] the cross and His most meek Mother, together with Saint John the Evangelist, both standing underneath the cross. On the other part there was Saint Francis adorned with the sacred stigmata. He was filled with a devout curiosity to know who, out of these three, suffered most during Christ’s passion. While he was hesitant in this meditation and shedding copious tears, the Virgin Mother of God appeared to him, resplendent in glory, together with Saints John the Evangelist and the Father Saint Francis bearing the stigmata that conformed him to Christ Crucified. They were both wearing most beautiful vestments, but the ones that Saint Francis was wearing exceeded those of Saint John in beauty. Upon seeing them, brother Peter remained dumbfounded, but Saint John consoled him and said: “Be comforted in the Lord and do not fear. We have been sent to you by God in order to console you and to clear your doubts. You should know, therefore, that just as the Blessed Virgin Mary and myself were very sorrowful when we beheld with our eyes the sufferings of Christ during His passion, in the same way, after us, Saint Francis experienced the greatest sorrows that anybody had ever gone through, as is evident from the glorious and holy stigmata on his body.” Brother Peter then picked up courage, and asked why Saint

87 Forano was one of the hermitages of the Spiritual friars in the region of the Marches. Conrad of Offida (c. 1237-1306) entered the Order in 1251, and personally met and knew brother Leo, Francis’ companion. He lived in the hermitages of the Marches, in Ancona and Fermo, and on La Verna. He was a friend of Ubertino da Casale and Peter John Olivi. He was sympathetic to the Poor Hermits of Pope Celestine V, and was accused of favouring this Spiritual family that had split from the Community of the Order. He is author of a work entitled *The Words of Brother Conrad of Offida*, even though the work itself could have been written by his disciples (FAED III, 127-137). He died on 12th December 1306 in Isola Romana (Bastia Umbra), and his feast day is celebrated on 16th December in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary.

Francis was wearing clothes that were more beautiful to look at. Saint John answered: “This is because, when Francis was alive, he wore the poorest and most miserable clothes for Christ’s sake.” Having said this, Saint John gave to brother Peter a most beautiful robe and told him: “Accept this robe, that your beloved Lord Jesus Christ sends you. Brother Peter put on that robe, and he was so full of great wonder that he did not know what he had to say. So he started calling aloud and saying: “Brother Conrad, brother Conrad, hurry up and come to see the wonders of God.” While he was saying these words, the vision disappeared. Brother Conrad, his most dear friend and perfect friar, came up running when he heard him shouting. Brother Peter recounted to him the entire vision.

In that same Province of the Marches, there lived a certain brother⁸⁸ who possessed such great holiness and graces that he seemed to be divine. He would often, in fact, be lost in mystical contemplation of God and [412] during those moments various species of birds would come to rest upon his head, shoulders and arms in a familiar way, and singing marvellously. He would thus remain nearly always by himself, he rarely used to speak and would spend his time continually in prayer and contemplation. When he used to return from prayer, many would admire his resplendent face. In this way he spent all his praiseworthy life to the very end. When he became seriously ill and could not eat any food, the glorious Virgin Mary appeared to him with a great company of virgins and angels. When he saw this, the brother was filled with unspeakable consolation, and he humbly beseeched her to take him out of the dark prison of the flesh.

88 Another hand added this note in the margin: “His name was Liberato.” Further down it added: “Blessed Liberato and his companions Brunoforte and Lauro.” According to the historian Niccolò Papini there was only one Liberato in the Marches, who came from the family of the Spirituals and entered the Poor Hermits of Pope Celestine V. Papini calls him leader of the Beguins and Beghards. In the Order his name had been Peter of Macerata. He changed his name to brother Liberato when he joined the Poor Hermits. He died in 1307 and Papini calls him “anathema”. His life story is intimately linked with that of his companion Angelo Clarenio. However, there was another Liberato, namely Liberato of Loro, who is a Blessed in the Order, and whose feast is celebrated on 30th October. He came from the noble family of Brunoforte, and died in the hermitage of Soffiano in 1260. It is highly probable that the author of the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General* is referring to this second friar, namely Liberato of Loro. This episode is found in the *Actus Beati Francisci*, 59 (FAED III, 548-550).

The Blessed Virgin answered: "Do not be afraid, my son, your wish will come true." Together with the most Holy Mother of God there were three virgins. Each one of them was carrying pyxes full of elixir, which gave a most fragrant scent and were delicious to the taste. The Virgin Mary took some of the elixir that was in the pyx, and offered it to the sick brother. When he had tasted it, he felt so much sweetness, than it seemed to him that his soul was being separated from his body there and then. So he said to the Glorious Virgin: "O Blessed and most sweet Mother of God, do not give me any more, because I cannot bear so much sweetness." The Blessed Mother of God continued to exhort and comfort him and she frequently continued to offer that elixir to him until she emptied the first pyx. When he had eaten the contents of the first pyx, the sick brother said: "O most Blessed Mother of God, if my soul was nearly melting at the sweet fragrance and taste of the elixir, how can I sustain the second one? I beg you, who are blessed above all others, not to continue insisting that I eat of this food." The Blessed Virgin answered: "My son, it is beneficial to you to taste the contents of the second pyx." When she had offered him some elixir from the second pyx, she said: "For now, this is enough for you, but be comforted my son, because I will soon return to you and will lead you to the kingdom of my Son, where you desire so much to go." That moment she disappeared from his gaze. He then remained in so much sweetness, that for many days he continued to live in a marvellous way, without taking any corporal nourishment, and yet he was still strong in soul and body. He was enlightened to such a degree, that he could read the names of all those who were saved in the book of life. At long last, while talking with the brothers, he expired with a heart full of joy.

The martyrdom of brothers Monaldo of Ancona,
Francesco of Petriolo, and Antonio of Milan

In the same Province of the Marches there were two famous friars, namely brother Monaldo of Ancona and brother Francesco of Petriolo, or of Fermo,⁸⁹ who together with brother Antonio of Milan

⁸⁹ Petriolo is a large town in the province of Macerata in the diocese of Fermo.

[413] received martyrdom for Christ in Arzenjim, a town of the Saracens. Brother Carlo de Grimaldis, Guardian of Genoa, wrote that when these three holy brothers were living in Arzenjim, they were filled with zeal for the faith and moved by the fervour of martyrdom. On day, which was a Friday, a day that is solemn for the Saracens, as Sunday is for the Christians, the brothers went in front of the Cadi, and began to announce that Christ is truly God, and that He was crucified for the salvation of all, and that since the Saracens did not believe all this, they were not living in the light of truth. In fact, the Saracens deny the Christian belief that Christ is truly God. The brothers then said: "Many prophets and many miracles prove that what we affirm is true, and we, who are confirmed in this faith, are hereby ready to die for our faith. In fact, who was Mohammed in whom you believe? Did he not deceive all of you, when he presented himself as a prophet? What law, what scriptures, and what miracles witness to his life?"

At these words, the Cadi, who was like a bishop among the Saracens, and who saw that the Saracens who were present became very upset and angry, turned to the brothers with an unpleasant look on his face and told them: "Go away from here as quickly as you possibly can, since these are insulting words that you have uttered. Go on your own business." The friars then retreated. This episode occurred on the Friday of the first week of Lent. On the Friday of the second week the holy fighters returned to preach the truths of the faith, and they repeated what they had said the week before and added other words to the praise of our faith and to the confutation of the law of Mohammed. At this, the Cadi convoked the elders of the Saracens and the ones who were considered as religious. A long discussion ensued regarding our faith and there was much litigation among the parties involved. In the meantime, the Saracens were enraged, and the friars, who were threatened by them, full of the Holy Spirit, frequently answered them intrepidly: "We are in your hands. Kill us if you will, because we are prepared and you will find us full of joy whatever tribulations or even death we have to bear for Christ's sake." Then the Saracens wanted to rise up against the brothers. The Cadi, however, prohibited them from doing so, and told them not to have

It is not known exactly when these brothers suffered martyrdom in Arzenjim in Armenia, but the probable date is 1288, although Luke Wadding states that they suffered martyrdom on 16th March 1314 (*Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1314, n. 9).

haste to punish the brothers. So he gave the friars the order to leave, and they retreated once more.

After these events the Cadi convoked his senior priests and the religious, and made them meet in a council. A great crowd of people also took part in the discussion. He listened to their complaints against the brothers. All of them together were shouting with one voice: "They should die and be destroyed from the face of the earth. They are insulting our prophet and our laws as if they were filth. They have been repeatedly warned not to continue in their insults, but they have kept on being adamant in their doctrine and are publicly challenging us [414] and our law, and insisting that they are not to be observed in any way and that they will soon come to an end." On the Friday preceding the Fourth Sunday of Lent they convoked the holy friars. These joyfully prepared themselves to die. When they arrived they continually preached the Catholic faith with courage to the Saracens who had gathered there, declaring that it is the only way to salvation, for which they ardently desired to die. They were saying to the Saracens: "Your law will lead you to eternal death. So when the Saracens found them to be so constant in their faith, they declare the death sentence.

At that moment everyone in that land was shouting aloud: "All those who want to insult us as if we were the blood of their dogs, and who ridicule as nothing our law and our prophet, as if they were the mud on their feet, should immediately go to the place of execution." In the meantime the holy friars were being led to the *maydanum*, that is, to the open space or field where they were to be executed. They were not dragged not tied up, however, since they were full of joy as if they were invited to a sumptuous banquet. The brothers were saying: "Our wish will now come true." When they arrived at the place of martyrdom, all the Saracens who came from all directions were brandishing their swords, and were approaching them menacingly. In front of the tribunal the brothers courageously confessed their faith in Christ. Then a great multitude of Saracens approached them and grievously and cruelly wounded them with their knives. The brothers were kneeling down, blindfolded. They lifted up their arms to heaven towards God, and commended their spirits. Then, after having been wounded many times, they fell to the ground in a pool of blood coming out from their numerous wounds, and thus completed their martyrdom on the same day at the sixth hour. They rendered their spirit

to God and all the other Christians, out of fear, fled to their homes. Then the Saracens cut off their hands, feet and heads. After having severed these members, they went to hang the remains of their lifeless bodies on doors, walls and ramparts of their castles.

Since the priest of the Armenians was favourable to the most holy brothers, the Saracens captured him together with his companion. Then they tied the head of one of the martyrs to his neck, and dragged him here and there in that region, while they flogged and beat him. The Saracens continued guarding the bodies of the saints for all that day and the following night. They said: "Lest the Christians will rob them and venerate them as saints." Then they left their bodies to be eaten by dogs and birds of prey.

The aforementioned Armenian priest, together with a multitude of armed men, went to gather secretly the bodies of the holy martyrs, and the other body members that had been dispersed, and by asking for them or even paying a price to acquire them, he managed to gather them and to give them a decent burial. But one of the Armenians, out of great devotion, stole two heads of the martyrs and did not bury them. However, after many prayers on our part, he brought over the two heads he had hidden out of fear of the infidels. Now when these Armenians were burying the relics of the holy brothers in Arzenjim, [415] during that same night, in front of all those who were present, a bright light from heaven descended upon the place where the holy friars had been martyred, and where they had shed their blood and their mutilated members had been buried.

A certain Saracen, maybe drawn by natural piety, or pushed by divine impulse, narrated how the ones who martyred the holy friars and treated them so cruelly, during a great tumult, were eventually killed by other Saracens.

Those who were present referred that when the Cadi condemned the friars to death, he placed before them a blind man and ordered them: "You say that your faith has been confirmed by many miracles. Therefore, work a miracle now in front of us. Make this blind man regain his sight and we will believe you." The saints answered: "Christ, the Son of God, has the power to give light to this blind man, if He so wills it." After having prayed and marked the eyes of the blind man with the sign of the cross, from his eyes there flowed first water and then blood, and thus he regained his eyesight. The Saracens were terrified and started clamouring that the brothers be

killed, otherwise their faith would be confused by what they had witnessed. They then made the man who had been blind go away from their midst, and he has not been seen since.

When the sacred relics were being brought back to us, we went out to greet them with all solemnity, together with all the Latins there present. Two of our priests were carrying the ark, in which the sacred heads had been placed. The ark was adorned and covered in a precious *pallium*. The others were singing and the faithful were rejoicing and weeping with devotion. The infidels were all confused. Even the Greeks venerated those holy relics. After the priests had sung the solemn Mass of the Sunday in which the following Gospel text is proclaimed: *I am the Good Shepherd* (Jn 10:11),⁹⁰ and after the sermon had been delivered, the following morning the Bishop of the Armenians came to the place where the holy Martyrs had been buried, together with his clergy and the entire congregation of their people. They demonstrated a great devotion and reverence to the holy relics. Some Armenians told us that they had great reverence towards these holy brothers, and that their Patriarch had canonised them, and that the Armenians used to fast out of devotion on the vigil of their feast day.

The Lord brother Matthew governed the Order for just two years, as General and Cardinal.

[416] Many friars consumed their holy martyrdom in various other parts of the world during different occasions. Among them, brother James, who was a Custos, and brother Jeremy his companion.⁹¹ Together with seven other brothers, all members of the Order of Minors, were killed by the sword for confessing their faith, upon the command of Melcassa, Sultan of Egypt. – Brother Conrad of Halle an der Sale was beheaded by the Saracens for his faith in Christ. When his body had been thrown in the sea, on the spot where his body had drowned, for three days a light was visible. Many could see this light and marvel at it, since it was certainly the result of a divine miracle. – Another two friars, of whom one was old and the other one was young, were beheaded by the Saracens for their Christian faith.

90 Second Sunday after Easter.

91 Brother James from Le Puy was Custos in Syria. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1266, n. 9. The Sultan is also called Bendocdar by Wadding.

Brother Conrad and Brother Voisilius suffered holy martyrdom in Prussia for their faith.⁹²

The Martyrdom of brother Philip

Brother Philip of Le Puy⁹³ was martyred in the castle of Ashdod according to the prophecy of Saint Anthony of Padua. One day Saint Anthony, who was still living in the flesh, went to visit a certain lady from Le Puy. Since she recommended herself to his prayers, because she had conceived a child in her womb, after some time the Saint was enlightened in his prayer by a divine prophecy. So he returned to her and said: “Remain calm, in peace and joy, because the Lord will give you a son, who will be great in the Church of God. Her will become a friar Minor and a martyr, and will lead many to the palm of martyrdom.” She bore a child, and called him Philip. He entered the Order and when a group of friars went beyond the sea, he was divinely inspired and with great devotion crossed the sea. He arrived in the castle of Ashdod. There he was betrayed and handed over to the Saracens, together with about two thousand Christians who ended up in the hands of the barbarians. They were all condemned to capital punishment unless they would deny their faith and become Saracens. Among them brother Philip obtained permission to be the last one to be beheaded, so that he could encourage the others and comfort them in the Lord. All the other Christians, comforted by his words, when asked whether they wanted to deny their faith in order to avoid the death penalty, or experience death by being strong in their faith, unanimously answered that they wanted to opt for the way chosen by brother Philip.

[417] Brother Philip, when all had gathered together, preached to them with efficacious words of comfort. At the end of his sermon he said: “My dear brethren, be constant, since this night God has revealed to me that I will enter the glory of heaven through the road of

92 Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1284, n. 2.

93 This same account of martyrdom is found in the section of the *Liber miraculorum* of St. Anthony of Padua. The castle of Ashdod lies on the Palestinian coast in the Holy Land. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1288, n. 36.

martyrdom together with one thousand souls.” Thus he comforted them and heard their confession. They all confessed that they wanted to opt for their faith in Christ. Thus those holy men were beheaded after confessing their faith, while brother Philip was continually preaching and strengthening them in their faith. The Sultan was angry at him and commanded that he be flogged and his hands cut off. When Philip did not cease from preaching, the Sultan commanded that his skin be peeled off right down to his navel. Even so Philip did not cease comforting the Christians, until the Sultan ordered his men to cut off his tongue. Philip yet resumed preaching, even without his tongue, until all his companions had been killed. At long last he removed his hood from his head with the maximum devotion, and thus he was beheaded and received the palm of a glorious martyrdom. The corpses of the Saints remained unburied for four days, but when the Sultan came to that place he marvelled when he found that they were still incorrupt and not foul smelling.

The Martyrdom of the holy friars Minor, brother Conrad of Saxony and brother Stephen of Hungary

In Georgia,⁹⁴ near the Caspian mountains, there were two brothers, namely Conrad of Saxony and Stephen of Hungary, who were men of perfection, full of zeal for the Catholic faith. They continually discussed matters of faith and disputed with the schismatics of the Greek rite. The same heretics of Georgia threatened to harm them personally, unless they would stop preaching against them, since they could not resist the divine wisdom of their words inspired by the Spirit. The holy friars, however, did not minimally fear their insults, and they continued to act as if they wanted to risk their lives for Christ, and carried on insisting in preaching the Catholic faith and disputing with the heretics. The same heretics, fearing that many of their own people would convert to the Catholic faith, and not being

94 The Latin name is *Iveria*, or *Iberia*. The region named here is that of Georgia and Kurdistan, in the Caucasus mountains, between the shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1282, n. 2.

able to defend their own faith, or rather their unfaithfulness, came to the common agreement to kill those holy friars. One night a certain faithful and devout lady, who had offered hospitality to the friars, saw in her dreams two golden falcons of great beauty flying and going up into the clear sky. When she woke up she immediately began to reflect upon the significance of that dream. The holy brothers also woke up and with great fervour went as usual to the place where they used to preach. But the heretics were hiding on the road, and with great ferocity they ran up to them, wounded them, tore them up to pieces and killed them. Thus the friars willingly welcomed death, praising the Lord. According to what the dream had foretold, they were the two falcons full of virtues [418] of various kinds, who had become prey to the avid cruelty of men, and who went up to heaven glittering with the golden *aureola* of their crown of martyrdom.

The Martyrdom of brother Francis of the Order of Minors

Brother Francis of the Order of friars Minor was martyred in the town of Damietta, in Egypt.⁹⁵ One day he was fervently disputing with the Saracens regarding Christ and the Catholic faith, and was trying to convince them with manifest arguments. They were indignant against him, since they heard him speaking his mind regarding Mohammed and his law while preaching. He was fearlessly stating that that law was false and irrational and that whoever observed it would be condemned to eternal damnation. When they heard him say these words, they immediately accused him, led him to the palace of their prince and imprisoned him. All those Saracens who had heard him speaking against Mohammed and his religion wrote a letter to the prince of that town, who was absent at that moment, and pleaded with him to command them to kill immediately that friar who had blasphemed so seriously against their law. When they acquired his permission, the Saracens called brother Francis and told him: “You miserable man, decide what you are going to choose; in fact, you will be killed, except if you deny your own faith and become a Saracen.” But he answered them with great constancy: “I would rather desire to

95 He was martyred on 12th April 1307.

lose this present life through the tribulations I have to bear for Christ, and thus acquire eternal life, than to live for a short period of time in this miserable life confessing your law and your wicked falsities, and thus living among you according to the most perverse Mohammed⁹⁶ I will merit to inherit eternal death in hell.” That same moment the Saracens began shouting and clamouring that he be immediately killed. The death sentence was given, and they cut his body in half with a sword. Thus he acquired a glorious martyrdom and was accepted in heaven.

Under this General there lived brother Andrew of Anagni, who was the nephew of the lord Pope Alexander IV.⁹⁷ When he was elected Cardinal, he refused his rank with such an efficacious sense of humility, that the lord Pope accepted his resignation. He lived such a life of perfection, that the lord Pope Boniface VIII considered his canonisation. In fact, after his death, he shone with many miracles. H

96 These expressions are the literal translation of a mediaeval text and reflect a typical mediaeval view regarding relations between Christians and Muslims. They are in no way meant to affirm anything further than their literal sense in the historical context in which they were written. The same can be stated even regarding relations between Catholics and the eastern Orthodox Churches, which are called “schismatics” in the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals*.

97 Brother Andrew was the nephew of Alexander IV and also a relative of Boniface VIII, and his feast day is celebrated in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary on 1st February. He was created Cardinal on 17th December 1295, but resigned and died on 1st February 1302.

The times of brother Raymond Godefroy, XIIIth General (1289-1295)

[419] The thirteenth General Minister was brother Raymond Godefroy⁹⁸ from the Province of Provence and the friary of Marseilles. He was elected during the chapter of Rieti celebrated in the year of the Lord 1289. The lord Pope Nicholas IV was present at the chapter, together with two Cardinals of the Order, namely the lord brother Bentevenga of Albano and the lord brother Matteo bishop of Porto. The same lord Pope wanted to listen personally to the votes of the individual electors, since there were rumours that the same Pope would have like them to elect another candidate, in such a way that the electors knew that the Pope was not hiding his intentions. Therefore, although the chapter had been planned to meet in Assisi and there the Ministers and the other brothers were to meet to elect the General, the lord Pope convened the chapter in Rieti. Although some believed that the lord Pope had been offended by the decision taken by the

98 Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1289, n. 22. Brother Raymond *Gaufredi* (Godefroy or Geoffroy), from Marseilles and master in Paris was “a man of great virtue and culture, pious and devout, full of good actions, zealous in discipline of the regular life and in evangelical poverty.” He was elected Minister General on Pentecost, 29th May 1289, in Rieti, where the Papal curia was residing. He was elected against the wishes of the Pope, who had his own candidate. Raymond Godefroy was accused by the *Communitas Ordinis* of nurturing sympathies for the *Spirituals*. He did promote Peter John Olivi as lecturer in Montpellier, and freed the *Spirituals* of the Marches who had been imprisoned, and sent them as missionaries to Armenia. These same friars returned in 1294, after they had been harassed by the friars of the Province of Syria, and found a great protector in the newly-elected Pope Celestine V, who constituted them as a new Order of hermits. Celestine V, however, was only Pope from 5th July to 13th December 1294, when he resigned. Cardinal Benedict Gaetano was elected as Pope Boniface VIII, and he ruthlessly persecuted the *Spirituals*, particularly Peter of Macerata and Angelo Clareno. In 1295 Boniface VIII tried to get rid of Raymond Godefroy by creating him archbishop of Padua, but he did not accept the office. He was, therefore, absolved from the office of General and Matthew of Aquasparta remained *vicarius apostolicus* of the Order until the following chapter. Raymond died in Marseilles in 1312. Cfr. J.R.H. Moorman, *The History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517*, 193-195.

friars regarding the place where the chapter had to be held, after the elections had been concluded, all the Cardinals who had come to the chapter commended the whole procedure to be the work of the Holy Spirit and declared it to be an evident sign of His action.

[420] During the same chapter, Charles,⁹⁹ the heir of the kingdom of Sicily, the father of Saint Louis, who became bishop of Toulouse, and the son of Charles, who was the brother of Saint Louis, king of France, together with his wife lady Maria, daughter of the king of Hungary, were crowned monarchs by the same Pope in the friars' place. The same king Charles, in preparation of his military expeditions, sent to call his three sons who were being held captives in Catalonia, namely Saint Louis, whom we have already mentioned, Robert, who was his successor in the kingdom of Sicily, and Raymond Berengarius, who was later on buried in the friary of Marseilles. They had been there for seven years, and during that time they had made steady progress in perfection, in knowledge and in their devotion towards the Order.

In that same year, the lord Pope Nicholas IV, on the *Calends* of September, during the second year of his pontificate, confirmed the Rule of the Third Order of the brothers and sisters of Penance, that Saint Francis had given them when he was still alive.¹⁰⁰

99 Charles II of Anjou was born in 1270, and died in 1325. He was crowned king of Sicily in Rieti on 29th May 1289. Peter John Olivi had accepted the invitation of the three captive Angevin princes to visit them in 1295. Raymond Godefroy (Geoffroi), dismissed from the generalate by Pope Boniface VIII in 1295, "had renewed his Angevin connections and had become a confidant of Louis, the son of Charles II, Angevin king of Naples. One of the three royal hostages who had sought Olivi's tutelage in 1295, Louis became bishop-designate of Toulouse in 1296, but was on his deathbed in April 1297. Raymond remained with him, was holding Louis's hand when he died, and was a witness in the ensuing canonization process" (D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans. From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis*, Pennsylvania State University 2001, 114).

100 Pope Nicholas IV approved the Rule of the Third Order of the brothers and sisters of Penance, with the Bulla *Supra montem* of 18th August 1289. In this Bulla the Pope states that the Third Order had been founded by Saint Francis. However, this is the first time in the early history of the Third Order that we meet with such an expression. The *Ordo Poenitentium* had received a form of life written by Cardinal Hugolino in 1221, the *Memoriale propositi*, but it was never approved as a Rule by the papal Curia, and in it there is no reference to Saint Francis as being the founder of the Third Order. Cfr. R. Pazzelli, *Saint*

In the year of the Lord 1290 the venerable father, the lord brother Bentevenga, Cardinal and bishop of Albano died.

In the same year the lord Pope sent letters the General brother Raymond, in which he wanted him to intervene against certain friars who were fomenting a schism in the Province of Provence, and who condemned the other friars and regarded themselves to be more spiritual than all the others.¹⁰¹ They were the cause of some bad fame and scandals that arose because of them in that Province and because of the doctrine that they held, which was not in agreement with truth. It was brother Bertrand of Cigotorio who examined their doctrines. After having been presented with a report, the General referred the results to the examination of the next general chapter that was to be celebrated in Paris.¹⁰²

In the year of the Lord 1291, on the fourteenth day of the calends of June, the Saracens captured the town of Acre.¹⁰³ They slew or took as prisoners more than 30 thousand Christians of both sexes, the second year after they had captured Tripoli.¹⁰⁴ In Acre there was a solemn [421] monastery of the sisters of Saint Clare. The Abbess heard that the town had fallen and that the Saracens were entering it. So she was full of manly courage and zeal, and urgently convoked all the sisters to the chapter. After having given them wise counsels not to let themselves fall into the hands of the infidels, she encouraged them all to prepare themselves for martyrdom. At the end of her speech she said: "My daughters and sisters, let us despise this miser-

Francis and the Third Order, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1989.

101 For the history of the *Spirituals* in Provence, cfr. D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 39-41; 50-65; 67-69; 75-94; 114-155; 168-170; 191-212; 213-237; 239-259.

102 Pope Nicholas IV sent the Bulla *Sollicitudinis nostrae studium* from Saint Mary Major in Rome, on 6th March 1290, in which he declared brother Bertrand *de Cigoterio*, together with brother William *de sancto Marcello* as inquisitors.

103 Girolamo Golubovich OFM, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese*, Tomo I (1215-1300), Collegio S. Bonaventura, Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi 1906, 350-353. Acre (Acco, St. Jean d'Acre, Tolémaide) was captured by the Sultan Melek-al-Ashraf on 18th May 1291. The Saracens massacred the entire Christian population, including the friars and the Clares, while the Knights Hospitallers and the Knights Templars took refuge in Cyprus. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1291, n. 1.

104 Tripoli, in Lebanon, captured from the Crusaders on 29th April 1289.

able life, so that we will be worthy to offer ourselves to our spouse the Lord Jesus Christ with immaculate hearts and with our bodies strong in faith, and thus we will acquire eternal life with the price of our own blood. I ask you to do to yourselves what you are going to see me do to myself.” That courageous woman took a knife and cut off her nose and blood flowed all over her face. She encouraged all the sisters to do the same out of faith and love of chastity, and to disfigure their faces in order and shed their virginal blood, and thus present themselves in a horrible and terrifying state. What else can we say? The Saracens entered the monastery full of thirst to shed the blood of the Christians. The courageous virgins came out to meet them not with beautiful faces, but they presented themselves in that horrible state to those dogs. When they saw them the Saracens at first marvelled, and then killed them all in a cruel and horrible way with their swords.

The friars of the same town were likewise barbarically killed.

In the year of the Lord 1292, on Good Friday, the lord Pope Nicholas died.¹⁰⁵ After his death the apostolic See remained vacant for two years and three months.

In the same year, on Pentecost, the general chapter was celebrated in Paris. In this chapter the same brother Raymond, the General, upon the request of king Philip of France, who was known as *the Fair*,¹⁰⁶ was promoted to the chair of professor in the faculty of theology.

During the same chapter, brother Peter John Olivi was present for the discussion of the controversy between himself and the Community of the Order, regarding whether the friars, in force of their profession, were obligated in a strict way to the poor use of things.¹⁰⁷ After having some distinctions regarding poor use, that had already been accepted by the chapter of Montpellier under brother Arlotto, who had been General on that occasion, the same Peter added the following words: “I brother Peter John declare and confess, that we friars Minor are not bound to any kind of poor use, nor to any way of life

105 Nicholas IV died on 4th April 1292. There was an *interregnum* until 5th July 1294, when Celestine V was elected Pope.

106 Philip IV, *the Fair*, was king of France from 1285 to 1314.

107 The controversy upon the *usus pauper*. Cfr. D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 43-65.

except that which has been declared by the lord Pope Nicholas III,¹⁰⁸ and which is accepted in the profession of our life by the Community of the Order. I therefore have never declared anything to the contrary, and if I have said or written anything contrary, which I do not believe I did, from now on [422] I revoke and want to detest anything that is contrary to this present declaration I am now pronouncing. I promise with good faith, that I will never assert anything contrary to this declaration for ever in the future, and I clearly hope to be faithful to all this and adhere to it.” The general chapter admitted and accepted this declaration.

The friars who were guilty of having created problems and divisions in the said Province, because of their interpretation of the doctrine of brother Peter, according to the information that Bertrand of Cigotorio acquired in the Province of Provence, and according to the command given by the lord Pope to the General, were also punished. In this way it was evident to all that the same brother Peter had satisfied the wishes of the Order and could not be reputed as being a schismatic, or a rebel. However there were many among the disciples of his doctrine whom I consider as having demonstrated excessive zeal without any discretion on their part, and because of their devotional zeal they were to cause many other scandals in the following years.

The Life of brother Conrad of Offida

During those times the holy brother Conrad of Offida¹⁰⁹ was a remarkable zealot of the evangelical Rule of our blessed Father, Saint Francis. He was a man of such religious life and such merit before God that both in life and in death the Lord Jesus Christ honoured him in many ways. When he was still 16 years old he entered the Order

108 Nicholas III, Constitution *Exiit qui seminat* (14th August 1279).

109 Conrad of Offida (c. 1237-1306) entered the Order in 1251, lived in the hermitages of the Marches, in Ancona, Fermo, and La Verna, and personally knew brother Leo, Ubertino da Casale, and Peter John Olivi. Favoursing the Poor Hermits of Celestine V, he was accused of favouring a split in the Order, but remained in the Order, and became a favourite of the Spirituals. This section has parallels in *Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum eius*, chapters 46, 48, and 53.

under the impulse of the divine Spirit. While he was still studying, he would flee from the vanities of pride that come with knowledge, and he resigned himself to the most humble offices that truly edify those who want to acquire the most fervent charity. For 10 years he continually distributed alms and worked in the kitchen. One day, when he was staying in a small hermitage, a most beautiful bird came to him and settled on his shoulder. It used to go with him in the garden or in the woods, filling the air with its most sweet singing, and filled Conrad with inexpressible consolations. When the day of Holy Thursday approached, Conrad prayed the Lord not to permit that bird to approach him for three days, since he did not want to have any consolation during the time in which Christ suffered the tribulations of His passion. Thus that bird remained hidden from his presence until Easter Sunday. On that day the bird came back to him, more beautiful than ever and singing more melodiously than before. And while that same bird would reveal to him the greatest mysteries, with his bodily eyes he would behold it flying back up to heaven.

Also at the time when brother Conrad was staying in the hermitage of Forano in the Province of the Marches together with brother Peter of Monticello, brother Conrad went into the woods to meditate on divine realities. Brother Peter followed him secretly to see what would happen to him. Brother Conrad began to pray very devoutly and tearfully to the most Blessed Virgin that she would obtain the grace for him from her Son, namely, that he would be able to experience some of that sweetness which the holy Simeon felt on the day of the Purification, when he held Christ, the blessed Saviour, in his arms. [423] While Conrad multiplied his prayers, brother Peter, who was hiding in the woods, was also filled with a great consolation of the Spirit. He saw the Queen of glory who appeared with her beloved Son in such a bright light, which not only put the darkness to flight, but also outshone every other light. Approaching brother Conrad she placed in his arms that most beautiful child. Brother Conrad received Him most devoutly, pressed his lips to His, and embraced Him breast to breast, and he melted completely in these embraces and kisses of charity. The Blessed Virgin Mary departed with her Son, and brother Peter hurriedly retraced his steps to the hermitage. When brother Conrad returned, full of joy and happiness, brother Peter went to meet him and said: "O heavenly brother, you have received a great consolation today." When he heard this, brother Conrad marvelled and said:

"What do you mean, brother Peter? How do you know that I have received a consolation?" Brother Peter answered: "O heavenly brother, I know very well that the Blessed Virgin and her Son have visited you." Hearing these words, brother Conrad, since he was truly humble, immediately begged brother Peter to keep what he saw a secret, and not to reveal it to anybody. For there was so much love between these two brothers, that they seemed to have one heart and one soul.¹¹⁰

Once brother Conrad was in the woods living in a remote cell that had been lent to him by others. Some hunters were running after wild animals in the woods. A wolf that was fleeing from the hunters came to that cell. Brother Conrad took him by his neck, as if he were a meek lamb and led him to the friary. The brothers were astonished at the sight, and began to weep out of devotion.

Praying in the hermitage of Sirolo in the Custody of Ancona, this same brother Conrad freed a girl possessed by a demon and then immediately fled from the place so that the mother of the freed girl would not find him, and a crowd of people would gather. Brother Conrad had been praying that whole night and appeared to the mother of the girl, and by appearing had freed the girl.

While he was still living and had come to the hermitage of Offida, the brothers asked him for the love of God to talk to a very young brother, who was very lax and dissolute in his behaviour, and did not care about the sacredness of the choir and disturbed all the brothers with his immature ways. Conrad admonished him with such fervour and charity and led him to worship God that the young man was changed into a new man, and it seemed that he had grown from a childish brother into a mature and elderly brother, obeying God and being peaceable and respectful to everybody. Just as before all the brothers were upset by him, so afterwards everyone rejoiced at the complete holy conversion he had made to virtue, [424] and all showed affection to him as if to an Angel of God. A few days after this conversation, he fell ill and passed from this world, which caused much grief among the brothers. When brother Conrad, who had converted him, was at prayer before the altar of that same hermitage, the soul of that brother appeared and devoutly greeted brother Conrad

110 The apparition of the Blessed Virgin and the child Jesus to brother Conrad probably influenced a similar story found in the *Liber Miraculorum* of St. Anthony of Padua. Cfr. *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General*, in *Analecta Franciscana* III, 133-134.

as a father. Brother Conrad said: "Who are you?" The answer was: "I am the soul of that young man who just died." Brother Conrad said: "How are you, my dear son?" He replied: "Dear father, by the grace of God and your teaching, I am well because I am not damned; however, because of some faults of mine which were not fully purged because of the short time I had, I am suffering the great pains of purgatory. I ask you, Father, that just as in your kindness you helped me when I was alive, so now please help me in my sufferings by saying some *Our Fathers* for me, because your prayers are very acceptable to God." Brother Conrad gladly agreed, and he said one *Our Father* together with an *Eternal rest*. After he finished the prayers, the soul said: "O holy Father, what great profit I received from that! I ask you to say them again for me." After he prayed a second time, the soul said: "Holy Father, while you are praying, I am totally relieved, so I ask you not to stop praying." Brother Conrad, realising that this soul was being helped by his prayers, said one hundred *Our Fathers* for him. When he finished praying, the soul said: "On the part of our Lord Jesus Christ, I thank you. Out of His love may He give you an eternal reward, because due to your prayer I have been liberated from all punishment and I am now going to the glory of paradise." After he said this he disappeared. In order to bring joy to the brothers, brother Conrad related everything that had gone before during the night, and as a result he and the others were consoled very much.

Brother Andrew was a devout man. During the time in which brother Bonagrazia governed the Order as General he went up to mount La Verna. There he found brother Conrad, who revealed to him many secret facts regarding himself and lady Benvenuta from Ancona,¹¹¹ who was a most perfect woman, as well as regarding a certain brother John, his most dear friend. Conrad revealed these things in a familiar way, and commended to brother Andrew the reading of Holy Scriptures as a means of edifying himself. He said that the lady Benvenuta of Ancona consecrated her life devoutly to Christ from infancy and she was frequently praying. Although she had a husband, she was so enlightened by revelations and filled with spiritual consolations, that she would often experience divine elevations and enraptures. Sometimes she would turn to Christ and tell him with all

111 Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1282, n. 12. This lady Benvenuta died circa 1300.

humility: "O Lord, why do you come to me, since I am touched by my husband? Lord, go to the holy virgins, who always serve you in their monasteries, since I am not worthy of such great consolations."

This same lady was attracted to love the Order through a vision. One day she was praying and keeping watch. She fell into ecstasy and saw the blessed Virgin Mary, [425] who was holding her blessed Son. So Benvenuta told her: "O my Lady, I beg you, as your humble servant, although I am not worthy, that you will deign to give me for a short time your precious Son, so that I may hold him." The Virgin answered her: "I will show you my most beloved sons, and I want you to show them the same love that you would reserve to your own children. At that very moment she saw that that room in which she was praying became full of friars Minor. The blessed Virgin therefore told her: "These are my beloved sons, that I will give to you as if they were my own Son." As a sign of her love, the blessed Virgin called one of those friars and told him: "My son, stand up and come to me," and she offered him her hand to raise him up. From that moment the lady Benvenuta began to love the Order with a singular affection.

Another time Jesus Christ appeared to the same lady Benvenuta, and regarding the friars Minor he told her the following words: "If the whole world will abandon me, these my sons will always keep close to me and be united to me. These have appeared in these last days of the antichrist in order to be the defenders of faith and to comfort many others to keep strong in faith." And so the lady Benvenuta loved the friars even more. The friars often went to visit her and she would know beforehand through a revelation that they were coming. So she would prepare table and bread for the friars, to eat when they would come. Whenever her daughter in law would ask her: "Lady, why are you preparing the table in this way?" she would answer: "My daughter, you will soon know the reason why." After some time that daughter in law would see that the friars who arrived were the same number as the loaves that her mother in law placed on the table. In this way, in that family, everybody would know beforehand when the friars would come to visit, and how many they would be, by the number of loaves that that lady placed on the table, since she did this in an exceptional way for the friars who came to visit her.

Once the husband of this lady was sick. So they prepared for him a drink of wine mixed with medicinal herbs. During the same time a certain friar Minor also had the same illness, and the same lady

Benvenuta used to send him some of that medicinal wine. Once her husband called the maidservant and sent her to get him some of that wine. But she returned with an empty flask, saying that there was not a single drop of wine left in it. So the man was very upset, since he knew that the flask should have been half-full, and now it was totally empty of the wine. At this the lady Benvenuta, wanting to calm her husband who was upset and angry, took the flask from the hands of the maidservant and said: "Perhaps, if you will go to the fountain, you may not find water. But give me the flask and I have no doubt that I will find enough wine." So that woman, full of faith, went down to the cellar and began to pray fervently and with great confidence, saying: "My most glorious father Saint Francis, you know how, for your love, I have shown mercy to your sick brother and I have administered to him the wine as I did to my own husband. Therefore, I beg you, most holy Father, to provide for my necessities and give me peace in this moment." A marvellous thing to say! That very moment the empty flask was filled with wine as if with divine power, and the wine spilled over and began falling down on the floor of the wine cellar. That lady was overjoyed and went back to her husband carrying that excellent wine, and she herself was wet with the same wine that had spilled over her. She showed her husband that wine that was the fruit of divine piety and that had the same divine power in it. That very moment her sick husband tasted it, and he immediately was restored to full [426] and perfect health. The woman also sent that wine to the sick brother and as soon as he had tasted it, he also acquired perfect health. When the husband of that lady realised that it had been a miracle, he was full of devotion to Saint Francis and became inflamed with love for the Order. From that moment he commanded his wife never to refuse to give alms to the friars Minor.

After being healed in this miraculous way, that man filled some casks with oil and went up with them in a ship. When the ship was on the high seas, it encountered a great storm. In order to lighten the ship that man threw those casks full of oil into the sea. When he was throwing them overboard, he was saying: "Saint Francis, I kindly entrust them to your care." The following day the sea was calm and he told the captain of that ship: "Let us go in search for my casks full of oil, and I will give you a decent payment for the work. I am sure that Saint Francis has preserved them intact." They searched for a long time for those casks of oil, but could not find them. At long last as

they were looking at the beach, they saw that there was a new heap of sand on it. So they dug on its side and there they found all the casks, stacked in the same way as they had been on the ship. In fact, the cask filled with oil that was less dense was packed on the others that contained the denser oil, just as those casks had been stacked on the ship. So that man praised Saint Francis with magnificent expressions, since he had given him back the fortune he was transporting.

Another time the same lady Benvenuta came with a sad look on her face to brother Conrad and told him: "This night the Lord has revealed to me that He will soon come and take you, and I will not be able to see you frequently as I used to." Brother Conrad said: "Maybe this is a sign that I will soon die." On the third or fourth day brother Conrad received a letter of obedience on the part of the General, commanding him to transfer to the sacred mountain of La Verna. Conrad was very disappointed. Thus he wrote from La Verna a letter to lady Benvenuta, asking her to plead with the General to revoke that obedience and to let him go back to live in Ancona. But that lady answered him and said: "I was very sad for three or four days when I saw that you had gone away from Ancona; but afterwards the Lord revealed to me that it was He who had inspired the command to have you transferred to mount La Verna. You should know that God is pleased with your act of obedience, and therefore be ready to ask anything you want from Him, since you will certainly obtain it. I was with you in spirit on the feast days of Saint John the Evangelist and of the Holy Innocents, and I saw you and understood that God was pleased with your new life; therefore now please pray for me." When Conrad asked the aforementioned brother Andrew to read that letter for him, that brother knelt down and begged him to pray for him, since he was sure that God would listen to his prayers. But Conrad answered him with some virtuous embarrassment and said: "Brother Andrew, I was already praying for you before you came."

They began to pray together when the Angel of God appeared. When the man of God asked the Angel who he was, he answered: "I am the Angel that God gave as a help to Saint Francis, and now the Lord has sent me to be your help." Then, brother Andrew asked brother Conrad [427] why it had initially been so hard for him to live on mount La Verna. Conrad answered: "And who am I, brother Andrew, to merit to stay in this most holy and famous hermitage, I who am never able to think anything good but am inclined rather to bad

thoughts?" Then brother Andrew asked him why he did not celebrate Mass, since he was a priest and ought to celebrate frequently. Conrad answered: "Brother Andrew, know that before I became a priest, I was living very well for seven continuous years in that state, in which all creatures, even inanimate ones like wood and stones, and any other creature see that sweet light in which they contemplate God in everything. During that time I lived in such consolation that it seemed to me that I was possessing paradise. And it seemed to me so difficult to serve Mass, since I got distracted from such consolation because of the attention I had to offer to the priest in serving him during Mass. So how can I now celebrate Mass? I receive the body of the Lord on Sundays and feast days out of devotion towards the efficacy of the Sacrament. Before I was a priest, Saint Francis used to appear to me frequently. Sometimes he would recline his head on my breast, and would speak to me closer than I am now speaking to you. One Sunday it happened that I wanted to receive the body of Christ, but because of a funeral of a person that was going to be buried, I was afraid of being distracted, and I began to hesitate whether I should communicate or not. So I decided to postpone my communion to the following morning. The following day the lady Benvenuta told me: 'What happened to you yesterday morning, brother Conrad?' And I told her: 'What do you mean?' She answered: 'Yesterday morning I saw Christ upon the altar of the church, and the Virgin was standing on one side of the altar and you on the other; and Christ was turning his gaze now upon you, and then upon his Mother.'" Brother Conrad was not a little astonished, since he realised that what she was telling him referred to the fact that he had been hesitating whether he should communicate, and that finally he postponed his communion because of the funeral. The lady Benvenuta then said: "Brother Conrad, what you did is not right, since you kept Christ and his Mother waiting. Now be careful that in the future a similar thing will not occur, since if you went to the funeral, nothing would have harmed your devotion at all."

Once brother Conrad was serving with great charity a certain sick brother, and he was massaging his head and neck, and helping to make him feel comfortable. When he went to bed he began to think of God and to pray saying: "Lord, on judgement day you will say: *What you did to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me* (Mt 25:40). I beg you to show to me, your servant, if this service that I have rendered to my sick brother, is pleasing to you and if you accept

it as if I did it to you." That same moment the Lord Jesus appeared to him with a most sweet and serene look, and told him: "Brother Conrad, I now want to answer your question by rendering you the same service that you gave to me." That very instant the Lord Jesus Christ placed his head on the head and neck of brother Conrad and filled him with an inexpressible consolation and said: "Now you can understand how the service that you have rendered to your sick brother is pleasing to me."

One day, brother Conrad saw brother Giles, of holy memory, appearing to him in glory. Among other words, brother Conrad said: "Glorious father, how was it that, when you were living in this world, you used to be enraptured to such great heights of contemplation?" [428] Giles answered: "God has lent me three wings, so that I would be able to ascend to these heights of grace." And when brother Conrad asked how it was possible to receive the grace of mystical ecstasy, brother Giles told him: "Open your mouth." When he opened his mouth, brother Giles breathed into it and from that moment brother Conrad received the grace of mystical ecstasy. When brother Andrew asked brother Conrad regarding what he had told him, and namely regarding the wings of which brother Giles had spoken, he answered him that these corresponded to faith, hope and charity, which can elevate a person to heaven. Another time brother Giles appeared to Conrad and told him: "Brother Conrad, you have now become similar to me."

Regarding brother John

Brother Conrad used to recount to brother Andrew some marvellous experiences of one of his most dear friends, called brother John. Conrad said that brother John was a good man from his youth, and that he made such steady progress, that he frequently had visions of the blessed Virgin Mary, Saint John the Evangelist, and Saint Francis, together with brothers Angelo and Leo, who had been companions of the holy Father Francis. Some time before brother Leo died, Saint Francis appeared to brother John and told him to take with him brother Conrad and go to visit brother Leo, who was at the time living at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, and to interview him regarding his words and life, that is, regarding the words and life of our holy Father

Francis. When they had done this, both heard many stories regarding the marvellous deeds of Saint Francis, from the mouth of brother Leo himself.¹¹²

Once on the day of the resurrection of the Lord, brother Conrad asked brother John, whether God had given him some special graces on that particular feast day. He answered: "God has been very kind to me. In fact, Christ and His Mother appeared to me. Among other things, I told Christ: 'Lord, I beg you to tell me, your servant, to whom you first appeared on the day of your resurrection.' Before Christ had answered, the blessed Virgin turned to me and told me: 'What is this that you are asking right now?' And then Christ answered: 'The first person to whom I appeared on the day of my resurrection was my Mother, as Saint Ambrose says.'"¹¹³

Another time, brother Conrad was celebrating Mass in the company of brother John for a certain novice who had just died. Since he felt that the Mass had done him a great deal of good, after Mass Conrad humbly asked brother John to say one Mass for the repose of his soul when he would die. Brother John said: "I will not say only one Mass, but I will say many Masses, if I will outlive you. But, why are you asking me this favour, father?" Conrad answered: "At the end of the Mass I am seeing that novice who has died coming to you and saying: 'Brother John, I thank God and you, since through the power of the Mass you have said for the repose of my soul, I will be freed

112 Brother Leo died in 1271, when Conrad would have been in the Order for about 20 years. This detail is a precious piece of information, since it proves the direct link between brother Leo and the *Spirituals* in Italy. Brother Conrad is the author of *Verba fratri Conradi*, which quote brother Leo and are a proof that Conrad had listened to the precious memories of one of the last surviving links with Saint Francis. The *Verba fratri Conradi* are translated in English in FAED III, 127-137.

113 This is a reference to the Franciscan devotion to one of the "joys" of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Franciscan crown. According to a tradition that is very popular also in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Christ appeared first to His Mother Mary before appearing to Saint Mary Magdalene, on the morning of Easter Sunday. The Franciscans commemorate this joyful mystery in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, close to the chapel of the apparition of the Risen Christ to Saint Mary Magdalene, on the right hand side of the Edicule in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. The reference to Saint Ambrose is that in the *Liber de Virginitate*, c. 3, n. 14: "Vidit ergo Maria resurrectionem Domini: et prima vidit et credidit. Vidit et Maria Magdalena, quamvis adhuc ista nutaret."

from purgatory and will enter the kingdom of God.' Therefore I have asked you to say one Mass, since I hope that I will be soon freed from the pains of purgatory."

[429] Another time, after the feast of the Epiphany, brother John was seriously ill. Brother Conrad and the other brothers were assisting him. Brother John said to them: "You can all go out now." When they had gone away and were huddling together close to the fire for warmth and talking to one another about diverse topics, brother John came to them perfectly cured and said: "Stop these idle words of yours and let us speak together about God, since I have seen the devil on the roof of this friary, rejoicing because of the idle words that you are uttering." The brothers were terrified and were astonished at seeing how brother John, who just a short time before had been seriously ill, was now up and well, and was revealing to them what they had been saying. So they all remained silent. Brother John then began to speak about God and to uplift the hearts of the brothers. He said: "Brothers, be comforted, and at the same time praise God, since as soon as he listened to me speaking about God our adversary has retreated in confusion and sadness, and now the Angel of the Lord is greatly overjoyed at these divine words." After this, brother Conrad asked him: "I beg you to tell us whether you were truly seriously ill, as we thought when we saw you before." John answered: "I was truly seriously ill, but when you went out of the room, I began to think about God and there came to my mind the words that we sing in the Church: *Arise Jerusalem, your light has come*."¹¹⁴ That very moment the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to me. She was carrying her Son in her arms, and she told me: "Behold the light that you were looking for." The child Jesus then took my hand and raised it holding it up high as if there was a door beneath our raised arms. Many friars then came over and could freely go in under Christ's hand, while he was still holding my raised hand. Other friars also wanted to cross, but Christ did not let them, and they could not go through in any way. That very moment when Christ touched my hand, I was completely healed from the illness that was causing so much suffering for me."

Once the same brother John was travelling with a companion and came to a certain crossroad. He felt a strong urge in his heart to

114 "Surge, illuminare Ierusalem; quia venit lumen tuum, et gloria Domini super te orta est" (Isaiah 60:1). This was the short reading of Lauds in the Office of the Epiphany in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary.

divert his direction and go out of that road which he had been following for a distance of two miles, and continue walking until he came to another hermitage of the brothers. He was prudently considering the strength of the divine impulse he had felt. So he knelt down and reverently prayed that the Lord, according to His will, would deign to show him the reason why he had changed course along his journey. Saint Francis then appeared to him, together with his companion who was Saint Anthony of Padua, and told him: "It has pleased God that you arrive in this friary, since here there is brother Walter of Pisa who is on the verge of dying, and there is no brother cleric who can commend his soul, and celebrate Mass for his funeral. And I had promised him that I would send you to him. So go to him and carry out what I have told you." He immediately rose and continued on his journey and arrived to that hermitage, where he found brother Walter very ill. He greeted him and spoke to him about the Lord. But that brother had lost the use of his voice, and could not answer him, although he showed him that he was overjoyed at his presence. Then brother John asked him: "Did Saint Francis appear to you?" Brother Walter made some signs that showed that it was so. And after brother John had commended his soul, brother Walter died with great devotion and in union with the Lord.

[430] While brother John was alone in the church near the dead body of brother Walter, and was reading the psalter and praying fervently, he went into ecstasy and saw brother Walter with other seven brothers walking along that church. He and the friars were wearing crowns of most beautiful and sweet smelling flowers on their heads, and they were praising and blessing God. The following morning, when brother John celebrated Mass with devotion for brother Walter, a certain lady, who had been hearing Mass, told him: "Brother John, blessed are you and blessed is the womb that bore you." Brother John felt very embarrassed and wanted to go away, but she tried with all good manners to keep him there. So he said: "Good lady, please let me go, because even though it is still morning, I will start thinking that you are drunk." She said: "No father, since today I have not eaten or drunk, but when you said Mass, I saw brother Walter who has just died with many brothers, and they were all wearing beautiful crowns. Brother Walter placed a crown upon your head, and thanked God for the Mass that you have celebrated today for the repose of his soul. I have also seen other things, that I will not tell you right now."

One night towards the end of his life, brother Conrad was praying behind the altar of the Portiuncula. It was the sacred night of the holy indulgence of the Portiuncula.¹¹⁵ A certain brother came to him and said: "Father, there is a rumour among the people who are awake and praying, and we do not know its cause. We have seen a snow-white dove, which has been flying in circles for five times around the church of Saint Mary of the Angels." Brother Conrad answered: "Brother, keep secret what I am going to reveal to you, at least until the day I die. You should know that I have seen the Queen of heaven holding her Son in her arms. She appeared to me in a great light and I saw her coming down from the heights of heaven. Her Son was blessing the people gathered here and has filled all their hearts with a special devotion and even incited the people to weep with joy."

Brother Conrad continued to shine with many virtues, until when brother Gonsalvus was General he happily died in the Lord and was solemnly buried in the friary of Isola Romana in the Custody of Assisi. At that place he began to shine forth with many miracles, among which there were the cases of five people who rose from the dead. After his death he appeared to a certain brother who was praying. When that friar asked him why he did not make more miracles, since it seemed to him that Conrad was already reigning glorious in heaven, he answered that he had prayed God for this special grace while he was still alive. He then added: "The Lord, however, has given me this grace, namely that on the anniversary of my death I will go down to purgatory and will forgive the sins of those who showed me devotion and will quickly lead them to eternal life."

In the year of the Lord 1294 brother Pietro di Morrone from the Province of Terra del Lavoro, who was living as a hermit, was elected Pope on the seventh day of the month of July in the town of

115 When Arnald of Sarrant was writing the *Chronicle of the XXIV Ministers General*, the Portiuncula Indulgence had become popular, and on 2nd August crowds of pilgrims would visit the place of Saint Mary of the Angels. The Portiuncula Indulgence is well documented in late documents, particularly in the *Diploma* of Teobaldo, bishop of Assisi (10th August 1310) and in the *Tractatus de Indulgentia S. Mariae de Portiuncula* of brother Francesco Bartholi (c.1334). The Portiuncula Indulgence is documented also in the same *Chronica XXIV Ministrorum Generalium*, in *Analecta Franciscana* III, 632-633.

Perugia [431] and chose the name Celestine V.¹¹⁶ In the same year, on the eve of the feast of Saint Cecilia, *he chose to be despised in the house of God* (cfr. Ps 83:10) and after first publishing the Constitution, in which he declared that he would resign from the papacy, in front of the Cardinals, in Naples, he deposed his papal insignia and his pontifical vestments, and resigned from the grave duties and honours of the papacy. After twelve days, on the vigil of the Nativity of the Lord, the lord Benedict Caetani, Cardinal priest with the title of San Martino ai Monti, was elected Pope and chose the name Boniface

¹¹⁶ Pietro di Morrone is known by this name from the mountain where he retreated in solitude as a hermit, about two miles distant from Sulmona. He was born in Sant'Angelo Limosano, in Molise, or in Isernia in 1215. After becoming a Benedictine monk at Faifoli in the diocese of Benevento, in 1239 he retired to live as a hermit in absolute solitude on mount Morrone. With some companions he then moved on to the Abruzzi region at Maiella, where they continued to live as a Benedictine congregation of hermits, founded by him in 1244, and subsequently called Order of the Poor Hermits of Celestine V. After the death of Pope Nicholas IV in April 1292, a two-year *interregnum* followed. The cardinals in Perugia did not succeed in electing a new Pope. Upon receiving severe warnings from the same Pietro di Morrone, Cardinal Malabranca suggested him as the next Pope. Although reluctant to accept, he was elected Pope in Perugia on 5th July 1294 and took the name Celestine V. He was crowned in the church of Santa Maria di Collemaggio in L'Aquila on 29th August. He never went to Rome and remained at L'Aquila. In the meantime he gave shelter to the Franciscan *Spiritual* fugitives, who were encouraged by the Minister General Raymond Godefroy to appeal to him. He established them as members of his Order of the Poor Hermits of Celestine V, with Pietro da Macerata (Liberato) as their leader and Cardinal Napoleone Orsini as their Protector. Later on Pietro da Fossobrone (Angelo Clareno) joined the group. Celestine V, however, resigned from the papacy on 13th December 1294 (that is on the feast of Saint Lucia and not of Saint Cecilia, as the Chronicler here states), and Pope Boniface VIII was elected in his stead. The *Spirituals* never accepted the legitimacy of Celestine's resignation and were thus persecuted by the new Pope. Celestine himself wanted to retreat in solitude as a hermit, but he was also persecuted when he tried to escape. Boniface VIII (1294-1303) captured him and imprisoned him in the castle of Fumone near Ferentino, where he died on 19th May 1296. He is venerated as a Saint and his remains have miraculously been preserved intact in the Basilica of Collemaggio, which suffered intensive damage during the earthquake in L'Aquila on 6th April 2009. The attitude of Arnald of Sarrant, who is definitely in favour of the *Communitas Ordinis*, is not so positive towards Celestine V, since he had defended the *Spirituals*.

VIII.¹¹⁷ He was a great father and a special friend to the Order, as the many privileges that he conceded to the same Order evidently show.

In the year of the Lord 1295 the lord Pope Boniface offered the bishopric of Padua to the General brother Raymond and absolved him from the office of General. But he did not accept this office, telling the Pope that he was not worthy of such dignity of prelacy. The Pope answered him that, if he deemed himself not worthy of the dignity of a bishop, then he was far less worthy to lead the Order of friars Minor, and thus he remained absolved from his office.

[432] Around that time,¹¹⁸ brother James of Anagni, who was a nephew of the lord Pope Boniface, was endowed by the same lord Pope with the title of Cardinal priest, and later on became bishop of Ostia.

In the same year 1295, brother Amaneus de Mota, Minister of Aquitaine, was absolved from his ministry and made procurator in the curia of the Order in Rome. During the chapter of Brives brother Raymond Rigaldi, a master of sacred theology, was elected Minister of Aquitaine.

¹¹⁷ Benedetto Caetani, or Gaetani, was the son of Liutfrido, a noble from Anagni. He was elected Pope Boniface VIII in Naples on 24th December 1294, and was crowned in Rome on 16th January 1295. He died in Rome on 11th October 1303. The words of praise heaped upon Boniface VIII by Arnald of Sarrant indicate that the Chronicler was a keen defender of the *Community* against the *Spirituals*, and he is enthusiastic about the fact that Boniface VIII deposed Raymond Godefroy (Geoffroi) from the generalate on 29th October 1295.

¹¹⁸ On 17th December 1295, on the Ember Days of Advent, in Rome, on the same day and year in which Andrew of Anagni was likewise created Cardinal. Brother James (Iacobus Thomasius) was the son of Boniface's sister and was made Cardinal priest with the title of San Clemente. He died in 1300 or 1304, but it is not true that he was made bishop of Ostia.

The times of brother John of Murrovalle, XIVth General of the Order (1296-1304)

[432] The fourteenth General was brother John of Murrovalle,¹¹⁹ master in theology from the Province of the Marches. He was elected in the chapter of Anagni, celebrated in the year of the Lord 1296 in the presence of the lord Pope Boniface VIII.

In the same year the famous brother Raymond Rigaldi, master in Paris and Minister of Aquitaine, died on the feast day of Saint Saturninus,¹²⁰ after the celebration of the provincial chapter of Figeac on the Nativity of the blessed Virgin. He was succeeded by brother Peter [433] Raymond of Saint Romain,¹²¹ from Toulouse, who died that same year, on 19th March, before he had assumed the office of minister.

In the same year, according to the will and assent of the lord Pope Boniface, this General accepted into the Order the lord Louis, second son of king Charles of Sicily, who had been elected bishop of the Church of Toulouse.¹²² Louis, however, did not want to accept the

119 Giovanni (John) Minio de Murrovalle in Piceno, was a doctor of theology. In 1287 he became lector at the Sacred Palace. He was elected General on 14th May 1296, solemnity of Pentecost. During the same year he accepted Louis of Anjou, bishop of Toulouse, into the Order. In 1298 he was sent as Apostolic Legate to Ghent, with the aim of bringing peace between England, France and Flanders. On 15th December 1302 he was created Cardinal bishop of Porto. During the Council of Vienne he was a strenuous defender of Pope Boniface VIII against the accusations of Philippe IV, king of France. He died in Avignon in 1312, and was buried in the church of the friars Minor.

120 29th November.

121 Raymond of Saint Romain is the author of the *Legenda Raymundina* of Saint Anthony of Padua. He lived in Padua in 1293, where he was *lector* of theology. He died on 19th March 1297.

122 Louis was the second son of Charles II of Anjou, king of Sicily and Maria Arpad of Hungary. He was born in February 1274 in the town of Brignoles in Provence. He was a nephew of Saint Louis IX, king of France and of Mary of Hungary, whose great-aunt had been Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. When he was 14 years old, in 1288, he was taken together with his other two brothers as hostage in Catalonia, where he was formed by the friars Minor and also met

bishopric before entering the Order. When he was accepted into the Order, underneath the clerical vestments that he had to wear upon the command of the lord Pope, he used to wear the habit of our Order. He was not content with a new habit, but he chose a torn habit of one of his brothers and companions in the Order. He made his profession on his knees in the hands of the same General Minister.

After some time, on the feast of Saint Agatha,¹²³ in the friary of Aracoeli in Rome, in front of two Cardinals of the Order, namely the lord Matteo d'Aquasparta, bishop of Porto and the lord Giacomo di Anagni, bishop of Ostia, with great joy and humility, he received the habit, and then went walking with it to Saint Peter's. From that moment until the day of his death he used to wear the habit in a manifest way.

When he became bishop of Toulouse, he used to show such great humility, that he would accept many poor people in his own lodgings. He used to wash their feet, he would pour water on their hands, [434] and he would administer food to them with reverence, as if they were his lords. He little cared about the fact that he had renounced to his birthright to the kingdom.¹²⁴ He relinquished all the

Peter John Olivi. His father, Charles II, had been taken prisoner in Italy during the war with Pedro III of Aragon, that had followed the Sicilian Vespers (Sicilian revolt against Angevin domination in 1282), in which the Angevins lost the island of Sicily to the Aragonese, and continued to reign in Naples, and had to offer his three sons as hostages in order to acquire his freedom. The three princes were kept in Barcelona, in the kingdom of Aragona. In 1294 it is probable that Louis received minor orders with the permission of Pope Celestine V, as is evident in the papal letter *Cum desideres*, published in Sulmona on 9th October 1294. In the same year he returned from his captivity. When his older brother Charles died in 1295 Louis was next in line for the throne, but he renounced his royal inheritance in favour of his brother Robert of Anjou. In 1296 he was in Rome and Naples, where he was ordained deacon and priest in the church of San Lorenzo. Boniface VIII made him bishop of Toulouse in the Bulla *Fons sapientiae*, given at the Lateran on 29th December 1296. He was consecrated by Boniface VIII on 5th February 1297 and left for his episcopal see in Toulouse, but died soon of typhoid fever, on 19th August 1297, aged 23. John XXII canonised him in Avignon on 7th April 1317, publishing the Bulla *Sol oriens*.

123 5th February.

124 Louis was the second born in the royal family, but his older brother, Charles Martellus had died on 30th August 1285, and thus Louis was next in line for the throne of Naples.

pomp of this present life, since he considered riches and dignity to reside in the fact that he would humble himself to become like the other friars Minor. He did not consider himself lowly enough if he would not serve with zeal the lepers and other miserable persons with the same humble self-emptying and service of Christ who became *scorn of mankind, jest of the people* (Ps 21:6). He crucified his own flesh with its vices and evil inclinations (cfr. Gal 5:24), with fasting and harsh vigils, and he lived a life of great penance. He also ordered that, from the entries of his Episcopal benefice, he would retain what was moderately needed for his office, and all the rest should be given to the poor. He did this, in spite of what the Pope had wanted, namely, that he keep for himself not only the amount of money needed for his Episcopal dignity, but also as befitted the son of such a famous king. Once, when he was going to Paris, he took off his cloak and gave it to a poor man who asked him for alms. During the night he would stay awake and pray, and would often be attacked by such horrible demons. Once one of his brothers saw him being attacked by a demon under the appearance of a horrible savage cat. Stories similar to this are too long to narrate in their entirety.

He was so scandalised if he heard somebody blaspheming against divine names, that he would not only shut them immediately in solitary confinement for the serious blasphemies they uttered, but he would also command them to eat on the floor and be allowed to take only bread and water as a sign of penance. In this he would not make any exceptions to the rule, except in the case of his brothers. To them he would concede that they eat on a table without any cloths to cover it. He was a most chaste man in heart and body, and he was so careful to preserve his chastity that he would avoid all empty discussions with women, even if they were relatives. He particularly abhorred all wicked words and actions. Brother Alvarus Pelgais¹²⁵ from

¹²⁵ Alvarus Pelagius (1280 – 25th January 1352) studied canon law at Bologna, but in 1304 resigned his benefices, and entered the Franciscan Order. He is said to have studied under Duns Scotus, and to have been tutor to the children of Don Pedro, Regent of Portugal. He became penitentiary to Pope John XXII at Avignon, and enjoyed much favour with this pontiff, and was employed by him to refute the claims of the Franciscan antipope Pietro di Corbara. In 1333 Alvarus became titular bishop of Coron in Achaia, and in 1335 was appointed to the See of Sylves in Portugal. He died in 1352 and was buried in the monastery of Saint Clare at Seville. Alvarus is chiefly known for his work *De planctu ecclesiae libri duo*. This work, begun in Avignon in 1330, completed in 1332,

Spain, who was a great doctor and the penitentiary of the lord Pope, referred in his book *De Planctu Ecclesiae*, that “when Saint Louis received his mother the queen, who came to visit him from Naples and wanted to show him reverence by joyfully embracing him and kissing him in the usual way of the French people, he tried to avoid to present his chaste and good-looking face of a young man, so that she would not kiss it. His mother therefore told him: ‘My most dear son, why do you not let me, who am your own mother, have the legitimate right to kiss you?’ Her virginal son answered: ‘My lady, I know that you are my mother, but you are also a woman, and it is not befitting that a servant of God would kiss a woman.’”

Louis was so full of inner grace, that both the faithful and the Jews would see that this grace became visible outwardly in his body, and changed the hearts of all to tenderness and to a better life with a kind of hidden spiritual power that emanated from him. [435] When the new Bishop of Toulouse entered in his Episcopal see for the first time, everybody went to greet and meet such a noble and perfect man. When the people saw the young man of royal blood, with such a devout spirit, an angelic face, filled with science and knowledge, they did not doubt that he was filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. In fact, with a hidden spiritual power he led many to change for the better and drew many sinners to penance and to the service of God. During his entry into his bishopric a certain carnal and worldly man felt an inner and marvellous sense of sorrow, and he was joyfully changed, and was absolved of his sins through many tears, and began to shout aloud in front of everybody that Louis was truly a holy man. Louis also led the Jews to the faith in Christ and to the sacred fountain of baptism.

In the same year on the feast day of Saint Anthony of Padua, the servant of God came to celebrate the divine office in the convent of the friars Minor in Toulouse. The brothers, in the presence of the Saint, began to chant the office of Matins from sunset, and they continued all night long until dawn the following day to sing Matins in a solemn way, and he was there present with indefatigable devotion.

and corrected in 1335 and in 1340 at Compostella, is notable for its defence of the rights of the Church, but also for the freedom and force by which Alvarus writes against the ecclesiastical abuses of his time. He was accused of showing sympathies towards the *Fraticelli*, but this charge on the part of the *Community* cannot be proved.

In the year of the Lord 1297, on the third day of the *Idus* of August, which was a Sunday, Pope Boniface, during the third year of his pontificate, canonised Saint Louis, who had been king of France, in Orvieto, and included him in the catalogue of the holy Confessors.¹²⁶ Saint Louis was the uncle of this same Bishop Louis.¹²⁷

How Saint Louis once sent a person to Saint James of Compostella

In the year of the Lord 1318, a certain man wanted to visit the shrine of Saint James, but he had doubts as to whether he could face the long journey. So he took an image of Saint Louis from his wife, entered his room and began to pray on his knees and with tears in his eyes in front of that image of Saint Louis, and asked him to inspire him divinely or to reveal to him, whether it would be good for his health to undertake that long journey. When he had finished praying, he went to bed. In his dreams he saw Saint Louis who appeared to him and gave him a staff and begging bowl and told him: “Arise and go to Saint James and do not be afraid.” He woke up and took the staff and bowl that Saint Louis had given him in his dream. Early the following morning he rose and with great joy went on his way. After having completed his pilgrimage, he came back home safe and sound.

[436] *How he cured a person hit by an arrow*

In the year of the Lord 1323 in Italy there was a great battle between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. During that battle, a certain great baron from Balzo was hit very seriously by an arrow under his left eye. The wound was so serious that the arrow penetrated right down to the back of his neck. When all the doctors studied that wound with great attention, they all agreed in saying that there was no natural remedy for such a wound, since if they would try to extract

¹²⁶ Boniface VIII canonised Louis IX, king of France, on 11th August 1297, and published the Bulla of canonisation *Gloria, laus et honor*.

¹²⁷ Some editions add the following rubric at this place: Here follow the miracles of Saint Louis, Bishop.

the arrow that lord would die immediately. So they told him that he had better confess his sins and prepare his testament as early as possible, since he would surely die. When that baron heard these words, he started to invoke the protection of Saint Louis, since he was working many miracles, and with great trust began to pray to him and say: “O most holy Saint Louis, you relinquished your earthly kingdom in order to acquire the kingdom of heaven, in my great misery I now beg you, since I would have been your servant if you would have reigned in this world, that you would deign help me and in your mercy keep away this terrible death from me. I now promise you, that if I regain my strength, I will come to visit your tomb and bring with me an image of myself made of wax and corresponding to my own weight.” When he had made that vow, that arrow that so many people could plainly see, began to come out from his face and sweetly dislodge itself from the neck where it was fixed, without causing him any pain, until it came out completely. The wound it had created also healed, leaving just a scar in order to be a sign of such a great miracle. What was more marvellous was the fact that, with the grace of God and the power of Saint Louis, that nobleman could cure all the others who had similarly been wounded by arrows. As he had vowed to do, that baron visited the tomb of the Saint with the image corresponding to his own weight, and in front of the all the friars in Marseilles and all the others who had been called as witnesses, he signed under oath the document regarding the truth of that miracle.

How he liberated a knight from death

In the year of the Lord 1323, a certain knight from Limoges, who was a mercenary during the war in Italy between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, encountered a large number of cows. He was avidly seeking to capture them and so he went running after them, without noticing that the cows were a snare along his path. When he was trying to draw those cows to himself, fifty men sprang up from that place bearing arms against him, and they surrounded him and were trying to capture him and shouting to have him killed. When he saw that all human protection was lacking, that knight turned towards the Bishop Saint Louis, and began to invoke him with a loud voice, so that he would deign free him from death and listen to his prayers. Suddenly

Saint Louis appeared on the hill to that knight, who was trying to flee on his horse, and he comforted him. At the same time he was beating those fifty men with ropes, and was telling him: "Do not be afraid to pass in the midst of these enemies who are running to capture you, since I will be your protector." That very moment the knight, armed with the courage given to him by the Saint, managed to pass through all those armed men safe and sound, since they were not able to harm him in any way. After this episode he went to Marseilles to visit the tomb of the Saint, and confirmed with an oath this miracle in front of the brothers and other witnesses.

Regarding a son who was born after a prayer to the Saint

In the year of the Lord 1325 a certain noble knight from France had been living with his beautiful and devout wife for 14 years. Unfortunately no science or medicine could make them have children. [437] A certain friar Minor counselled this married couple to make a vow with the Bishop Saint Louis, so that he would ask God to give them a child. After nine days that lady conceived, and after nine months she gave birth to a beautiful child. His father, full of joy, went to Marseilles to visit the Saint's tomb and to fulfil his vow.

How he liberated a knight from the danger of death

In the year of the Lord 1326, when brother Arnald the elder of France was suffering from a terrible disease in the bone of his right thigh, and had spent a thousand *Morlas livres* on medicines, he was miraculously cured by Saint Louis. So he came to Marseilles with brother Arnald the younger of France, since both lived in the friary of Morlas in the Province of Aquitaine, in order to visit the tomb of Saint Louis. In those times the Saint had become famous in front of all the people and the friars for a great miracle that he had worked. It happened that, while a certain nobleman was riding on his horse, as he usually did, the horse became furious and threw him down on the ground, and thus he broke both of his legs and was on the verge of dying. That courageous man, sensing the danger he was in, began to call upon Saint Louis to come to his help. His relatives came and

took him, but he was by now dead. So they continued to invoke the aid of Saint Louis. After three days, when they were carrying him on a stretcher to bury him, he rose up from death, and regained his health, and from that moment onwards there was no fracture to be seen in his bones.

How he changed a piece of flesh into a living boy

There was a certain nobleman in Marseilles, in Provence. He could not have any children by his wife. So he made a vow with Saint Louis, and after some time his wife was pregnant, and after nine months she bore him a disfigured child, that looked more like a piece of flesh than a normal human being. When the other women saw that child they were terrified and greatly astonished. When they showed that child to the nobleman, he told them: "Wrap it in a beautiful cloth and bury it, and tell my wife that she bore a beautiful child, otherwise she will die of grief if she sees it." When they had done so, after one day that lady wanted to see the fruit of her labour at all costs. So those women, in order to satisfy her desire, and having obtained the permission of her husband, exhumed that lifeless body and showed it her. When she took it in her arms and saw that the child was just a disfigured piece of flesh, she sent out terrible wails and cries, and shed abundant tears. She began to invoke the Bishop Saint Louis, together with her husband and with the thirteen women who had been with her during her labour. They prayed: [438] "Come to us, o Saint, since you have never left a miracle uncompleted." While they were all calling upon the Saint with great trust, that piece of flesh in the hands of the lady was changed into a most beautiful child, alive and kicking. At the same time the child began to cry and that very moment those women took the child to the tomb of Saint Louis and narrated that miracle to everybody.

How he restored to life and whole a child delivered in pieces from the womb

A certain noble woman had prayed Saint Louis to give her a child. She conceived, but after nine months the midwife took out the

foetus in pieces from the womb. When the mother saw that her child was not a whole human person, she burst into many tears in front of all those who stood nearby, and started to invoke Saint Louis with great devotion. A marvellous thing happened! All of a sudden, those disjointed body members were miraculously joined together into one whole body, and the child started to live. That same moment they took the child to the tomb of the Saint to thank him.

How he brought back to life a dead child, after a vow had been made

A certain noble lady and her husband, who lived in Marseilles, made a vow to Saint Louis and asked him for a child, but when the child had been born they forgot all about the vow. When that boy was seven years old, he began to become seriously ill. His parents began to invoke the Saint, and they confessed that they had been ungrateful and unfaithful. They confirmed their first vow, and promised to honour the Saint with many other good deeds, if he would conserve their child alive for them. Saint Louis, however, seemed not to take any notice of their prayers, so that he would punish them for their ingratitude, but at the same time he would also demonstrate his power through a greater miracle. What else can we say? That boy died and his parents did not cease to invoke Saint Louis continually to bring him back to life, shedding many tears and uttering loud cries. When the other persons wanted to carry the child to bury him, his father and mother in no way wanted to let them do so, since they had great trust that the Saint would have mercy on them and protect them. However the boy showed no signs of being able to speak or feel anything, and the people grew weary of waiting to take him to the church and then to carry him for burial. So it was decided to proceed with the funeral. In the meantime the parents continued to invoke the Saint with great cries. When they arrived at the tomb and were going to bury the child, all of a sudden he woke up and rose full of life, safe and sound, in the eyes of all those who were present there, and telling his parents to go and carry out the vow they had made for him and which they had then neglected. They immediately carried the boy to the tomb of the Saint and his parents hurriedly fulfilled the vow they had made.

How he freed a man who had been lifted up to be hanged by breaking the rope three times

In the year of the Lord 1304 there was a battle in Apulia between the nobles and citizens belonging to different parties. One party obtained victory, and captured many persons from the other party. Among the ones who were captured there was a certain nobleman whom the victors greatly hated. He had been very strong and stubborn in fighting with arms and was very dangerous for his enemies, and therefore the ones who captured him did not want to receive any sum of money for his ransom, but condemned him to be hanged. When that nobleman was awaiting his death sentence and was full of terror at the thought, he turned to the Bishop Saint Louis with many tears, and with a feeble voice, and a trembling body, began to plead with great humility, so that he would [439] mercifully deign to free him from such a danger and a terrible death. He promised him that, if he would free him from death, he would visit the Saint's tomb in Marseilles, going there barefoot and not carrying any money, with just one tunic and begging all the way. What else can we add? He was taken to the scaffold and he was lifted high up to be hanged. All of a sudden the rope, which tied his neck broke, but he suffered no harm. His enemies did not realise that it was a miracle, and they again tied his neck with another rope and tried to hang him. For the second time the rope broke, and he remained unharmed. The third time they tied a very strong rope around his neck and lifted him high on the scaffold, but again the rope broke just like before. That nobleman then told his enemies who were dumbfounded at the sight: "My lords, it is useless that you are working hard to hang me, since Saint Louis is defending me, because I entrusted my life with great trust into his care." When they heard this, his enemies marvelled, since they did not dare to resist the power of the Saint any longer. So they admitted that it had been a miracle and they let him free to go away. He then left on his journey, as he had promised, and for 40 leagues he walked barefoot to Marseilles, leaving his beard grow down to his navel. He prostrated himself in front of the tomb of the Saint for another 40 days and all during those days and nights he only took bread and water. In the meantime his relatives and other nobles came with horses and costly robes for him, but he first took an oath on the holy Gospels regarding the miracle that had happened in front of all the brothers there pres-

ent, and after having given homage to the Saint, he went back as a free and joyful nobleman.

The life of brother John of La Verna

How glorious is our Father Francis in the sight of God is apparent in his chosen sons whom the Holy Spirit brought together into the Order, so that truly the glory of such a great Father is his wise sons.¹²⁸ Among whom holy brother John of Fermo, also known as of La Verna, shone forth in a special way. He came from the Province of the Marches and from the town of Fermo. When he was still a child, he would refuse food and fast three days a week, as a prophecy of his future merits, just as we read in the life of Saint Nicholas.¹²⁹ When he was seven years old, he used to flee the company of the other children who were his friends and would stay all alone in a field, where he would weep very bitterly over the Passion of the Lord and would practice self-flagellation until blood would come out of his wounds. Underneath his clothes he would place thorny leaves and thistles from his neck downwards, and when he then entered the Order he once familiarly told his companion that nobody could understand the harshness of such penance if he had not experienced it personally. When he grew up to be a young man, he already acted as if he desired with all his might to acquire the wisdom of the heart of an elderly person, since he lived a life of penance, and defended the chastity of his mind and body. When he was still a boy of ten years of age, he wore chain mail and an iron band [440] that weighed 30 pounds next to his flesh. Its rings penetrated like a seal in liquid wax into the tender

128 There is a parallel between this section and chapter 49 of the *Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius* (FAED III, 529-532). John of Fermo or of La Verna (1259-1322) spent much of his life in the hermitages of the Marches of Ancona and Fermo. He eventually moved to La Verna, where after forty years, he died in about 1290. He was beatified in 1880 and his remains are venerated inside a side altar of the main basilica of La Verna. His biographer was Giovanni de Settimo Pisano, *Vita del Beato Giovanni della Verna*, ed. G. Melani, La Verna 1962.

129 Taken from the office of Saint Nicholas in the Roman Breviary, whose feast is celebrated on 6th December.

flesh of the young boy, and he carried the cross of abstinence daily. For when he was living in San Pietro at Fermo, with the canons of that church,¹³⁰ while the canons lived a life of luxury, he took upon himself the obligation of eating only a quarter of a loaf of bread, and amid such a luxurious way of life he practiced the martyrdom of abstinence. But since he often endured obstacles from his companions who were opposed to his angelic zeal, to the extent that they stripped him of his chain mail and impeded his abstinence, he was inspired by God to leave the world and those who loved it and offer the flower of his angelic youth to the arms of the Crucified. Thus, when he was still very young, he entered the Order of Saint Francis, in which he had the courage to renew in his own body the stigmata of Christ crucified.

Therefore when he was still a boy of thirteen years of age, he put on the habit of the Order of friars Minor, and was assigned to a master for training in spiritual discipline. At times when he was listening to the words of God from the master, his heart, melting like wax, was so filled internally with gentle grace that externally he was forced to run, sometimes through the garden, sometimes through the church, sometimes through the woods, here and there as the inner flame forced him. Sometimes he would wear a chain of iron, or a hair shirt made of a pig's hide, or else of a horse's mane, and he would tie these instruments of penance so tightly to his body, that he could hardly be able to remove them. In this way he preserved both his soul and his body in angelic purity. Wherever this angelic man would be staying, the grace of God raised him to different states and made his actions orderly. Sometimes divine grace would carry him off to the splendours of the cherubim, sometimes to the fire of the seraphim, and sometimes to the joy of the angels. And what is more, it sometimes raised him as an intimate friend to divine kisses and repeated embraces of Christ's love, which he not only tasted inwardly but also showed outwardly.

Before he came from the Marches to La Verna, he would fast the entire Lent of Saint Francis by eating only uncooked herbs and drinking water, except on Sundays, when he would eat with the brothers, but would not drink anything except water. Indeed for 30 years

130 The church of San Pietro at Fermo had been entrusted to the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine since 1251. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, III, 42 states that the friars Minor arrived in Fermo in 1240.

he drank only water, and during the major Lent he would eat only some barely bread on one day, a handful of beans that had been in water on the next day, on the third day some uncooked herbs, and thus he would continue alternating his daily food.

Brother John was asked by brother James of Falerone¹³¹ to ask God about a certain scruple of conscience which worried him very much. It was about certain things which pertained to the priestly office. Brother John had an answer from the Lord before the feast of Saint Lawrence, as he himself said. He said that the Lord told him: "He is a priest according to the order of God." But as his conscience still troubled him, he asked brother John again to ask the Lord about this. Therefore, when on the night of the vigil of Saint Lawrence¹³² brother John was faithfully keeping vigil and praying to the Lord that through the merits of Saint Lawrence He might reassure him about Brother James' scruple, blessed Lawrence dressed in white robes like a Levite appeared to him in his prayerful vigil, and said: "I am Lawrence the Levite. He for whom you are praying is a priest according to the order of God." And from then on he was reassured and very greatly consoled regarding the doubt which he had. When the brothers [441] on the same day had gone from the rooms to the choir for Vespers, Saint Lawrence appeared to him again but said nothing. When the brothers had finished singing Vespers, John remained alone in front of the altar of the Blessed Mary. When the brothers were singing the *Salve Regina*, Saint Lawrence again appeared to brother John in the form of a young man dressed in a red dalmatic and carrying an iron grill. He said: "This grill has glorified me in heaven, and the pain from the burning coals gave me the fullness of God's sweetness; in fact no torment can be so difficult if a Christian bears it for the glory of heaven. If you wish to have the glory and sweetness of God, patiently endure the suffering and bitterness of the world." Blessed Lawrence remained visible to him until that antiphon ended. Afterwards the brothers went to rest, but he remained in the choir with Saint Lawrence. Then after assuring and consoling him, Saint Lawrence disappeared, and left him in such divine love and sweetness that for the whole night of that feast he did not sleep, but passed the night in wonderful consolation.

131 This episode is parallel to *Actus Beati Francisci* 50 (FAED III, 533-534).

132 The evening between the 9th and 10th August.

When this same brother John was once celebrating Mass with the greatest devotion and after the host had been consecrated, the appearance of bread totally disappeared before his eyes, and in a blink of an eye Christ appeared there, with a very beautiful beard and clothed in a red robe. Christ gave him such sweet consolation that, if he had not remained aware of himself, he would have been rapt into ecstasy. In that vision he was assured that because of that Mass God was reconciled with the whole world and especially with those commended to Him.

When brother John was celebrating Mass on the commemoration of all the dead,¹³³ he offered this sacrifice to God with such emotions of love and tender compassion, that he was totally dissolved in this sweetness of piety. When in this Mass he devoutly raised on high the most holy Body of Christ, he saw an almost infinite number of souls leave purgatory, like a multitude of sparks from a lighted furnace, and he saw them soaring toward their heavenly homeland.

At the time when brother John was staying in the hermitage of Massa,¹³⁴ brother James of Falerone, a most holy man as we have already seen above, was ill in the hermitage of Mogliano in the Province of the Marches. Brother John prayed fervently for him. While he was attentively praying, he fell into ecstasy and with great clarity saw in the air above his cell, which was in the woods, a host of Angels and other Saints. There was such light there that the whole surrounding area glowed. Among them he saw brother James standing there, very handsome and resplendent in white robes. He also saw there our blessed Father Francis marked with the sacred stigmata, and shining with a marvellous glory. He saw and recognised holy brother Lucido and brother Matteo of Monte Rubbiano, and many other brothers whom he had never seen in his life, who together with many saints shone with similar glory. And while he was watching all this, it was revealed to him that the sick brother was certainly saved and that in this sickness he would pass over to God, but that he would not immediately go to heaven because he had to be purged for a little while. Brother John who saw all this rejoiced so much in the salvation and glory of that brother that in the sweetness of spirit he would

133 This episode is parallel to *Actus Beati Francisci* 51 (FAED III, 534-535). The *Actus* say that the episode happened on All Souls Day, 2nd November.

134 This episode is parallel to *Actus Beati Francisci* 52 (FAED III, 535-536).

frequently call out to brother James, saying within the recess of his heart: "Brother James, my brother James, companion of the Angels, member of the company of the Saints." That very moment he left the hermitage of Massa where he had this vision, and went to that of Mogliano, where he found brother James a sick man so weighed down with illness that he could hardly speak. Brother John announced to him that he was about to die, and that he would be passing quickly into eternal life. Brother James, now certain about his salvation, was overjoyed and [442] received brother John with a beautiful smile. Brother John asked him please to speak to him after death. Brother James promised to do this, if the kind Saviour would permit it. As the hour of his death approached, brother James began to say devoutly: "O, in peace; O, in Him; O, I will sleep; O, I will rest." After having said this he departed from this life. Brother John returned to Massa and awaited brother James's promise on the day when he had said that he would speak to him. While he was waiting Christ appeared to him with great brightness and with a magnificent escort of angels and saints. Brother John remembered brother James and commended him to Christ. After this, on the following day, when brother John was staying in the woods at Massa, brother James, totally glorious and happy, appeared to him escorted by Angels. Brother John said to him: "O Father, why didn't you come to talk to me on the day you promised?" He replied: "Because I was in need of some purging; but at the same moment when Christ appeared to you, I appeared to the lay brother James of Massa, a living saint, who was serving at Mass where at the time of the elevation he saw that the sacred host turned into a living, very handsome boy. Then I said to this brother: 'Today I am going with that boy to the kingdom of heaven.' And you, brother John, when you commended me to Christ, your prayer was heard, and at the same time I was freed from all my sufferings." This brother James of Falerone passed away on the vigil of Saint James, and was buried in the month of July¹³⁵ in the hermitage of Mogliano, where he performed many miracles.

135 The Quaracchi editors state in the footnote, that the vigil of the feast of St. James is on 30th April. This would be correct if the St. James to whom they are referring is St. James the Less (feast on 1st May). But since the text says that brother James of Falerone was buried in the month of July, it is more correct to stick to what the *Actus Beati Francisci* states, namely that he died on the vigil of St. James whose feast is kept in the month of July, namely St. James the Greater, celebrated on 25th July.

It happened that, in the space of three years,¹³⁶ brother John was enraptured in ecstasy so often, that he would become insensible, in such a way that the brothers would even try to test him by burning his left hand. Once this radiant and fiery state of love was taken away from him, and he remained without light, pining for love and full of bitterness. Although he had been so inflamed before, he could not find any hidden love in order to inflame himself once more. So he remained greatly afflicted for many days, and was crying and sighing and would walk with a sad expression on his face, and would grip a beech tree and there raise his tearful face to heaven. But the One who *heals the contrite of heart* (Ps 146:3), Christ, appeared to him walking in a footpath, but not saying anything. When brother John recognised him he immediately prostrated himself in front of him and began weeping uncontrollably. He multiplied his most devout prayers before him and asked him to have mercy on him and called him with cries full of sadness. That desire that he was feeling, increased in him the fervour of love, but Christ still did not answer him and continued on His way along that footpath. So brother John went running after Him and did not care to bother Him with his many tears. He prostrated himself and said: "O most sweet Jesus, have mercy on me; You know how much I am afflicted and how much I long for You, o joy of my heart."

Again the Saviour retreated, saying nothing to brother John, and went on his way along the footpath. Brother John followed Him yet again weeping aloud with a broken heart. Christ then turned his beloved face to him and stretched out his hands. Then brother John saw wonderful rays of light coming from the most sacred breast of Christ, which illuminated not only the woods outside, but also his body and soul inside. Then brother John was taught how he should maintain a humble and reverent attitude with Christ. He immediately threw himself at Christ's feet. Then the blessed Christ mercifully showed him those most holy [443] feet that John seemed to be another Magdalene. He received so much grace that he was totally renewed, consoled and at peace. Then blessed Christ opened his arms and offered brother John his most holy hands to be kissed. As Christ opened his hands brother John arose and went to the breast of the Lord Jesus. He embraced Jesus and blessed Jesus embraced him. While brother

136 This episode is parallel to *Actus Beati Francisci* 49 (FAED III, 530-533).

John was kissing the most holy breast of Christ, he sensed such a divine fragrance that, if all the fragrances of the world were gathered into one, it would be considered a putrid stench compared to this divine fragrance. And over and above this, those rays were issuing from the Saviour's breast, illuminating his mind inwardly and, outwardly, everything around them. From that time on, since he had drunk at the sacred fountain of the Lord's breast, he was filled with the gift of wisdom and the grace of God's word, and he often poured forth marvellous words beyond description. Moreover, that fragrance and brilliance which he had experienced there remained in his soul for many months. And, what is more, on the path in the woods where the Lord's feet had passed and in a wide area all around he experienced that same brilliance and fragrance for a long time. When brother John returned to himself after this rapture, the blessed Christ disappeared and he afterwards remained always consoled and enlightened. He used to say that, at that time, he not only found Christ's humanity, but his soul was buried in the abyss of Christ's Divinity. He arrived at such serenity of soul, and he used to utter such exalted and profoundly illuminating words before the Roman Curia, before kings, and barons, and masters, and doctors, that all were wonderfully astonished, since they knew that he was unlettered, nevertheless he gave extraordinary explanations about the most subtle questions concerning the Trinity and other mysteries of Scriptures, that he seemed to shine with a divinely inspired knowledge.

Brother John was staying in the hermitage at Mogliano¹³⁷. On the first day after the Octave of Saint Lawrence,¹³⁸ he got up before the hour of Matins as if he had received an anointing of grace. After Matins he went into the garden, because he was feeling such an abundance of immense sweetness and delight which he had from the great grace of tasting in his mind the words of the Lord: *This is my Body*, that he let out loud cries and said in his heart: *This is my Body* (Mt 26:26). At these words he was illuminated by the Holy Spirit and the eyes of his mind were opened. He saw the blessed Christ with the blessed Virgin Mary and a multitude of angels and saints, and he understood this saying of the Apostle: *We all though many are one body in Christ and individually members one of another* (Rom 12:5); and

¹³⁷ This episode is parallel to *Actus Beati Francisci* 57 (FAED III, 542-544).

¹³⁸ 18th August.

that other one: *Thus you will be able to grasp fully, with all the saints the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge* (Eph 3:18-19); because all is in that most high Sacrament which is brought about when *This is my Body* is said. When dawn came, so moved by that grace, he entered the church with anxious fervour of spirit, thinking no one could hear him, although there was a brother in the choir who heard this. Still feeling anxious because of the immensity of the grace, he could not contain himself and let out a loud cry. As he approached the altar to celebrate the Mass which he had to sing, the grace expanded and that love increased; and he was given an ineffable feeling of God, which he could not in any way express in words. And fearing that this feeling and wonderful fervour would grow which would force him to stop the Mass, [444] he did not know what to do, and wanted to refrain from celebrating the Mass. Yet because he had once experienced a similar thing, and the Lord had so tempered it that he did not have to stop the Mass because of it, he confidently proceeded with devotion to celebrate the Mass. But when he came to the Preface, that illumination and gracious sweetness increased so much that he was hardly able to endure such sweetness and delight. When he arrived at the words of consecration, he kept groaning: *This is*, and could not proceed any further. He was almost fainted because of the immensity of the things he felt in his soul. So the Guardian of the hermitage hurried to the aid of the anxious brother and stood next to him, a brother with a lighted candle behind him. The rest of the brothers watched fearfully, together with many noble men and women who were nearly weeping with compassion.

Brother John was outside himself from blessed and sweet joy, and he could not carry on because he could not bear such great majesty, but at the end he cried out *my Body*. Immediately the appearance of bread vanished and the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him, the blessed Son of God, incarnate and glorified, showing him that humility which made Him become incarnate, and makes him come daily into the hands of the priest. For this reason, after *This is my Body*, powerfully shaken, he fell backwards, but as soon as he said this, the Guardian, who was standing beside him, held him so he would not fall to the ground. The brothers and the other men and women who were in the church came running, and he was carried, as if dead, to the sacristy. His body had become cold like the body of a dead man.

The fingers of his hands were so tightly contracted that they could hardly be straightened or moved. He lay there, as if dead, from morning until late Tierce. When one of his familiar companions¹³⁹ asked him with insistence to narrate what had happened, he said that before and while he was consecrating, his heart was melted like thoroughly dissolved wax; and his flesh seemed to have no bones so that he could hardly lift either his arms or hands or make the sign of the cross over the host. He added that before he became a priest, he was shown that he would faint in this way during the Mass. But because he had read many Masses, and what had been predicted to him had not happened, he thought that he had been deceived about this. But about fifty days before the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, he had been shown again that this would happen to him around the Assumption, but he had forgotten about this promise.

It happened that the Nativity of our Saviour was approaching,¹⁴⁰ he was sure that he could expect consolation from the humanity of the blessed Christ. He received such consolation from the charity of Christ that it seemed to him that his soul was snatched from his body. For his body was inflamed a hundred times more than if he were in a furnace, and because of this ardour his spirit became uneasy and panted, and he was ardently brought to such a state that he would cry out in a loud voice. Due to an exceeding fire of love and a violent impulse of the Holy Spirit, he could not restrain himself from crying out. At the time when he experienced such great ardour of love, the hope of salvation became very strong in him and he did not believe that, if he had died at that moment, he would be passing through purgatory and going straight to heaven. The ardour, however, lasted for more than a year, so that for an hour he seemed to be breathing out his spirit. After this time he had visitations and innumerable consolations, just as many others have frequently seen with the eyes of faith [445] and evaluated with care. For due to the excess of love and ardour he

¹³⁹ According to *Actus Beati Francisci* 52 (FAED III, 544) this familiar companion would have been the same author of this work who speaks in the first person, namely brother Ugolino Boniscambi da Monte Santa Maria. He was born in an unknown year in the town of Monte Santa Maria, today Montegiorgio, in the Province of the Marche. He knew John of La Verna who died in 1274, and so he entered the Order before that date.

¹⁴⁰ This episode is parallel to *Actus Beati Francisci* 56 (FAED III, 540-542).

could not conceal these visitations; in fact he was enraptured many times in the presence of many brothers.

On one particular night he was raised to such wonderful illumination that he saw all created things, celestial and terrestrial, in their Creator with all things disposed according to their rank: how, for instance, the choirs of blessed spirits are below God, and so too, the earthly paradise and the humanity of Christ. There were also the lower choirs which were similarly arranged, and he saw and felt how all things represent the Creator. Afterward God raised him above every creature so that his soul was absorbed and assumed into the abyss of divinity and illumination, and was buried in the sea of the eternity and infinity of God, to such a degree that he experienced nothing created, nothing formed, nothing finite, nothing imaginable which the human heart could conceive or human tongue could relate. That soul of his was absorbed in that abyss of divinity and in that sea or a kind of illumination like a drop of wine absorbed in the depths of the sea. And just as the drop of wine finds nothing in itself but sea, so that soul saw nothing but God in everything, above everything, within everything and outside everything, and therefore he saw the three Persons in one God, and one God in three Persons. He discerned that eternal love which, as far as his humanity is concerned, prompted the Son of God to become incarnate in obedience to the Father, and he arrived at ineffable light by way of the incarnation and passion of the Son of God by meditating, by carrying the Cross, and by weeping over the Passion. For there is no other way by which souls can enter into God except through Christ who is *the way, the truth, and the life* (Jn 14:6). In the same vision he also saw whatever was done through Christ from the fall of the first man until the entrance of Christ into eternal life, who is the head and leader of all the elect who have existed from the beginning of the world, who are living now and will live in the future until the end.

When brother John was a most fervent preacher and was preaching in the friary of Florence in front of a great multitude of people, all of a sudden there was a torrential downpour and all those people were soaking wet, but upon him and upon the pulpit where he was preaching not one single drop of rain fell.

In the same occasion, while he was preaching in Florence, brother John said: "I know a friar Minor who, while he was celebrating Mass, after consecration saw the suffering Christ, from whose

wounds blood was flowing in abundance and falling into the chalice. That brother was going to faint out of compassion, and that very moment the vision disappeared and only the consecrated bread could be seen.” After the sermon he familiarly revealed to his companion that he was that friar.

When he was in Siena the people wanted to heap great honours upon him. Therefore he fled to the hermitage of Fonte Colombo.¹⁴¹ There he hid himself in order to pray. A column of fire descended from heaven and rested upon his cell. He also tried to flee from the praises and honours of men and went to live in the friary of San Francesco di Bacciola, in the district of Cortona, and then on La Verna. On this mountain he dwelt in a remote cell all alone,¹⁴² and there he felt an abundance of divine consolations and received many spiritual gifts. In that place, for three days, the Angels often visited him and [446] he had the privilege of their company. In that place also Saint Francis often appeared to him and told him some secrets that he did not want to reveal to anybody. One day Saint Francis appeared to him and said: “Ask me any grace you will, and I will give it to you.” Brother John answered: “Most glorious Father, if it pleases you, let me touch your wounds, not because I have any doubts regarding them, but simply out of spiritual devotion and sweetness.” That same moment Saint Francis gave him permission to touch and kiss his wounds, and he felt great consolation and overwhelming sweetness.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ This is not the hermitage of Fonte Colombo in the Rieti valley, where St. Francis dictated the Rule in 1223, but the hermitage of Colombaio, that pertained to the Custody of Siena. Later on, St. Bernardine of Siena made his novitiate in this Observant friary.

¹⁴² The cell of Blessed John of La Verna is indicated by a tiny chapel in the woods above the complex of the friary of La Verna.

¹⁴³ The origins of the feast of the stigmata of St. Francis are shrouded in mystery. Various Popes had published decrees proving the truthfulness of the stigmata, especially when the Order was facing a fierce opposition from other ecclesiastical quarters that denied the truth of the stigmata of St. Francis. See André Vauchez, “The Stigmata of Saint Francis and Its Medieval Detractors,” in *Greyfriars Review* 13 (1999) 61-89. In his description of Gerard Odonis, Minister General (1329-1342), Arnald of Sarrant mentions the institution of the feast of the Stigmata during the Chapter of Cahors in 1337. See *Chronica XXIV Generalium*, 528: *In eodem autem capitulo [Caturci] fuit institutum, ut fieret festum de sacris beati Francisci stigmatibus per Ordinem universum* (In that same Chapter – of Cahors – it was decided that the Feast of the Sacred Stigmata of Blessed Francis would be celebrated throughout the entire Order).

In that same place, on the feast of Saint Michael, when brother John came out of the choir after Matins to go back to his cell, along the footpath he met an Angel under the guise of a most handsome young man who was carrying a musical instrument. The Angel was playing that instrument with a most sweet melody, and continued to do so continually along the way, with brother John who preceded him, until he arrived in his cell. When brother John entered his cell the Angel disappeared and he was rapt in ecstasy.

Sometimes brother John would be accompanied by Angels who would play the sweetest melodies that would enter into his heart in such a way that he would marvel and cry out.

In that same remote cell he once saw in his dreams an innumerable quantity of demons that were firing arrows against the friars. Some of those arrows, when they arrived at the friar to whom they were destined, would immediately turn back with full force and strike the same demons that shot them, and they would escape with howls and terrible cries. Other arrows would hit the friars, but they would not harm them in any way, even though they would enter the flesh of the same friars with their iron points, and in some cases they would penetrate their entire bodies. That same moment brother John recognised the spiritual state of all the friars through the power of the divine Spirit.

Another day brother John was walking on the mountain in deep contemplation. He saw a multitude of demons that were filling the air and the earth, and they were so numerous that it seemed that they were filling the air like clouds. But brother John fearlessly took his staff and began to hit them hard and they all fled from the mountain.

One day, when he was living on the same mountain, he saw in spirit a certain friar who was a carpenter and who wanted to leave the Order. So he ran to his cell and said: “My brother, what are you going to do?” That same moment the friar realised the evil in his own will, and after receiving sweet words of correction from brother John, he was converted by his good words and was confirmed in his vocation in the Order.

Maybe this episode of brother John who touches Francis’ stigmata has to be understood within the context of Franciscan literature that defends the truth of this unique privilege given to St. Francis.

Once brother John saw the Lord Jesus Christ whose body was so despised and miserable, that no man could ever be in that low state. So brother John was full of admiration and asked Jesus: "O Lord, why do you appear so poor and miserable?" Christ answered him: "You should know that in the hearts of Christians I am even more abominable and despised." Then the Lord disappeared, and brother John was rapt in ecstasy.

He foretold the day of his death many years before it occurred. Once he prophesied to the friars who used to stay for some time in his company, that in a few days' time he would be overtaken by a terminal illness that he would have to bear up with patiently. In the last hours before his *transitus* his face appeared to be full of fear, in such a way that those who were close him also felt terrified and very astonished. All of a sudden, however, he became very serene and looked at the friars with a grateful and angelic face. Brother John of Septimio, who was a very spiritual lector, asked him why he had changed his appearance so much. Brother John, who was breathing his last, answered: "If I will tell you, [447] what I have seen, you will not understand me. But one thing you should know, namely, that whoever wants to arrive to acquire eternal life, should hold on with all his strength to Christ crucified." Thus brother John joyfully slept in the Lord in the year of the Lord 1322, and was solemnly buried in the hermitage of La Verna. There he became famous for many miracles that were wrought with the power of Our Lord, who lives and reigns with God the Father for all ages.

The Miracles of Saint Louis

In the year of the Lord 1297, in Brignoles, a castle in Provence, Saint Louis, bishop of Toulouse, after having received with great devotion the Sacraments of the Church, departed from this life. He had chosen to be buried in the friary of Marseilles, where he had lived. When his dead body was being carried on the road across the summits of the mountains, it emitted various hues of light, as if it was being accompanied by the flames of many candles sent down from heaven. When the sacred corpse was placed in the middle of the choir

of the friary of Marseilles and the friars were chanting the Mass of the dead before the burial, a certain venerable knight saw the Saint in the central stall of the choir adorned with his pontifical vestments who appeared to him and then disappeared. From that moment many miracles began to shine forth from him, as if to render divine witness that he had passed from an earthly kingdom to the diadem of the eternal kingdom of heavenly glory. Among the many miracles we are here noting some that were not written down in the Bulla of canonisation, as a faithful witness to his holiness.

After the death of the glorious Pontiff Louis, he began to shine forth with many miracles, of which we shall note some. There was a certain man, who used to deny the miracles of Saint Louis, who developed a horrible looking deformation in his face and eyes. Thus he remained for six days in front of the tomb of Saint Louis, commending himself to his intercession with most devout prayers, and offering candles. Before he went out of the church he was perfectly cured. Whereas before he was a detractor of the Saint's miracles, from that moment he began to preach the truth of such miracles.

A certain man was recklessly riding with full speed on his horse upon a dirt road. The horse overran a certain boy who was on the road and one of its hooves ended up on the boy's neck, breaking it, and leaving the boy dead on the spot. Those who saw the scene were crying with loud howls of terror. The rider with his horse escaped and went to the friary, and full of fear fell down on his face and started praying in front of Saint Louis, and multiplied his pleas so that the Saint would deign to make the boy return to life. Having done this that boy stood up and went back to his relatives without suffering any harm, and the tears of sorrow were changed into joy and everybody began to praise the Saint with loud voices and to be inflamed with greater devotion towards him.

While Saint Louis was shining with wonders and miracles in Marseilles, in the same town there lived a certain expert doctor of medicine, who was a Jew. When he was visiting some sick people, he [448] announced to them that their illness was beyond cure and that they would die on a certain date and on a certain hour, according to his knowledge of the science of medicine. But at that same moment he saw that they were completely healed through the merits of Saint Louis, and that the same people who he thought were on the verge of dying were now walking on the road. So that doctor marvelled and

said: "If this Saint is capable of working such wonders, then all the arts of medicine are vain." Through these signs that he had seen, he was converted and prepared himself for baptism. But his fellow Jews suspected this, and constrained him wickedly to hold on to his law until the day of this death.¹⁴⁴

John, who was the first-born son of the king of France Philip IV,¹⁴⁵ was afflicted by a most serious illness, and according to the expert advice of the doctors of the royal court there was no remedy for his case. The king was feeling the pangs of an intense grief on that night during which the doctors unanimously gave their verdict on his son's illness. So he entered his chapel and began to pray with great fervour and to say: "O my most glorious uncle, Saint Louis, you know that I have great trust in you and that I have always showed you a unique devotion. I beg you to have mercy on me and on my kingdom, and heal my son. I hereby make a vow, that if you do this, I will come to visit your tomb as a pilgrim, and I will bring a silver image of the same weight of my son, and I will become the servant of the brothers of that friary and their perpetual benefactor." While he was thus praying with great anxiety, Saint Louis appeared to him and promised to cure his son from his illness. At that same hour the Saint appeared to the lord John, while his mother Johanna and many others were keeping watch around his deathbed waiting for the moment of the boy's death. Saint Louis touched the boy with his sacred hands and healed him completely from his illness. When the Saint disappeared, the lord John called his mother, the queen, and said: "My lady, look, I have been totally freed from my illness." His mother marvelled at these words, since she thought that the boy was speaking in that way because of his high fever and was having hallucinations. But he insisted and said: "My lady, do not think that I am saying this because I

¹⁴⁴ This is a typical mediaeval anti-Semitic interpretation of the Jewish religion. As we have seen in the case of similar judgements regarding the Muslim religion, the translation of the mediaeval text in no way endorses any anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim sentiment on the part of Christians nowadays. Although we condemn any similar judgements today, we have no right to take them out of the mediaeval context in which they were written.

¹⁴⁵ Philip, known as the "Catholic", was the son of Charles king of France, and count of Valois. He was a nephew of Philip the Fair. He was born in 1293, was proclaimed king of France in 1328 and died on 22nd August 1350 in Nogent-le-Roi, near Chartres, when he was 57 years old.

am driven by hallucinations or because I cannot reason, but I am truly cured through the merits of my uncle Louis, who has come to visit me with great tenderness, touched me and cured me." The queen realised that the boy was feeling better and her sorrows were converted into great joy. The doctors entered the room and remained dumbfounded, since they had expected to hear the weeping and wailings of the moment of the boy's death. They touched the boy's pulse and felt the blood circulating in his veins, and full of astonishment they said: "What is this phenomenon? The boy is totally cured." The queen told them: "Do not be astonished, since my son has found a better doctor, that is Saint Louis." Many went running to give the good news to the king. When the king heard their good news he declared: "I know now that my son has been cured through the power of Saint Louis, and that when I was interceding for him, the Saint restored his health and made him well."

Some time later, king Philip, who did not forget such great benefices, according to the vow he had made, left with a few companions and, dressed in very simple clothes, personally visited the tomb of Saint Louis. Later on, with great pomp and royal splendour, [449] he came in the company of two kings, namely the king of Majorca and the king of Navarre, in order to visit the Saint's tomb. He prostrated himself in front of the sacred body, and kept watch all night long praying with the friars. That same night brother Gerard, the 18th Minister General of the Order,¹⁴⁶ was present in that place. The king offered the silver image that had the weight of his firstborn son, the lord John, together with many great and weighty offerings of candles, offered by himself in the name of the queen and his younger son. The queen came with the king and had arrived at Montpellier, since she wanted to visit the tomb of Saint Louis together with her husband the king. But since she was pregnant and could not travel comfortably in the royal carriage, she sadly had to remain in that place. The same devout king assigned an annual perpetual benefice of five hundred *livres* to the friary of Paris. The aforementioned lord John then succeeded his father as king,¹⁴⁷ and also went to visit the tomb of Saint Louis.

¹⁴⁶ Gerard Odonis (Eudes, Ot) was Minister General from 1329 to 1342.

¹⁴⁷ John, known as the "Good" was king in 1350-1364 and died when he was 54 years old.

In the castle called Beja, in the kingdom of Portugal, there was a certain royal falconer, who took care to breed the best birds of prey. Among these birds he had a really good falcon. The king loved that falcon more than all the other birds of prey. For this reason that falconer used to take special care of that falcon. One morning he went as usual to see his birds, but found the falcon that was on the point of death. That falconer was terrified and greatly afraid, since he knew that the king would be very angry at him. So he took the falcon in his arms, and saw that the bird was truly dying. He carried the bird to the friary of that castle, where Saint Louis had become famous for his miracles, and with great devotion he prostrated himself in front of the altar, and began to pray fervently for the life of that falcon. He promised that, if the Saint would cure the bird, he would make and offer a silver image of that falcon. But even at that very moment, the falcon died in his hands. Yet he still truly believed that Saint Louis could free the bird from death. While he was in this sad state and was moved to tears in his pleas to the Saint, he irreverently placed the dead falcon on the altar and went full of fear to reach the king, who at the moment was two leagues distant from Beja. When the king saw him, he immediately asked him how the falcon was faring. So the trembling falconer who was pale in the face began to narrate how the falcon had died, and how he had vowed to Saint Louis when he desperately confided in his miraculous power to make the falcon live once again, after having flung the bird and left it on the altar. While the falconer was still speaking with the king, behold the falcon was restored to life by the merits of Saint Louis and came flying to the place where the king and the falconer were. When the king saw the bird he said: "Is this not the falcon, which you say has died? Why are you telling me lies?" So the falconer looked in that direction and full of astonishment saw and recognised the falcon, and just as usual he stretched his arm so that the falcon might come to rest on it. All those who were present also marvelled. So that falconer kept his vow and the king ordered that a chapel be built in the friar of Beja in honour of Saint Louis, since God was working many miracles through the intercession of this Saint.

In Villalpanda,¹⁴⁸ a castle in the kingdom of Castile, John of Villanova, a place about two leagues distant from Villalpanda, was

¹⁴⁸ Villalpanda, a town close to Zamora.

building a certain chapel in the friary of the brothers [450] in honour of Saint Louis, because of the many miracles that were happening through his intercession. A multitude of locusts once ravaged that land and invaded and destroyed the entire harvest and the crops in the fields of Villanova. So the inhabitants of the same village made a vow and pleaded with Saint Louis, promising him that they would go to the friary of Villalpanda carrying with them a candle weighing 25 pounds, and that they would offer it every year, if the Saint would mercifully free them from that invasion of locusts. After they had made that vow, one morning, in front of many who saw him, Saint Louis appeared in the air wearing his pontifical vestments, and wielding a staff, with which he was driving away the multitude of locusts and insect pests from the fields, until he had sent them all away and the region was freed from them. Those men therefore continued to carry the annual votive candle for 20 years, as they had promised. After that time the friars advised them to change that vow into a better commitment, and urged them to build a chapel in honour of Saint Louis. They continued to observe the feast of Saint Louis every year and to celebrate it solemnly and abstain from servile work on that day.

In the year of the Lord 1347 two noble merchants left on a vessel together with their merchandise. When they were in the open sea, a great storm and a hurricane blew up, and since all the ones aboard that vessel were desperately trying to avoid being drowned, since they saw that the storm would not abate, they all turned their hearts to pray and ask for the intercession of Saint Louis, promising that as soon as they would arrive in Marseilles they would go with naked feet and arms and carrying ropes on their necks and lighted candles in their hands, and make a procession from the port to the Saint's tomb. They would offer generous alms to the friary, if the Saint would mercifully free them from that danger. Nevertheless the storm continued to strike them in all its fury, and they were being abandoned in the mercy of the gale and the waves. So those merchants, who could only place their trust in God and in Saint Louis, when they saw that the vessel was on the point of sinking, decided to squeeze as they could into a small boat, which had an anchor, together with their money. With great anxiety they went into the boat. They immediately thought that the enormous waves would swallow them up, but they still trusted

solely in God's power and continued to navigate up and down those waves towards land, and at the same time they invoked the name of Saint Louis. They unfurled a small sail and continued to navigate in that dangerous gale. They were being driven up to heaven and falling down into the abyss of the terrible waves of the sea, but at long last they arrived ashore in their boat on a deserted and empty land.

When they escaped from the sea they took their money and there rested awhile, thanking Saint Louis for the grace of having freed them from drowning. But a group of cruel men arrived and wanted to kidnap them. They were brandishing swords and fell upon them and took their money from them, and would have wanted to kill them all. They, however, joined their hands and pleaded with them to give them some time, in order to recommend their souls to God and at least to be able to recite an *Our Father*. Those savage men answered: "Hurry up, since you will all have to die." They brandished their swords and with the ferocity of a lion on their faces they waited for that short space of time during which the captives could at least recite the prayer of the Lord. Those merchants were looking up to heaven and were praying as they trembled with fear: "Most holy Louis, come to our aid. Why have you now led us to this terrible death? Was it not already a tragedy that we were going to drown in the sea, [451] that now we have come to this other terrible tragedy to fall into the hands of our murderers? May you be pleased in your goodness, to preserve us from this death, since we always have had, and still have, full trust in you. We promise to come to visit your tomb, in order to be faithful to our vow to you and to praise you for having been so kind to us, or at least be kind enough to lead our souls to salvation." As soon as they had uttered these words those kidnappers changed their ferocity into meekness. They gave them their money back, and told them not to be afraid, asked them for pardon and with downcast faces they retreated full of shame.

Those merchants stood up full of joy and hurried to the nearby port thanking God all the time. There they requested to board a vessel that was setting sail for Marseilles, and behold Saint Louis added to the second miracle a third one. In fact they found out that their vessel, which they reckoned was totally destroyed and lost with all their belongings that they had left behind them, was there in the port, although it was damaged, and through the merits of the saint had been preserved intact with all those persons. One cannot explain the joy

and admiration of those merchants, who continually thanked and praised Saint Louis. So they hurriedly mended and repaired the vessel, and sailed on it safely on to Marseilles. They immediately carried out the vow they had promised. They went walking naked, except for their underwear, with ropes tied to their necks and carrying lighted candles in both hands, and together with many others arrived at the Saint's tomb with great humility. There they prayed very devoutly and after having dressed, they solemnly narrated the whole adventure that had befallen them to the brothers who were there, together with our Religious from the Order of Preachers, who also were on a visit to the tomb, and to many others who had come for the same reason, as well as to me, who was present, and who am writing all this. They told their story with the maximum fervour, and then they left a generous alms offering to the friary. The friars rang the bells as thanksgiving for this miracle and for many other similar wonders, and all praised the Saint. Then the merchants returned full of joy to their homes.

During roughly the same time there lived in Marseilles a certain woman who belonged to the Order of Penitents. She had been totally blind for 12 years. She had great devotion to Saint Louis and would hardly move from his church where she would spend all day in prayer. On the solemnity of the same Saint¹⁴⁹ she was present in that church, together with a multitude of people who had gathered there with devotion, and full of tears she began to say these words: "O most holy father Louis, the whole earth is full of the good works of your miracles in healing persons. I am a miserable woman who has been coming here to pray for so long now. Many others come from afar and easily obtain the graces for which they pray, while I alone am deprived of your grace. O most holy and benign father, open your eyes, and have mercy on me who always serve you and desire so much to offer myself totally to you." While she was praying thus, she felt as if a finger of a hand was tenderly passing over her eyes and peel the skin that seemed to be covering them. That same moment she began to see and proclaimed in front of all that she had regained bodily eyesight.

The account of the following miracle has been divulged in Italy. A certain merchant showed devotion to Saint Louis. When he

149 19th August.

was sailing in the open sea, a great storm blew up. In order to lighten his ship he threw all his goods overboard, including his money, which went down into the deep water. In the meantime he was invoking the name of Saint Louis. Through the merits of Saint Louis he and all the ones on board escaped from that storm, and the merchant, [452] who did not forget such a favour, bought a large fish and went to offer it to the nearby friary so that the friars would eat it, out of love for Saint Louis. When that large fish was cut in half, from the belly of the same fish a great quantity of golden coins came out. The friars called that merchant and he came to collect all the money that he had thrown into the sea, and which had finished in the belly of the fish. He was astonished and full of joy gave thanks to the Saint.

In the year of the Lord 1299 the general chapter was celebrated in Lyon. According to the will of all the members of the chapter, it was ordered that no friar Minor could have more than one tunic, and that he had to mend it with pieces of sackcloth as is prescribed in the Rule.¹⁵⁰

In the year of the Lord 1300 brother Gentile,¹⁵¹ who had been lector in the sacred Palace, was created by the lord Pope Boniface a Cardinal priest with the title of San Martino ai Monti, whereas brother Reginald from the Province of Assisi was made lector of the Curia.

In the year of the Lord 1302 the same General convoked the general chapter in Genoa. In this chapter it was ordered that the feast of Saint Mary of the Snows¹⁵² should be celebrated with the rank of a

¹⁵⁰ *Later Rule* 2,14-16 (FAED I, 101): "Those brothers who have already promised obedience may have one tunic with a hood and another, if they wish, without a hood. And those who are compelled by necessity may wear shoes. Let all the brothers wear poor clothes and they may mend them with pieces of sackcloth or other material with the blessing of God."

¹⁵¹ Gentile de Montefiore in Piceno was a lector at the Sacred Palace, succeeding brother John of Murrovalle in 1296. He was made Cardinal in Rieti on 4th December 1298, which was the First Sunday of Lent. In 1308 he was sent as an Apostolic Legate in Hungary. During the Council of Vienne he strenuously defended the case of Boniface VIII against Philip the Fair. He died, according to Wadding, in 1312 in Avignon. According to Luigi da Fabriano, he died in 1314 in Lucca, Tuscany, and was buried in the church of St. Francis in Assisi.

¹⁵² The feast of the Virgin Mary of the Snows is celebrated on 5th August. The feast of the dedication of the basilica of the Saviour, or St. John Lateran, falls on 9th November, and that of the dedication of the basilica of Saint Peter in

double feast [453] from henceforth, and that the feasts of the consecration of the churches of the Saviour and of the prince of the Apostles were to be celebrated in the entire Order.

In the same year the lord Boniface gave the title of Cardinal to this General, and consecrated him as bishop of Porto.¹⁵³ Nevertheless he remained as vicar of the Order, like his predecessors, until the election of the next General. Thus he governed the Order for 7 years.

Under this General brother John Scotus¹⁵⁴ was famous in Paris as a most expert doctor and for his subtle and profound teachings.

In the year of the Lord 1303, on the 5th day of the *Idus* of October, on the 25th day from his capture, Pope Boniface VIII died in Rome, during the 9th year of his pontificate.¹⁵⁵

In the same year, on the 11th day of the *Calends* of November, brother Nicholas of Treviso, who was then Cardinal bishop of Ostia,

the Vatican on 18th November, together with the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

¹⁵³ See note 539.

¹⁵⁴ John of Murrovalle sent the letter *Ad expeditionem dilecti* to the general *conventus* of studies in Paris, from Ascoli, on 18th November 1304. In this letter he presented John Duns Scotus for the *licentia docendi*, and spoke about his "praiseworthy life, his excellent knowledge and most subtle scientific ability, together with other distinctive qualities, as well as his long experience as a scholar, and his fame that had spread far and wide." John Duns Scotus, master in Paris, known as *Doctor Subtilis*, was born in 1266 in Duns, Scotland. He entered the Order of Minors and was ordained priest on 17th March 1291. He studied in Paris and was lector in the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Paris and Cologne. He remained famous for his writings on Christology and on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On 23rd June 1303 he refused to sign a *libellus* of Philip IV the Fair, king of France, against Pope Boniface VIII, and was exiled from Paris. After being recalled back to his professor's chair through the good services of the Minister General Gonsalvus of Valboa, he again left Paris and went to Cologne, where he died soon after, on 8th November 1308. He was venerated as Blessed *ab immemorabili tempore* in Cologne, where he is buried, and at Nola, in Italy. His public cult was confirmed by Pope John Paul II on 6th July 1991, and the same Pope gave John Duns Scotus solemn and public liturgical honours in the Vatican Basilica on 20th March 1993. The critical edition of Scotus' *Opera Omnia* is being published by the International Scotistic Commission founded in 1933 at the Antonianum in Rome.

¹⁵⁵ Boniface VIII died on 11th October 1303, of a very high fever. He had been captured on 7th September, when he was already 84 years old, by Guglielmo Nogareto and Sciarra Colonna, and was liberated on 10th September by the citizens of Anagni. Thus he died on the 33rd day after his capture and not on the 25th day, as the *Chronicle* says.

and who belonged to the Order of Preachers, was elected Pope in Rome and chose the name Benedict XI.¹⁵⁶ In this election three friars [454] Minor were present, who were Cardinals, namely the lord Matteo of Aquasparta,¹⁵⁷ the lord brother Gentile, and the lord brother John of Murrovalle.

¹⁵⁶ On 22nd November 1303 Nicolo Boccasini of Treviso was elected Pope Benedict XI, and was crowned on 27th November. He died in Perugia on 7th July 1304.

¹⁵⁷ This is a mistake, since Matteo of Aquasparta died in 1302. Most probably the author is referring to Cardinal Giacomo Thomasius Caetanus. He was the son of the sister of Boniface VIII and was made Cardinal with the title of San Clemente by his uncle.

The times of brother Gonsalvus, XVth General of the Order (1304-1313)

[454] The fifteenth General was brother Gonsalvus the Galician,¹⁵⁸ a master from the Province of Saint James. He was Minister of Castile when he was elected General during the chapter of Assisi celebrated in the year of the Lord 1304, when the lord Pope Benedict XI was governing the Church.

In the same year the same lord Pope Benedict died in Viterbo on the *Nones* of July,¹⁵⁹ when he had been Pope for just 8 months and 17 days.

In the year of the Lord 1305 on the vigil of Pentecost,¹⁶⁰ the lord Bertrand de Gotho, who came from the Basque countries, and who was then archbishop of Bourdeaux, was elected Pope in Perugia and chose the name Clement V. He immediately visited the diocese of Poitiers, [455] whose Bishop was the lord brother Walter of Brügge, from the Order of friars Minor, a man worthy of his science and virtue. At that time there was a great disagreement between this Bishop and the lord Pope Clement, who was still archbishop of Bordeaux. So the same Archbishop, once he was elected Pope, after some time deposed the same lord brother Walter from his bishopric and made him go back into the friary. After some time, this same lord brother Walter, full of virtues, became gravely and terminally ill. When he was nearing his end, he wrote a certain declaration in which he spoke about the sentence of Pope Clement to depose him, and appealed to

¹⁵⁸ Gonsalvus of Valboa, or of Spain, was master in Paris. He was elected Minister General on Pentecost, 17th May 1304, during the chapter at which Cardinal John of Murrovalle presided as Vicar of the Order. Gonsalvus died in 1313 in Paris. According to Alvarus Pelagius, *De Planctu Ecclesiae*, Gonsalvus had received him in the Order, and was a great master in sacred theology, in his profession of poverty, in his humility, and patience, in his oratorial skills, in his life of mortification.

¹⁵⁹ Benedict XI died on 7th July 1304.

¹⁶⁰ Clement V was elected Pope on 5th June and crowned on 14th November 1305. He died on 20th April 1314 at Rochemaure, on the river Rhône in the diocese of Nîmes.

the justice of God. He held that declaration in his right hand and so departed from this life and was given burial together with his declaration. He became famous for many miracles and he was especially known for the grace of curing people from quartan fever.

In the same friary of Poitiers, together with brother Walter, is buried brother Simon, who was Minister of Touraine, in whose mouth the Holy Spirit appeared under the form of a dove. – In the same Province of Rennes is buried brother Rudolph, whom the Angels themselves served during Mass. – In Le Mans, brother Electus, during extreme Unction, when the Litany of Saints was being recited, saw in a vision all the same Saints who appeared to him, and he showed them reverence with smiles and joyful looks, even though he had not been able to utter a word for three days.

In the year of the Lord 1307 this General held a general chapter in Toulouse, in which there were in attendance nine hundred and ninety friars, and eight masters, among whom brother Raymond Godfrey, who had once been General Minister.

In the same chapter [456] brother Vital du Four, master, was instituted as Minister of Aquitaine, succeeding to brother Bernard Hortulanus, who had been nominated penitentiary to the lord Pope, and to brother Peter Raymundi, who had succeeded Bernard as Minister in Aquitaine.

Under this General the lord John,¹⁶¹ who had baptised and

161 Brother John of Montecorvino (1246-1328). In 1291 brother John of Montecorvino arrived as a Papal legate to the Great Khan of the Mongols. In 1272 he had been commissioned by the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Paleologos to negotiate terms with Pope Gregory X for an eventual reunion of the Greek Orthodox and Latin Churches, in preparation of the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. The Franciscan Pope Nicholas IV sent John to preach Christianity in the Far East. Between 1275 and 1289 he worked in Persia. In 1289 he left from Rieti, sent again by Pope Nicholas IV as papal legate to the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan (1260-1294), who welcomed Christians in his empire. He left in the company of the Dominican Nicholas of Pistoia. They first arrived in India by sea in 1291, in the region of Madras, where Nicholas died. John continued alone and reached China by sea in 1294. He was received by the new emperor Temur at Khambalik (Beijing), since Kublai Khan had died, and remained as a missionary in China for 34 years. In 1299 he built a church and began to evangelise, translating the New Testament and Psalms, plus the liturgical books, into Chinese. In spite of opposition by the Nestorian Christians, John had great success in his endeavour, and in 1305 requested missionaries from Europe. In 1307 Pope Clement V sent seven Franciscan bishops to consecrate John of Montecorvino as archbishop of Cathay. Only three arrived, Gerardus,

confirmed in faith the emperor of the Tartars, whom the friars Minor had converted to the catholic faith, departed from this life, and was solemnly buried according to the imperial custom in the friary of Saint John, three miles from Saray. He remained buried in that place for 35 years. Because of war, the friars transferred his remains to the city of Saray, and found him to be whole and incorrupt, still vested and his head resting on a silk couch, not without the admiration of the faithful and of the Saracens who were there, as if he had died and was buried on that same day.

This General, after the lord Matteo Rubeo,¹⁶² the Protector of the Order, had died, requested and obtained from the lord Pope Clement the lord brother John of Murrovalle, Cardinal and bishop of Porto, as Protector of the Order.

In the year 1307 the lord Pope with the entire Curia went to Poitiers and lived there for more than a year. When he heard how the aforementioned lord brother Walter had wanted to be buried with the declaration he had written for his self-defence, he ordered that his body be exhumed. He was found to be still clutching so tightly on to the declaration, that no one could take it away from his closed hand, until the lord Pope promised that he would have it replaced back in the tomb with him. At that moment it became easy to take that parchment, and open it. When the Pope had read that declaration, according to the promise he had made, he ordered that the parchment be replaced in the closed hand of the corpse and reburied with it.¹⁶³

Peregrinus and Andrew of Perugia. In 1309 they consecrated John of Montecorvino first archbishop of Khambalik, and is considered as the founder of the Catholic Church in China. John of Montecorvino died in 1328, leaving behind him many flourishing Christian communities. These communities were eventually wiped out in 1368 when the Ming Dynasty in China came to power after destroying the Mongol empire.

162 Matteo Rubeo came from the Orsini family. He died tragically in a collapse of a building on the same day when Clement V was crowned Pope.

163 An addition to the text, that however was not composed by Arnald of Sarrant, states: "In the same year, that is 1307, on the 13th day of the *Calends* of October (19th October), the second year of the pontificate of the lord Pope Clement V, the most reverend father and brother John, bishop of Porto and Santa Rufina, and Protector of our Order and of the Order of Saint Clare, send from Poitiers a letter to the General Minister Gonsalvus together with the Constitutions of the Order of Saint Clare. The General then sent them from the Province of Provence to Henry, Minister of the Province of northern Germany."

[457] In the year of the Lord 1308 the king of Thracia¹⁶⁴ sent a message to the lord Pope, in which he stated that he wanted to submit himself and his subjects to the faith of the Church of Rome. The same lord Pope sent his nuncios to him, namely the Patriarch of Grado¹⁶⁵ and the procurators of the friars Minor and Preachers in the Roman Curia, in order to investigate whether his will was sincere or whether he was concealing other intentions. When they came to him they were received with all due honours. However, since he feared his mother and brother, the king retreated from his good intention, and thus nothing good came out of that initiative.

In the year of the Lord 1309 the lord Pope presided over a great process against the Venetians, who had captured Ferrara, a town of the Church's dominions. He declared the sentence of excommunication against them and commanded the friars Minor and other Religious to go out immediately of that town and of all the other places they owned there, that were subject to them.

In the same year Charles II, king of Sicily and father of the Bishop Saint Louis, died. He was succeeded by his son Robert, who was crowned by Pope Clement in the city of Avignon. Robert became a special lord and protector of the Order, as we shall show later on.¹⁶⁶

164 Thracia, or Ratia, or Rascien, is the region lying between Montenegro and Serbia, called Novibazar, and which belonged for many years to the Turkish empire. The king was called Urosius, and his mother Helena. Nicholas IV had sent letters in 1288, through the services of two friars Minor, brothers Mariano and Cipriano, in order to instruct the king and his brother Stephen, king of Bosnia, in the Christian doctrine. However, this mission was a failure.

165 His name was Egidio. The Procurator of the Minors was brother Artanasius and that of the Preachers was brother Lapo.

166 Robert of Anjou, or Robert the Wise (1277 – 20th January 1343) was King of Naples from 1309 to 1343, as well as Duke of Calabria, titular King of Jerusalem, and Count of Provence. He was the third and eldest surviving son of Charles II of Anjou and Maria of Hungary. During the Sicilian Vespers Robert was hostage of Pedro III of Aragon. His elder brother Charles died, and Louis, his other brother, renounced the throne of Naples to become a friar Minor and Bishop of Toulouse. Robert first married James II of Aragon's daughter Yolanda, to become king of Sicily, but was ousted from the island in 1302 and his Angevin dynasty continued to reign in Naples. Robert's second wife was Sancha of Majorca, daughter of king James II of Majorca. Robert and Sancha were great benefactors of the Franciscans, since they bought the Cenaculum in Jerusalem in 1333 and established the friars Minor on Mount Zion. The same friars became official custodians of the Holy Land in 1342. Robert died

Also in the same year, in the month of September, the lord brother Peter of Cassano,¹⁶⁷ who was a friar Minor, as well as bishop of Rodez and patriarch of Jerusalem, went as Legate to the regions of the Holy Land. He was sent by the lord Pope, together with the Master of the Hospital¹⁶⁸ and a great army in order to prepare the way for a future general crusade. The following year on the feast of the Assumption of the blessed Mary, the army began its preparations for the offensive on the island of Rhodes. That island was the metropolis of the entire region, since in those parts there are many good harbours, and it was well suited for the passage of the Christians who went to the Holy Land.

In the year of the Lord 1310 in the Curia of the lord Pope a long and scandalous dispute ensued regarding the observance of the Rule. Brother Ubertino da Casale and brother Raymond [458] Godefroy, who had once been General, together with many of their companions, accused the Order of many omissions regarding the observance of the Rule. Brother Alexander of Alessandria, who was a master and later became General, defended the Community of the Order. The lord Pope gave to the aforementioned brothers Ubertino, Raymond and the companions who supported them, the right of immunity from

in 1343 and was buried in the monumental church of Santa Chiara in Naples.

167 Cassano is a town in Lombardy.

168 The Master of the Hospital was the Grand Master of the Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John founded in Jerusalem by Pope Paschal II in 1113, at the hospital of Santa Maria Latina, close to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. The hospital was built by Amalfitan merchants in 1014-1023 for the care of Christian pilgrims coming to Jerusalem. An older hospital had existed since the times of Charlemagne, but had been destroyed by the fanatical Califf Al Hakim in 1008. Blessed Gerard (1040 – 3rd September 1118) was the founder of the Order of the Knights of Saint John, and was a Benedictine oblate, in charge of the charitable works of the hospital in Jerusalem. After him, Raymond du Puy (1125-1158) was the first superior of the Order, known as the Grand Master. The Knights of Saint John were ousted from Acre in 1291 and settled first in Cyprus and then on the island of Rhodes (1309), which remained a bulwark of the Crusaders against the menace of the Turks, until the Knights had to surrender the island in 1522, later on to settle in Malta (1530-1798), thus being eventually known as the Knights of Malta. The Papal Bull of the mandate of Peter of Cassano is entitled *Exhaurientes indesinenter*, given at Avignon on 11th July 1309, in which the Pope encourages the superiors of the Order and the faithful to give all the help necessary to the Knights of St. John to be able to cross the sea and occupy Rhodes, which was under Byzantine domination.

obedience to the Order, since they had made recourse to the Pope himself, or better still he let them defend other extreme views they had been holding for a time. Thus many scandals occasionally resulted from this state of affairs. The aforementioned brother Raymond left for a period of rest in a certain castle belonging to his relatives, but there he fell ill and in a matter of five days he died, maybe as a result of God's hidden judgements.¹⁶⁹

Also during that time a process against the doctrine of brother Peter John was held. Those who defended him, basing themselves on the decision of the lord Pope, said that his doctrines could be held as valid, even though the Order had condemned him. Since his doctrine was found to have eight errors that were listed in order, his doctrine was not condemned in its entirety, since the Master of the Sentences in his book had erred in an equal number of instances, and his doctrine had still been studied in the four great sections of the aforementioned book. The same brother Peter had frequently submitted himself and his doctrine in both his words and writings, and he had also begged the holy Mother Church to correct his mistakes and declared that he was united with all his heart to the lord Pope and to his decisions. He also expressed this confession publicly in front of all the friars of the convent of Narbonne. But since the Community of the Order defended the opposite views, a terrible and public division ensued in the Order, and the entire world was condemning all these sins.¹⁷⁰

169 David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 113: "Clement summoned spokesmen for both factions (Community of the Order and Spirituals) to a protracted hearing, which moved with him from his summer retreat at Grozeau to the papal court at Avignon, then to the Council of Vienne, and finally back to Grozeau again after the Council ended in May 1312. In April 1310, at the urging of Raymond Geoffroi, Clement temporarily removed from control of the order all those who were serving as spokesmen for the spirituals. It was a wise precaution though perhaps an insufficient one. Raymond Geoffroi died suddenly that summer, and he was followed quickly by two and perhaps three other spiritual spokesmen. Both Angelo Clareno and another source claim that they were poisoned, and Angelo reports that some members of the community actually bragged of having done it. The charge of poisoning was common in the Middle Ages ... yet so, apparently, was poisoning. We might find it hard to imagine pious Franciscans engaging in such behavior, but then again we might have equal difficulty believing some of the imprisonment stories recounted by Ubertino and Angelo."

170 For an expert treatment of the question, cfr. David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 155-158.

That same year a general chapter was celebrated in Padua.¹⁷¹

In the year of the Lord 1311 there was such a serious pestilence following a famine in the kingdom of France that many people died. The pestilence got worse the following year, in such a way that there was hardly a house in which people were not weeping over a dead member of the family. People had never witnessed a similar tragedy of such a great famine and pestilence before.

In the same year, on the *Calends* of October, a general council was convoked and celebrated in Vienne, and continued until May of the following year.¹⁷² During this council the Order of the Knights Templars was totally annihilated.

In the year of the Lord 1312, on the day following the Ascension of the Lord,¹⁷³ the process regarding the aforementioned case between brother Ubertino with his disciples and [459] the Community of the Order was concluded. During the first secret consistory, and the following day, that was the feast day of Saint George,¹⁷⁴ in the last session of the council of Vienne that we have mentioned, it was solemnly decreed by sentence that the way of life of the brothers, who had been accused, had been and still was licit, with the addition of the new declaration regarding the Rule, in which the judgement regarding the cellars filled with wine, the barns filled with wheat and the question of the poverty of the friars' clothes, was to be left to the decision of the Prelates of the Order and not to the will of the friars wherever they were living.¹⁷⁵ This declaration begins with the words: *Exivi de paradiso*, and refers to the *Extravagantibus* and to the significance of the words in the *Clementinis*.¹⁷⁶ Those friars who had re-

171 The chapter of Pentecost, on 5th June 1310.

172 The Council of Vienne took place between 1st October 1311 and 6th May 1312.

173 Namely on 5th May, since Ascension that year fell on 4th May.

174 This is an error of the author of the *Chronicle*, since the feast day of St. George falls on 23rd April, and here the author mentions 6th May, which was rather the feast of St. John the Evangelist *ante Portam Latinam*. The first session of the Council of Vienne was held on 16th October 1311, the second one on 3rd April 1312, and the third and last session was held on 6th May 1312. It was on that date that Clement V published the Constitution *Exivi de paradiso*.

175 For the details regarding the *usus pauper* controversy and the decisions of the Council of Vienne, together with the papal declaration *Exivi de paradiso*, cfr. David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 111-150, especially 144-150.

176 A reference to Gregory IX's *Decretales una cum libro Sexto Clementinis et*

ceived the privilege of immunity from obeying their religious superiors, under the command of the lord Pope, now came back to full unity and obedience to the Order. However Ubertino did not want to return to the obedience of the superiors of the Order, and entered a Monastic Order.¹⁷⁷ Other friars who were his collaborators and who hailed from diverse provinces, left their own flock and were the cause of many scandals regarding the Order, while they still regarded themselves as full of zeal for the Order. The lord Pope therefore admonished them to return, and at long last they were constrained to fall under the pain of excommunication. Those among them whose hearts were touched by God returned contrite and submitted their necks to the yoke of obedience, and ended their days as good friars in the Order.

This General went about visiting the Order, and he ordered the friars to demolish their sumptuous buildings, to lay aside their excessive comforts in their way of dressing, to abandon the acceptance of perpetual alms under the forms of [460] annual legacies, and he obliged them to refrain from any other similar obligations and privileges. Wherefore brother Alvarus from Spain, in his *Summa* entitled *De Planctu Ecclesiae*, wrote these words: "Brother Gonsalvus the Spaniard, from the Province of Galicia, a man of holy memory and of noble birth, but more noble for his good life and evangelical

Extravagantibus.

- ¹⁷⁷ It is probable that Ubertino da Casale entered the Order of the Carthusian monks, according to what Bartholomew of Pisa says. It is certain that, in 1317, Ubertino went to the Benedictine monastery of Gembloux, in the diocese of Liège, as can be concluded from a letter sent by Pope John XXII from Avignon on 1st October 1317. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1317, n. 16, states: "Brother Ubertino da Casale was also judged, since he was staunchly defending the case of Peter John Olivi, and some of his fellow disciples, who were not true to their vocation as friars, were taking advantage of this. When he saw that these friars were causing much agitation because of their adamant views, and that the Prelates of the Order were vehemently persecuting these zealous friars, he decided not to remain in the Order but to transfer to another Order. So he asked and obtained the faculty to transfer to the Benedictines, stating that he was of frail health and that he was ill, together with other reasons known to the Pope. He was sent to the monastery of Saint Peter in Gembloux, that was once in the diocese of Liège and is now to be found in the diocese of Namur in Brabant. He went with a declaration of necessary privileges written down by Cardinal Berengarius of Tusculum, and he presented himself to the bishop of Liège and to the Provost of the church of Niella, so that they would receive him kindly in that monastery."

poverty, a true friar Minor and a zealous supporter of the evangelical rule and of lady poverty, as well as a man of great humility, when he was in the hermitage at Lucca he washed the friars' bowls in a stone wash basin. Although he was the Minister General of the Order and a most renowned master, in fact one of the greatest learned men in the world, some time after his death he appeared in vision to a certain friar in Paris. He was seated on a throne with a sceptre and a golden crown. He said that that throne had been assigned to him, since in the Order he had observed the Rule and lady poverty in a most pure way. He had seen to it that, during his life, the Order should be expropriated and he declared the sentence of excommunication against all those brothers, whether they were subjects of Prelates, who would not restore their properties to their rightful owners, or who would not renounce to their rights of inheritance. These orders were carried out; in fact the General had to suffer persecution from some of these friars."

Further on in the same book, Alvarus wrote that, "in the Province of Tuscany there was a certain brother, whose name was Guido, from Florence. He was a man of such great obedience that he never wanted to ask for any favour out of his own free will, but always wanted to obey promptly and carry out the orders he received. Sometimes he used to say that, even if an Angel of God would come down from heaven to preach in the square in Florence, he would not ask for any permission to go and listen to his sermon. He was never known to have asked for anything, except once when he requested to be removed from the office of door keeper, because one winter day his Guardian prohibited the poor people who were shivering outside in the cold begging alms to take shelter in the entrance of the friary. On that occasion brother Guido had been afraid of going against obedience, but at the same time he could not bear to see such cruelty."

In the same book, in the section regarding chastity, he said that "brother James Benedict of Todi, who was a most perfect man, was so decided in his resolve to defend his physical purity that, as he would say, he would not take any heed to look at the face of the most beautiful woman more than he would take heed to look at the face of an ass."

In the same year 1312, on the Saturday of the fast of the Ember Days of Advent, on the 10th day of the *Calends* of January,¹⁷⁸ brother

¹⁷⁸ 23rd December 1312 was in fact the Ember Saturday after the 3rd Sunday of Advent. Vital du Four was born circa 1260 in Bazas (Vasatum in Aquitaine).

Vital du Four, who was then Minister of Aquitaine, was created [461] Cardinal priest by the lord Pope Clement, and given the title of San Martino ai Monti. Afterwards he was also consecrated bishop of Albano. He was succeeded as Minister of the Province of Aquitaine by the most respected father brother Bertrand de la Tour,¹⁷⁹ master of sacred theology of the Custody of Rodez.

[462] In the same period, a certain king of Armenia, called John ceded his reign to his nephew Leo, and out of great devotion he entered the Order of friars Minor; however, the infidel Turks arose against the kingdom, and king Leo did not have enough strength to resist them. So Leo, inflamed by his zeal for the faith, took up arms and subdued a great multitude of infidels, who all escaped, but at the end the same infidels killed him and he was solemnly buried in the friary of Limassol.¹⁸⁰

He entered the Order and became master of theology. In 1307 he became Provincial Minister of Aquitaine and in 1310 was chosen as a member of the commission to examine the doctrines of Peter John Olivi. He became Cardinal priest in 1312 and in 1320 John XXII chose him as bishop of Albano. He died on 16th August 1327.

179 Bertrand de la Tour is described by Wadding as “a man who was an expert in Sacred Scripture.” He was probably born in 1265-1270, entered the Order in the Province of Aquitaine in the Custody of Rodez. He studied in Toulouse, and became master of theology in Paris, nicknamed *doctor famosus*. In 1312 he was elected Minister Provincial. In 1317 Pope John XXII nominated him Nuncio in order to bring peace between the Guelphs and Ghibellines in Italy. In the period 11th June 1318 to 3rd September 1320, when he was still Provincial, he accepted the mandate to examine John Peter Olivi’s *Apocalypse Commentary*, which was then condemned as heretical by John XXII on 8th February 1326 in public consistory. On 3rd September 1320 Pope John XXII made him archbishop of Salerno, and on 20th December of the same year he became Cardinal with the title of St. Vitalis, or according to others, San Martino ai Monti. In 1323 he became bishop of Tusculum. In 1328, when John XXII deposed the Minister General Michele of Cesena, Cardinal Bertrand de la Tour became Vicar General of the Order until the election of Gerard Eudes (Ot) on 10th June 1329. He died in 1332.

180 Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1294, n. 10 and ad an. 1306, n. 25, where he publishes the letter of Pope Clement V sent to Leo from Bourdeaux on 2nd July 1306. The name of the town in which Leo was buried is *Sisii* in Latin. It is *Sissium* or *Limissum*, the harbour of Limassol in Cyprus, that was a crusader fortress.

In the kingdom of Castile in Spain, the reverend brother John of Gandia¹⁸¹ became famous as a most devout man, who exercised all kinds of virtues, and was marvellous for the variety of his miracles. He shone with a great learning, but not less with his innocent and perfect life. Although he was assiduously occupied with teaching and studying Sacred Scripture, nevertheless he never abandoned his commitment to prayer and the exercise of a virtuous life. Once he was in the friary of León and during the small hours of the night he was praying fervently in front of the body of Christ, when he saw in a vision a certain terrible and black horse, without any knight riding it, and which was kicking up its hind hooves as if it wanted to attack brother John. He escaped towards the altar where the Eucharist was being kept, and terrified began to pray devoutly to the body of Christ, begging Him to protect him. He heard a voice coming out of the pyx that enclosed the Eucharist, and it spoke to him in a marvellous way and said: “Do not be afraid, brother John, because I am with you, but now go and grip that horse and with my own power fling it down on the ground.” Comforted by these words, he gripped the horse by its bridle and made it go down prostrate on the ground, placing his foot over its head, and pressed it hard all the down in order to subdue it. At that moment the horse spoke to brother John with a human voice, asking him to permit it to go away from him, and promised that it would not harm him any more. But since he had been commanded by God to keep it prostrate on the ground, he did not dare to let it go; so the voice from the pyx of the Eucharist came to him once more and said: “Brother John, command it not to harm you in any way or to molest you or anyone else, since you have come to seek the protection of the Eucharist with confidence and devotion.” When he had done this, and the horse had firmly promised him to obey, brother John finally let it go freely. That very moment the terrified horse, neighing loudly and making a din, disappeared as if it went up in smoke.

[463] Brother John progressed in virtue for many years, and the devil wanted to tempt him but could not hinder him in any way from his commitment to prayer. Brother John never wanted to reveal this vision for as long as he lived; at the end of his terminal illness, however, he confided the vision in familiar way to a certain devout

181 Known as Iohannes de Candia by Wadding. The locality could probably be Gandia, a town in Spain.

brother who was his confessor. At that time he was seriously ill in the friary of Orense, where with great joy he departed from this life and went to heaven. His body was honourably and solemnly buried in that place. From that moment he became radiant with many miracles.

After his death there was a certain devout Abbess of the sisters of Saint Clare in the monastery of Orense. Her niece, who lived in the same nunnery, had many temptations from the devil and was vexed with many diabolic illusions. In fact, every time she was alone, day and night, the devil would appear to her under the appearance of a man. She was so terrified that she did not dare to stay alone or to sleep in any place. Once the Abbess confided this problem with her confessor, namely brother John, who was a most perfect man. When she revealed to him the problem and asked for his counsel, he answered her that he would advise that nun to have a great devotion towards the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and every time the devil would appear to her, she would pray the *Our Father* three times and invoke at the same time the body of Christ to come to her aid, since Christ was truly powerful in that Sacrament. Then brother John revealed to her the vision he had of the terrible horse, and how he found the remedy in the Eucharist. So when the devil appeared as usual under the appearance of a man to that nun, she began to pray the *Our Father* and to invoke upon the body of Christ to come to her aid, the devil receded from her with great confusion and noise and told her: "May he be cursed, who gave you the advice regarding what you should do." From that moment onwards the devil did not appear to her any more and neither did he bother her any longer.

A similar story happened in the case of a certain wife of a knight, who was truly a virtuous woman. When her husband would be occupied in far away regions, the devil would frequently appear to her under the guise of a man and would continually afflict her and terrorise her. So she asked brother John to counsel her, and he revealed to her that she should show greater devotion towards the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and whenever the devil would appear to her as usual, she was invited to go to recite the *Our Father* with reverence. That very moment the devil disappeared and did not dare to bother her with those illusions any more.

In the same kingdom of Castile, in the friary of Burgos, a certain man called Martin was buried. In his life he had been a most

perfect man and was admired for his exceptionally holy way of life. A story circulated about him, namely, that when a certain man sat down without any reverence on his tomb, he heard a voice coming out of the tomb and telling him: "Rise from this place immediately, since you are not worthy to sit down here." He immediately stood up terrified and astonished. At the same time some men were digging a new tomb next to that tomb, in order to bury in it the body of a certain knight. One of those workers hit [464] Martin's foot with the spade, and immediately a river of blood flowed from the wound in his foot, and remained like a stain on the ground for many years, in such a way that many who saw it were filled with wonder. Then they erected a circle of swords around the tomb and soon popular devotion towards him increased.

The life of Saint Adhémar

During the time of this General, brother Adhémar of Filsin¹⁸² who lived in the friary of Figeac in the Province of Aquitaine, became famous for his holiness. He was the son of his excellence the lord Castronovus *de Monte Murato* and of his wife, lady Geraldæ of Figeac. He first entered the Order of Saint Benedict in the monastery of Figeac, serving God in bodily penance and continual tears together with many virtuous acts. While he was dean of the monastery and a venerable and famous person, he entered with devotion the Order of friars Minor. There he continued to progress in all kinds of virtue, and would normally divide his time in this way: a part of the day he would dedicate to prayer, meditation, and copious tears; another part of the day he would wash the bowls and dishes in the kitchen, sweep the friary or occupy himself with other manual and humble tasks; the rest of the time he would spend in the community and in taking care of other necessities of his own body. He was most prompt to obey, showed a most profound sense of humility, excelled for his most high poverty, and kept away from the anxieties of this world. Even until old age he would wear a hair shirt on his body, would fast daily, sleep on a very hard bed, spend long hours in vigils and prayers, work hard, and

¹⁸² Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1309, n. 7.

crucify his flesh and its vices (cfr. Gal 5:24) with various disciplines and other bodily mortifications. The same year in which he entered the Order, he was struck by a serious illness to the point that he was in agony and nearing death, and the brothers came to recommend his soul in the usual manner. But then the heavens opened and he had the vision of God, who revealed to him the mysteries of heaven and of Sacred Scripture and gave him the spirit of wisdom and intellect, and also a prophetic spirit. When he was cured of his illness, even though he had not been an expert of Holy Scripture before, with the eternal rays of divine light, he could now penetrate hidden divine mysteries with the wisdom of a mystical intellect, he could solve dubious questions and could predict future events and read the secret intentions of the hearts. He became a most fervent and famous preacher and he was always ready to spread the word of God with the help of prayer and study. In order to prove and confirm the truth of his preaching of God's word, people would bring to him the sick and those possessed by the devil and he would marvellously cure all through the power of his prayer. Although many things were written regarding his life and his miracles, many of these facts are now lost through negligence; however, among the many things known through the memory of those who are still living, I will not add the following.

[465] During the time of the famine that killed men and animals in the year of the Lord 1311, as we have already shown, brother Adhémar resolved to show piety and mercy. Brother John *Yaionis*,¹⁸³ who had been a novice at the time, and was his companion and later on a bachelor in Paris, a man worthy of all trust, wrote that Adhémar used to visit the sick and comfort them in the Lord. When he entered a large hospice, where there were many sick people, he first visited Galharda *de Claveriis*, who was a noble lady and who was terminally ill. With a feeble voice that could hardly be heard, she humbly

183 Sbaralea, *Supplementum ad Scriptores trium Ordinum S. Francisci*, 469, writes: "John *Yvionis*, from Gaul (France), a bachelor in Paris, was a companion of Blessed Adhémar of Filsin from Aquitaine, who died in 1309 in Figeac, and who composed the *Vita Beati Ademari Galli*, as is witnessed by Wadding in the *Annales Minorum* ad an. 1309, n. 10, and maybe he is the friar mentioned in the *Catalogus Sanctorum Ordinis Minorum* in the *Speculum vitae Beati Francisci sociorumque eius*, published in Venice in 1504, where regarding Blessed Adhémar of Aquitaine it says that the witness of his life was brother John, lector in Assisi, in the year of the Lord 1335."

begged him to pray to the Lord in order to heal her. Full of mercy towards her, he uttered in a loud voice and in a very devout way the words of the Gospel according to Matthew: *I give you praise, Father* (Mt 11:25), which are sung on the feast day of Saint Francis. Then he raised his eyes to heaven, and began to pray silently. His face became completely changed, as if he was dead, and his colour became very pale. In that way he remained rigid and immobile for about half an hour, then he went to the sick lady, placed his hands upon her and marked her with the sign of the cross, and thus made her completely well in her health.

In the same hospice there was another sick man, the noble lord William *Barasci* who, upon hearing that brother Adhémar was in that place, although he had a very high fever, rose up from his bed and seemed to be frantically searching for him, in a such a way that nobody could hold him. When he arrived at the servant of God, he went down upon his knees in front of the man of God, and began to tug at his cord with his hands and to beg him to cure him from that terrible fever. Adhémar pronounced the words of the Gospel upon him and then prayed for a while, marked him with the sign of the cross, laid his hands upon him, and totally freed him from his intense headache and his raging fever.

In the highest room of the same hospital there was a certain lady who was suffering from such a serious disease¹⁸⁴ that there was no remedy for her. Her neck and throat were swollen inside and out, and she could hardly breathe. Many women who lived in her village were outside [466] waiting anxiously with lighted candles. When the saintly man went in to see her, she looked at him with fixed eyes, since she could not speak, and continued to gaze at him hoping that she would receive a remedy from him. That pious man was full of compassion, and having recited a text of the Gospel like the other times, he prayed and marked her with the sign of the cross. That very moment she began to thank him and to say: "I am perfectly cured." The following day she came to the friary to assist at Mass. When she was going to the friary accompanied by a great crowd of people who came to know about the miracle, it was during the month of August. The day was so hot that the earth was cracked because of the drought, and all the people were seriously burned by the sun's rays. But all of

184 The author of the *Chronicle* describes this disease as *squinantia*.

a sudden thunder could be heard and lightning began to flash, and enormous storm clouds gathered, so that it started raining heavily. That downpour was beneficial for both men and for the fruits of the earth, and all those people knew that it was so unusual for rain to fall in that season that they all said that it was all the result of the merits of brother Adhémar's prayers. – Note that, if he was capable of working four famous miracles when he entered just one village, how many more could he have worked when he visited the sick? Unfortunately there was nobody to write down those accounts, or else those writings have been lost, as we have already said.

The lady Dulcia of Aurillac, of holy memory, who was a noble and devout baroness, referred that her firstborn son, called Astrogius, was once gravely ill and died, and for one whole night he remained dead in the castle of Palareto. The following day brother Adhémar came, and found the mother crying and the entire household in utter desolation. That tender-hearted man also began to shed tears. After he prayed he asked them to show him the face of the boy that was veiled. After having marked him with the sign of the cross and laid his hands upon him, he made the dead boy rise in that same place, and the boy rose from the dead and afterwards governed Aurillac as baron for 40 years.

A certain noble and most devout lady of L'Aveiron, in the territory of St. Afrique, in the diocese of Vabres, had an only son who was very dear to her, but who was seriously ill with a horrible epilepsy. She could not alleviate his sufferings in any way, not even with the art of medicine. When her relatives heard of the miracles that brother Adhémar was working through the Lord's power, they were convinced by this lady, who held the man of God in great esteem, to write and explain to him the whole situation and ask for his help. When he received the letter, brother Adhémar gave himself over completely to prayer. After he had finished praying, he sent back the messenger who delivered the letter and told him: "Go and tell those who have sent you that the Lord will give her the grace of seeing her son cured, as she has prayed." The messenger returned, and [467] as soon as he had repeated those words, the young man was perfectly cured from his illness. In this way everybody praised the miraculous power and the prophetic spirit of the Saint.

Once the servant of the Lord was living in the friary of Figeac. A certain blind man came in front of the door of the chapter hall. He was not only blind in one eye, but had the other eye totally dried up. So he prostrated himself humbly and begged brother Adhémar to help him through his prayers. Brother Adhémar made a short prayer, then he marked the eyes of the blind man with the sign of the cross, and in front of many women who were looking, the blind man regained his eyesight.

Once the servant of the Lord was devoutly celebrating Mass. Since he was meditating upon the Passion of the Lord, he was sobbing and sighing and could not restrain the flow of his tears. Someone discovered after Mass, that upon the corporal the tears left the marks of many multicoloured crosses ordered according to a beautiful pattern, and they were impressed not by the ability of an artist, but by the divine master Himself. The corporal is kept in veneration to this very day in the church, as a sign of such a great miracle.

When he was staying in the friary of Figeac, after a life of perfection brother Adhémar became very ill, and with great devotion gave back his spirit to God the Father. There he was buried and to this very day he has not ceased to shine forth with many miracles.

In the year of the Lord 1313 the aforementioned brother Gonsalvus, who came to Paris after he had been at the general council, died in that same city.

Also in that same year, the death of brother Gonsalvus was followed by the death of the lord brother John of Murrovalle,¹⁸⁵ Cardinal Protector of the Order and bishop of Porto.

This same General governed the Order for nine years.

¹⁸⁵ This is an error, because John of Murrovalle died in Avignon in 1312, that is, a year before Gonsalvus of Valboa.

The times of brother Alexander of Alessandria, XVIth General of the Order (1313-1314)

[467] The sixteenth General was brother Alexander of Alessandria,¹⁸⁶ master of the Province of Genoa, elected in the chapter of Barcelona celebrated in the year of the Lord 1313. During [468] the same chapter, above the privilege conceded to the University of Toulouse, namely that in that place there would be a general *studium* of theology,¹⁸⁷ this statute was also applied to the Order in these terms: “The chapter concedes the grace, that one cannot deny such a privilege without scandal, namely that in the friary of Toulouse there should be the provision, according to the conscience of the General Minister, to present the bachelors in sacred theology and promote them to be masters; the General should also be careful that he should not promote them because of the great number or because of the lack of them, so that the same faculty of theology will not be dishonoured.”

The same General, when the chapter had been concluded, with some other Ministers chosen for the task, went in the presence of the lord Pope Clement and asked and obtained the lord Arnald of Pelagrua, Cardinal deacon of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, as Protector

186 Alessandro Bonini from Alessandria della Paglia in Lombardy (today in Piedmont), was born circa 1270, and entered the Franciscan Order in the Province of Genoa. In 1303, after commenting the Book of Sentences in Paris, he was made regent master with the letter *Dum fecunditatem* of Pope Benedict XI, and became also lector in the sacred Palace of the Lateran. In 1310 he became Minister Provincial of Genoa, and defended the Order against the doctrines of Peter John Olivi and Ubertino da Casale. On 3rd June 1313, Pentecost Sunday, he was elected Minister General of the Order and died in Rome on 5th October 1314 and was buried in the basilica of Aracoeli.

187 A *studium generale* in the Middle Ages was an academic institution of a religious Order that had its seat in one of the great university towns, and that had the privilege of granting the faculty of *licentia docendi* (license to teach theology everywhere). This privilege given to the *studium* of Toulouse was a special privilege to confer the degree of bachelor, lector, master and doctor of theology, a privilege that was formerly given only to the *studia* of the Order in the Universities of Paris, Oxford and Cambridge. However, this statute was not put into effect in Toulouse before 1365. In Toulouse there were also the *studia* of the Cistercians, Augustinians and Carmelites.

of our Order.¹⁸⁸

This General wrote a useful and voluminous commentary on the books of the Metaphysics of Aristotle. He also wrote a good commentary on the Book of the Sentences and he [469] has been called the *minor* Alexander, to distinguish him from Alexander of Hales, who wrote a voluminous and very famous commentary on the Sentences.

In the year of the Lord 1314, on the 12th day of the *Calends* of May,¹⁸⁹ in Rochemaure on the Rhône the lord Pope Clement V died, on the 9th year of his pontificate, and the Holy See remained vacant for more than two years, because the Cardinals continued to discuss who to elect outside the conclave.

In the same year this General, who had been governing the Order for one year and a half, was also united with his holy fathers in death in Rome, and was buried in Aracoeli. After his death the Order remained without a General Minister for about 17 months.

During the same year in which the Roman See and the office of General of the Order were both vacant, some rebels in the Order from the custody of Narbonne decided to go back from unity and obedience to the Order. So they forcibly occupied with arms and with armed men the friaries of Narbonne and Béziers,¹⁹⁰ drove out the Superiors

188 Arnald of Pelagrua was born in Bordeaux, France, and was a relative of Pope Clement.

189 20th April 1314.

190 D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 168-169: “With Gonsalvo’s death, Clement saw to it that the order should elect a cooperative minister general. He wrote to the 1313 general chapter at Barcelona urging them to choose a *pater benevolus* who would reconcile opposing factions. Alexander of Alessandria, Gonsalvo’s successor, seemed willing to do just that. He assigned the houses at Narbonne and Béziers, and Carcassonne to the spirituals, ordering provincial leaders to make sure they received guardians acceptable to them. Clement already had prepared the way by dismissing from office the provincial minister and fifteen others hostile to the spirituals, prohibiting their return to authority, taking disciplinary action against them, and making sure that they were replaced by leaders who would lean more toward the minority, which had hitherto been afflicted. So at least we are told by the spirituals of Narbonne and Béziers, and their story is corroborated by other sources. They go on to relate sadder news. After Clement and Alexander died (in April and October 1314, respectively), supporters of the infamous sixteen engineered their return to power and the spirituals soon found themselves in their former state ... Having neither pope nor minister general to whom they might appeal,

of these friaries with all the other friars who obeyed them, and settled themselves as their occupants. They then chose at their own will their own Superiors, Custodes and Guardians, abandoned the habit of the Community of the Order as if it were profane and illicit, and began to wear shorter habits against the commands of the legitimate Superiors and to do whatever they willed. Many other friars in the years of the Lord 1315 and 1316 from the same Province and from other Provinces denied obedience to their Superiors and persisted in a similar state of rebellion. They also arose against their Minister and the other Prelates and obedient brothers, closed them up in solitary confinement as if they were tyrants, and rising up against them drove them out of their friaries. In this way many scandals resulted from such actions. Although they incurred excommunication and other punishments against them by law, or that were promulgated and inflicted upon them by their Superiors, they paid no heed to them at all.

the spirituals undertook their own defense. With lay support, they drove the guardians and their adherents out of the convents of Narbonne and Béziers. These convents then became havens for escapees from other houses in the province and from the province of Aquitaine, until eventually around 120 spirituals had congregated there. For the moment the spirituals were in a strong position. They found supporters not only among the laity but also within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, including some influential cardinals. Physical attacks were blocked by the local citizenry, while ecclesiastical processes were impeded by friends in high places. The lack of a minister general and pope, which had worked against them when they were trying to stay within the law, worked for them once they stepped outside it.”

The times of brother Michele of Cesena, XVIIth General of the Order (1316-1328)

[470] The seventeenth General Minister of the Order was brother Michele of Cesena,¹⁹¹ master in the Province of Bologna, who was elected during the chapter of Naples, celebrated in the year of the Lord 1316.

During that same chapter brother Pierre Auriol¹⁹² was chosen to read the Sentences of the Parisian (Peter Lombard) because of his great qualities, with the will of the same General, although some of those who had supported him [471] told the General, that he had opposed his election, and they tried with all their might to oppose such a choice. The General however answered them in a gentlemanly manner and said: “Far be it from me that such a light of the Order is extinguished because of any kind of offence towards me.”

In the same year, on the 7th day of the *Idus* of August,¹⁹³ in Lyon

191 Michele Fuschi was born in Cesena circa 1270. He entered the Franciscan Order and studied in Paris, where he became a master in sacred theology. On 31st May 1316, Monday of the Octave week of Pentecost, he was elected Minister General during the chapter of Naples. He is most known for his stance in the poverty controversy between the Franciscan Order and Pope John XXII. Summoned to Avignon to explain his position and that of the Order, he escaped together with Bonagratia of Bergamo and William of Ockham, and sought refuge in the court of Louis of Bavaria, sworn enemy of John XXII. In 1328 the Pope deposed him from the office of Minister General, and then excommunicated him. Michele fled to Munich taking with him the seal of the Order. He died on 29th November 1342.

192 Pierre Auriol was born probably around 1280 in Toulouse, although he has sometimes been confused with Pierre de Verberie sur l'Oise, a doctor of theology in Paris. He entered the Order and studied in Paris, where he received the title of master of theology, and was known as *doctor facundi*. In 1318 he was elected Minister Provincial of Aquitaine, and on 27th February 1321 he was chosen as archbishop of Aix by Pope John XXII (papal letter *Sponso coelesti*). He died probably on 10th January 1322.

193 7th August 1316. Jacques Duèze came from Cahors. He was Cardinal bishop of Porto when he was elected Pope. He was crowned in Lyon in the church of the friars Preachers on 5th September, and died in Avignon on 4th December 1334.

the lord Cardinal Jacques Duèze was elected Pope and chose the name John XXII.

In the year of the Lord 1317, on the 7th day of the *Idus* of April,¹⁹⁴ the same Pope enlisted in the catalogue of the Saints the lord brother Louis, who had once been bishop of Toulouse, son of the great Charles II, king of Sicily. As we have seen [472] Louis shone with miracles as bishop of Toulouse. On 8th November of the same year, in the presence of his brother Robert, the illustrious king of Sicily, his mortal remains were exhumed by four cardinals officially chosen to preside over the ceremony, and were transferred with the greatest solemnity on the high altar and placed in a silver casket. During the night, in order to avoid a stampede by the crowds who came to venerate the holy relics, the lord king and the cardinals who had exhumed the relics, one of whom was the lord brother Vital Du Four, stood close to the saint's remains, which emitted such a sweet smelling fragrance, that people could smell it even at a great distance.

In the same year, the lord Philip V, king of France, nicknamed *the Long*, together with his wife Johana, offered his daughter Blanche¹⁹⁵ to Saint Francis and the virgin Saint Clare. They offered their daughter to dedicate her entire life to divine service in the monastery of Longchamp, near Paris, living under the Rule and habit of the *Minorissae*.

194 7th April 1317 was the Thursday within the Easter Octave. The letters of canonisation included the following: *In coelesti patria*, published in Avignon on 8th April and sent to all Christian faithful; *Epulari filia*, published in Avignon on 9th April and sent to Maria, queen of Sicily and mother of St. Louis; *Iucunditatis*, published in Avignon on the same day and sent to Philip, king of France. Another letter was sent to Jaime, king of Aragon, from Avignon, on 14th April. Charles II of Anjou died on 6th May 1309, when he was 61 years old. His son Robert of Anjou died on 19th January 1343.

195 The monastery of Longchamp was founded by Urban IV in the Bulla *Religionis augmentum* (27th July 1263). The Rule had already been given to the nuns by Alexander IV in 1260. The nuns were called *Sorores Minorum inclusarum*, or else *Minorissae*, as they are called in this text. The monastery of Longchamp, under the title *Humilitatis B. Mariae*, on the river Seine, was founded by Blessed Isabella (1225-23rd February 1270), who was the sister of Saint Louis IX, king of France. The king himself had supervised the construction of the monastery in 1259. Philip IV, *the Long*, died at Longchamp on 2nd January 1321, when he was 28 years old and had reigned for 5 years and a month and a half. He was buried in the church of St. Denis in Paris.

In the meantime the plague¹⁹⁶ infesting single friars continued to grow, especially in the friaries of Béziers and Narbonne. According to the will of Pope John, in order to control the fear of condemnation that had taken grip of those friars, the General sent their Minister to visit them. Some of those friars fearfully appealed to the Apostolic See. The lord Pope then dealt with their case, and sent brother [473] Michel Le Moine,¹⁹⁷ who was an inquisitor against the errors of the heretics, and who was a member of the Order of friars Minor. He expected that the friars' appeal would generate much unnecessary contention among them, and therefore he did not listen to their appeals, but upon the command of the aforementioned General, after having reflected on the initial appeal, he punished those friars according to the canonical sanctions.¹⁹⁸

In the year of the Lord 1319 a general chapter was celebrated in Marseilles. The chapter decided to introduce the feasts of Saint Martha, of the Body of Christ with its Octave, and of Saint Louis, in the entire Order.¹⁹⁹

196 Namely the doctrinal errors of the Spirituals and the consequent acts of open rebellion, especially in Provence. The Minister of Aquitaine at the time was Bertrand De La Tour.

197 D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 197: "On November 6, 1317, John XXII placed the twenty-five brothers who had refused assent in the hands of Michel Le Moine OFM, who was no stranger to the spirituals. He was one of the sixteen leaders removed from office by Clement V. John XXII had appointed him an inquisitor in 1317. In the letter setting Michel to work, John, who constantly referred to the recusant friars as *pseudofrateres*, also branded them as heretics."

198 D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 204-205: "Armed with the pope's bulls and his blessing, Michel Le Moine could proceed against the errant twenty-five. Twenty of them recanted. As part of their penance, they were forced to abjure their errors publicly in the very places where they had formerly preached them. Of the other five, one held out almost to the end, and then finally recanted – but so late that he was sentenced to wear crosses front and rear, be degraded from all orders, and spend the rest of his life in prison. His four colleagues went to the stake impenitent." They were burned at Marseilles on 23rd January 1318.

199 L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1319, n. 1: "The acts of that chapter are lost. What we do know is that it established that the entire Order should celebrate the feast of St. Martha (29th July) according to a semidouble rank, that of St. Louis, Bishop (19th August) according to a greater double rank, and that of the Body of Christ with its Octave (Feria V after the 1st Sunday after Pentecost, which is the feast of the Most Holy Trinity)."

In the same year, brother Bertrand De La Tour, Minister of Aquitaine, was elevated to the dignity of archbishop of Salerno.²⁰⁰

In the same year the master brother Peter Aureol²⁰¹ was elected and confirmed as Minister of Aquitaine. In the meantime, however, he was made archbishop of Aix and never occupied the office of Minister.

[474] In the year of the Lord 1320, on the 14th day of the *Calends* of January,²⁰² the lord Pope John made the aforementioned brother Bertrand De La Tour, archbishop of Salerno, a cardinal with the title of Santa Croce. Afterwards he was made bishop of Tusculum.

The following year, on 3rd January, Philip king of France, died. His heart was buried with great solemnity in the convent of the friars Minor in Paris.

In the same year, namely 1321, brother Arnald Americus was elected and subsequently confirmed as Minister of Aquitaine during the chapter of Condom.

Here begins the martyrdom of four friars Minor in the town of Thana

In the year 1321, on the Thursday after Passion Sunday,²⁰³ brothers Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, Demetrius, a lay brother, who knew how to speak various languages, and Peter of Si-

200 Bertrand De La Tour became archbishop of Salerno with the letter *Sane Ecclesiae Salernitanae*, given at Avignon on 3rd September 1320, 4th year of the pontificate of John XXII. On 20th December 1320 Bertrand was made cardinal.

201 Petrus Aureolus (c.1280 – 10th January 1322), was a scholastic philosopher and theologian. We know little of his life before 1312. After this time, he taught at the Franciscan convent in Bologna, then at the convent in Toulouse, around 1314. He went to Paris in 1316 in order to qualify for his doctorate, where he read the Sentences. In 1318 he was appointed master of theology at the University of Paris. In 1321, he was appointed by his mentor, Pope John XXII, to the position of Archbishop of Aix-en-Provence, but died not long after in 1322.

202 19th December 1320. Bertrand De La Tour, as cardinal, did not receive the title of Santa Croce, nor that of San Martino ai Monti, but that of San Vitale.

203 9th April 1321. Thana is the town of Asow in western India, within the limits of the Custody of Saray, not far from Mumbai (Bombay).

ena, were crowned with a glorious martyrdom in Thana, a town of the Saracens.

The account of their martyrdom was gathered by others worthy of trust, who wrote and sent long letters together with a detailed documentation of the facts. These four brothers came from Tabriz to Hormuz together with brother Jordan from the Order of Preachers. From there they boarded a ship to go to Colam, but their captain deceived them and took them to Thana. They received hospitality in the house of a certain schismatic Christian. Brother Jordan, convinced by some Christians, went to the town of Paroth in order to baptise some who had converted in that place. It happened that, one night, the lord of that house in which the friars had been welcomed, beat his wife with many strokes of the lash. On the following morning she accused her husband in front of the Cadì, who was like an archbishop among his subjects, and she took the friars with her as witnesses. When they were led in front of the Cadì, a certain wicked man from Alexandria, called Yussuf, instigated the Saracens to start a discussion with the holy friars regarding the faith. Brother Peter of Siena remained in the house to guard the friars' belongings. The Saracens, who were blindfolded by the devil, began to state that Christ was simply a man and not God. The holy friar Thomas brought forth many rational arguments to prove that Christ was truly divine, in such a way that the Cadì could not resist him. When the Cadì [475] saw that he was appearing so confused in front of all the crowd, he was very upset and started shouting and saying: "What do you think about Mohammed?" All the other Saracens were also demanding with loud voices that he speak. So Brother Thomas answered: "Since you want so much to know what I think regarding Mohammed, I tell you that he is the son of perdition and that he is in hell together with his father, the devil. I add that he is not there by himself, but that all those who observe his law, which is abominable, irrational and against the salvation of the soul, they are all in hell together with him." The Saracens started shouting and clamouring that he be instantly put to death. A great tumult ensued against the friars. They tied them up with very strong ropes, and placed them out in the sun, so that they would be scorched to death in the infernal solar rays. In that region the sun is so hot that no one can survive in it for more than the space of one Mass. Those brothers were tied in that way from Tierce to None, and yet they were not harmed. The Saracens were greatly confused when they saw that

miracle, and they began to plan new tortures and to say: "We will now light a blazing furnace, and we will throw you in it. If your faith is true, the fire will not harm you; if it is false, the flames will consume you." The friars answered: "We are ready to face the fire and all kinds of tortures you want to inflict upon us, and we will sustain them for Christ's sake. However, if the flames will destroy us, you are not to refer this fact to our religion, which is most certain, but rather to our sins. If, on the other hand, we will escape the power of the flames, you should conclude that this is the result of divine clemency and the truth of our faith."

In the meantime the Saracens lit up a great fire in the main square of the town, and all rushed to behold that spectacle. Brother Thomas, who was full of fervour of faith, wanted to enter the flames out of his free will. But some Saracens held him by his hood and said: "You will not enter the flame, since you are the elder, and you have somebody strong who protects you in such a way that the flames cannot burn you." Others began clamouring to bring a younger brother and throw him in the flames. In fact, the Orientals are accustomed to show respect towards the elders who have a white beard. At that moment four Saracens took hold of brother James of Padua who offered himself spontaneously, and they threw him forcefully into the flames. The flame was so large that it was not possible to see brother James; they could only hear him invoking Christ and the Virgin Mother of God. Although the flame was all around him, brother James was standing over the glowing coals praying with his gaze fixed towards heaven and his arms raised in the form of a cross. That great fire did not harm him in any way. The crowd was shouting that he was a saint, and was stating that the miracle was a proof of the holiness of the brothers and of the truth of the Catholic faith. But the Cadi shouted at them and said: "He is not a saint, he is not a saint. The fire is not harming him, because his habit is made of the wool coming from the land of Abraham, whom God has blessed." Then the Saracens doubled the intensity of the flame and threw brother James totally naked in them, after having poured oil in abundance over the twigs and wood burning in the fire. In this way they threw him totally stripped of his clothes once more in the flames. Brothers Thomas and Demetrius were kneeling down and praying fervently. When brother James had been in the flames until they were totally extinguished,

they called him, and to the amazement of all those present, he came out unharmed.

When Lomelic, that is, the mayor of the town, wanted to cut off his head, since he was very upset regarding the miracle, the crowd began to shout and say: "It is a sin to offend them, since they are saints and are dear to God." So brother James put on his clothes once more, and Lomelic told the holy brothers: [476] "Go, brothers, in the name of the Lord, since you will not receive any more harm on our part. In fact, we see that you are just men, and that your law is good and true. Therefore, go out of this land with haste, since this Cadi is keen upon killing you." That very moment Lomelic made them go away and transferred them a short distance out on the sea, at the hour of Compline, where there was a certain man, who was a close friend of Lomelic, and who offered them hospitality. The Cadi, however, in the meantime went to Lomelic and told him that the law of Mohammed had been abandoned, since those friars had come to preach, and the people were awestruck by the great wonders they had seen in them, and that they were instantly believing them and abandoning their religion. Lomelic answered that it was unjust to harm the brothers. God protected them in such a marvellous way, because they were poor pilgrims who were doing wonderful deeds. But the Cadi, like a hungry dog, said: "Do not hesitate to kill them; the sin will fall upon me and upon my sons. Do you not believe what Mohammed wrote down in the Koran, namely that if anyone kills a Christian he will gain the same merits as if he went to Mecca?" Mecca is the place where Mohammed is buried, and the Saracens go to that place out of devotion, just as Christians go to visit Christ's sepulchre.

Then Lomelic gave the Cadi permission to treat the holy friars according to his own will. So the Cadi sent four armed men, and commanded them to kill the brothers and cut off their heads. That very moment he resolved to capture and kill the Christians in that town. Around midnight the brothers woke up to go and pray Matins. Those four guards captured them and led them out of the village, telling them: "We have received orders from Lomelic and the Cadi to kill you. And we are doing this unwillingly, since we know that you are holy and just men; but if we do not obey, we, our wives, and our children will be killed without mercy." The courageous friars answered: "Most dear brothers, carry out what you have been ordered to do, since we are always ready to die for Christ." So those guardians

of the devil stripped the saints totally naked, and one of them drew out his sword and, while brother Thomas was praying with his arms in the form of a cross, with one strong blow cut off his head. Another one hit brother James on the head and opened it half way down to his eyes, and thus killed him. Another guard hit brother Demetrius in his belly, and then the others finished him off cruelly with their swords. Then they cut off his neck and that of brother James. That moment the moon became so radiant with light that it seemed to be a marvelous portent to all. Then there came such a heavy storm of thunder, hail and lightning that all those who were present were terrified and thought that they were going to die. The ship that had to carry the friars to Colam and instead had brought them to Thana sank in that most secure harbour, and also another vessel that was berthed in that place, in such a way that it disappeared from sight.

The Martyrdom of brother Peter of Siena

That same morning the Cadi sent his men to take over the belongings of the aforementioned Martyrs. They found brother Peter of Siena in the house and led him to the Cadi. The Cadi [477] tried to induce him to reject the faith with many promises on his part. Brother Peter, however, constantly professed his faith, and said that he detested the law of Mohammed. So the Cadi began to threaten him seriously, unless he would accept to become a Saracen. The Saint rejected all these proposals with indignation. Therefore he was made to suffer various torments for two whole days until he would be led to give up his spirit. Since he remained constant in his faith, the indignant Saracens hung him up by his neck on a certain tree, but he remained in that position from the hour of None to the following night, and remained hanging alive and without suffering any harm. That night they made him go down from the tree on which he was hanging and cut his body in half, so that in this way he consumed his martyrdom. The following morning nobody could find his body. In truth, it was revealed to a person worthy of trust that his body had been in hiding for a time, in order to reveal its great glory to the faithful.

When the Saints had been killed, the following night, when Lomelic was sleeping, the holy and glorious Martyrs appeared to him,

and they were as radiant as the sun. They were each wielding a flaming sword and they were hovering it over Lomelic, as if they wanted to kill him. Lomelic was terrified and began to shout in a loud voice. All the members of his family ran over to him when they heard him shouting, and he told them: "Those Franks who are teachers, that is religious men, were here standing close to me, and they seemed to want to kill me with their flaming swords." So they called the Cadi and Lomelic narrated to him his vision and asked for his council, since he was still afraid that the Saints would kill him. So the Cadi instructed him to make a great alms offering for those friars, in order to avoid death, since he was terrified of it. Therefore Lomelic convoked all those Christians whom he had first captured, and asking for their pardon he humbly admitted his fault. Then he freed all of them, and commanded that nobody was to harm the Christians under pain of death. After this he had four mosques built, in which he instituted priests.

A certain great friend of Lomelic, who was a member of the royal household, and who was a counsellor, and who helped to carry out the killing of the holy brothers, fell from his horse and was crushed by the horse's hooves. Finally the horse itself fell upon him, and thus his life was taken away from him by the devil.

The body of brother James was left unburied in the open air for eight days, but it was found to be incorrupt and did not emit any foul odours, as if it had died that very day. When the aforementioned brother Jordan came to Thana, together with the other Christians he gathered the relics of the Saints and found that they were emitting a sweet fragrance, and shedding profuse tears he buried them.

When the emperor Daldil heard the account of how the friars had been sentenced to death and then shone forth with so many miracles, he ordered Lomelic to be captured and to be led in front of him with his hands tied, and told him: "You most cruel dog, when you saw how the Lord freed them from the flames, how did you dare to touch them and give them the death sentence?" When Lomelic answered that the friars wanted to subvert the law of Mohammed and spoke against it, nevertheless the emperor remained angry and ordered that Lomelic be sentenced to the same death he had condemned the friars to endure, together with all his family. In this way it became apparent that the vision of the holy Martyrs who were wielding inflamed

swords became true. When the Cadi heard what had happened to Lomelic he secretly escaped from that empire once and for all.

In that region it was not a custom to bury the dead bodies, but the corpses were left in the open fields and thus they were soon totally consumed by the strong rays of the sun. These corpses of these Martyrs [478] were left in the sun for fourteen days, but they remained incorrupt as on the same day in which the Saints had been killed.

When the sacred relics had been gathered by the aforementioned brother Jordan, after some time, brother Odoric,²⁰⁴ a most perfect friar, came to that place, since he had heard about the Saints' martyrdom. He received the bodies of the Martyrs, and took them with him to India, where they worked many wonders. Once this same brother Odoric was sleeping in a certain house, where he had placed those relics. The Saracens maliciously burned that house, in such a way that people thought that the friar had died. In fact, the emperor had commanded his men to burn that house, so that Odoric would immediately die. That very moment his companion and his servant escaped from that place. Brother Odoric, however, took the holy bones and placed them in a corner of that house. The flames destroyed all

204 Odorico Mattiuzzi was born at Villanova near Pordenone, in the Friuli region of northern Italy, about 1286. He entered the Franciscan Order at Udine, in the Province of St. Anthony of Padua, about 1300. During the latter half of the 13th century, the friars Minor had been commissioned by various Popes to be their personal legates and undertake missionary work in the Far East. Among these missionaries the most famous were John of Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruk, and John of Montecorvino, who became the first archbishop of Khambalik, or Beijing. Odoric followed these missionaries in April 1318, when he left Padua, bound to Trebizond on the Black Sea, and then proceeded to Persia, and to the Persian Gulf. From Hormuz he travelled to Thana, on the island of Salsette, near Mumbai, where he gathered the relics of Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, Peter of Siena and Demetrius of Tiflis, who had been martyred some time before. He took the relics with him to China. From Thana he went to Malabar, Madras and on to Sri Lanka (Ceylon). He also visited the Nicobar Islands, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and went on to Canton in China. From there he travelled to Zaitoum, and went inland to the city of Quinsay (Hangsheufu). From there he continued his travels on the Hwangho River and arrived in Beijing, the capital of the Great Khan, where he remained three years with the archbishop John of Montecorvino. Then he returned to Europe, passing through Tibet and Armenia, and arrived in Padua in 1330. He wrote a famous diary of *Itinerarium* of his journey to the Far East, in Padua, or else in the papal court at Avignon. He died in Padua on 14th January 1331. Benedict XIV declared Odoric a Blessed on 2nd July 1755.

the other corners of that house; however the flames could not burn the corner in which brother Odoric was sheltering together with the relics of the saints, but they spread out like a tent high above that corner of the house and thus did not harm neither the friar nor the relics. When Odoric went out of that corner together with the relics, the flames immediately descended and burnt that corner of the house together with all the houses in the surroundings.

When brother Odoric wanted to go to Colam, he went upon a ship together with many Saracens and other unbelievers. A strong gale threatened to destroy the ship, and all the persons on board were praying to their gods to calm down that gale. The Christians and the Saracens were also praying to their one Lord God. The captain of the ship told the friars in the Armenian tongue, that if the gale would not cease, they would have to throw all the bones of the holy friars in the depth of the ocean. Brother Odoric was afraid, and thus with his companion, he multiplied his prayers so that the gale would cease. When he saw that it was in vain, brother Odoric took one of the bones of the Martyrs and, after having tied it with a rope, full of trust asked one of the servants [479] to let it fall down into the ocean. That very moment the gale changed into a favourable wind, and thus the ship could go into a very suitable port and no harm came to it or to its crew.

When brother Odoric went on the ship in the port of Colam, taking with him the sacred bones, since he wanted to travel to India, the unbelievers who were on the ship, according to local custom, searched diligently all the vessel to see whether there were any bones of dead people on it, but they could not find those relics, because of the merits of the martyred Saints. In fact, if they had found those relics, they would have immediately thrown them into the sea and they would have killed those who were carrying them. Therefore brother Odoric arrived with the holy relics and went to a certain town called Zaitoum, in which there are two convents of the friars Minor. The sacred bones were honourably placed in one of these friaries.

A certain Giovannino, son of Ugolino of Pisa,²⁰⁵ was crossing the sea. Out of devotion he had stolen one of the heads of the aforementioned Martyrs. There were two other ships in his convoy. A pirate ship ferociously attacked his ships. The pirates managed to capture the other two ships, but they could not attack in any way the

205 He was a merchant.

third ship, in which Giovannino was travelling together with the head of the holy Martyrs, even though they were trying hard to capture it, since it was evident that the divine power of the holy Martyrs was protecting it.

A certain Christian was suffering from dysentery for many days, and he was in danger of dying. When he had drunk, out of devotion, some water that had been used to clean one of the teeth of the aforementioned Martyrs, he instantly regained his health.

God worked many miracles through the merits of the holy Martyrs, and He does not cease to work wonders also among the unbelievers and the Saracens to this very day. In fact, when they are struck by illness, they take some of the earth on which the Martyrs had been killed, and they mix it with water or wine, and after they drink that water or wine they are totally freed from their illness.

In the year of the Lord 1322 a general chapter was celebrated in Lyons.

That same year or thereabouts,²⁰⁶ brother James Bernardi of the Order of friars Minor, who was Inquisitor against heresy in the provinces of Arles, Aix and Embrun, sent [480] brother Chatalanum and brother Peter Paschalis of sacred memory to the diocese of Valencienes, instituting them as his vicars to proceed against heresy and those who were propagating it. They carried out their office in a manly and constant way, until in the castle of Montesil, where they had come from the town of Chabeuil to carry out their task more efficiently they were killed after suffering various tortures by the heretics. Their bodies were carried to the friary of Valencienes and were buried in that place, from where they shone with many miracles. On the same day in which the Martyrs shed their blood, they appeared in their glory to a certain devout nun who was ill, and revealed to her that they had just received the Martyrs' crown, and admonished her to hurry to the place where their bodies were buried and she would certainly be cured

206 Brothers Cathalanus Fabri and Peter Paschalis de Saliente were killed in 1321, and not in 1322, as is proved by two papal letters, one of which is entitled *Vox sanguinis*, sent from Avignon on 30th November and the other also *Vox sanguinis*, sent from Avignon on 20th September to the bishops of Valence and Viviers, as well as to James Bernardi, friar Minor and Inquisitor in Arles, Aix, Vienne and Embrun, as well as to other noblemen and counts of the same provinces.

of her illness. When she had done this, she was instantly freed from all her sufferings. The news of these wonders and of the multitude of miracles reached the ears of the lord Pope John and the members of the Roman Curia. The lord Pope examined the life and martyrdom of the friars, as well as their miracles, and commissioned the Bishop of Valencienes to begin the process of their canonisation,²⁰⁷ so that it would not be impeded by any future troubles.

In the year of the Lord 1325 a general chapter was celebrated in Perugia.²⁰⁸ During this chapter the friars determined the questio

207 The Bull *Vox sanguinis innocentis*, given at Avignon on 20th September 1321.

208 This is an error. The chapter of Perugia was held in 1322 and not 1325. According to the *Chronicle* of Nicholas Glassberger, the issue cropped up in 1321, when the archbishop of Narbonne and the Dominican inquisitor of that region captured and interrogated a certain *beguin* or *bizzocco*, who was claiming that Christ and the apostles, following the way of perfection, possessed nothing as a title of property neither personally nor in community. Among the experts consulted by the inquisition in view of the final judgment, there was a certain Franciscan called Berengarius Taloni, who was lector at the friary of Narbonne. According to his arguments, the accused was not heretical at all, but was affirming a truth already contained in the Gospels and proved by the Church's authority in *Exiit qui seminat*. The inquisitor pretended that brother Berengarius publicly withdraw his affirmation, but the Franciscan lector appealed to the Apostolic See. When he presented himself in front of John XXII, he was imprisoned. The pope immediately presented this question in front of a commission of masters resident in the papal curia at Avignon. On 26th March 1322, John XXII issued the Bulla *Quia nonnumquam*. Since he considered himself to be above the canons of the Church, the pope declared that he had the right to revoke, modify, or suspend the decisions taken by his predecessors, including those contained in *Exiit qui seminat* of Nicholas III. On 30th May 1322, the Order celebrated the General Chapter at Perugia. The capitulars decided to hold on fast against the declaration of John XXII in *Quia nonnumquam*. On 4th June the capitulars sent a letter to John XXII, requesting him to uphold the prohibitions contained in *Exiit qui seminat*. The General Minister, Michele of Cesena (1316-1328), together with all the ministers and masters present at the chapter, published a declaration in which they affirmed that: "Christ and the apostles possessed nothing neither individually nor in common in reason of property, dominion, or proper right." They declared this doctrine not to be heretical, "but healthy, catholic and faithful, above all because the Holy Roman Church expressly upheld, affirmed and determined it." John XXII answered with another Constitution, *Ad conditorum canonum*, which was published on 8th December 1322, and affixed to the doors of the cathedral church of Avignon. On 14th January 1323, Bonagrazia of Bergamo, procurator of the Order, wrote a *libellus* of protest and appeal. In response, John XXII arrested him and held him imprisoned for one whole year. Then

John XXII republished the Constitution *Ad conditorem canonum*, after having modified it lightly. In it John defended the right of the pope, as supreme legislator, to correct preceding canons, if they resulted more harmful than useful. John XXII denied the Order the principle of the *simplex usus facti* (the simple *de facto* use of material possessions), as it was presented in *Exiit qui seminat*, and insisted that the Order was to accept the *dominium*, or right of ownership and property of all material things. As an expert canonist, John ridiculed the Order for its insistence upon maintaining its right of renouncing property in the case of material things consumed by use, such as the food of the friars. John XXII declared that the Church was not gaining any spiritual or material advantage from possessing things, which the friars were, in fact, using according to their own decisions; that it did not accept to have procurators who administered the friars' properties in its name; and that henceforth the Church would only keep the property of the Friars Minor in the case of churches, oratories, buildings, and all books, sacred vessels and vestments destined for the divine offices. On 12th November 1323, John XXII published the Constitution *Cum inter nonnullos*, in which he declared heretical the affirmation that Christ and the apostles did not have any property individually or in common. In April of the same year he had canonised Thomas Aquinas, whose views on poverty the pope had expressed in *Ad conditorem*. As John Moorman maintains: "*Ad conditorem* had turned the brothers into possessors; now *Cum inter nonnullos* threatened to turn them into heretics." The question between the Order and the papacy became complicated because of political factors. In 1324 Louis of Bavaria was elected king of the Romans, and John XXII excommunicated him as the head of the *Ghibellines* (the imperial party). Louis appealed to convoke a general council against John XXII, and in the edict of Sachsenhausen accused the pope of being a heretic. In this way, the imperial authority asserted itself as a defence of the cause of the Friars Minor in their conflict with the pope. In June 1327 John XXII convoked the General Minister Michele of Cesena to Avignon. Michele arrived only at the end of that year. In the spring of 1328 the pope manifested to the General Minister his opposition to the Franciscan manifesto of the Perugia Chapter of 1322, and declared such an affirmation as heretical. The rigorous defence of brother Michele of Cesena did not produce any effect. In the meantime, as we have seen, Louis of Bavaria had been crowned by the delegates of the Roman citizens in the basilica of Saint Peter, and declared that John XXII had to be deposed as a heretic, accusing him of being the Antichrist. To complicate matters, on 12th May 1328, Louis of Bavaria convinced the Romans to elect the Friar Minor Pietro of Corbara as antipope Nicholas V. This Franciscan, however, repented from having accepted such an offer, and in September 1330 asked and obtained the pardon of John XXII and was readmitted into full communion with the Church. On 27th May 1328, a general chapter was celebrated at Bologna. Michele of Cesena could not attend, because he was imprisoned at Avignon. The pope had given to the capitulars clear instructions to depose Michele and elect a new General Minister. The capitulars met at Bologna, and re-elected Michele of Cesena in an act of defiance. Michele was now aware that he was

regarding the poverty of Christ, and presented their case in the Curia in front [481] of the lord Pope. The lord Pope, however, was greatly angered at this initiative. From that moment the Order went through a great tribulation, which had seemed to be dormant during the preceding years. Indeed, the same General presented himself in front of the lord Pope and wanted to defend the decision taken by the aforementioned chapter, but he did not accomplish his task with due reverence, and neither was he prudent as he should have been. The murmurings on the false positions and detractions of the friars ignited the anger of the Pope against the Order and thus many scandals were born of this situation, and an irreparable evil was done to the fame of the Order.

During the times of this same General there was a certain brother called Germanus, who was a cook in the friary of Toulouse. He was daily radiant with spiritual joy, to the day of his death. His body was buried in the friary of Toulouse. Once the Custos of Toulouse, brother Berengarius Malabosco, was walking outside the choir, when he physically saw brother Germanus who appeared to him and said: "Father, I have just entered paradise; but since I still have not satisfied the payment of money that I owed to a certain man for having repaired [482] the water pipes of the kitchen, I have had to wait for some time to enter into the glory of heaven. Therefore I beg you, for the love of God, to hasten and pay that man for the service he has

risking his own life by remaining at Avignon. On 26th May 1328, he managed to escape from Avignon and reached the imperial court at Pisa. On 28th May 1328, John XXII issued the document *Quia vir reprobis*, in which he deposed Michele from the office of General Minister, and requested all civil and ecclesiastical authorities to capture Michele, together with Bonagrazia of Bergamo and William of Ockham, a master in Oxford, and accuse them of heresy. On 6th June 1328, John XXII published yet another document, *Dudum ad nostri*, in which he excommunicated the General Minister and his collaborators. Michele, however, had escaped with the seal of the Order, and he had no intention of handing it back. John XXII therefore nominated Cardinal Bertrand de la Tour as Vicar General (1328-1329), until the election of a new General Minister. In the meantime, Michele of Cesena, Bonagrazia of Bergamo, William of Ockham, Marsilio of Padova, and other friars, had transferred to the imperial court of Louis of Bavaria at Munich, and there they continued their opposition to John XXII and to his successor Benedict XII. On 10th June 1329, John XXII convoked a general chapter, in which less than half of the capitulars participated. During the chapter a new General Minister was elected, namely Gerard Eudes, or Odonis (1329-1342).

rendered to us.” When he heard these words the Custos was astonished, and when the vision disappeared he hastily arranged for that payment to be effected.

In those days, the Lord permitted that the enemy of religious life would arise against our Order. Indeed, some friars fell from the heights of the most perfect religious life into the abyss of their sins because of their temerity and under the diabolic impulse, and in this way they threatened the entire edifice of the Order. They drove Christ’s vicar to a great anger, and the flame of tribulation spread so much in the Order that it was clear that the prophecies of Saint Francis were coming true. God sent his clients, that is, the demons, who placed so many hazards among the friars spread all over the world, that they were humiliated and compelled against their will to return to the unity of the Order.

I beg you, o reader, to be careful and consider in these events the great perfection of this Order. Just as its head, namely Saint Francis, was conformed to Christ in his life, in his despising of the world and in the crucifixion of his flesh, in the same way his Order was similar to the holy Church, the bride of Christ, in good times and in bad. It grew immediately like a vine in the Church and spread its branches to the ends of the earth; it similarly grew like a mustard seed that is the least among all the seeds, in such a way that the Order of friars Minor became a great tree that spread its great boughs to the ends of the earth, just like the tree seen by the prophet Daniel (cfr. Dan 4:7-9). The preaching of the friars Minor illuminated all the earth just as the preaching of the Apostles had once done. This great net of the Church gathered in it the good and bad fish; and in this field of the Order the enemy planted the darnel in the midst of the good wheat. When the gale blew and the sea reared up its waves, the boat of Peter and the disciples was buffeted in the midst of the waves, while Christ was asleep, but it did not sink; in the same way the boat of Saint Francis, when it was buffeted by the gales of tribulation, seemed to have Christ its protector who was asleep in it, but the prayers of the holy friars roused Him up just as did the anguished cries of His disciples. Christ immediately woke up and commanded the wind and the waves, so that the tempest ceased and a great calm ensued. Christ prayed that Peter would not waver in his faith; He promised the same grace to Saint Francis, namely that whatever tribulations would rock the boat that is his Order it would always be kept safe and sound. Therefore,

my brother of little faith, why do you doubt when you find yourself in these greater tribulations?

Nevertheless, this most innocent Order could not perish with the Church, and it became embarrassed because of its many sins like a most tender virgin who blushes with embarrassment. Christ, however, who is her bridegroom, since He foresaw all its tribulations and all the weight it had to shoulder, gave the Order stability with the help of ecclesiastics and other secular protectors. He lifted to the excellent dignity of Cardinals two [483] brothers from Aquitaine, who were wise men and full of zeal for the Order, namely brother Vitalis du Four and Bertrand de La Tour, who stood in front of the Church to answer the accusations of the dogs barking against the Order.

In this period lived the lord *Infante* of Aragon,²⁰⁹ patriarch of Alexandria, who showed great devotion towards our Order and continually used to wear our habit.

Some time before this great tribulation of our Order, Saint Louis, bishop of Toulouse, was canonised in order to approve and exalt the greatness of our Order, since his miracles were abundantly clear in front of the entire papal Curia. His blood brother, the lord king Robert, also loved the Order very strongly, together with his wife, the lady queen Sancha.²¹⁰ She sent letters of consolation to the Order and among other things inserted that she would present herself personally to defend the Order with her own power, and that she was ready to offer her life for the stability of the Rule.

King Philippe V was governing in France. He had sent his daughter Blanche to the monastery of Saint Francis in Longchamp. After his death his heart was taken to Paris and buried in the friars’ church as a sign of his love for the Order. In the same kingdom Philippe VI, son of the sister of Saint Louis the Bishop, reigned with his wife Johanna, who was a most devout lady, and became a great defender of our Order.

In the kingdom of Castile Sanchius,²¹¹ king of Castile, a man of great fame, was reigning. At first he was angry against the friars and

209 His name was John, and he was the son of Jaime II, and archbishop of Toledo as well as patriarch of Alexandria, and was still alive in 1336.

210 Robert of Anjou died on 19th January 1343, when he was 64 years old, and his wife Sancha died on 21st January 1344.

211 Sanchius IV died on 25th April 1295, when he was 30 years old.

wanted to expel them from his kingdom, and proposed to destroy the Order, but after this he was filled with such a strong flame of love of the Holy Spirit towards this same Order that he demonstrated many benefices, and made great favours towards it, and at the end he wanted to be buried in the habit of the Order. During this time of tribulation, his successor was the most Christian king Alphonso,²¹² who also showed great love towards the Order.

[484] The king of Portugal was accustomed to have friars as his confessors, out of his devotion to the Order. Many queens in this kingdom were buried wearing the Order's habit, and one of them is represented wearing the cord and habit in the cathedral church of Lisbon; another queen is solemnly buried in the monastery of the sisters of Saint Clare in Coimbra,²¹³ which she built when she was alive.

Some time before, in the kingdom of Aragon, the lord king Jaime²¹⁴ showed great devotion to the Order. During his terminal illness, when he was sick in bed, he wore the habit of the Order and vowed to keep it on until the day of his death. When he died he was buried with the habit, and left his kingdom in the hands of his son Pedro, who became king in Barcelona and who showed great love towards the Order during those times of tribulation. Pedro was also buried with the habit of the Order when he died in Barcelona, as were buried his brothers as well. In the same way, he wanted to bury his first wife with the Order's habit in the friary of Zaragoza and the last one in the friary of Lérida.²¹⁵

The king of Majorca²¹⁶ and his wife, the lady of holy memory queen Esclarmunda, loved the Order to such an extent as is clearly evident, that they offered their first born son the lord Jaime to the Order, and he lived in the Order in a praiseworthy manner all his life.

²¹² Alphonso XI was born on 30th August 1311 and died on 16th March 1350.

²¹³ Saint Elisabeth of Portugal, who was the wife of King Dionysius, and who died in 1336. Her feast day is celebrated on 4th July in the Franciscan calendar.

²¹⁴ Jaime II died on 12th November 1327, when he was 66 years old.

²¹⁵ Pedro IV was born on 5th September 1319 and died on 5th January 1387, after having reigned for 52 years. His first wife was called Maria de Navarre and the second one Eleonora of Portugal.

²¹⁶ Jaime II of Aragon. Their son renounced the kingdom and entered the Order in 1302.

During the same time of tribulation the king of Hungary was the son of the brother of the holy Bishop Louis,²¹⁷ who was the great lord and defender of the Order. Out of his great love for the Order he dedicated his entire royal household to its service.

During that same time the king of Cyprus was the lord Henry,²¹⁸ who remained most pure in his virginity to the day of his death, even though he was married. He was perfect in every virtue, and loved the friars very deeply. When he died he was buried dressed in the habit of the Order in the friary of Nicosia, together with the friars. His tomb is glorious for many miracles.

In the year of the Lord 1317, in the midst of the great tribulation, on the 5th day of the *Calends* of October, the lord Eleazarus,²¹⁹ a most holy count of Ariano, who lived for 26 years with [485] his

²¹⁷ Namely Charles Robert or Charles II of Hungary, who succeeded his father Carlo Martello, or Charles I, brother of Saint Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, and who died on 16th July 1342, after having reigned for 50 years.

²¹⁸ Henry II of the royal house of Lusignan was king of Cyprus and titular king of Jerusalem from 1271 to 31st August 1324.

²¹⁹ Elzearus and his wife Delphina are two Franciscan saints belonging to the Third Order of Franciscan Penitents. He was born in Apt in Provence, sometime around 1284-1287, first born son of Ermengao de Sabran, count of Ariano and Laudana d'Albe de Roquemartine. He studied under the direction of his uncle Guillaume de Sabran, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Victor in Marseilles. King Charles II of Anjou ordered him in 1299, when he was still 18 years old, to marry Delphina of Signe. Both decided to live as husband and wife in total chastity all their lives. After the death of his father Elzearus inherited the title of count of Ariano, and went to the Irpinia region in southern Italy to take possession of his county, but the local populace was hostile to him. Robert of Anjou, king of Naples, greatly appreciated his good qualities, and sent him to release the Pope who was besieged in Rome in 1312 by the troops of Henry VII of Luxembourg. Elzearus was also in charge of delicate diplomatic missions in the royal court of France, where in 1323 he became seriously ill and died on 27th September 1323, when he was still 38 years old. Since he was a Franciscan Tertiary he was buried in the church of the friars Minor in Apt. He remained famous for his works of charity and for his assistance of the victims of the plague. Urban V recognised his holiness, but it was his successor, Pope Gregory XI who officially canonised Elzearus on 5th January 1371. In 1791 his relics, together with those of his wife the Blessed Delphina, were transferred from the Franciscan church to the cathedral church of Apt. He is especially venerated in Apt, in Avignon, in the Abbey of St. Victor in Marseilles, in Ariano Irpino, and in the Franciscan Order, where his feast day is celebrated on 27th September, together with his wife, the Blessed Delphina.

most holy wife Delphina in virginity and without ever being separated in their nuptial bed, departed from this life in Paris in the hands of brother Francis de Mayronis.²²⁰ During his last moments he prayed: "God, I thank you, because I am leaving my wife Delphina a virgin in mind and body." On that same day his death was revealed to his most holy wife who was in the province of Provence; his death was revealed to his family in a spirit of prophecy. The same holy count afterwards appeared in glory to his wife and told her: *The net is torn and we escaped* (Ps 123:7); and he disappeared that very moment. When he died he was buried wearing the habit of the Order in the convent of the friars Minor of Paris. That same year his remains were transferred to the friary of Apt in the Province of [486] Provence, where he shone with many miracles, and after the solemn process of his canonisation has been concluded, it is hoped that he will be shortly enlisted in the catalogue of the Saints.²²¹

The aforementioned lord Pope wrote cordial letters of support to many of the kings we have referred to and other persons, in order to conserve our Order.

During that same period of time many brothers shed their sacred blood in order to confess the faith. Many friars shone with so many virtues and miracles that their fame spread far and wide all over the world. Many great clerics lived during those times, namely brother Peter Auriol, brother Francis de Mayronis, mentioned above, brother Francis of the Marches,²²² brother Gerard Eudes,²²³ who composed many subtle and useful commentaries on the Sentences.

All these things show that, although our Order might have appeared horrible because of some of its members who were rebels and

220 Francis Mayronis de Digne was a famous disciple of Blessed John Duns Scotus and was the confessor of St. Elzearus.

221 Elzearus was canonized on 15th April 1370 by Pope Urban V (1362-1370), but the Bull of canonisation *Rationi congruit* was published by Urban's successor to the papacy, namely Gregory XI, on 5th January 1371. The cult of Blessed Delphina was confirmed by Urban V shortly after her death.

222 Francis of Ascoli Piceno was a disciple of Scotus and a doctor of theology.

223 Gerard Eudes was also a doctor of theology and became Minister General of the Order (1329-1342). For greater details regarding his life see the next section.

full of insane fantasies, nevertheless there were many Prelates and princes who held it in great favour and showed love towards it, as well as many friars who shed their blood for the faith, while others confirmed its perfection through many signs and wonders. The Order also had great and noble clerics of fame who professed this life, and who stood as a protection to the Order, just as if it had four columns as its foundation²²⁴ in order to serve its rectitude and high esteem, and to make it appear so admirable so as to convert not only Prelates but also others to be astonished at its greatness. Moved by divine instinct the lord Pope tried to dispel the murmurs of those who envied the Order and solemnly defended the innocence of the same Order, and bowed to it with compassion and with many favourable letters of affection and consolation that he sent to the general chapter of Paris,²²⁵ in order to invite the Order to return to its primitive love.

[487] In the year of the Lord 1325 a general chapter was celebrated in Lyons.²²⁶

In the year of the Lord 1328 a general chapter was celebrated in Bologna, and the aforementioned brother Michael was absolved from his office by the lord Pope and the lord brother Bertrand De La Tour, Cardinal, was declared Vicar of the Order. He commanded that

224 The four columns would have been the prelates, the princes, the friars who were martyred for their faith, and the clerics.

225 The general chapter of Paris was celebrated in 1329.

226 It seems that the author sometimes confuses the facts in his narration. Some manuscripts add the following information, which is found in Nicholas Glassberger's *Chronicle*, in *Analecta Franciscana* II, 135, ad an. 1325: "In the year of the Lord 1325 a general chapter was celebrated in Lyon. During the same chapter, the capitulars, together with the General Minister, published the following Constitution: 'The General Minister and the general chapter admonishes the friars in all the world as well as each and every single friar, and under obedience sends them whatever the holy Roman Church and our most holy lord Pope personally wrote in these Constitutions, so that they would observe them with reverence and sobriety. Whoever would be found to have transgressed these Constitutions, was to be sentenced by his Minister to imprisonment as a penance. The Minister is bound in obedience to execute this command, and to denounce all the delinquent friars to the General Minister. The same lord Pope John gave orders to the same General Minister to absolve the Ministers of many Provinces of the same Order and to institute others in their place. The General has since accepted this command and vowed to obey and observe it according to the mandate of the same Pope.'"

the following year a chapter was to convene in Paris in order to elect the future General.²²⁷

During the same year, brother Helias de Nabinali,²²⁸ Minister of Aquitaine, who had been chosen to read the Sentences in Paris, was absolved from his office, in the friary of Montauban, during [488] the provincial chapter, according to the command of the aforementioned lord brother Bertrand, Vicar of the Order. The Constitutions that the aforementioned brother Michael had written were totally abolished in the Province of Aquitaine. During that same year brother Berengarius of Malbosc,²²⁹ a most devout friar, was made Minister of Aquitaine.

The same brother Michael remained in the office of General for twelve years, and although he had been deposed, he continued to hold on to the office of General for as long as he possibly could.²³⁰

227 See note 628 for the relevant details regarding the general chapter of Bologna (27th May 1328) and its aftermath.

228 Helias de Nabinali was made magister of theology in Paris (May 1331). He was subsequently made archbishop of Nicosia on 16th November 1332, and on 12th July 1342 Patriarch of Jerusalem. On 20th September 1342 he became Cardinal priest with the title of San Vitale and died on 4th October 1363, and was buried in Avignon.

229 Malbosc is a town in the département of Ardèche.

230 Michele of Cesena died on 29th November 1342, still holding on to the seal of the Order.

ARNALD OF SARRANT

**CHRONICLE
OF THE TWENTY-FOUR
GENERALS
OF THE ORDER
OF FRIARS MINOR
[1369-1374]**

English Translation by NOEL MUSCAT OFM
from the original Latin text

Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,
in *Analecta Franciscana ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum Spectantia,*
edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae,
Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), prope Florentiam,
Tomus III,
1897

Section 4
FROM GERARD EUDES
TO LEONARD OF GIFFONI
(1329-1378)

**The times of brother Gerard Odonis (Eudes)
from the Province of Aquitaine,
XVIIIth Minister General of the Order
(1329-1342)**

[488] The eighteenth General of the Order was Gerard Eudes,¹ a famous master of the Province of Aquitaine. He was elected in Paris during the general chapter celebrated at that place in the year of the Lord 1329. In that chapter the deposition of the aforementioned brother Michele (of Cesena) from his office of General was considered certain. Nevertheless, in order to put an end once and for all to the cunning reasoning and empty words that had been uttered in abundance regarding this affair, the lord Cardinal Bertrand de la Tour, declared that Michele had been absolved from his office by all the Ministers and Custodes who were present in the chapter.²

[489] During that same chapter brother Berengarius of Malbosc, Minister of Aquitaine, died in Paris. In that same year, on the feast day of Saint Mary Magdalene, during the provincial chapter cel-

1 Gerard Odonis (Eudes, or Ot), was born in Châteauroux. He became a famous master of theology in Paris, known as *doctor moralis*. On 2nd June 1329, solemnity of Pentecost, he was elected Minister General, with the support of Pope John XXII, after the downfall of Michele of Cesena. He was sent as Legate to Sicily and to Bosnia-Croatia. On 27th November 1342 he was nominated Patriarch of Antioch and was entrusted with the Episcopal See of Catania, where it is held that he died and was buried in the cathedral church.

2 Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1329, n. 7: "During this chapter, at the conclusion of the controversy regarding the poverty of Christ and after having cleared some difficult questions, the Decretals of Nicholas III and the decision of the chapter of Perugia, taken from the same words of Pope Nicholas, were brought in line with the Decretals of Pope John, who had studied this question and pronounced his decision regarding it. The result of all this was that the storm abated and in the Order there was a great calm." But in fact, this was not so easy to acquire. The *Fratricelli de paupere vita*, who had been condemned in 1317, continued to exist, hidden in hermitages in the Apennines and in southern Italy and Sicily, whereas the *Fratricelli de opinione*, disciples of Michele of Cesena, continued to insist on their own way of understanding the doctrine regarding the poverty of Christ. Angelo Clareno himself was still alive until 1337.

ebredated at La Reóle,³ in the presence of the General, brother Gerard Marchionis was elected and confirmed as Minister of Aquitaine.

The life of brother Gerard of Palermo

During those times, in Palermo, in the Province of Sicily, there shone with fame the most holy brother Gerard, from the town of Valenza of Lombardy,⁴ a town in Piedmont. When he was ten years old his father died, and he remained an orphan living with his mother, who thus became a widow. For nearly 14 years he was ill with typhus and gout, but the saintly boy was brought up as a good son by his mother, who ministered to him with love. After his mother also died, his relatives tried to induce the young man Gerard to marry, but he refused their invitations. He distributed all his belongings to the poor, and also left some of them to his friends, and totally despoiled himself and began to freely lead the life of a solitary pilgrim. He lived a most austere life, and for some time stayed in Rome, Naples, and Sicily on Monte San Giuliano and on Monte Gibello,⁵ giving himself over completely to a life of prayer, until he was fifty years old. From that moment he began to nurture a unique devotion towards the most holy confessor and Bishop Saint Louis, and under the Lord's inspiration, entered the Order of friars Minor, where for 35 years he lived wearing the habit of a lay brother and progressed in all holiness. He was a most humble man and no words of murmurings could ever be heard coming out of his mouth, and he was always ready to obey everybody.

Once in the friary of Palermo, he was in the chapel of Saint Louis. He was uncovering the altar together with brother Leonardo, who was still a novice. The novice placed a wooden plank without paying due attention, and it fell upon glass *ampullae*, which were thus totally broken in pieces. That young novice was shaking with fear, and he was crying, since he was afraid that the sacristan would scold him. But the saint told him, "Do not be afraid [490] because the Lord will fix them." When they removed that plank they found that the *ampullae* were whole and unbroken as before.

3 La Reóle was the place of a friary pertaining to the Custody of Burgundy.

4 Valenza is a town on the river Po in the Piedmont region.

5 Monte Gibello is Mount Etna.

It once happened that the Guardian of the hermitage of Randazzo, in the Province of Sicily, brother Alfeo of Messina, ordered brother Gerard to cook the meal for the friars on Easter Sunday. Gerard bowed his head and promised to do so willingly. When it was nearing the hour of Tierce the procurator of that friary, a certain Corrado, went to the kitchen and found it still locked and the fire still not kindled. So he went to announce what he found to the Guardian. He was rather angry, and asked the man of God why he had omitted to carry out his duty as cook as he had promised previously. Gerard answered him with all humility: "Father, do not be afraid, since the Lord will provide good things for his poor ones." So he entered the kitchen after the elevation of the Body of Christ during high Mass. That very moment a most handsome young man appeared to him, who began to prepare diligently all the food that was necessary for the brothers. The procurator went to the kitchen once more and found it still locked. So he peered through the cracks in the door and saw that young man who was diligently preparing a good meal like a well-experienced cook. He was so astonished that he fell to the ground with fear. All the friars ran to that place and he told them what he had seen. So they immediately went to look in the kitchen and found, like the other brother, that there was a most handsome young man, who was very good-looking, and had golden hair going right down to his waist and around it he was wearing a white and clean apron. When he had prepared the food, he vanished from sight in the same invisible way in which he had come, to the admiration of all present. When the Office was concluded, the brothers entered and they ate such a delicious meal that, full of astonishment, they did not doubt that it had been prepared by the hands of an angel.

After this he was a doorkeeper in the friary of Palermo. He went to visit some sick brothers and found a certain brother John of Catania, who was suffering from terrible pain since for three days he could not pass urine, and it seemed that he would soon die. Brother Gerard was filled with compassion when he saw him in so much pain, and asked him whether he could help him in any way. He told him: "Pray for me, father, because I am dying with pain." The Saint hurried and entered the church and concentrated all his efforts to pray. While he was praying for his sick brother, that friar was instantly freed of his sufferings.

Another day the man of God was humbly washing a urinal in that same place, when it escaped from his hands and fell over sideways and, since it was made of porcelain, it broke into many pieces. When he saw what happened the Guardian said to him: "Brother Gerard, we now need to acquire a new urinal, since you have broken this one." The man of God, filled with faith, began to gather the broken pieces of the urinal, and presented it whole to the Guardian, saying: "Father, it is not broken; look, it is still whole." The Guardian was marvelling and began to praise the Lord for his servant.

The holy man worked another miracle similar to this, when he was still doorkeeper. Once a certain boy was carrying a glass jar full of wine. It fell down from his hands on the ground and broke into many pieces. [491] When the boy saw this he began to cry loudly since he was afraid that his father would beat him. The saintly brother Gerard took pity on him. He knelt down on the ground, and after having prayed for a short time, he gathered the broken pieces of the glass jar and gave it back whole to the tearful boy. When they saw this many of the brothers were astonished beyond words.

Brother Gerard lived in excessive penance and austerity. Indeed he was content to wear one rough habit and a harsh hair-shirt day and night, and would never use any footwear. Many a time his only food would be bread and water. His cell was the chapel of his patron Saint Louis, which was found next to the door in the friary of Palermo. His bed was a wooden plank on which his small body would find some rest, and next to it there was a wooden kneeler, where he would stay day and night on his knees, praying assiduously. And although he practiced such austerity in his clothing, food and bed, he would never judge others. On the contrary, although the friars in that convent would have food in abundance, he was always content to gladly acquire the necessary food for the brothers.

It happened once that, during the time of the grape harvest, brother Gerard was begging for wine together with another brother called Andrea along the streets of Palermo. As they went along they met a certain man who was very sad and was suffering. When Gerard asked him the reason for his suffering, he told them: "My first-born son cannot eat anything, and he is in agony and going to die." So that servant of God took pity on that man and entered his house. Through the power of the Holy Spirit he commanded that sick boy, who for three days had not been able to utter one single word, that in the name

of the blessed Mary and of Saints Francis and Louis, he would answer him whether he wanted anything to eat. That boy immediately answered, to the admiration of all those present: "I would like to eat lettuce, bread and nuts." When they had brought that food to him, he could hardly taste it. So the man of God took out a piece of bread from his sleeve, and when the sick boy tasted it he ate it whole and was immediately cured from his illness.

In a similar way the holy man took a branch of a cypress tree and touched it with the image of Saint Louis that was found in the chapel, placing it also in the oil of the lamp that was burning in that place, and after invoking the name of God, the blessed Mary and Saints Francis and Louis, with it he would free people from all kinds of sickness.

Once a certain demoniac, who had been securely tied with ropes, was brought from Monte San Giuliano to Palermo to brother Gerard. Upon the prayers of brother Lawrence from Monte San Giuliano, brother Gerard took the cypress branch and touching it in the usual manner with the image of Saint Louis and placing it in the oil of the lamp he said: "Open your mouth." That demoniac immediately drew out his tongue. The holy father touched his tongue with that branch, and invoked the names of God, the blessed Virgin, and Saints Francis and Louis as above, and that man was totally cured from that furious diabolic possession. He had not been able to sleep for many days, and after he left that place he slept for two whole days, and thus totally regained his strength.

The holy man was often enraptured with the thirst of a most ardent charity and intense devotion. He would frequently be found in that chapel in front of Saint Louis, looking at the image face to face [492] and his body would be completely lifted up from the ground. When once the holy man was in that same place speaking with Bindo de Longis from Pisa in the church of Palermo, they heard the bell announcing the moment of the elevation of the Eucharist, and so they both went to pray. And behold, that very moment Bindo looked and saw brother Gerard being lifted up corporally one cubit above the ground, and the same Bindo was truly astonished by what he saw.

The angelic man before God and men, namely brother Gerard, shone with the spirit of prophecy, in such a way that, with the help of the rays of divine inspiration, he had the knowledge of future and most hidden realities. Once the lady Elisabetta, queen of Sicily, came

to Palermo together with her husband the lord king Pietro.⁶ Now, although the queen had given birth to seven daughters, she did not have a son; and both she and the king were very sad regarding the future of the kingdom because of this. So the same queen asked the holy friar Gerard to pray to God and to ask Him to give her a son. After having prayed for her, on another day the servant of God answered her: "You must know for certainty that, before you will go back from Palermo, you will conceive a son, whom you will name Louis."⁷ When the king and queen heard this news they were overjoyed. They remained in the city of Palermo for some more days. When the queen wanted to go back, she humbly visited brother Gerard out of devotion. He told her in a prophetic spirit: "Rejoice, since through the grace of God and the merits of blessed Mary and of Saints Francis and Louis, I can now tell you that you have conceived a son." Full of joy she went to Catania and there, at the end of her pregnancy, on the eve of the feast day of Saint Agatha,⁸ she gave birth to a son, according to the word of the man of God, and called him Louis. He succeeded the lord Pietro as king of Sicily.

On another occasion, when the lord Enrico de Abbatibus, who was the supreme judge of the king, was staying in Palermo, he became gravely ill, and the doctors despaired of his condition and everybody thought only that he would soon be buried. This lord Enrico had great devotion towards brother Gerard, and he sent a messenger to him and humbly begged him to pray for him to the Lord. When he had done this, the Lord revealed to brother Gerard that his prayers had been heard and that the lord Enrico was totally freed of his illness. So brother Gerard rose from his prayers in the middle of the night and told the Guardian of Palermo: "Go to the house of the lord Enrico, since with the grace of God he is cured." The Guardian woke up and went to him and marvelled when he saw the lord Enrico totally cured. In that way the virtues and serenity of mind and heart of the Saintly man became evident.

Another time the lord Pietro of Antioch, who was chancellor of the king of Sicily, was very ill. So he asked brother Gerard whether he

6 The name used by the chronicler is *Trinacria*, which is the Greek name for the island of Sicily. Pietro II reigned from 1328 to 1342.

7 Louis reigned from 1342 to 1355.

8 4th February.

would be freed from that illness. After having prayed, brother Gerard answered him: "I tell you not to be afraid, since you will certainly be cured." According to the word of the man of God he was perfectly healed. But after some years he again became ill, and he consulted brother Gerard once more. Gerard answered: "I now tell you to prepare yourself well to accept death, since this is a terminal illness." After some days that chancellor died and was buried.

On another occasion the army of the lord king Robert of Sicily⁹ was besieged by a multitude of enemies. When the servant of God was asked regarding the fate of that army, he answered: "It is not necessary [493] to be afraid, since in a few days the enemy will return back to where it came from." In fact, this is what occurred, since the enemy remained without water, and in a few days the whole army retreated from Sicily.

On another occasion the lord Guglielmo, count of Augusta,¹⁰ suffered a great defeat when his castle in Augusta was taken over by his enemies. He asked for the restitution of his castle through royal letters, and came to the man of God, brother Gerard, so that he would support his case. The Saint told him: "You will not acquire your castle, if not after seven months." As the Saint had said, the request he wrote in the letter was not heeded, but after seven months he took back his castle.

Many persons said that the man of God shone with such clarity of prophecy that in a short time he was able to foretell the common state of the entire Church in both spiritual and secular matters, but he would never want to reveal these truths not even under the seal of secrecy.

A certain lady called Contissa was on the point of dying, since she was in hard labour for two whole days but could not give birth to the dead child in her womb. The Saint visited her. Among other things he told her: "Tomorrow during the ninth hour you will give birth to a stillborn child and you will be freed from your sufferings." And that was what happened exactly on that hour.

The man of God was strengthened with a most profound humility in such a way that he was ready to submit himself to all creatures for the love of the Creator. Although he shone forth with many

9 Robert the Wise of Naples reigned from 1309 to 1342.

10 Augusta is a port on the eastern coast of Sicily, between Catania and Siracusa.

miracles, he never abandoned his duty of doorkeeper out of obedience. He would normally fast on bread and water, except when his Superior would command him to eat of whatever was placed before him. He would immediately obey, but he would only taste a little of the food, so that in this way he would not deprive himself from the fruits of obedience and from a most harsh abstinence.

Towards the end of his life the holy man began to suffer strong tribulations by the demons that would appear to him and visit him frequently under the guise of savage beasts. The Saint would fight against them and win over them with manly courage. Once, during the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord, on the feast day of Saint John the Evangelist, which was a Friday, during the hour of Tierce the queen of glory, the Virgin Mary appeared to him. For a long time she comforted the man of God with her presence and her most sweet and tender words, and she was drawing him towards her and telling him that on the third day she would invite him to see the glory of heaven. Having said this she disappeared. The servant of the Lord revealed this to his secretary, some time before he died. On the third day, namely on the feast day of Saint Thomas,¹¹ his companion, brother Lorenzo of Monte San Giuliano told him: "Father, pray for me to God." The man of God answered: "I shall willingly do this for you and for all our benefactors, not here, but in another place, since I am going to heaven." He gave the same answer to Roberto de Altibrandino, who was an intimate and devout friend of his.

[494] A certain wise man called Raymond came visit him. He was a teacher in the court of the lord Frederick, king of Sicily. Out of devotion for brother Gerard he asked him to give him a *pater noster*.¹² The friend of poverty answered: "I cannot give it to you, since nothing belongs to me; but if it is pleasing to the Guardian, may your wish be satisfied."

At the end, on the feast day of Saint Thomas, which fell on a Sunday, after having received with great devotion the Sacraments of the Church, when it was nearly the hour of Tierce, the saint of God brother Gerard lifted his eyes to heaven and with a peaceful face departed to go to the Lord, just as the Mother of God had promised him.

¹¹ St. Thomas Becket, celebrated on 29th December.

¹² This refers to a type of "rosary" crown made of beads, on which to pray the *Our Father*.

That same moment, when the friars began tolling the great bell to announce his death, the rope of that bell broke. The bell, however, continued to toll by itself for a long time, without anybody pulling its rope. The people saw this and came to see with admiration the bell that was ringing in a miraculous way. Because of this miracle a great crowd of people gathered and they tried to take pieces of the habit that the Saint was wearing, as relics. On that very day brother Gerard began to shine with miracles. Now in the town of Palermo there was a certain lady called Gratia, who was disabled in all her members in such a way that she could not move. Her son led her to the tomb of brother Gerard, when his body had still not been buried, and when she kissed and touched his cord with devotion she immediately left that place liberated from her disability.

Another woman called Concessa, from the same island of Sicily, was very sick in her eyes, in such a way that she could not see distinctly. She placed the hand of the Saint with devotion upon her eyes and immediately she was freed and could see very clearly.

Another woman called Beatrix was suffering from a fever in the same town. They took her to visit the Saint's body in the church. There she was gripped by an intense fever and when she returned home she felt an intense pain in her intestines. With unwavering faith she took a tiny piece of cloth that her daughter had taken from the habit of the man of God in the church, before his body had been buried, and she placed it on her side with a devout invocation to the Saint and she was instantaneously liberated from her fever and her pains.

God worked these wonders and many other miracles to glorify his Saint, and such was the multitude of persons who went to visit brother Gerard that for two days the friars could not take the body of the Saint for burial. On the third day, during the lunch hour, the friars closed the doors of the church and the convent, and they buried the body in the chapel of Saint Louis in the friary of Palermo, where brother Gerard had lived night and day for all those years. But what the friars accomplished secretly the Lord wanted to reveal publicly. Indeed, there was such a sweet smelling fragrance in that chapel and in the other areas close to it, that the people came running when they sensed that fragrance and they were astonished to discover that his body had just been buried some time before they had come to the friary.

The saint immediately began to shine forth with many miracles in various regions. We shall write down the account of some among the multitude of these wonders. On that same day Orlando, who was a doctor, and who was suffering from a whooping cough, after having invoked the Saint as his patron, was totally liberated.

A certain brother Bartholomew, from Castrogiovanni, was liberated in a most perfect way on that same day from intestinal pains.

[495] A certain lady, who was just married to a young man called Paul, fell off from a piece of furniture and hit her head and arm hard on the floor. She broke her arm, and banged her head and bruised all her body, and so she was suffering from intolerable pain. On the evening of the following day she took a small piece of the Saint's habit and began to apply it with devotion on her broken arm, on her head and on her entire body, and she was immediately cured.

Nicholas Cebulla was instantly cured from pain and infirmity in his stomach, after having invoked the protection of brother Gerard.

A certain girl, called Elegrantia, daughter of Peter of Florence, from the same city, was suffering from a most dangerous fracture. She persevered for eight days near the tomb of brother Gerard, and on the eighth day she was completely restored to the most perfect state of health.

Matthew of Marseilles, from the region of Trapani, was suffering from cancer in his private parts. The doctors could find no remedy for him. After having been convinced by his compatriot, a master called Francis, he turned with many tears to invoke brother Gerard, and after having taken a piece of the Saint's clothes, he applied it to that blackish and fetid tumour and was perfectly freed from his malady.

Brother Gerard liberated many others who were obsessed by evil spirits. A certain woman called Massea, from the area around Pisa, was afflicted for eight months by a diabolic anger. Once her husband Peter, who was suffering greatly because of this, asked her why she was so angry and from where did that great anger come, in such a way that she would break the chains and ropes with which they would tie her up, and four strong men were not able to keep her still on the ground when she became violent. He also asked her whether she wanted him to procure any remedy that could help her in some way. She answered him in a prudent and meek way just as she had not done so before and said: "There is no other remedy or medicine

that is useful in my case, except the one that brother Bartholomew of the lord Alberico of Pisa¹³ has." Her husband marvelled at these words, since he had never heard that obsessed woman mention brother Bartholomew. So he hurried to Pisa, and began to inquire whether there was anybody living there who was called brother Bartholomew of the lord Alberico. When he heard that there was such a person, who was living in the convent of the friars Minor, he went to that place and found that brother. Then he recounted to him what his wife had said, and begged him to help him and give him any useful medicine he might have. Brother Bartholomew thought hard for some time, but that, upon the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, he remembered that he had some relics of the holy brother Gerard, namely some of his hairs and his crown of beads of the *Our Fathers*. After two days he gave that man those relics, together with a prayer that he had composed in honour of the holy friar, and sent him to take them to the woman who had offered herself to the protection of the saint's relics, and she was immediately freed from the anger and burning fury of the devil. This fact occurred in the year of the Lord 1343.

[496] After the Saint's death, during a period of four years, more than 20 persons obsessed by evil spirits were freed in a similar way through the intercession of the Saint. Among them there was a certain woman, called Diana, who had been obsessed for thirty years by the devil. Since she was sixteen years old she lived alone as a vagabond in deserted regions. At long last they carried her to the church of the friars Minor in Pisa and she was placed in front of the image of the holy brother Gerard on the Sunday within the Octave of the Apostles Peter and Paul,¹⁴ in the year of the Lord 1345. The aforementioned brother Bartholomew applied to her the relics of brother Gerard, and after making roaring sounds she was freed from the devil's obsession. There was a small boy who was four years old. When he heard her roaring in that way he immediately fell half dead to the ground. When

13 Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1343, n. 33, says: "The life of brother Gerard was written and divulged by brother Bartholomew of Pisa, son of the lord of Albisi, in 1347, on 2nd April, four years and three months after the death of brother Gerard. I have seen the same manuscript. This brother Bartholomew is the same one who wrote the *Liber de Conformitate* when he was an old man, and sent it in 1399 to the general chapter celebrated in Assisi."

14 It was the 7th Sunday after Pentecost, 3rd July. On that year Pentecost fell on 15th May.

the people around him brought him back to his senses and asked him what had happened to him, he answered: "I saw a black owl coming out of the mouth of that roaring woman. It was the devil, and it flew out of one of the windows of the church, and I was terrified that it would devour me."

A certain boy from Pisa, called Augustine, had been blind ever since he was five years old. He was marked in a similar way, and after the prayer of the Saint had been placed on his head in the evening, the following morning he woke up and was totally restored to health in both his eyes.

In the year of the Lord 1346, on 11th January, there were two men in the town of Pisa, namely Gaddo and Francesco, who were sworn enemies even unto death. On that same day Gaddo met Francesco on a public road, and he attacked him close to the river Arno between the *Ponte Vecchio* and the *Ponte della Spina*. When he hit him hard with his sword on his head for the first time, Francesco did not have a sword to give him blows on his part, and neither did he have a shield to defend himself. So he ran away and immediately fell to the ground. Gaddo continued to hold him by his head and gave him three blows on his side with the sword and hit him in his kidneys by inserting his sword right to its handle. Thus the sword penetrated his entire body, as many of the bystanders saw. Gaddo then ran away, since he feared that they would kill him. The people came running from all over that area. Francesco was lying lifeless and without any sense of movement, and when they saw him in that position they all commonly judged that he was dead. So they raised him from the ground and took him to a certain storehouse. When they undressed him, Francesco opened his eyes and began to breathe. They were all astonished and said: "Francesco, are you alive?" He answered them: "Yes, I am alive, thanks to God and to blessed Gerard, whom I was devoutly invoking between one blow and another." They could clearly see that his clothes and his shirt were torn with the three blows of the sword, but his flesh was intact on all parts, in such a way that no sign of any wounds appeared on it, and no signs of blood could be seen coming out of his body or staining his clothes. When the aforementioned Gaddo, who had struck Francesco with the sword, heard the people narrating that a great miracle had occurred and got to know the details of what happened, he was full of incredible wonder and said: "Certainly, I was hearing him saying and exclaiming: 'Saint Gerard,

help me.'" That very moment Gaddo went to Francesco and knelt down in front of him, [497] and begged his forgiveness out of reverence for God and the blessed Gerard. Out of his love for saint Gerard, Francesco forgave him all his offences and sent him away. They embraced one another and were in peace with one another. Then they went to the convent of the friars Minor of Pisa and they began to pray and to offer thanks in front of the image of blessed Gerard. Gaddo offered the sword with which he had hit Francesco, while Francesco left his torn shirt; from that time onwards these were left hanging in that place as a perennial witness to the miracle that had occurred.

Once, brother Bernardo Bruno, who was master and Minister of Aquitaine, was hearing the confession of a certain man who was devout to the holy friar Gerard. Out of shame or out of fear that man did not have the heart and the courage to ask forgiveness in that important moment for a certain sin he had committed. So the holy brother Gerard appeared to him visibly holding a staff in his hand, and he began to hit him with it and to tell him to say the truth in order to cleanse himself from that sin. That man was terrified at what he saw and without any shame he confessed his sin and cleansed himself from it.

In the same kingdom of Sicily, which is made up of six Provinces of the Order,¹⁵ there are many friars who are buried, and who shone with merits and wonders during different times.

In the island of Sicily, in the friary of Palermo, together with the holy brother Gerard is buried brother John Bura, who was famous for many miracles; in Caltagirone brother Richard, who carried a scorching brick from the kitchen to the infirmary to a certain sick brother, without suffering any burns, and who worked many other miracles; in Polizzi brother Gandolfo,¹⁶ who shone with many miracles; in Messina brother Simon Haymo, who was unique as a wonder-worker in life and after death; in the same place brother Electus, son of the lord Andrea, who on the point of death saw Christ appearing to

15 The six Provinces are: Sicily, Terra di Lavoro (Naples), Penne (Abruzzo), Sant'Angelo (Foggia), Calabria and Puglie.

16 Galdolfo Siculo, who was a zealous missionary to the Holy Land and an apostolic commissary.

him under the form of a dove, and invited him to dine with him, and who shone with many miracles.

In the Province of Terra di Lavoro, in Capua, is buried brother Augustine, who had once been Minister of the same Province.¹⁷ He was the one who died on the same day as Saint Francis and flew up [498] from this world to God. In Naples, brother Lawrence shone with virtues in life and after death worked many clear wonders.

Brother Donatus, who shone with miracles, is buried in the friary of Gaeta;¹⁸ he was a most holy man and was always lifted up during fervent prayer and contemplation. He was once meditating upon the beauty and sweetness of the infant Jesus, *who is the most handsome among all men* (Ps 44:2). He was inflamed inwardly with intensity and prayed the Lord that He would deign to give him a grace in this life, namely that he would be able to see the child Jesus in that same form and image in which he appeared when the blessed Virgin held him in her arms, and that he would be able to see him with his own corporal eyes. He prayed for this grace to the Lord for 20 years. Once he was praying in the church of the friary of Gaeta. A most beautiful child appeared to him, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. That child was approaching him with a sweet smile. Brother Donatus, full of humility and admiration, did not dare to go and embrace the child, and he was walking backwards, but at the same time was looking at the child Jesus and contemplating Him all the time. Going back in that way he arrived at the door of the church, and he could not proceed further. So he knelt down and prostrated himself in front of the child Jesus who ran to his embrace and told him: “Brother Donatus, your prayer has been heard. Look now and see me in the age in which my Mother

17 The account of the death of brother Augustine on the same moment of St. Francis’ death in the Portiuncula is found in various Sources. Here we quote 2C 218 (FAED II,389): “At that time the minister of the brothers of Terra di Lavoro was Brother Augustine. He was in his last hour, and had already for some time lost his speech when, in the hearing of those who were standing by, he suddenly cried out and said: ‘Wait for me, father, wait! Look, I’m coming with you!’ The amazed brothers asked him to whom he was speaking, and he responded boldly: ‘Don’t you see our father Francis going to heaven?’ And immediately his holy soul, released from the flesh, followed his most holy father.”

18 Donatus died on 29th March 1234 and his body was transferred to a more decent place in the convent of San Lorenzo on *Laetare* Sunday 1388.

would hold me in her arms.” Having said this He disappeared. Until now there is a stone slab on which the Lord Jesus placed his feet during this apparition.

In that same place is buried brother Simon, who was a most perfect man. – In the same Province is buried brother John, who was radiant for his wonders and his perfect manner of life.

In the Province of Sant’Angelo, at Foggia, is buried brother James of Assisi, who cured many sick people in a miraculous way from dangerous illnesses. In Corneto is buried brother Benvenuto, a lay brother from Gubbio, who was canonised in that same diocese after having worked many miracles.

In the Province of Calabria is buried brother Peter, Minister of the same Province, who became universally famous for his life and example.

In the Province of Puglie, at Oria, is buried brother Francis of Durazzo,¹⁹ who for seven years never ate any bread; in Andria²⁰ is buried brother Landus of Taranto, Minister of Puglie, who shone [499] with a great holiness; there are also buried brother Gismondo and brother John of Auricario, who were radiant with signs and virtues.

We have already spoken before of the Province of Penne.

The life of brother Odoric of Pordenone

Before the chapter of Perpignan,²¹ under the government of this General, there lived and died the most perfect man brother Odoric of Pordenone,²² who entered the Order of friars Minor when he was

19 Durazzo, Dürres, is a port in modern-day Albania. In those times it belonged to the Saracens.

20 Andria is a town in the province of Bari.

21 The general chapter of Perpignan was celebrated in Pentecost 1331.

22 Odorico Mattiuzzi was born at Villanova near Pordenone, in the Friuli region of northern Italy, about 1286. He entered the Franciscan Order at Udine, in the Province of St. Anthony of Padua, about 1300. During the latter half of the 13th century, the friars Minor had been commissioned by various Popes

still very young. From the day of his profession he always wore a hair shirt or cilice on his flesh. He was going to be promoted to various offices in the Order, but in his humility he always wanted to do mean tasks. He always fasted on bread and water, like many other holy friars. His bread was commonly made of a kind of red seed, which is given to donkeys as their fodder. Before he left to go beyond the sea, his Minister had given him permission to live alone as a hermit in the woods in complete solitude. He was often seen praying in church, and for three whole nights the devil appeared to him as a burgher who was squeezing his throat.

A certain wife of a blacksmith had a tumour in her cheek. Brother Odoric cured her by marking her cheek most devoutly with the sign of the cross, after her husband came to beg him to help her.

He also cured with the sign of the cross another girl, who had an incurable tumour in her hand. He demanded from her a firm promise that she would never reveal the fact to anyone for as long as he was alive.

Once he was crossing the sea out of devotion and he was travelling along many lands in a south-easterly direction. He saw many wonderful things, which he took note of and about which he wrote a book, [500] entitled *The Marvels of the World*. In the space of 16

to be their personal legates and undertake missionary work in the Far East. Among these missionaries the most famous were John of Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruk, and John of Montecorvino, who became the first archbishop of Khambalik, or Beijing. Odoric followed these missionaries in April 1318, when he left Padua, bound to Trebizond on the Black Sea, and then proceeded to Persia, and to the Persian Gulf. From Hormuz he travelled to Thana, on the island of Salsette, near Mumbai, where he gathered the relics of Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, Peter of Siena and Demetrius of Tiflis, who had been martyred some time before. He took the relics with him to China. From Thana he went to Malabar, Madras and on to Sri Lanka (Ceylon). He also visited the Nicobar Islands, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and went on to Canton in China. From there he travelled to Zaitoum, and went inland to the city of Quinsay (Hangsheufu). From there he continued his travels on the Hwangho River and arrived in Beijing, the capital of the Great Khan, where he remained three years with the archbishop John of Montecorvino. Then he returned to Europe, passing through Tibet and Armenia, and arrived in Padua in 1330. He wrote a famous diary of *Itinerarium* of his journey to the Far East, in Padua, or else in the papal court at Avignon. He died in Padua on 14th January 1331. Benedict XIV declared Odoric a Blessed on 2nd July 1755.

years, during which he was in the east, Odoric baptised 20 thousand infidels and subjected them to the Catholic faith.

Once he was staying in a certain land, in which there was the command that no one could offer hospitality to any Christian in his house, under pain of death and confiscation of his goods. Odoric was then seriously ill, in such a way that he could not travel on foot for one whole year. A certain peasant placed him upon a tree, called *fasciol*, and he lay there in the tree. For the space of that whole year he did not eat anything except the fruit of that tree, that continued to grow all the year long, and neither did he drink any water except for the water that oozed out from that tree's roots. He used to say that he patiently endured all that tribulation. Once, when he was very hungry, he ate a fruit that he had found in a certain river. That fruit gave him so much physical strength, that he could spend nine days without food or other necessities. He also believed that he did not need any more food or drink, except for what he ate when asked to do so by that same lady.

After this he went to stay at the house of a pagan man, so that he would convert him and his son, who was a young boy. He woke up after matins in order to take the boy with him, but that boy was so sleepy that he could not travel further. Therefore brother Odoric, in order to protect the boy from wild beasts, placed him upon a tree and left him there to sleep, while in the meantime he gave himself up to prayer. He then saw a multitude of women who were approaching him in procession along the road, singing melodiously, and they were wearing green coloured vestments. After that he saw another greater procession of women who were this time dressed in red coloured vestments, and after them there followed another group of women wearing white silk vestments. All those women were marvellously crowned. At last he saw a certain lady of great beauty who was wearing vestments of cloth of gold, and who was assisted by many knights. That same moment Odoric heard that the lady was solemnly calling him by name. He was astonished and answered: "My lady, how is it that you know my name?" She answered him: "I am the Mother of God and I am going with all these ladies to honour a certain woman who will soon die, and who always served me in virginity. The first procession that you saw was made up of holy married women and widows; the second one was made up of Martyrs; the third procession was made up of women who always served me in total virginity."

While she was still talking to him Odoric walked with her the distance of about half a league. At that point the blessed Virgin told him that he should hurriedly return to the young boy, whom he would find crying, and that he should take him and immediately follow her, since that woman could not die before he had administered the Eucharist to her. When that vision disappeared, brother Odoric found the boy crying and took him and went after the lady and found the woman who was dying; when he had administered communion to her, according to the words of the Virgin, she departed from this life.

Odoric also arrived in a certain region, called Malescorte. In that place as well as in the entire land of Tartary God had given the friars Minor so many graces, that with just one word they could drive out the devils from the bodies of those possessed by them, as one would drive out a dog from a house. For this reason some persons who had been possessed by the devil for 20 years were carried, bound in fetters, to the friars, and were liberated from the possession. [501] They converted to the faith and the friars baptised them. Then the brothers took their idols made of felt and placed them in the fire. Whenever the power of the devils preserved them from the flames, the friars would bless them with holy water and immediately after having driven away the devil the idols would be thrown back and were consumed by the fire. The devil would cry out in the air and say: "Look how I have been expelled from my own house!" When the pagans who worshipped the idols would hear these words they would convert and the friars would baptise them.

Once Odoric was travelling along a certain valley, that was full of lush vegetation and had a river. He saw that there were many dead corpses in that valley and he heard the music of a certain musical instrument called *nacara*²³ and of other musical instruments. That music was instilling a great terror in him. That valley was 7 or 8 miles long, and whoever would enter it, according to what was proved true in that region, would never come out alive, but would certainly die. Brother Odoric commended himself to God and entered it just the same. After having found a great number of dead bodies at the entrance, he went on and on the side he saw a rock that had the form of a human face, which was so terrible to behold, that he was nearly go-

23 The *nacara* is described as a kind of drum used by pagan priests in Egypt, who would hit it with an iron rod.

ing to die with fear. So he commended himself once more to God, and was continually saying: *The Word was made flesh* (Jn 1:14), and after having made seven steps, he approached that face. But he could not proceed any further, and full of fear he went on to the head of the valley. Then he went up a certain mountain of sand, and when he looked around him he did not see anything else except a great quantity of silver on the summit of the mountain, that was gathered together like fish scales. He first took some of it to his bosom, but then he discarded it and threw it away from him. In the meantime he was listening to the aforementioned sound of the musical instruments, and with God's protection, he finally went out unharmed from that valley. When they saw him the Saracens were full of wonder and came back to him saying that he had avoided death because he was baptised and was a holy man. They also told him that those dead corpses were all demons that lived in hell.

Odoric also arrived in the splendid palace of the great emperor who is known as the great Khan. The friars Minor always have a special place on his table, since the emperor asks for their blessing. After having stayed with him for two years, with his own free will Odoric came back by sea, so that he would take back with him other friars in order to teach the people of those lands. When he was going back to his land for this reason, the devil appeared to him on the road under the guise of a pilgrim woman. After calling him by name, the devil asked him where he was going. Brother Odoric told the devil: "Who are you and where are you coming from?" That woman answered: "I am the devil, and I have come in order to hinder you in your endeavour, so that you will not expel us from the persons we possess. And you should know that you will never come back to these parts." So Odoric felt confused and answered with a loud cry: "Go away, Satan, you are the father of lies, and I will never believe what you say." His companion, who was following him, was astonished, since he saw him crying out so loudly and seemingly speaking to a ghost. When he scolded Odoric for such a manner of talking so loudly, he answered him that he was not talking to the empty air but to the devil, and he added, "since he has told me these very words."

[502] When Odoric was staying in Pisa, he wanted to go to the lord Pope to ask for his blessing,²⁴ and to plead with him regarding the tribulations of the Order, but he began to become seriously

24 Pope John XXII resided at Avignon when Odoric returned from the Far East in 1330.

ill. When he felt so afflicted, the blessed Francis appeared to him in a certain cloud that was luminous within and dark on the outside, and told him: "Brother Odoric, do not go to the Curia, since I will go and take care of your business, for which you want to go there. Rather, get up and go back to your homeland, and there you will die, because this town does not deserve to have your mortal body." So he immediately asked to be taken to Udine, his native town, although he was feeling very weak in his body and that town was very far away from where he was staying. When he had made his general confession and the confessor wanted to absolve him, he told him: "Father, it is pleasing to me that you absolve me, although I do not need to be absolved, since God has absolved me already from all my sins." After that, on a Monday at the hour of Tierce, he departed from this life.

When the friars, after having recited the Office of Vespers, wanted to bury him, Gastaldus, the mayor of the town, arrived. He was a great friend of Odoric, and he told them: "Brothers, it is not a good thing to bury this man in such a manner. Please wait until tomorrow, and I and all the town will come to render him honour." The friars did just what he had told them. On the following day, that was a Tuesday, in the morning, the friars recited the liturgical prayers of the funeral and, as was the custom, the ladies came over to kiss Odoric's feet. A certain lady, who was the sister of the lord patriarch of Aquileia, had been suffering for seven months from a contracted arm, and she could not find any remedy. So she approached the arm of brother Odoric, and full of trust touched it with her own contracted arm. That very moment she was cured and began to cry out aloud and show her arm to everybody. So all those present also shouted out, and began to declare that Odoric was a saint, and therefore that he should not be buried immediately. From that moment many sick persons came to that place and they all returned cured through his intercession.

Odoric's face appeared to be more beautiful than when he had been alive; his body members were more flexible than those of any living person. The crowds began to take pieces of his habit as relics, and they cut off his habit up to his knees. A certain woman tried to cut off his finger with a scissors, but she immediately became unable to move. For this reason the friars closed Odoric's body in an urn. On Wednesday the lector of the friars Preachers came in the evening and delivered a sermon on the life of Odoric. When the brothers wanted to

place him in another ark with three locks, and therefore tried to bury him once again, the crowds came over with great force out of devotion and they wanted to kiss his feet and hands. The body began to emit such a sweet smelling fragrance that everyone was astonished. The Custodian of the church of the Canons, who was a very solemn man, together with a certain burgher, wanted to test whether the friars were deceiving the people by placing fragrant substances on Odoric's body. So one of them uncovered the body and began to sniff in all directions upon that corpse applying his nostrils on the legs, and he was still sensing that same fragrance. Therefore he took an oath regarding the truth of that fact, and used to declare that for seven consecutive days he could still sense that fragrance in his hands, that had touched that sacred body.

[503] When he was being buried, the people began to take pieces of the outer casket as relics. A certain man came over with a big sword and wanted to cut off a piece of wood, but he instead cut off his entire finger, which was seen hanging only by a piece of skin. So he applied his wound to that wooden casket, then wrapped his cut-off finger with a piece of cloth, and ran to the doctor. When his finger was uncovered, it was found to be whole, and hardly any sign of the wound was evident. The doctor was very confused, and thought that he was being deceived. That man, however, full of astonishment, began to declare that brother Odoric had cured him from that incision in his flesh.

On the following day, that was a Friday, the lord patriarch of Aquileia came over from one of his castles to visit the sacred body. Since the doctors said that the body members of that corpse were more flexible and the face more beautiful, and the cheeks more rosy than when Odoric was alive, and that his body emitted a sweet smelling fragrance, and therefore that they had their doubts as to whether he had truly died, the lord Patriarch decided to settle their doubts once for all, and ordered that Odoric's body be publicly exhumed from the grave. The mayor of the town and the consuls came over together with the Guardian, who opened with three keys the three locks that secured the place where the sacred body lay. The sacred corpse was taken out of the ark and placed devoutly upon an altar. The lord Patriarch saw the body members as if they were the members of a living man, since they were flexible and soft, and he applied his nostrils to the corpse to sense the fragrance it emitted, and could not keep him-

self from weeping. He placed his own ring in the finger of that sacred body and knelt down and showed reverence to that Saint; and after him all the members of his household did likewise. Odoric's face was beautiful and young looking, as if he were still alive. When the Abbess of Aquileia, whose monastery was about 6 leagues distant, arrived at that place, she also requested to see the body, since she was a very noble lady. So the mayor and consuls, together with the Guardian, who kept the keys of that ark, came over, and once more placed the body on the altar together with candles. The Nuns came over two by two to devoutly kiss the feet of the sacred body. That moment a stone dislodged itself from the building and fell upon the leg of brother Odoric, and after having wounded it, blood began to come out of it. The mayor of the town took his silken hood and applied it to the wound to gather that blood, and kept it as a relic.

Brother Michael of Venice had incurable ulcers in his throat, that developed naturally, and his throat had a hole in it for a period of seven years. When he heard about the miracles that brother Odoric had accomplished in the lands beyond the sea, he offered himself and made a vow to the holy man. He sent Odoric a letter through brother James. The letter said: "Brother Odoric, my most dear companion, for the sake of the charity, friendship and company that we had when we were together among the unbelievers, and for the sake of your merits, I humbly beg you to cure our friend and faithful procurator from his illness." When the same brother Michael went to Odoric's tomb on the vigil of Pentecost after Matins, in the presence of two friars, kneeling down he read out aloud that letter, and after having applied it on the holy man's tomb and placed it confidently upon his own wound, [504] after praying in that place he found himself to be completely cured. On that same day he preached to the people, and showing them the place where he had the ulcers, he spread far and wide the account of that miracle.

The following day, a certain woman from Padua was being carried upon a cart, since she had great difficulties in giving birth and had broken her spine and become hunchbacked in such a manner that she was bent down to the ground and could not lift up her head more than the space of three palms, since she was tall and for ten years had walked in that bent state with the help of a stick. When she stayed for some time near the tomb, on the third day she was restored to her for-

mer health, she could walk without the stick, and could stand upright in front of all the onlookers.

The Lord worked many other wonders through His Saint. To him be honour and glory forever and ever.

In the same Province of Padua and in the friary of Saint Anthony rest the mortal remains of brother Luke,²⁵ companion of the holy father Saint Anthony, as well as those of brother Fidentius,²⁶ who was a man of great perfection and contemplation. In Conegliano²⁷ is buried the lay brother Mark, who was a holy man; in Mantua brother Gerard. All these brothers were most holy in life and became radiant with miracles in life and after death.

In the year of the Lord 1331 a general chapter was celebrated in Perpignan.²⁸ In this same chapter the General brother Gerard

25 Luca was descended from the noble family Belludi of Padua. He entered the Order of friars Minor when he was 25 years of age. According to tradition Saint Francis himself gave him the habit. He was a man of culture and studied in the University of Padua. Luca was ordained priest in 1227, and became the closest companion, or *socius*, of Saint Anthony of Padua, when the saint was minister provincial in Padua. He was one of the editors of the *Sermones* of Anthony, and may also have contributed to the biographical documentation of the official *legenda* of Saint Anthony, known as *Assidua*, whose author is anonymous. Through his prayers Padua was freed from the tyranny of Ezzelino da Romano (20th June 1256). Luca died on 17th February 1286 and was buried in the same casket in which the body of Saint Anthony had been for some time. In 1971 his remains were translated to another tomb in the Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua. Pius XII confirmed his cult as a Blessed on 18th May 1927. He is author of a volume of *Sermones dominicales*, conserved in the library of the convent of Saint Anthony in Padua.

26 Fidenzio da Padova (1226-1291) was a missionary in the Holy Land. He had witnessed the fall of Safed in 1266. In 1274 he returned to Italy. In 1289 he was again in the Orient and witnessed the fall of Tripoli in Lebanon, returning to Italy again in 1290. During the Second Council of Lyon (7th May – 17th July 1274) Fidenzio was asked to present to Pope Gregory X and to the Christian princes a strategic plan for reconquering Jerusalem. His plan was published in his famous *Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae*. Cfr. Fidenzio da Padova, *Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae* (Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese), a cura di Girolamo Golubovich, Collegio S. Bonaventura, Quaracchi (Firenze), Tomus 2, 1-60.

27 Conegliano is a town in the province of Treviso.

28 The general chapter of Perpignan was celebrated on Pentecost, 19th May 1331.

changed the old form of the general statutes that had been published by the lord brother Bonaventure and his successors. Quoting the sayings of the holy fathers and the privileges of the Order and the various statutes of the general chapters, he edited in the same chapter a new compilation of general statutes. In these statutes he imposed upon the friars some new ceremonies and rites contrary to ordinary customs, namely, that the habits of the friars who entered the Order should first be blessed; and that the one who is received for profession should stand during conventual Mass and prostrate himself in front of the altar; and after the priest has received communion, the one who is professed should also devoutly receive the body of Christ; and that afterwards he should read from the parchment (the form of profession) that he personally wrote or asked another person to write for him, if he did not know how to write, while placing his hand on the cross or other sacred sign; and that he should profess in front of the friars as well as the crowd of secular persons in the hands of the Prelate who celebrated that Mass. – The statutes also laid down that the friar who went out of the friary for a distance of more than two *dietas*, should kneel down in front of his Prelate and say: “Lord, I ask for your blessing,” and in this way humbly beg for his blessing.

[505] When the lord Arnald of Pelagrua,²⁹ Cardinal Protector of the Order, died, this General, according to the wish of the aforementioned chapter, asked the lord Pope and obtained as Protector of the Order the lord James Caietani, Cardinal deacon of San Giorgio al Velabro.

In the year of the Lord 1333 the venerable father brother Dominic de Barra was elected and confirmed as Minister of Aquitaine, since brother Gerard Marchionis was absolved from his office because of his frail body.

Brother Alvarus Pelagius from Spain, who was a doctor and penitentiary of the lord Pope, refers in the *Summa* that he composed, with the title *De Planctu Ecclesiae*, that in the year of the Lord 1331

During the chapter new Constitutions were published.

29 The author of the *Chronicle* errs. Arnald de Pelagrua, a French, was Cardinal deacon of Santa Maria in Portico not in Cosmedin, as the author says in another section, and died in August 1331 or 1335. According to the Bulla *Nuper dilecti filii*, published in Avignon on 23rd July 1334 it seems that this Arnald might have already died, or else he had renounced the office of Cardinal Protector in favour of James Caietani.

this General brother Gerard presented in front of the lord Pope John an appeal that was sealed with the seals of 14 Ministers, as well as with the seal of the general himself. In this appeal all the ones whom we have mentioned as having stamped their seal, pleaded with the lord Pope John to revoke all the declarations regarding the Rule, since this was contrary to the will of blessed Francis, as it is expressed in his Testament,³⁰ since these declarations were binding the friars, who thus could not observe the Rule in a better way, since it was impossible to observe the same declarations. They also said that the chapter of the Rule that stated: “Wherever the brothers may be who know and feel they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, they can and should have recourse to their ministers,”³¹ and that the Ministers in these cases could dispense them from observing some points of the same Rule; and also (that chapter of the Rule that stated): “the friars cannot receive money,”³² not even through intermediaries, for the sick brothers and in order to clothe the brothers, were not in the intention of the Rule; since the ones who presented the plea interpreted infirmity to refer to any kind of corporal necessity. The Pope answered: “This meaning, referring to the two points of the Rule, regarding dispensation and reception of money, is not correct and goes against the Rule, and we believe that, among a thousand friars, not even one of you would agree to it in the whole Order.” In this way the Pope annulled their plea. After this they wanted to procure that some articles in the provision that used to be found in the declaration [506] of the lord Pope Clement V be revoked,³³ but the Pope did not listen to them neither in this case. That is what happened. – In fact, it is unbelievable that a cleric of such great fame, especially since he was a General, would say that the fact that the friars received money for the sick brothers and in order to clothe the brothers did not go against the Rule. The Rule, rather, expresses itself in the opposite manner in an

30 Testament 38 (FAED I, 127): “And I strictly command all my cleric and lay brothers, through obedience, not to place any gloss upon the Rule or upon these words saying: ‘They should be understood in this way.’”

31 LR 10,4 (FAED I, 105).

32 LR 4 (FAED I, 102).

33 According to Alvarus Pelagius, the ministers wanted to abolish some provisions of the decretals *Exivi de paradiso*. Gerard Eudes, according to the same Alvarus, admitted the maximum relaxation of the Rule in the Order.

evident way, since it says: “saying always that, as stated above, they do not receive coins or money.”

In the year of the Lord 1332 and 1333 this same General, upon the request of the lord Zacharias, archbishop of Saint Thaddeus in Armenia, sent many friars from the Province of Aquitaine and from other parts of the Order to go and convert the Armenian subjects of greater Armenia and other unbelievers; he also wanted to preserve their unity with the holy Roman Church. Among these friars there was brother Roger Guérin,³⁴ who came from the aforementioned Province.

34 The Crusades lost Jerusalem to Salah-ed-Din on 2nd October 1187. On 18th May 1291 the Crusades lost their last stronghold in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, namely the fortified town of Acre on the Mediterranean coast of Palestine, occupied by Melek-al-Ashraf. After this tragic end to Christian presence in the Holy Land, the Franciscan friars managed to enter once more in the Christian holy places with peaceful means. A friar from the Province of Aquitaine, Roger Garin or Guérin, arrived in Jerusalem in 1333 and stayed at the Hospital of Saint John close to the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Among the pilgrims who were lodging at the Hospital there was a Sicilian noble lady called Margherita, who maintained good relations with the Sultan of Egypt in favour of the Christian pilgrims who visited the Holy Land. On his part, brother Roger was the representative of the sovereigns of Naples, king Robert of Anjou and his wife queen Sancha or Sancia. According to documents written in Arabic, and conserved in the historical archives of the Custody of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, on 15th May 1335 the lady Margherita bought from the public treasury a property on Mount Zion, paying one thousand golden *denarii*. On 19th September 1335, brother Roger bought one third of this property from lady Margherita, paying 400 *denarii*. On 1st February 1337 brother Roger and other friars, known as *friars of the cord*, that is, friars Minor, acquired another property for 1400 *denarii*. At that time brother Roger was living in the small friary at the *Coenaculum*, and enjoyed the juridical recognition of the local authorities in Jerusalem. In fact, between 1335 and 1337, brother Roger had bought the entire holy place of the *Coenaculum*. Two Papal Bulls of Clement VI, dated 21st November 1342, namely *Gratias agimus* and *Nuper carissime*, confirm and communicate to the Catholic world that “after difficult negotiations” between the sovereigns of Naples and the Sultan of Egypt Melek en-Naser Mohammed, and “at a great expense” the Franciscans had entered in possession of the *Coenaculum* of the Lord (Upper Room of the Last Supper), of the Chapel of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and of the Chapel of the Apparitions of the Risen Christ, and that at that very place queen Sancha had built a *conventus*, a friary, for 12 Franciscans to officiate in that place and in the Holy Sepulchre, and 3 secular persons who were at their service. In 1336 the Franciscans were probably already living in the friary, whose small mediaeval cloister is still existent today. The superior of the friary was known as the *Guardian of Mount Zion*, and from 1342 he became *Custos* of the Holy Land.

He went to the Holy Land and obtained from the Sultan of Egypt the sacred place of mount Zion, where there is the *large upper room* (Cfr. Lk 22:12) or *Coenaculum*, where the Lord ate His Supper with his disciples, and also the sacred place where the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost under the form of flames of fire (Cfr. Acts 2:1). In that place he built a friary for the brothers; from that moment to this very day our friars live in that place and in the Holy Sepulchre.

Other friars travelled to Armenia, where they baptised many and led them back to unity with the holy Roman Church. Among them there was a certain devout and well-educated man, brother Gonsalvus Surat, who could preach since he had perfect knowledge of their language, and who baptised many and translated some books from Latin into Armenian and accomplished great spiritual benefits in that region.

[507] During that time there was a certain friar living in those parts, who was perfect in holiness and had a great desire to become a martyr. When he was still a young man he stayed at a friary together with eleven other friars of his same age. The sweetness of the grace of the Holy Spirit descended so completely upon them, that they became imitators of Christ and Saint Francis in their inviolable observance of the Rule, in their bodily penances and in their continual prayers, and it seemed that, in some way, they had been transformed into another group of twelve Apostles. When they had continued to persevere for a time in the exercise of such a virtuous life, one night, when they were still praying in the choir after the Office, the devil came and as if he would hit them hard with his hand, he began to shout with a loud human voice and say: “You should know that, since you have striven so much to be my adversaries, in a short time you will be dispersed in various regions.” The brothers were astonished and were inflamed to do even better, since they saw that this was displeasing to the devil, and they prepared themselves with patience to endure all future tribulations. On the following day all of them received letters of obedience, commanding them to transfer without delay to many other convents. The other friars were afraid that, under the instigation of the devil, those brothers would now succumb to some dangerous novelties because of those sudden changes they had to endure against their strong bond of fraternity and their unique way of holy life.

Having been dispersed through a diabolic initiative in many places, it nevertheless seemed that they continued to live in the same holiness as before. Once one of these brothers became seriously ill and was going to die. Another friar among the group of twelve was serving him with great care. He begged him that, some days after his death, he would oblige to appear to him and tell him whether the way of life of the twelve brothers was truly pleasing to God. That brother promised him to do so, and then departed from this world and went to God. While the other brother in the Order was continually waiting for the assigned day, on the very last day the dead brother appeared to him under the form of a snow white dove, that stayed close to him for some time, and then flew off. After some days that dead brother appeared to him again and told him that he was saved and that all the other eleven brothers were predestined to eternal life. When the brother asked him why he had not appeared to him on the assigned days, he answered: "That time I appeared to you under the form of a dove, because the Lord did not permit me to tell you or reveal anything to you." All the other friars eventually went to the heavenly kingdom, and that venerable brother alone remained alive. He *wanted to be gone and be with Christ* (Cfr. Phil 1:23), and tried to do so by searching by all means the way of martyrdom, but he could not find it. So he marvelled greatly and said: "I do not know what the Lord had decided to do with me. There are so many who do not want to die as martyrs, and yet find martyrdom in their way, while in my case martyrdom flees from me, even though I ardently desire with so much diligence. For such a long time I have also ascertained regarding my eternal beatitude, and yet here I have been left in misery, while all my companions are in heaven. May He be blessed, whose will, and not mine, be accomplished."

[508] Among the friars there are still some we have not mentioned. Brother Garcia Arnald of Aquitaine, from the Custody of Auch, lived in Constantinople. The empress of the Greeks,³⁵ who came from the family of Savoy, convinced the emperor of the Greeks and converted him to the true faith and to the unity of the Church. The emperor sent this same friar Garcia to the lord Pope John, asking him to send doctors in the Catholic faith in order to convert his people.

35 Her name was Johana.

The lord Pope chose for this task the aforementioned General, namely brother Gerard.

Roughly around the same time, the lady Sancha, queen of Sicily and Jerusalem, sent letters of benevolent grace to our Order. Many friars had gathered at the Portiuncula during the days of the holy Indulgence. In these letters the queen proved that she was a true mother to this Order, since she had sent various similar letters before. In order to show better her affection to the Order, in all these things that she herself dictated, I have not judged it unworthy to insert here a letter, which she herself had written. In this way the reader might see the great concern of this lady for the observance of the Rule, in a moment during which the friars were full of fear and would often be unstable in such an observance.

Letters of the lady Sancha, queen of Sicily and Jerusalem

To the venerable fathers and brothers, as well as my sons, the friars Minor who have come to the indulgence of Saint Mary of the Angels, as it was known in ancient times, and is now called Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. In this place where you are gathered as a community, our Father Francis founded the Order and here he ended his life and blessed his brothers, both those present as well as those in the future, and commended them to the glorious Virgin. I, Sancha, with the grace of God, queen of Jerusalem and of Sicily, and a humble daughter and servant of Saint Francis, wish you all health in Jesus Christ crucified.

My fathers, you should know that God wanted to make me be born in this world in this family and household, just as was the lady Esclaramunda,³⁶ my noble mother, queen of Majorca, of holy memory and true daughter of Saint Francis. God also willed that my most beloved first-born brother, namely brother Jaime of Majorca,

36 Wife of Jaime II of Aragon, whose son became a Franciscan (1305). Cfr. *Chronica XXIV Generalium*, 484: "The king of Majorca and his wife, the lady of holy memory queen Esclarmunda, loved the Order to such an extent as is clearly evident, that they offered their first born son the lord Jaime to the Order, and he lived in the Order in a praiseworthy manner all his life."

renounce the kingdom for the love of Jesus Christ and thus became a son of Saint Francis, by entering his Order. God also willed me to be a relative of Saint Elisabeth, who was truly a devout daughter of [509] blessed Francis and mother of his Order, she who was the blood sister of the lady my paternal grandmother, whose son, namely my father, was the lord Jaime, king of Majorca, of holy memory. God willed me to have as my husband the most illustrious lord Robert, king of Jerusalem and Sicily, who was the son of the lady Mary, of holy memory, queen of the reign of Hungary, who was also a true daughter of Saint Francis and whose son was Saint Louis, who renounced his kingdom for the love of Jesus Christ and became a friar Minor. I firmly believe that God and Saint Francis ordered that my lord, who was the third brother, would become king and would have all kinds of virtues which befit him, and more wisdom and knowledge than those present in any prince of this world at the time of Solomon. He learnt this knowledge from the friars of the Order, in order to defend the Order of Saint Francis, and to have me to accompany him in this defence. As you see, I am telling you all this, since I greatly hold myself in duty to be a servant of such a great Father and his Order. If I consider the examples of those who have preceded me in my family and in the family of my lord, I can then accept the words of John, when Our Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples: *I have not called you servants, but sons* (cfr. Jn 15:14-15). I can utter these words personally to you and to the entire Order as a mother, and even more, as a true mother, because of three reasons: first, because a mother is one flesh together with her son, and I am one soul with each and every friar Minor, as it is evident in the letter that I have received from the general chapter of Naples. This letter was written by the lord brother Bertrand de la Tour, Cardinal, and at the time Minister of the Province of Aquitaine. The letter was written in the convent of Assisi under the command of brother Michael (of Cesena), who was Minister General, and these are the words that I have written in the letter that I sent to him:

To the reverend and venerable father in Christ, brother Michael, General Minister of the Order of friars Minor, Sancha, with the grace of God queen of Jerusalem and Sicily, as well as a humble and devout daughter of Saint Francis and his Order, commends herself to you with humility and devotion.

You have come to know, my most dear father, that your brothers during the recent general chapter held in Naples, have become

aware of our devotion and our most sincere affection, with which we embrace in a singular way your Order and the entire state of religious life in the Church. With unanimous prayers and perfect concord, which we ask for humbly and devoutly for the salvation of your souls and the prosperity of our kingdom, we favourably concede and would like to see confirmed all that pertains to your office. We have also prayed that the salvation of our soul and that of our lord the king be firmly impressed in the hearts of all the brothers, in such a way that our souls will be one with the soul of each and every one of you for the unity of the spirit and the same bond of charity, and that we all participate fully in these good things. For the benefit of each and every single brother that you have sent in all the earth, may you merit the work of the clemency of Our Saviour; in such a way that every brother [510] would accept our soul with his in full participation of all merits. This is what the brothers should do, since our soul truly cherishes this Order, it loves it with the most just affection that our body can offer to give meaning to its form of life.

Above all, since that general chapter approved the petition that we have humbly and affectionately presented, namely that in each and every convent of the Order in all the world, the brothers are to celebrate a Mass for the living every day, for as long as we live, and after our death, similarly they are to celebrated a Mass for the dead, and this is to be done in perpetuity in the entire Order, we humbly ask your reverend paternity with devotion, that you will deign to confirm all these provisions for us, and transmit them through the Minister of the Terra del Lavoro under your own seal, and send them to all the Ministers obliging them to their observance. They are bound to notify all these concessions in their provincial chapters and each Province is to make sure that the single friars of each of its convents are obliged to honour all these aforementioned provisions. On our part, regarding all that pertains to our person and to our kingdom, for as much as we can, will offer ourselves to render honour to the usefulness and defence of your Order, and we intend to honour this decision forever with the help of God. May the Most High preserve your venerable person for his holy Order for many more years to come.

Given in the castle at Naples, on the 10th June, of the 14th *Indictio*.³⁷

37 The *Indictio* refers to the year 1316.

Secondly, a mother loves her sons, and in the same way I love my sons the friars Minor, as is evident in the letter that I sent to the general chapter celebrated in Paris.³⁸ The contents of the letter are the following.

To the Venerable brothers and sons, the friars Minor who will gather in the general chapter which will be celebrated shortly in Paris, Sancha, for the grace of God queen of Jerusalem and Sicily, a humble and devout daughter of yours, wishes you all health in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know how our common Father Saint Francis based your Rule on the holy Gospel, and you know what you have promised, namely “to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without anything of one’s own, and in chastity.” You also know the precepts and the counsels of your Rule. I therefore beg you humbly and admonish you through Our Lord Jesus [511] Christ crucified, who deigned to endow his servant, our common Father Saint Francis, with His precious stigmata – according to what we read in the letter to the Galatians: *Brothers, as for me, the only thing I can boast about is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world* (Gal 6:14); and according to what is subsequently added: *Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, who form the Israel of God* (Gal 6:16) – in such a way that you can follow the footsteps of your Father. Do not have any doubts, since this Rule is based on this foundation, namely upon the holy Gospel, and has been signed by such great seals, namely the stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, impressed upon the person of our common Father, in such a way that nothing could ever and can ever break the force of such a Rule. Our Lady, under whose guidance our common Father founded and brought to completion your Order at Saint Mary of the Angels, and to whom he especially commended you during his death, will govern and defend you, so that you will not be guilty of having gone astray from the way of the Father, when he is absent. And remember the words that your Father told you before he died: “Goodbye, all my sons. Live in the fear of God and remain in Him always, for a great test will come upon you and tribulation is drawing

38 The Chapter to which the queen refers is that of 1329 and the letter was written on 15th March.

near. Happy are those who will persevere in what they have begun.”³⁹ No future or present tribulation should make you afraid. Remember the words of the Apostle in the Letter to the Romans: *Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food and clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. As Scripture promised: ‘For our sake we are being massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter’* (Ps 44:1). *These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death, nor life, etc.* (Rom 8:35-38).

I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave such a grace to His Apostle, that we will also give this grace to you and to me as well as to all those who intend to follow the footsteps of our Father. May he give us that charity and fortitude in the words of the promise, that even if he is absent, he will impede your guilt and mine. I am your devout daughter and I offer myself and my belongings and am even ready to face death for my body, if this would be necessary, to defend this same Rule of yours, that our common Father personally wrote, he who was sealed with the stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

[512] Finally I admonish you and I remind you, that in the future election of the General Minister⁴⁰ you will keep God before your eyes and that no favour or prayer, no singular affection will seduce you in this election, but you will choose the one who is ready to follow the footsteps of our Father and the words of the Apostle, as we have said above. I commend to you the lord my husband, the king of Jerusalem and Sicily, who is father and brother, as well as all the members of his household. I also commend my most dear son, the duke of Calabria, of holy memory,⁴¹ and all the dead members of the royal family.

39 1C 108 (FAED I, 276).

40 Queen Sancha is referring to the General Chapter of Paris, convoked by Pope John XXII for 10th June 1329, after the same Pope had deposed Michele of Cesena from the office of Minister General. In that chapter Gerard Eudes was elected Minister General. Gerard was a personal friend of the Pope and was definitely inclined towards the conventual way of life in the Order. The Queen’s letter shows how the royal family of Naples was very concerned about the need of reform in the Order at this critical moment of its history, and might betray close ties between the Anjou family and the Spiritual elements in the Order.

41 The duke of Calabria was Charles, son of Sancha, who died in 1328, when he was 31 years of age.

I commend myself, your devout daughter, and all the members of the house of Majorca, both living and dead, as well as all the other living and dead whom I remember.

Written with our own hands and dictated in Naples, with no other kind of service except that which is divine and is beneficial for your merits. The 15th day of March, of the 12th *Indictio*.

Thirdly, a mother gives counsel to her sons and helps them; in the same way I gave counsel and help to my sons the friars Minor, as I declared in the letter, which I sent to the chapter of Perpignan,⁴² and which begins thus:

To the venerable in Christ, brother Gerard, General Minister of the Order of Minors, and to all the brothers who are assembled at Perpignan for the general chapter, Sancha, queen of Jerusalem and Sicily, the humble and devout daughter, although unworthy, of Saint Francis, wishes you and the entire Order health in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray and admonish your paternity not to go astray from following the footprints of such a great Father, who is the standard bearer of Christ, and who is our common Father Saint Francis. I have heard some of your brothers who said that you are not capable of observing the Rule, that has been revealed by God to your holy Father and has been marked by five seals, which are the precious stigmata of Christ marked on the body of such a famous Confessor. May the brothers remember the words of the venerable father the lord John of Saint Paul, [513] bishop of Sabina, when he answered the Vicar of Christ, the lord Innocent III, of holy memory, who was being asked to confirm the Rule: "If we refuse the request of this poor man as novel or too difficult, when all he asks is to be allowed to lead the Gospel life, we must be on our guard lest we commit an offence against Christ's Gospel. For if anyone says that there is something novel or irrational or impossible to observe in this man's desire to live according to the perfection of the Gospel, he would be guilty of blasphemy against Christ, the author of the Gospel."⁴³ You should not believe in any way what they say, since these brothers are sons of the Father only in name. And if your father General would like to change anything in the Rule, even if

42 The general chapter of Perpignan was celebrated on 25th April 1231.

43 LMj 3,9 (FAED II, 547).

it were only an iota, do not give him your support. Indeed, if anyone tries to do such a thing, he is not a pastor, but a mercenary, and you are to consider him as such. You should be certain and not doubt that God and the blessed Virgin will govern you and defend you, since you want to be true sons of the Father. Remember the words that the Lord Jesus Christ said to our Father Francis: "I have called, I will preserve, and I will pasture; and I will raise up others to make up for the fall of some, so that, even if they have not been born, I will have them born. So do not be upset, but work out your salvation, for even if the religion should be attacked from all sides, by my gift it will still remain forever unshaken."⁴⁴ I shall offer myself with all my strength to govern the ones who want to follow the footsteps of our common Father and your footsteps, and I will do this even to death on the cross and I will receive the greatest of graces, if God will make me die and become a martyr for this cause. May this blessing come upon you and me and upon all those who are or who will come in the future to be part of this most holy will, according to the sign that our Father gave during the chapter of Arles, when the brother and father Saint Anthony preached about the title of the cross,⁴⁵ as well as according to that grace that descended over the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. May we not refrain from accepting such a grace because of our sins, as it is written in the Gospel and in your Rule: *No one who puts a hand on the plough and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.*⁴⁶

[514] Since I am a sinner and unworthy and unlettered, and I do not know how to speak clearly except with the grace of God and my relationship with Him, and since I do not confide in myself, on a Thursday, on the 18th day of April, I entered the small chapel next to my room in the new Castle of Naples, with the light of three candles before daybreak, I closed the door and stayed there alone in front of the body of Christ, who was placed on the altar, and I commended myself to Him and began to write, as the Lord was inspiring me, without any other human or earthly counsel. I commend to your prayers our lord the king, my reverend husband and your special father and son, and I also commend all the members of his family, both the living and the dead. In a special way I commend the duke of Calabria,

44 Cfr. 2C 158 (FAED II, 349).

45 Cfr. LMj 4,10 (FAED II, 557).

46 LR 2,13 (FAED I, 101). The citation is adapted from Lk 9:62.

of holy memory, so that God will give his glory to him and to me and to all of us, both living and dead, as well as to all those who I intend to commend. I especially commend the lord Fernando, my most dear brother, who was the father of the king of Majorca,⁴⁷ who is now reigning and is my most dear nephew and son. I have personally written this letter. Although I am not worthy, nevertheless through the grace of God I can abundantly call myself a true mother of the Order of blessed Francis, not only because of what I say or write, but also because of the good deeds that I have continually done and continue to do with the Saint's help for all the days of my life. Although I do not feel that I can call anything my own, except my sins, at the same time I can accept the words of the Apostle: *By God's grace that is what I am* (1Cor 15:10). And then I can say: *I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master's business. I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father* (Jn 15:15). As your mother, I can say to you and to the entire Order: I will not call you servants, but my intimate sons, as if you have been born of my own flesh, and more so, since my spiritual love for you is greater than any kind of carnal love.

Given at Casanana, near the Castellammare di Stabia, under the seal of my ring, on 25th July of the 14th *Indictio*.⁴⁸

Around that time the lord Philip, king of France, who went as a Crusader to the Holy Land,⁴⁹ wanted to establish good relations with the emperor of Tabriz and king of the Georgians.⁵⁰ So he wrote letters and sent them to the Guardian of Tabriz through the hands of some respectable Christian merchants. As it has been ascertained, [515] they presented the letters to the aforementioned emperor, who was confederated to the Sultan. They also sent other letters to brothers Richard Mercerius and Alexander the Englishman and the aforementioned king of Tabriz. The king received the friars with honour and read the letters, and after having placed them on his head, he

47 Fernando died circa 1318. The king of Majorca was Jaime III of Aragon, who was born on 1st April 1317 and died on 25th October 1349, after having reigned for 22 years.

48 1316.

49 The expression in Latin is *qui crucem ad recuperandam Terram sanctam acceperat*, literally, "took the cross in order to win back the Holy Land."

50 The Tabriz region corresponds to modern day Georgia.

answered: "The lord kings of France often push the kings of the east against the Saracens, but then they do not come and send them to undergo the tribulations of war; but go and tell your king that, when he will cross the sea, he will immediately see me according to his pleasure with 30 thousand armoured knights."

In the year of the Lord 1334 brother Stephen of Hungary acquired a glorious martyrdom for the glory of God, as we shall now explain.

Here begins the passion
of brother Stephen of Hungary
in the town of Saray of the Tartars⁵¹

For the glory and honour of God, and for the exaltation of faith and the confusion of the infidels, as well as for the edification of the Christian people, I have wanted to write down the account of the glorious martyrdom of brother Stephen of Hungary, as I have received it orally from the words of persons who are trustworthy witnesses and who were present for the same martyrdom. Stephen came from the town of Gross-Wardein. He accepted his martyrdom with great patience and constancy in the year of the Lord 1334, on the 22nd day of the month of April, in the town of Saray in the northern regions of the empire of the great king Osbeth, emperor of the Tartars. Before I start my narration I would like to exhort those who hear or read this account not to underestimate the end because of the beginning, but to glorify more the Lord, who alone can make saints out of sinners. Some in fact condemn the Doctor of the gentiles because he was a persecutor of the Church, they ridicule Matthew the Evangelist because he was an avid tax collector, they judge the Magdalene because of her previous sinful life, they laugh at the prince of the Apostles be-

51 Saray, or Sarai, was the capital city of the Golden Horde, which is the name of a Mongol (later on Turkish) khanate established in the western part of the Mongol Empire after 1240. It comprised the area of modern day Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan and the Caucasus, and extended from the Urals to the River Dnieper. It also bordered the Black Sea and Caucasus Mountains. Saray was built by Batu Khan in the mid 1240's on the lower course of the River Volga.

cause of his triple denial and they despise David because of his multiple crimes, although he was one of the most important among the Prophets. Therefore we admire greatly *the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God and of his incomprehensible methods* (cfr. Rom 11:33) since *when God wants to show mercy he does, and when he wants to harden someone's heart he does so* (cfr. Rom 9:18).

[516] Once brother Stephen was accused in front of the Vicar of the north, and he was placed in a convent, called Saint John, which was three miles distant from Saray, closed in a cell in order to discipline himself and make penance for his sins. The devils, however, began to attack him strongly. In fact, the demons would appear to him visibly and tempt him by indicating the way to go out of that conventual prison. The brother could not sustain so many temptations, and he would frequently pray the brothers to guard him with diligence from such strong vexations on the part of the demons. When he continued to undergo many temptations, one night he succumbed to them and the devil made him go out of his cell through a small window. When he felt that he was free, since he wanted to carry out what the devil was suggesting to him, he happened to look at the church and saw the friars, and marked himself with the sign of the cross. He repented for his action and said: "O traitor, will you deny your Lord, who underwent so many harsh sufferings for you on the cross?" So he called the demons who were leading him and said: "I cannot in no way deny my Lord, since He has shed his blood and suffered so much for my sake! I will certainly not believe you." In this way he refused to go out of the friary. At the same time he was afraid, since he had gone out of his prison, and therefore he went to hide himself among the reeds. When the friars went out to look for him, he immediately went out to them and revealed to them his temptation and evil intention, and begged them to guard him diligently from the vexations of the demons.

The brothers were afraid and wanted to take him to Capha, where there was a good friary in which he could be guarded. The brother who had the duty to lead him to that place, went too early to take him out of his prison without asking the help of the other brothers, and then went on an errand to the village leaving brother Stephen alone in the friary of Saint John. Brother Stephen became very agitated in his spirit, and he escaped to the town of Saray. There he met a certain Saracen whom he knew and revealed to him his plan, namely

that he wanted to become himself a Saracen at all costs. This fact occurred eight days before the feast of Saint George, on a Thursday.⁵² The Saracen rejoiced when he heard his intention, and he tried with all his might to harden his heart by leading him to the Cadì, who governs the Saracens with the same authority a Bishop has for us. This Saracen explained what brother Stephen intended to do. The Cadì was overjoyed and he interrogated brother Stephen and asked him "Christian priest, what would you like to do?" Brother Stephen answered: "I want to become a Saracen." "Why do you want to become a Saracen?" Brother Stephen answered: "Because it is only in your religion that God sent man true salvation through his prophet Mohammed." "What therefore do you say regarding Christ?" He answered: "I say that he was a holy Prophet and was born of the Virgin Mary, but that he is not truly God, as Christians commonly and falsely believe. I truly believe that there is only one God and that Mohammed is his prophet."

The Saracens were holding a solemn feast on that Friday. In their language they called the feast *Mereth*. When brother Stephen went together with many other Saracens to the feast, he was led to the mosque and in front of the whole multitude he asserted all he had declared before. The Cadì kissed him and there he took off his Franciscan habit and [517] detested it by spitting on it. Then he dressed him with golden and purple vestments and promised to give him many spiritual and temporal favours, while the other Saracens were saying: "We should greatly rejoice, since such men are now coming to our religion, and they are considering that we are stronger and more learned than they are in their Christian religion." That same moment the great news spread in the town that an important Christian priest had become a Saracen. Therefore a great multitude of people gathered at the mosque, in order to see brother Stephen and also because of that feast. They placed brother Stephen on a horse and with banners and the sounds of musical instruments they solemnly led him in procession all along their city, and they placed the habit of the Order in a higher position than all the other banners. When the Saracens saw him they showed that they were overjoyed. The Christians were filled with sorrow and confusion, especially the friars Minor, since the

52 The feast of St. George falls on the 23rd April. That means that it was Thursday 14th April 1334.

infidels were insulting them, and they all escaped and shut themselves inside their own homes.

When brother Stephen saw what was going on around him, all of a sudden he was shaken by the fear of God, and from that moment he began to feel sorrowful in his heart among all that rejoicing. The Saracens were telling brother Stephen to point one finger as a sign of his faith in the only God and of his denial of the supreme Trinity. But he was converted from his iniquity, and he pointed three fingers after pointing one finger, in order to confess the unity of God but also his Trinity. At that moment a certain devout Armenian woman, who was a great friend of the friars and faithful to the Roman Church, came in disguised clothes and drew close to the brother and told him: "Brother Stephen, if only I would shortly see you being drawn by the horse's tail along all the town and being led to die for the honour of Christ, in the same way in which today you have been honoured because you have insulted so much our faith and Christ himself." These words entered his heart as if they were many swords piercing it.

The Saracens organised a great banquet for the new Saracen, but brother Stephen did not want to eat anything because of his great sadness. When they asked him why he was not eating, he lied to them and answered that he could not eat, since he was filled with the spirit of Mohammed. After the banquet he was led to a house that they had assigned to him, in order to live there with a Saracen, who was to become his master. Brother Michael, one of the friars, who was living in that city, sent him a letter through one of the servants of the friars, called Henry, in which he wrote to him that if he would come back to the Order and promise to return to the faith, he would find again all the graces he had received in the Order. That servant came to meet him, and as secretly as he could, he gave him that letter. When he had read the letter, the Saracen who was his teacher in that profane law, asked him what he was reading. He answered: "I have written here in my tongue all the indications regarding the reverences and other duties I have to make according to our religion, since otherwise I will not remember them." Then he went out of that house and made a sign to Henry to wait for him for some time. With many letters he then wrote these words on the tablets he was carrying: "I have sinned, like Judas, but I am not despairing like Judas. You should know that, by the grace of God, I have converted from my error, and if you can now hide me without any danger befalling you, I am ready to enter into a prison

cell for the rest of my life; but if you cannot do so, I want to tell you that I am ready to accept the consequences and die for Christ; since I have publicly denied Christ, I now want to profess my faith in God and in my Lord." After having detached that [518] tablet from the others, in which he had written those words, he secretly told Henry to carry it and give it to the friars.

The friars, when they saw that writing, were partially overjoyed and partially afraid, because they feared that the churches of the Christians would be destroyed. So that night they decided that on the following morning, which was a Saturday, they would send the aforementioned Henry in order to see whether brother Stephen was still firm in his good purpose. Henry therefore went and found brother Stephen near the river of that city. He found him so desolate and sad, that Stephen could hardly speak and told him with a trembling voice: "Ah Henry, I have sinned, I have sinned; but for the love of God go and tell the friars to come tomorrow and not to despise the salvation of my soul." The brothers then sent the same servant and told him to go secretly to the house of a certain Christian, whose name was Peter, and who had adopted brother Stephen as his own son, in order to talk to him in a more secure place. Therefore on the following morning, which was a Sunday, brother Stephen went to the house of Peter and flung himself at his feet and with many tears asked for forgiveness and begged him to go to the friars and tell them that he wanted to confess his sins.

When the friars came over, Stephen saw brother Henry of Bohemia, who was the Guardian, together with the other brothers. He prostrated himself at his feet with many tears, and began to sob uncontrollably and bitterly, and showed with great humility that he was suffering from such bitterness of heart in his words and actions that he provoked to tears all those who were standing close to him. Then he asked the Guardian to hear his confession. The other brothers went out of the house, and he confessed his sins with copious tears and great sighs and cries, that the Christians and the brothers who were standing outside that house, could hear his sobs and his desolate voice. After he had confessed, the friars went back into the house, and comforted him in the Lord. The Guardian told him: "My son, now it is necessary that, just as you have publicly denied your faith in Christ and praised the religion of Mohammed, now you should convert and despise Mohammed and his religion and constantly confess our faith

and commend yourself to Christ whom you declare to be true God.” Brother Stephen answered: “Father, I will become the son of eternal death, if I will not carry out what you have asked me, since I greatly want to die for Christ.” Then he immediately added: “Look, these clothes which I am wearing are a heavy burden on my conscience. Do you counsel me to go and present myself to them with my habit, or with these diabolic clothes?” The Guardian answered him: “You should wear your habit underneath these clothes that the Saracens have given you, and when you present yourself in front of the Cadì you are to tear these clothes and thus appear in the habit of the Order and state all the words that the Lord will inspire you to utter.” Brother Stephen then humbly asked him to administer to him the body of Christ. The Guardian answered him: “For now your contrition is sufficient, my most dear brother, since I cannot administer to you the body of Christ when you are wearing these clothes, but have trust in the Lord, for whose honour you are willing to die, and who will be with you.” Then the Guardian asked for a book of the Gospels and placed it on his head, and opened it on the page in which it is written: *In the beginning was the Word* (Jn 1:1). [519] Then Stephen commended himself humbly to the brothers and said: “Pray for me, since I will certainly reach great things.” Having said this he went away from them consoled in the Lord.

That same evening Stephen put on the habit under the purple clothes that he was wearing. On Monday morning, during the hour of prayer, he entered the mosque, namely the oratory of the Saracens, in which about 10 thousand Saracens had gathered, since they were still celebrating that solemn feast. When the Saracens saw him entering, they all stood up and applauded him. He then went up to the pulpit in order to preach and asked them to be silent. The Saracens were all gazing at him, since they believed that he wanted to preach their religion, and since they were holding him to be a great cleric, they stood all together in perfect silence. At that point brother Stephen said: “I have been a Christian for 25 years and I have seen the law of Christ and have never recognised in it anything that is evil or false; I have been among you Saracens for three days, and I have seen among you all the evil that one can speak of, and I can now prove that your religion is false and wicked and that Mohammed is a pseudo-prophet and a deceiver. I hereby confess that Christ is the Son of God and that the blessed Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God, and that the Christian

religion is true, while I detest with all my heart your religion as false and wicked.” Then he tore his clothes and remained standing with the habit of the friars Minor.

At these words the Saracens rose with great anger and started shouting loudly with horrible cries and began to hit him with stones and sticks. The Cadì called out to them and told them not to kill him with the sword, since he wanted to burn him alive. So they took Stephen half dead and tied his arms very strongly and led him to the house of the Cadì. Then they left him with trustworthy guards and he remained until that night in great suffering and feeling very weak, since he had not eaten anything for three days because of his sadness, and they left him there. That same night the Cadì went to him and said: “What devil has deceived you? You have come to us freely, and nobody forced you or induced you to do what you did. Why have you therefore come among us, in such a way that you are now despising our religion?” Brother Stephen then answered him in a decisive tone: “What you say is true, namely that the devil deceived me, when I came to you and denied my God and my Lord. In the same way your Mohammed, full of the spirit of falsehood, has seduced you without any doubt. But you should know in a most certain way, that he is damned and all of you as well, who imitate him.” The Cadì was horrified to listen to such insults against his Mohammed and full of anger he gave brother Stephen over to the torturers, who flogged him with leather straps full of sand until he was on the point of giving up his spirit. That same night the Cadì gave orders to tie brother Stephen by his right arm and by his right thigh, and to hang him up with the weight of a great stone dangling from his other arm and thigh, and thus left him hanging all that night, commanding his men not to administer any food or drink to him.

The following morning, which was a Tuesday, they found him still alive. So they brought him down, and were admiring the fact that he had not died in such torments. The wife of the emperor of the Tartars, who was the daughter of the emperor of the Greeks, took pity on the friar when she heard what had befallen him, and full of compassion sent him food and drink. [520] He was comforted in the Lord in this way until the moment of death. The following night the Cadì found him to be even stronger in his resolve to confess his faith in Christ. So he ordered as before to bind him and to flog him with leather straps filled with sand and then to hang him by his arms and

tie a heavy plank of wood to his feet, which would pull him downwards in such a way that the interior of his abdomen would break apart. He remained thus hanging all that night.

On the following day, which was a Wednesday, the Cadi came to brother Stephen and told him: "O miserable man, if you do not convert to our religion, I will have you put to death this very night. Therefore, if you want to spare your life, become a faithful Saracen." Stephen answered him: "Do what you like with my body; I am a priest of Christ and for Him I am ready to die." That following night he was flogged in a most cruel manner and then they hung him by a rope tied to his neck in a high place. In order to make him die more quickly, the ministers of the devil kindled a huge fire under him in order to suffocate him with its abundant smoke. However the knight of Christ became even more valorous in his faith in the midst of his torments. The Saracens thought that he had died and they left him in the prison but still hanging by his neck. Around daybreak two Saracen women heard about the constancy of this friar, and they came to the door of the prison and looked between the cracks of the door. They were astonished to find the whole prison cell radiant with light and brother Stephen freed from the gallows and praying on his knees, with two snow white doves resting, one on his right shoulder and the other on his left. They marvelled at what they saw and went to the Cadi and told him what they had seen. The Cadi immediately went with them to the illuminated prison cell and saw brother Stephen freed from the ropes and praying, but he did not see the doves, since he did not merit to do so. So he was also astonished and went to the lord of the city, who was a great baron, and after having narrated everything to him, asked for his counsel. He answered him: "It is none of my business, you have to decide what to do with him. Since you made him become a Saracens without consulting me, now you kill him also without asking for my advice, since I do not want to have anything to do in this matter." The Cadi remained very thoughtful and confused, since he did not know what to do. He would have willingly freed brother Stephen, if he did not fear the anger of the crowds, since on the one part, according to their laws and customs he was obliged to burn him at the stake, but on the other hand, because of the wonders that he had seen, he was afraid that Stephen would again escape from death in a miraculous way and he was afraid that this would be a great mistake that would make the crowds furious. Nevertheless he ordered that

a great fire be lit in the square; but since he was afraid that brother Stephen would miraculously escape once again, he carefully thought about deceiving him.

When the people saw that great fire, a great rumour spread in the city that brother Stephen was going to be burnt at the stake on that day, which was a Thursday. Brother Henry of Bohemia, who as the Guardian, and brother William of Aquitaine, who was fervently longing to die as a martyr, disguised themselves in Saracen clothes hiding their habits under them, and went to the prison where brother Stephen was locked. They were saying to one another: "When they will pronounce the sentence against him, we will tear our clothes and then appear in the habit of our Order, and then we will confess with great faith all the word that brother Stephen will utter, and in this way we shall die for Christ." They found the prison doors open and the Saracens who were freely going in and out. So they also entered and there they found a multitude of Saracens who were disputing with brother Stephen in a great tumult. The champion of God, in fact, was ignoring all their affirmations, [521] and since he was greatly afflicted because of the great sufferings he had endured for many nights, he hardly had the strength to answer them. At that moment brother William of Aquitaine said: "He is not understanding you very well, but if somebody will speak to him in his own language, he will be able to answer you better." So brother William went over to speak with brother Stephen and told him: "Why are you not answering them?" So brother Stephen recognised his voice, looked at him standing near the door with the Guardian who was also standing close by. At that moment brother Stephen answered the Saracens: "Why are you interrogating me? I have said many greater things than all those you have uttered, since you are all damned with your wicked Mohammed. Your religion is all falsehood and it is only the Christian religion that can save those who observe it." Then he made a sign to the two friars to go away from that place, since he feared the imminent tribulation that would ensue for them, and even for the Christians in general, since he had condemned the Muslim religion in such a way that he merited to die. The Saracens were trembling with rage, while the friars were overjoyed at seeing his constancy in faith, and they returned to their convent. All the friars celebrated for him a Mass of the Blessed Mary or a Mass of Saint Francis.

The following night the Cadì came to brother Stephen and told him: "Why do you not want to do what I tell you? If you will not obey me, I will burn you at the stake." Brother Stephen answered: "I am not afraid of your threats. You can do whatever you like with my body, since I will only accomplish the will of my Lord Jesus Christ." So the Cadì ordered a great fire to be lit and commanded his men to throw brother Stephen into it and to close him in the furnace. The Martyr of Christ remained shut up inside that furnace. The Cadì stayed for some time there with his ministers, until he imagined that brother Stephen would have died, and then went away. In the meantime brother Stephen remained in the middle of the flames until the following morning. The fire did not harm him in any way, and he remained on his knees, praying, glorifying and praising God. The following morning, namely on Friday, the Cadì told his wicked ministers: "Go to the furnace, and if you can find any bones of that pig, throw them outside or else hide them from everybody." When they opened the furnace they found brother Stephen standing and praying in the middle of the furnace, although he was perspiring heavily. When the Cadì heard this, he was astonished and said: "This is a miracle of God, and he should not die." When they heard these words the Saracens said: "He has insulted our religion and our prophet, and according to our laws he must die; now you want to free him, and the crowds will kill both him and you as well." The Cadì then was very afraid and went to the lord of that city and told him everything that had happened, and again asked for his counsel. He answered him: "I do not want to have anything to do with that man; you do whatever seems best to you. I do not want that the curse of the Franks will fall upon me, as it fell upon my brother, whom they cursed, and then he died on the spot." So the Cadì ordered to lock brother Stephen in a prison, in which he normally held as captives those whom he sent for capital punishment.

The following night the Saracens arrived in great numbers and with shouts. They did not want to wait for the guards of the prison, who were not there at that moment, but they broke down the doors of the prison with axes and entered in full force, with their axes and brandished swords and began to call out and say: "You pig who want to destroy our religion; now you have to choose whether you want to live or to die. Do you want to become a Saracen and live, or else to be a Christian and die?" Brother Stephen answered them with great courage and told them: "I am a priest of Christ; you on your part are

all damned and your religion is the most false, while the religion of Christ is the most true, and for this religion [522] I am ready to die. As regards me, do whatever you like with my body." That very moment a Saracen struck him on his neck with his axe and wounded him seriously; another Saracen opened his abdomen with a sword in such a cruel way that his entrails were visible.

The Saracens meanwhile were clamouring that he should not be killed by the sword, but by being burnt at the stake, according to their statutes. The Cadì came to brother Stephen and wanted to deceive him with the most cunning promises, if he did not want the Saracens to kill him. He told him: "Why have you troubled us so much? You have come freely to us and we have honoured you; I do not know what kind of devil has seduced you. If you now decide to return to our religion, I will take care to have you cured and I will give you my daughter to be your wife together with many riches, and you will be greatly honoured in the whole city." Upon hearing these words brother Stephen courageously answered: "I do not desire to have anything that you are promising me; your daughter and your money will come with you in perdition, and you can treat my body as your wicked will dictates."

On the following Saturday, which was the feast of the Martyr Saint George, a great cry was heard in the town: "Why is this pig still alive, after having dared blaspheme our religion and God's prophet?" So the people were clamouring with the Cadì to have him immediately killed. The Cadì then gave the sentence to burn him at the stake. They immediately tied brother Stephen to the tail of a horse. He was afflicted, wounded and naked, and in front of a great crowd of people, he was dragged along by the horse, accompanied by the shouting of those present. Brother Stephen was rejoicing in Christ and giving thanks, and although he was so weak and was mortally wounded, he did not waver in his inner strength, even though everyone was marvelling at him, since the horse was dragging him all the time. In the meantime the cruelty and fury of the Saracens increased. They were hitting him with their sticks and his body was completely bathed in blood. Some of those sticks with the stains of that holy blood were afterwards taken and given to the friars.

When they were near a certain hospice, where they produced and sold a certain drink made of water and honey, which they called *medone*, and where many people were gathered to take this drink, a

certain vagabond⁵³ who was there present said: "What will you give me if I will amputate the ear of that pig and hand it to you in this place?" The people answered him: "We will let you drink from the *medone* as much as you like." So he went over to brother Stephen and amputated his ear and brought it to the ones who were drinking. They were horrified at the sight and told him to throw it away. He threw it in the fire that was burning under the pot in which they mixed that drink. All the people were gazing at that noisy crowd. When that ear had been in the fire for some time, all of a sudden it sprang up by itself and flew in the direction of some Christians who were coming for some errands in that place. They joyfully received it and gave it to the brothers.

When brother Stephen was led away with his hands tightly bound in ropes to the place of the execution, where a whole house full of fire-wood had been prepared in the form of a great furnace, he lifted his gaze up to heaven, gave thanks and prayed thus: "Lord Jesus Christ, give me the grace that, before I enter into the flames, I will be able to mark myself with the sign of the cross with my own hand." [523] That very moment, in the presence of all the onlookers, his hands were freed and brother Stephen marked himself with the sign of the cross and entered into the fire with his own free will, without being pushed in by anyone. At the same time, in front of the astonished onlookers, that great fire was totally extinguished. Brother Stephen went out of the fire without having been harmed. When the Saracens saw that, nevertheless, God had protected him by extinguishing the flames, they started to throw big stones at him. Brother Stephen was constantly confessing his faith in Christ, and was condemning the most wicked religion of Mohammed. In the meantime the Saracens were kindling another great fire with dry reeds, and they covered with grease the horse that was dragging brother Stephen. He wanted to mark himself with the sign of the cross, but his hands were tied up, but again they were freed by divine power. So he marked himself with the sign of the cross and threw himself in the flames. But the flames were once again extinguished in a miraculous way, and brother Stephen again came out unharmed. So he shouted and said: "Woe to you Saracens, since you are all confused, because you should know and believe that, as long as I am still alive, these flames will have

no power over me." The Saracens were by now enraged and ran over to him with force. Some were piercing him with their swords, others were throwing stones at him, while others were hitting him savagely with their axes and swords, until they covered him with innumerable wounds and killed him. Thus he breathed his last and consecrated his martyrdom by rendering his immaculate soul to God the Father.

Then the Saracens burned his body and did not want to go back from that place until the body had been totally burned, since they were afraid that the Christians would come to gather and conserve his relics. After this some faithful came and looked diligently among the ashes, and secretly found some small bones, which they gathered and honourably kept as relics. That same night and for the two succeeding nights many Latins and Jews and some Saracens, not without great admiration, saw many lights coming down from heaven and shining over the place where his body was burned. After these events the holy Martyr began to shine forth with many miracles, so that God would evidently show his fame also to the infidels, to prove that he was glorious in heaven. In fact, on the same night in which the Saint had been burned at the stake, the cow of a certain Saracen, who lived close to the place of the execution, escaped from that house. When he went out of his house to bring it back, he saw a multitude of lights shining upon the spot of the execution. The lights were shining only on that place and not in the surroundings. So he was very astonished and narrated to the other Saracens this wonderful vision.

Another Christian woman, although she was a schismatic, had a son who was gravely ill. So she placed him, together with lighted candles, upon the place of the stake where brother Stephen was burned. When the Saracens saw her they rose against her and tried to stone her. She escaped because of fear, but when she returned to her house she saw that her son was completely cured.

Another Christian Armenian woman suffered from a great infirmity in her head. So with great devotion she took the ear of the holy Martyr and placed it on her head, and from that moment she was freed from her infirmity.

Another boy who could not move his arm or his foot was placed with great devotion upon the place of the stake and he immediately regained his health.

When a certain Saracen woman approached the place of the stake and began to ridicule with words and gestures the faith of the

Christians and the holy Martyr, she immediately became blind and had to go back from that place in that condition, full of fear and sufferings.

[524] Many other miracles occurred through the merits of the holy Martyr and to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Martyrdom of brother William of England

Around the same time, in the Saracen town of Salmastre, brother William of England was killed by the infidels for confessing the true faith. In fact, the same brother William, who was a man full of devotion to God and inflamed with zeal for the faith, was preaching to the Saracens about Christ. When they asked him what he thought about Mohammed and his religion, he answered: "I say and I feel regarding him all that is true and agrees with what the Christian faith states." When he was interrogated about this truth, he answered: "The Christian faith and the truth state that Mohammed and all his followers are damned and that his religion leads to death, is irrational and unjust." When the Saracens heard these words, with great fervour they rose against him, captured him and threw him into a dungeon. That same moment the whole town was aflame with the news that a certain Christian pig was stating many insulting words against Mohammed and his doctrine. Such a great crowd gathered and started shouting that the pig that blasphemed should be brought in the middle and, if he would still hold firm to his first confession, he would be instantly killed. The crowd was clamouring so loudly that it could not be calmed down by any means. So the holy brother William was brought out in their midst like a lamb among wolves. They interrogated him with loud voices: "You miserable man, tell us whether you still want to hold on to your first confession, and if you will not deny your faith and revoke what you stated against God's prophet Mohammed and his religion, we will make you die like a most despised pig." After calling for silence brother William intrepidly stated: "Only the Christian religion is the true, just faith which leads to salvation, and for this faith I am read to die; your religion leads to death, and it will lead you together with your Mohammed to hell." When he had ut-

tered these words a great clamour ensued. One of the sons of the devil approached brother William and thrust a sword in his side. Brother William, growing even more constant in his faith, with his hand hid the wound in his side and began to insult the Saracens and their religion with a loud voice and to constantly extol the Catholic faith. The Saracens were enraged beyond control and they all fell down upon him and killed him most cruelly with multiple wounds. In this way he acquired the crown of martyrdom and was taken up joyfully to heaven.

The life of brother Michael Magoti

In the aforementioned year 1334 brother Michael Magoti, a lay brother of holy memory, died in the friary of Toulouse. In order to show how worthy he was of the faith, we can state that he was a man of the most praiseworthy life, [525] he lived in an honest manner, he was assiduous in prayer, rich in his poverty, rigid in penance, full of fervour in his zeal for perfection, and exemplary in his way of life. We saw him when he was already a venerable old man. His nourishment consisted of bread and water, he used to wear the roughest kind of hair-shirt, his habit was rough, his cell was a chapel of the blessed Mary, and his bed consisted of a wooden plank on the stone floor. He always went barefoot. He was always standing up or kneeling down, and would cover his head with his capuche and pray. He rarely sat down or rested, except when at table or when he was seriously ill. The devil was often seen to disturb him during his assiduous prayers.

Once he was in that same chapel praying during the profound hours of the night. He saw a rat sliding down with great speed along the rope of the lamp; that rat was drinking the oil of the lamp. The servant of God hit it with a hard and noisy slap in order to make that rat go away. The rat then told him with a human voice: "For me it is enough to have disturbed you in your prayers." Having said this it disappeared. Another night brother Michael was praying in the far end of the choir. The devil came under the guise of the Minister Provincial and entered the choir speaking with a loud voice, as if it was saying Matins, and knelt down in front of the railing of the main altar. Brother Michael, who was standing close by, immediately recognised

in the spirit that it was the devil, and he took him firmly by the hood of his habit and said: "You are not as brave as the one in whose guise you have come to deceive me." That same moment the devil disappeared like smoke.

During some nights he would go carrying a cross over his shoulder, visiting all the chapels of the church in order to stop at the stations, and he would flog his body until he would draw out blood in memory of the passion of the Lord.

In order that God would show that He accepted brother Michael's prayers, this is what happened one Sunday. On that day he had the duty of preparing the friars' meal and to stay in the kitchen. He was so changed with the sweetness of divine consolation that he could not think about corporal food. When the Mass was finished – since Mass was celebrated after Tierce – the friars saw that the kitchen door was still closed, and that there was no fire or smoke inside. So they called brother Michael and full of confusion told him that they wanted to eat, and that there still was no fire in the kitchen. Brother Michael rose from his prayers with a sense of wonder, and he hurried to the kitchen and closed the door. At the lunch hour he opened the door and said: "Go to the table, since your meal is ready." The brothers were astonished when they saw such a miracle, and they ate their meal knowing that it had been prepared by the hands of the angels only through divine power.

Once he went to Rome on pilgrimage. On his way a band of robbers took away his clothes. When they saw that he was girded with a very rough hair-shirt, they felt sorry for him and gave him back his clothes and asked him to forgive them for their crime. He told them: "Sons, accept my habit without fear, since you are poorer than I am." They did not accept and left him, begging him humbly to come to their aid with his prayers.

[526] Once there was a certain devout man who asked him to place his crown of *Our Fathers* on one of his wine caskets since it had broken open and wine was pouring out of it. That man had great trust in brother Michael, who went to place his crown on the hole that had opened on the wine casket. That very moment the wine that was gushing out of the hole stopped falling.

The man of God had a special grace when he used to speak about God. Once a certain young man asked him to teach him how to serve God. He answered him simply in this way: "My son, you should

do all the good that God teaches you to accomplish in order to serve Him; after you have done this, you should say to God: 'Lord, I have accomplished all that I knew for your service; if you want me to do more, teach me even more and I will be ready to accomplish your will.' If you do this, the same Doctor of all doctors will teach you more than all the other persons who are wise."

Another brother asked him for counsel and told him: "Most dear father, although I am not worthy, sometimes God sends me some spiritual sweetness, without any disposition on my part. When I am attracted to possess even more such a commitment, it is entirely taken away from me even during the time of prayer, even if God can give it generously to those who are lazy and thoughtless. Therefore, I ask you to tell me how I can acquire and keep such a grace." The servant of God answered him with great joy and said: "My most dear brother, God uses the same method of those who sell wine or fruit. When you go to the square you do not think about drinking or about eating fruit. But there you meet the wine-seller who invites you inside the tavern and offers you some most delicious wine to taste. He praises his wine and shows it in a clear glass flask and in such a way provokes your desire to drink. The same does the fruit vendor. He offers you a most delicious fig to taste, and that provokes your appetite. Now when you taste the delicious wine and fruit, you will be provoked to want more wine and more fruit, even though initially you did not care about them. Now the sight of them increases your appetite abundantly, but when you want more you will be asked a higher price. In the same way the Lord Jesus Christ does to you. You do not realise how sweet is the Lord when you read, when you listen to preaching, or when you have secret inspirations to taste his sweetness. So He diligently invites you and while before you did not care, now He administers to you the heavenly sweetness for your heart. This sweetness is pleasing to your heart's taste in an unusual way; you experience it but not to the point of becoming drunk with this sweetness, but only to the point of tasting what has been shown to you. In this way you want more, but then you will have to buy it at a high price. Indeed, spiritual sweetness can only be bought with the affliction of the body and rest only comes after arduous work."

Michael was full of the spirit of prophecy. The holy man became seriously ill in the convent of Toulouse, in the same friary brother Vitalis Arabinus also became terminally ill. The brothers admonished

brother Vitalis to go to confession and to receive the body of Christ. He did not know that he was so seriously ill, and did not realise that he was very close to death, and therefore he continued to postpone the time of confession. In the meantime his illness increased and it became evident that he was nearing death. When the brother was at last convinced to go to confession, the brothers called a confessor, [527] and he began to confess, but before he ended his confession he developed a high fever and died. The friars were very sad, because he had died without the Sacraments of the Church. The Guardian felt especially sorry for him, and he immediately went to brother Michael who was lying sick in the next room. He found him clutching at his beads and repeating the prayer of the Lord in bed. The Guardian told him: "Brother Michael, brother Vitalis Arabinus has died." The man of God answered: "Yes, father, I already know, but that naughty brother has been spared from extreme danger." "What danger?" asked the Guardian. The Saint answered: "The danger of damnation, since he took so long to go to confession; but since he at long last did confess, God willed to accept him." The Guardian then asked: "Is he already on the road to salvation?" Brother Michael answered: "Yes, he is, but he will have to undergo a great suffering in purgatory."

Brother Michael was subjected to many sufferings because of his advanced age. He was blind like Tobias, he was suffering from the effects of vigils, abstinence, pilgrimages and the flogging of his flesh, which he crucified with his vices and sins. In the midst of all these sufferings, however, he was seen to be admirable in his patience like another Job. So, full of virtue he was taken up to God. At his death there was such a numerous crowd of people, who wanted to tear parts of his habit to take them away with them as relics, that the youngest and strongest among the brothers could hardly defend his body. He was solemnly buried in the chapel of Saint Thomas the Apostle. After his death he shone forth with many miracles, for the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever.

In the aforementioned year, namely 1334, a general chapter was celebrated in Assisi. During this chapter certain novelties that we have referred to previously, and the ceremonies introduced during the chapter of Perpignan,⁵⁴ were revoked, and the reception of the

54 The general chapter of Perpignan was celebrated on 19th May 1331. The chap-

friars in the Order and their form of profession was again established according to the old form.

In the same year, on 4th December, the lord Pope John XXII died, during the 19th year of his pontificate.

In the same year as well, on 20th of the same month, in Avignon, the lord James,⁵⁵ with the title of Cardinal Priest of Santa Prisca, master of theology from the Order of the [528] Cistercian monks, was elected Pope and chose the name of Benedict XII. During the first year of his pontificate he conceded the friars a plenary indulgence for all their sins. When the aforementioned General was preparing himself to go to Greece, where he had been sent as Legate by the lord Pope John, and was now in the last preparations for his journey, the lord Pope Benedict revoked this legation, of which I have no information.

In the year of the Lord 1336 the lord Pope Benedict wished to reform the Order. So he convoked the General and many Ministers and masters, and made a new edition of the Constitutions for the regular observance of the Order, and renewed many other older statutes given during general chapters.

In the year of the Lord 1337 a general chapter was celebrated at Cahors.⁵⁶ During this chapter the papal Constitutions were publicly published and a new compilation of general statutes was also presented.

In that same chapter many Ministers and masters arose against the General, accusing him with many propositions, and formally asked to have him removed from office. However, after many

ter of Assisi, to which the author here refers, was that of Pentecost, 15th May 1334.

55 Jacques Fournier was born in Saverdun, France, circa 1280. He became abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Fonfroide. In 1317 he was elected bishop of Pamiers and on 26th January 1326 he became bishop of Mirepoir. On 18th December 1327 he was created Cardinal, and was elected Pope on 20th December 1334 and crowned on 8th January 1335. He died on 25th April 1342 in the palace that he built at Avignon, after seven years and four months of pontificate.

56 The Chapter of Cahors was celebrated on Pentecost, 8th June 1337. During the chapter the new Constitutions for the Order were approved. They were known as the *Caturcenses* (Constitutions of Cahors) or *Benedictinae* (Constitutions of Benedict XII). These Constitutions proved to be unpopular, because they resembled more the legislation of a monastic than those of a mendicant Order, laying importance upon abstinence and fasting and ignoring the issue of poverty in the Franciscan tradition.

accusations and justifications, the same General was confirmed in office.

During the same general chapter the feast of the sacred stigmata of Saint Francis was instituted for the entire Order.⁵⁷

In the year of the Lord 1340 a general chapter was celebrated in Assisi.⁵⁸

[529] The same General, after he had gone to Slavonia, to the Province of Hungary, passed through Bosnia, which was a land nearly entirely inhabited by heretics. Filled with fervour for the faith, he went to the prince of that same land, and converted him to the faith and drew him back to unity with the Church. After this he destined many friars from diverse parts of the Order to go to those lands and preach to the heretics. These same friars converted many to the faith in Christ and built many churches. After the friars had settled down in many convents, a Vicariate was established, and it is now known as the Vicariate of Bosnia.

In the same Vicariate brother John of Aragon is buried.⁵⁹ He was a perfect man and was fervent in such a great faith, that once he entered a great fire in front of the heretics in order to put himself to the test and prove to them the truth of the faith he was preaching. He remained in the flames for some time without incurring any bodily harm, and came out safe and sound and began to shine forth with many miracles. After him there was another friar who remained in the midst of the flames for the length of time necessary to recite the

57 The feast of the stigmata of St. Francis was instituted according to the double major rank. The feast had already been introduced by Pope Benedict XI in 1304, on 20th September.

58 Regarding this Chapter in Assisi, there is great uncertainty as to its historical details. In 1339 Gerard Eudes held a general Chapter in Assisi and then went on a visit in Hungary and Bosnia, where he instituted his companion Peregrinus as Vicar of Saxonia until 1349, the year in which Peregrinus was consecrated bishop. It could be that Gerard held the chapter after his return from Bosnia, that is, in 1340.

59 According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1338, n. 30, John of Aragon was buried in the friary of the town of Mili. In 1338 Beatrix, the queen of Portugal and wife of king Alphonso, sent him as Legate to Peter, king of Aragon. Wadding also mentions brother John of England and brother Andrew of Sardinia, who did not know how to speak Croatian (*lingua Illyrica*), but they preached with the power of the Spirit and suffered martyrdom, and were buried in the friary of Saint Nicholas at Ston, some thirty miles from Dubrovnik (Ragusa).

Psalm *Miserere mei, Deus*, and he also came out unharmed to the astonishment of all the onlookers.

In the surrounding Provinces of Hungary and Slavonia many friars are buried, who became radiant with virtues and miracles both in life and after death. In Villafranca⁶⁰ [530] in the Province of Hungary, brother John is buried. He had once been Minister of Hungary. When they had to carry his body from one place to another by using a boat to transfer it across the waters, the body transferred itself immediately without any means of transport. – In Esztergom brother Gallus is buried. He was a most devout lector. Many people crippled with various kinds of illness regained their health when they applied dust taken from his tomb. – In Villafranca are buried brother John, who was a Custos and a holy man, as well as brother Henry the German, who was perfect in all holiness.

In Pola⁶¹ in the Province of Slavonia is buried brother Otho, who gave many blind people their eyesight, and after his death freed many others from various kinds of illness.

The aforementioned General expelled the *Fraticelli* from the hermitage of Le Carceri of Saint Francis on Mount Subasio, where the same holy Father frequently used to dwell with his companions and lead an austere life of solitude. In their place the General placed other friars who lived a rigid and austere life of penance.⁶²

In the year of the Lord 1341⁶³ the lord Pope Benedict, upon the request of the emperor of the Tartars, sent [531] two Legates from the Order of friars Minor to preach the Catholic faith to the emperor's subjects. These friars were brother Nicholas Bonet,⁶⁴ master of sacred

60 The friary of Villafranca (in Hungarian Mangyalos). Brother John died around the year 1287.

61 In Istria.

62 Gerard Eudes expelled the *Fraticelli* from the hermitage of Le Carceri around the year 1340.

63 The author of the *Chronicle* is not exact. Pope Benedict XII sent the friars Minor as his Legates to the Tartars not in 1341 but in November 1338. The friars comprised Nicholas Bonet, John of Florence, Nicholas of Molano and Gregory of Hungary. The letter presenting the friars, *Votis zelantis ferventibus in terris Tartarorum*, was given at Avignon on 31st October 1338.

64 Nicholas Bonet was a Franciscan theologian and missionary. Probably a Frenchman by birth, he taught theology with great success at Paris, where

theology, and brother John of Florence. Brother Nicholas certainly returned to the Curia; brother John, instead, with other friars went and completed the legation. When he was close to Khambalik,⁶⁵ he heard that lately the emperor had died. Now this emperor used to love the friars Minor very strongly, since brother Francis of Alessandria had cured him miraculously from a cancer and a fistula. So the emperor would call him his own father and considered himself as his

he received the title of *Doctor Pacificus* (The Peaceful Doctor). Bonet took an important part in the dispute concerning the beatific vision, during the pontificate of John XXII. As a member of the papal embassy sent by Benedict XII to Kublai Khan, grandson of the famous conqueror Genghis Khan, Bonet exchanged the comparative ease and comfort of the professor of theology for the arduous and perilous labors of the missionary. In his desire to see the great work which was inaugurated by them and continued by the saintly Archbishop John of Monte Corvino kept up and extended, the Great Khan was induced to send an embassy to Benedict XII to petition for new laborers in the missions of Asia. The Pope received the legates with every mark of honor and, acceding to the wish of the Mongolian monarch, commissioned four religious of the Order of Friars Minor as his legates, on whom he conferred all the Apostolic faculties and privileges necessary for their missionary labors. These were John of Florence, afterwards Bishop of Bisignano in Calabria, Nicholas Bonet, Nicolas da Molano, and Gregory of Hungary. The embassy bearing letters from the pope to the Khan left Avignon towards the end of the year 1338, and after a long and arduous journey arrived at Peking in China, the residence of the Tatar emperor at the beginning of 1342. The missionaries were encouraged in their apostolic labors by the kindly attitude of Kublai Khan and succeeded in founding numerous Christian settlements throughout the vast Mongolian empire. About the year 1346 they set out again for Italy. Part of the homeward journey they made by sea and the remainder, from the Kingdom of Persia, by land, arriving in Avignon at the beginning of the year 1354. Nicholas Bonet (Nicolaus de Boneti), in fact, was consecrated Bishop of Malta (*Melita, Melivetana Ecclesia*) by Pope Clement VI on 27th November 1342 (Letter *Regimini universalis ecclesiae*), but died the following year 1343. Bonet was a prominent figure, who prior to his appointment as Bishop of Malta (not Mileve in Africa) appears in 1333 at the University of Paris on a panel of twenty-nine Masters of the University examining the work of Pope John XXII on the *visio beatifica*. In 1338 he was sent by Pope Benedict XI on a mission to the Tartars. For a detailed study of Nicolaus de Boneti as Franciscan Bishop of Malta, cfr. *Documentary Sources of Maltese History*. Part IV: Documents at the Vatican, No. 2: Archivio Segreto Vaticano: Cancelleria Apostolica and Camera Apostolica and related sources at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 416-1479, edited by George Aquilina and Stanley Fiorini, Malta University Press 2005, xi and 99-105.

65 Khambalik (Cambuluc according to Marco Polo), was the capital city of the Tartar empire of Cathay and is nowadays called Beijing.

son, and asked him to nourish him with the Christian faith and at last to baptise him. There he heard the news that a certain religious Saracen, called Alisoldanus, had become emperor. This emperor began to show cruelty towards Christians and published a wicked decree in which he commanded that all Christians who did not deny the Catholic faith and become Saracens should be killed. In this way all the friars who were living in the convent of Khambalik were captured, namely brother Francis of Alessandria, the aforementioned spiritual father of the emperor, brother Richard of Burgundy, who was a bishop, brother Raymond Ruphus who was the Provincial, brother Paschal the Spaniard from Vitoria, who was a priest. With them there were also brother Lawrence of Alessandria and brother Peter Martel of Provence, lay brothers, who had built the church that the dead emperor had permitted them to construct. [532] They were led before the emperor and examined thoroughly as to whether they were ready to deny their faith even by uttering one word. They remained invincible in their faith and declared that they would never deny it, and clamoured that they were ready to die for it, and thus they incurred the popular fury of the Saracens. These first wounded the holy friars with small daggers by piercing them in various parts of their bodies. When they continued to confess their faith in Christ constantly, the Saracens in their fury ran up to them, and with swords they killed them in a most cruel way. Thus they rendered their souls to God in a glorious martyrdom. The interpreter⁶⁶ of the bishop of Khambalik was also martyred, together with William de Mutina, who was a merchant from Genoa. All the other Christians, who were in that city, out of fear denied their faith and became Saracens. Then the friary was destroyed and the books and other belongings stolen or else burned in the fire. After some time the emperor Alisoldanus was cruelly killed and his body was burned, since the blood of the holy friars cried out against him, and he was punished with great suffering according to the quantity of his sins.

Brother Paschal of Vitoria, Martyr, suffered many other tribulations for Christ before he died, and he described them in a letter, which he sent from Khambalik to the Spanish friars of the convent of Vitoria. The letter is the following:

66 The interpreter was John of India, who was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis.

To the Reverend in Christ and beloved Guardian and the other brothers of the convent of Vitoria, as well as to the other father Custodians and beloved brothers, brother Paschal sends you his greetings with all blessings; I do not forget our other relatives and friends to whom I extend my filial reverence.

My dear fathers, in your holiness you know that when we departed from you together with our dear father brother Gonsalvo Transtorna, we travelled as far as Avignon. There, after having received the blessing of the reverend General, we left and travelled to Assisi to gain the indulgence and then we went up to Venice and travelled by carrack and crossed the Adriatic Sea, and then the Sea of Pontus,⁶⁷ having on our left the land of Slavonia and on our right Turkey. We landed in Greece, namely at Galatae⁶⁸ near Constantinople. There we found the father Vicar of the eastern Vicariate of Cathay. From there we boarded a vessel and crossed the Black Sea, which is a very deep sea, and we arrived at Gazariam in the northern Vicariate in the empire of the Tartars. From there we crossed another sea, which is not deep, and we landed at Thana.⁶⁹ Since I arrived earlier than my companion, I immediately proceeded on chariots drawn by horses together with some Greeks, and went to Saray. My companion together with other friars was directed out of his way to Urganth. I really wanted to accompany him on my journey, [533] but having received counsel, I first wanted to learn the language of that region, and with the grace of God I learnt the language of the Cumans⁷⁰ and the writing of the Uyghurs,⁷¹ since this language and writing are commonly used

67 The Aegean Sea.

68 Galatae was the name to indicate the suburbs of Constantinople.

69 This cannot be Thana in India, but must have been a town on the shores of the Caspian Sea. In fact, it is this sea in the heart of Asia, which is not very deep. If it were the case of Thana near Mumbai in India, the missionary should have crossed the Arabian Sea, which is an open and deep part of the Indian Ocean. In fact, the chronicler then states that brother Paschal arrived in Saray, that is, in the heart of Asia.

70 The Cumans were a nomadic Turkic people who inhabited a shifting area north of the Black Sea known as Cumania along the Volga River. They eventually settled to the west of the Black Sea, influencing the politics of Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Moldavia, and Wallachia. *Cuman* indicates the western Kipchak tribes living in Central Europe and the Balkans.

71 The Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group living in Eastern and Central Asia. Today Uyghurs live primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in

in all parts of this kingdom, or rather the empires of the Tartars, Persians, Chaldeans, Medes and Cathay. My companion returned from Urganth and came back to you; I abhorred going back to my vomit and, since I desired to gain the grace of the Supreme Pontiff, I did not want to go back, since I and all the brothers who came with me to these parts, have received that indulgence that all those who go with permission to Jerusalem gain, namely the plenary indulgence regarding guilt and temporal punishment, and those who persevere to the end will receive the crown of life. Therefore, my fathers, since by the grace of God I knew this language, I often used to preach the word of God without any interpreter, both to the Saracens as well as to the schismatic and heretic Christians. My Vicar, who preceded me, after having seen the letter, gave me the mandate in virtue of salutary obedience to continue upon the journey for which I had embarked. For one whole year I lived in the town of Saray, which is a town of the Saracens in the empire of the Tartars in the northern Vicariate, where a year before, one of our brothers, called Stephen, had suffered a venerable martyrdom in the hands of the Saracens. From there I continued to navigate for 12 *dietas* together with some Armenians along a river, which is called Tigris, and along the shore of the sea, called Vatuk, until I came to Saraschuk. From there I rode a chariot drawn by camels, which are terrible animals to travel upon, and after 50 days I arrived in Urganth, which is a city situated in the limits of the empire of the Tartars and the empire of the Persians. This city is also known by another name, Uz, where the body of blessed Job is buried.⁷² From there I rode a chariot drawn by camels in the company of Agareni,⁷³ who are the damned followers of Mohammed. I was the only Christian among them, together with a certain servant from the nation of Ziquo;⁷⁴ God then led me to the empire of the Medes. It will take a long time for me to describe, word by word, all the sufferings I had to undergo, and which only God knows. In fact the emperor of the Medes had been killed by his brother. So the caravan of the Saracens, with whom I was travelling, had been held on the road and remained in the towns of the Saracens, since everybody was afraid that war would break out and

the People's Republic of China.

72 Job 1:1.

73 Agareni (sons of Hagar) is another term denoting Saracens.

74 *Ziquo natione* in Latin.

all their goods would be stolen. In such a way, I had to stay for a long time among the Saracens. For many days I openly preached to them the name of Jesus Christ and His Gospel, and I explained to them the deceptions, errors and blindness of their false prophet, and I uncovered all these errors publicly and would confound them with loud arguments. I trusted in our Lord Jesus Christ and I did not fear them greatly, since the Holy Spirit [534] comforted and enlightened me. They observed me and made me go into their mosque on the celebration of their Easter. Because of this Easter feast many had gathered in the mosque from various parts, especially the Cadì, or their Bishops, their talismans, namely their priests. With the help of the Holy Spirit who taught me, for 25 days in the same place I discussed with these leaders the matters regarding divine realities and the falsities of their Koran. I used to dispute with them at the door of the mosque, and I was so engaged in the disputations that I hardly nourished myself once a day with bread and water. God so willed that I explained to them the mystery of the holy Trinity, and at long last I was repaid for the evil I received from them – thanks to the omnipotent God – and I had victory over them all to the praise and honour of Jesus Christ and the holy mother Church. In fact the sons of the devil first tempted me by promising to give me women, virgins, gold and silver, possessions, horses and oxen and everything else which is pleasing in this world, in order to pervert me from my faith. But I rejected and despised by all means whatever they offered me, and thus they stoned me for two days, then they applied fire to my face and to my feet, they tore away my beard, and for a long time they persecuted me with foul language, with insults and with all kinds of trials. God, who is blessed, knows that I, since I am poor, rejoiced and was happy in our Lord Jesus Christ, since through His mercy I was made worthy of suffering so many tribulations for His name. Then I was given the grace to be led to the city of Khambalik in the centre of the empire of the Medes in the Vicariate of Cathay. I started from Urganth, which is the last city in the limits of the Persians and the Tartars, and I journeyed for 5 months to Khambalik. During the journey I sojourned with the Saracens and with the words and example I publicly announced the name of Jesus Christ. These often tried to kill me by mixing poison with water, and I had to suffer many blows and other tribulations which no words can explain. But I thank God for everything, since I await even greater sufferings that I have to bear for His name and for the forgiveness of my sins, and in this way, through divine mercy, I shall surely go to the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

Keep well in the Lord Jesus Christ and pray for me and for those who make this journey or who intend to embark upon it, so that through the grace of God this pilgrimage will be useful for their salvation and will lead many to acquire many fruits for their souls. Do not worry about whether you will see me in these regions or in paradise, where there is rest, consolation and beatific vision, and where we become heirs of our Lord Jesus Christ. He himself says: *Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed* [535] *to the whole world* (Mk 14:9), until the end of times: therefore, my most dear brothers, I have to preach among many nations and I have to uncover the guilt of sinners and manifest to them the way to salvation, so that the omnipotent God will bestow upon them the grace of conversion.

Given at Khambalik on the feast day of Saint Lawrence, in the year of the Lord 1338, in the empire of the Medes.

After three of four years, as we have said, in the same city of Khambalik, brother Paschal consecrated his life with holy martyrdom, together with other five brothers.

After these events, the aforementioned brother John of Florence was sent as an apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See to many lands and regions. He travelled as far as the reign of the queen of Saba and in other principalities of the Orient, and he was received with honour as a great ambassador on the part of God. From there he entered the vast empire of the Khans and he was received honourably by the great emperor and found so much grace in his eyes, that the emperor gave him and all the friars permission to preach in the entire empire. So brother John used to carry the holy cross in his hand, and together with other friars he would preach to many people in order to convert them to the faith in Christ. He built a great number of churches and with all courage spread the name of Christ everywhere with his preaching.

The Martyrdom of brothers Ulric of Adlechovitz and Martin of Ahd

In the duchy of Livonia⁷⁵ in the Province of Bohemia, in the castle of Vilnius, brother Ulric of Adlechovitz and brother Martin of

⁷⁵ Livonia is the name which roughly corresponds to the region of the modern Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Ahd were consecrated with holy martyrdom. They were devout men and were endowed with regular observance. With great fervour for their faith and for martyrdom they arrived in the castle of Vilnius, which was inhabited by the worst heathens who adored idols. One day brother Martin celebrated Mass in that place, whereas brother Ulric, after taking the standard of the cross in his hands, went to the main square and began to preach to the numerous pagans who had gathered there, and to exhort them to adore the true and living God and to abandon their false gods and superstitious beliefs. The pagans were indignant, and making a tumult they captured him and took him to the duke of Livonia, who was called Gedeminus. Brother Ulric constantly confessed with great courage the Catholic faith in front of him and proclaimed as abominable the rites of those pagans. The duke was furious and commanded his people to kill Ulric in a cruel way and to disperse his entire body. When he heard that Ulric had a companion by the name of brother Martin, the duke sent his soldiers to bring him also in his presence. So the duke Gedeminus asked him why he had come to that city. Brother Martin answered him and all his people, and [536] revealed his error to him and preached to him the need to adore the one true God. The duke immediately commanded his men to shut Martin in prison. In the meantime those wicked ministers led brother Ulric out of the town while he was constantly preaching Christ. They dismembered his hands and his arms and cut off his ears and nose, and then took him to a certain grotto near the shoreline of the river at Vilnius and there made fun of him. One of them played the part of a madman and asked him: "Monk, do you need to beg?" Ulric answered him with a joyful voice: "My Lord God can administer to me this very moment the fish in this river so that I may eat, if it please His will to do so." That very moment a well-cooked and large fish appeared in front of him, and it had not been prepared by any human hands. When the infidels saw this many of them converted to the Catholic faith; others were indignant and killed him cruelly and threw him into the river. But Christ the leader permitted that sacred body not to drown in the river, but changed it into the appearance of a column of fire hovering above the water. When that column approached a certain castle of the Christians, all the men of that castle precipitated and ran to the riverbank when they saw the fiery column. There they saw the sacred body, which had been dismembered and mutilated, and they immediately realised that the column had been a miraculous

vision, announcing that he had been killed for Christ. Therefore they received his remains and picked them up as if they were a great gift sent there by God, and with great devotion they led him to bury him in their church.

After these events the most cruel duke Gedeminus tried to inflict different kinds of torments on brother Martin, who was professing with great courage the Catholic faith. In fact, his men were violently compelling Martin to swallow a large piece of cloth that had been placed in water, and then they pulled it out of his intestines in such a way that they broke his entrails. The more they afflicted him, brother Martin, however, became even more constant and strong in his faith. When Gedeminus the most impious duke realised that he was immovable in his faith, he ordered his men to hang brother Martin and let him suffocate on the scaffold. Thus he was crowned with holy martyrdom. The most cruel duke was not satisfied with the innocent death of brother Martin, but ordered to take him down from the scaffold and to abandon his body to the dogs in order that they would devour him. A big pack of famished dogs came over to eat him up, but they could not touch him, since he was protected by divine power. Thus he remained intact and incorrupt for some days, and when the sister of that duke, who was a Christian nun, even though she was a schismatic, realised that the Martyr had not been buried, she came to gather that sacred body and buried it with honours in her monastery.

In the year of the Lord 1342 the lord Pope Benedict died during spring. At that same time the lord Peter Rogerii, a doctor in theology, and a black monk, who was a Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Nereo e Achilleo, was elected Pope in Avignon [537] and chose the name Clement VI.⁷⁶ In that same year the Pope raised to the rank of Cardinal priest with the title of San Vitale the lord brother Helias

⁷⁶ Pierre Roger was born in Maumont (Limoges). He entered the Benedictine Order, studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, and became abbot of Fécamp, bishop of Arras, chancellor of France, archbishop of Sens and Rouen. He was made Cardinal priest of Santi Nereo e Achilleo and administrator of the bishopric of Avignon by Benedict XII in 1338, and was elected Pope on 7th May 1342. Clement VI reigned during the Black Death (1347-1350), which killed more than a third of Europe's population. Popular opinion had blamed the Jews for the plague, but Clement intervened with two papal bulls in 1348, which condemned the violence and those who blamed the plague on the Jews. Clement VI died on 6th December 1352.

de Nabinali, from the Province of Aquitaine, who was at the time patriarch of Jerusalem and archbishop of Nicosia.⁷⁷

During that same year the Pope made brother Gerard the General patriarch of Antioch and bishop of Catania. He made brother Fortanerius Vassalli of Aquitaine as Vicar General of the Order.⁷⁸ At the time he was superior in the convent of Avignon, and then succeeded brother Gerard in the generalate.

At this same time the lord Robert, king of Sicily and Jerusalem, who was decorated with science and prudence as well as with great virtues, and who was a most singular lord and protector of the Order, died in the city of Naples.⁷⁹ As he had ordered when he was still alive, he was dressed in the habit of the friars Minor with the cord, and without any other richly decorated coverings he was carried to the monastery of *Corpus Christi*, which belongs to the friars Minor and to the sisters of Saint Clare, and there he was solemnly buried in the usual way of royalty.

In the same year, during the month of September, the venerable father brother Dominic de Barra, Minister of Aquitaine, after returning to the Curia from Montpellier, departed from this life. For 30 consecutive years he lectured theology in the Order and wrote a most erudite *Postillam super Apocalypsim*.

Brother Fortanerius, Vicar of the Order, with the apostolic authority made brother William Farinier Minister of Aquitaine. William succeeded him in the generalate and became a cardinal before him.

The aforementioned brother Gerard, who had been General, governed the Order for 13 years.

77 Helias de Nabinali was made magister of theology in Paris (May 1331). He was subsequently made archbishop of Nicosia on 16th November 1332, and on 12th July 1342 Patriarch of Jerusalem. On 20th September 1342 he became Cardinal priest with the title of St. Vitalis and died on 4th October 1363, and was buried in Avignon.

78 Fortanerius Vassalli (Vassal Fortanier) had been master of theology since 1334. The document *Habet assertio fide digna* of John XXII of September 1334 states that William, chancellor of the University of Paris, conferred the dignity of *magister* upon brother Fortanerius Vassalli, from the Order of friars Minor, who was bachelor in sacred theology. He became minister general on 11th June 1343.

79 Robert of Anjou died on 16th January 1343 (or 1342 when the computation of the year starting on 25th March is followed).

The times of brother Fortanerius, XIXth General of the Order (1343-1347)

[538] The nineteenth General was brother Fortanerius Vassalli,⁸⁰ a master from the Province of Aquitaine. He was elected during the chapter of Marseilles in the year of the Lord 1343, in the presence of the aforementioned lord Cardinal brother Helias. In the chapter it was ordered that from that moment onwards [539] the friars were to observe the Constitutions of the lord Bonaventure, together with some additions regarding the basic elements of the life of the Order, whereas the other statutes and compilations were to be revoked. – It was also ordered that in the feast of the holy Trinity the friars were to recite the office composed by the lord brother John Peckham, and that in the feast of Saint Louis Bishop they were to recite the office composed by the lord king Robert, who was the saint's brother.⁸¹

According to the will of the chapter, after the lord Cardinal Protector James Caietani had died, this General requested and obtain from the lord Pope Clement the lord Talerandus,⁸² Cardinal and

80 Fortanerius Vassalli was born circa 1300 in Aquitaine. He was received into the Order in the friary of Condom. He became a bachelor of theology and in 1334 became master of theology in the *studium* of the friars at Avignon. In 1342 the Minister General Gerard Eudes was created Cardinal, and Fortanerius was chosen as Vicar General of the Order until the next chapter. On 11th June 1343, during the Pentecost chapter of Marseilles, he was elected Minister General, and was confirmed by Pope Clement VI, who greatly desired him to govern the Order, as is evident in the Bullae *Dudum Ordine fratrum Minorum* (Avignon, 22nd May 1343) and *Cum inter cetera* (Avignon, 24th May 1343). On 24th October 1347 Fortanerius was created Archbishop of Ravenna, and on 20th May 1351 Patriarch of Grado. With the Bulla *Gravis inter dilectos filios* (Villaneuve, 24th October 1351) he was sent as Legate to pacify the Venetians and the Genoese. On 17th September 1361 he was created Cardinal, but died on 12th November when he was going to Avignon to receive the Cardinal's hat from Clement VI. He was buried in the church of the friars Minor at Padua.

81 These divine offices, together with those of St. Bonaventure and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, were suppressed with the edition of the Breviary of Pope Saint Pius V.

82 Talerandus, or Talayrandus, was the count of Perigueux. He was Cardinal with the title of San Pietro in Vinculi, and in 1348 became bishop of Albano.

bishop of Albano, as Protector of the Order.

In the same year⁸³ this General received into the Order of Saint Clare the most illustrious lady Sancha of Majorca, queen of Sicily and Jerusalem and widow of the most famous lord king Robert. Out of her great fervour for poverty she abandoned all her earthly possessions and entered the monastery of the Holy Cross in Naples and chose to follow the Lord according to the first and more original rule of the sisters of San Damiano, and taking nothing of the world with her, she embraced that form of life forever. That monastery lived absolutely with the alms brought by the Mendicant brothers. She gave such an unheard of example of humility, that she wanted to abandon her proper name and title of queen, and humbly begged the General to sign a decree on his authority, commanding that henceforth no brother or sister was to call her lady Sancha or queen, but sister Clare, servant of the sisters of Saint Clare; and thus it came to be.

This same lady queen, out of her devotion and submission to the Order, when her husband the lord king Robert was still alive, built many monasteries for the sisters of Saint Clare and other houses for the friars Minor. In fact, in the city of Naples she ordered that four solemn monasteries be built and she placed them under the government of the Order of friars Minor; namely the aforementioned monastery of *Corpus Christi*, which is a splendid edifice endowed with many incomes and church ornaments, in which nowadays live about two hundred nuns and fifty friars; she built the aforementioned monastery of the Holy Cross, in which, as we have said, she chose to enter and lived a most perfect life of poverty and humility and finally ended her days happily in the same monastery; she also built the monastery of Saint Mary Magdalen for three hundred nuns, as well as the monastery of Saint Mary of Egypt.⁸⁴ She also built a solemn monastery for the sisters of Saint Clare in the city of Aquì in Provence, as well as other [540] monasteries that she endowed with many gifts out of the great affection that she had and used to demonstrate for Saint Francis and his Order.

With the Bulla *Petitionis dilectorum* (Villeneuve, 28th October 1343) Pope Clement VI nominated him Protector of the Order.

83 Sancha entered the monastery of the Holy Cross on 21st January 1344 (1343 according to the computation of the year starting on 25th March).

84 Sancha built the monastery of *Corpus Christi* in 1319; the monastery of the Holy Cross in 1342; the monastery of St. Mary Magdalen in 1342.

In the same year 1343 brother Manens, the Vicar of the East, came to the lord Pope Clement. He had been sent by the Latin empress of the Greeks,⁸⁵ who was a member of the house of Savoy, and by her son who had just become emperor, since his father had died, with letters requesting the lord Pope to send Catholic doctors in order to convert his people. The lord Pope sent as his Legate brother Fortanarius, the General of the Order. But when he was preparing himself with many other masters and brothers to leave on his journey, all the plans were revoked because of reasonable causes.⁸⁶

Upon the request of this same General, the lord Pope Clement at first temporarily suspended the statutes of the lord Pope Benedict XII regarding the election of the Custodes and Guardians, but then he revoked them, declaring that they were to be chosen in the chapter or outside the chapter, according to the ancient custom, in order to avoid disputes and lack of accord that often occur during the time of elections.⁸⁷

The Martyrdom of brother Livinus of France

In the year of the Lord 1345 brother Livinus from the Province of France suffered a glorious martyrdom for professing his faith in Cairo, in Babylon minor.⁸⁸ Through the initiative of the venerable brother Adam, Livinus was received into the Order. He was a most humble man, assiduous in prayer and endowed with all kinds of elegant behaviour. Although he was well prepared and very subtle in theological studies, he never took any care to become a lector, since he greatly desired to dedicate his time in prayer and contemplation, more than in doctrine. He burned with the desire for martyrdom, and therefore went to the lands of the Saracens together with the afore-

85 The empress Johana.

86 The Pope decided to send Henry, the Patriarch of Constantinople, as his Legate. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1343, n. 1.

87 Chapter 20 of the Constitutions of Benedict XII stated that, except for the election of the Guardian of the house of Paris, the other Guardians were to be chosen only by the friars residing in that particular friary, and they had to be at least 25 years old and ordained priests.

88 Brother Livinus was from the Province of France and died in Cairo, according to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1345, n. 1.

mentioned brother Adam. When he was praying fervently one night in the holy place of mount Zion, in the church in which there is the great upper room where Christ ate the Last Supper together with His disciples, many Saracens, who were awake outside, saw three fiery globes coming down [541] and illuminating with a marvellous light that church in which he was praying. The Saracens ran over to that place, since they thought that it was burning. But when they arrived at the door and did not find anything out of the ordinary, they were astonished and went back. The following morning they told the friars what they had seen. Brother Livinus, however, had confidentially revealed what had happened to his spiritual father, brother Adam. When brother Livinus then went to Cairo and settled there he immediately began to dedicate his time to prayer, in honour of Christ and the blessed Virgin, but then he had to cut short his prayers because of other temporal commitments. One day in the chapel in which he was praying the Queen of heaven appeared to him in radiant robes, with her husband Joseph, but not with her beloved Son. So brother Livinus, among other things, with all humility said: "O my lady, how is it that you have not brought your Son with you?" The blessed Virgin answered: "You are not worthy of seeing Him, since you have not finished the praises that you had begun in His honour and in my honour. If you will finish them, you are to know that not only you will see Him, but also that He will give you the grace of martyrdom, that you desire so greatly." When he heard this brother Livinus immediately finished his praises.

Therefore brother Livinus now knew that he could shed his blood for the honour of God and the Catholic faith. So first he disputed in a very subtle way a certain question in order to determine a conclusion based on the decisions in the writings of the holy Roman Church. He decided that, if his conclusions were not correct, he would abandon them. The question regarded the following: "Whether it is licit and according to God for a Christian to enter the mosques of the Saracens in order to preach to them the Catholic faith and condemn the religion of Mohammed." Some authors were of the opinion that it was not licit, given that according to the laws of the Saracens such a Christian should be killed instantly, and in this way they reasoned that he would make no fruit at all since he would die that very moment. Brother Livinus, however, referred to the examples of the Martyrs and to the writings of the Saints and chose to answer affirma-

tively. In his answer he reasoned that, when many of our friars, out of their zeal for the faith, had entered the mosques of the Saracens and preached to them by professing their Catholic faith, they had not been killed by the same Saracens, and he even cited the names of those friars. So he continued by stating: "You state or demonstrate, that if you offer up yourself to be killed by others, you are committing suicide. Now the Saints professed their Catholic faith, even though they did not in the least doubt that they would be killed by those tyrants because of their confession. The Church, however, venerates them as true Saints and proposes their fervent confession of faith to others as an example." Since the man of God, brother Livinus, wanted to give proof of the truthfulness of what he asserted by offering an example, on a certain Friday, around noon, full of fervour and inflamed with the Spirit he entered the city of Cairo. That was the hour in which the Sultan and the Saracens are accustomed to pray according to their rites. He courageously entered the mosque and began to shout aloud in French, and to preach to the Turcomans, both interpreters and other persons, who [542] were more than forty in number and could understand him, and to incite them to deny their faith, telling them that their religion was of no good to them and that they were all damned unless they accepted the faith in Christ. Then he turned to the Sultan and said: "How come, Sultan, that you are praying in vain? Stand up and be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus and abandon this deadly sect; otherwise you should know that you will be condemned to eternal punishment."

The Sultan was astonished when he saw that friar in the mosque who was speaking in such a courageous and fervent manner, even though he could not understand what he was saying. So, full of confusion, he turned towards his comrades who were around him and asked: "What is that pig saying?" The interpreters and renegades told him that the friar was saying different things from what he was actually stating, since they were expecting the Sultan to mount in fury. But brother Livinus began to speak very clearly in Arabic, even though nobody had taught him to speak that language, and repeated in an intelligible way what he had stated before, and proclaimed the religion of Mohammed to be false and deadly. That very moment in the mosque there was great commotion, and the Saracens were saying: "That pig must die, since he has presumed to enter the mosque and insult our religion and our holy prophet." The Sultan tried to per-

suade him to deny all the statements he had uttered and to become a Saracen, promising to give him riches and honours, and to include him among his most noble Cadi, who are the great pontiffs of that city. Brother Livinus became even stronger in his faith and answered him intrepidly: "What are you promising me are all transitory things. You, instead, should convert to the Lord and abandon your deceiver Mohammed, and thus you will gain eternal life." The Sultan wanted to free him from death and to take him with him, so that in the meantime he would deny what he was saying, and therefore he told his companions: "This poor Frank is out of his mind because of his misery and hunger; but give him food and drink and maybe he will come back to his senses." In fact brother Livinus was wearing one habit, he was barefoot and had no sandals, and he looked miserable because of his great fervour and his vigils, prayers and afflictions, with which he used to arm himself, and thus he looked to be completely changed. In fact, when the Saracens placed food in front of him, he ate a little and that day he remained silent. On the following day, which was a Saturday, he became even stronger in his faith and he condemned the religion of Mohammed even more forcefully, and thus the Saracens shut him up in prison.

On Sunday he was led in the presence of the Sultan and there he courageously confessed his faith and contemptuously insulted Mohammed and his religion. On Monday the Cadi, namely the high priests, met in front of the Sultan and solemnly requested that, according to their religion, that blaspheming pig should die. Therefore the Sultan gave Livinus over to them so that they would kill him according to their will. So they took him as if he was a sheep captured by a wolf, and calling the people to gather and make a tumult in that place, they led him to the public square of their city while he was continually invoking the Lord. There they cut off his most holy head, and in this way he attained the glory of martyrdom and departed from this world to the Father.

When the devout man brother Adam heard about his martyrdom, he was sad beyond words, since his sickness had prevented him from accompanying Livinus to Cairo and therefore he could not die for Christ together with him. One night he was praying to the holy Martyr. Brother Livinus appeared to him and said: "Father, why are you so agitated? Take comfort in the Lord, since [543] He will show you his clemency and you will be able to carry out your desire." Af-

ter some time Livinus appeared to him once more dressed in a glorious and splendid habit and carrying an enormous book that was shut. When brother Adam asked him what was written in that volume, he answered that in that volume there were all the names of the martyred friars as well as the names of the friars who would be martyred in the future. Having said this he disappeared from his gaze and went up to heaven. Brother Adam remained very much consoled in the Lord.

The Martyrdom of brother John of Montepulciano

In the same year 1345, roughly in the middle of the month of April, brother John of Montepulciano⁸⁹ died as a martyr in Cairo. It happened that a certain Christian from Genoa, because of some tribulation renounced his faith and became a Saracen. Brother John persuaded him with his holy arguments and made him return to the faith and inflamed in him the desire for martyrdom. That Genoese man accepted brother John's advice, and after having armed himself beforehand with the Sacraments of the Church, he entered the mosque and began shouting in front of the multitude of Saracens and constantly professing his Catholic faith, asserting that the religion of the Saracens was deadly. So he was taken away with violence and imprisoned. When the Saracens heard that it was brother John who had converted him, they sent their guards, and with great noise and violence they captured him and led him away. Since the Saracens could not convince brother John and the Genoese man to deny their faith and become Saracens, even though they promised them money and honour, therefore they cut off the head of the Genoese man and cut John's body in half. In this way both of them rendered their souls to God through their glorious martyrdom.

In the year of the Lord 1346 a general chapter was held in Venice.⁹⁰

89 Montepulciano, in Tuscany. Brother John belonged to the Province of Tuscia. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1345, n. 5.

90 The Pentecost chapter of 4th June 1346, in which Pope Clement VI sent a letter entitled *Summus et mirabilis opifex*, from Avignon (27th April 1346) in which he pleaded with the capitulars to pray and work for the good of the whole Order and for the deliverance of the Church from the present tribulation. Cfr.

In the year of the Lord 1347 the lord Pope Clement VI made the aforementioned General Fortanerius archbishop of Ravenna. Nevertheless he made him remain as Vicar of the Order, until a successor to the generalate would be elected. He immediately ordered that, in the following year, a General Chapter was to be celebrated in Verona for the election of the General Minister. This General governed the Order for five years; and then he was made patriarch of Grado.⁹¹

Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1346, n. 7-8.

91 Fortanerius Vassalli was archbishop of Ravenna in 1347-1351 and patriarch of Grado in 1351-1361. He governed the Order for 4 years as Minister General and 1 year as Vicar.

The times of brother William, XXth General of the Order (1348-1357)

[544] The twentieth General was brother William Farinier,⁹² a master from the Province of Aquitaine. He was elected when he was Minister of Aquitaine, in the chapter celebrated in Verona in the year of the Lord 1348, at which the lord brother Fortanerius, who was his predecessor, presided over the same chapter.

In the same year there was such a great epidemic and plague in the entire world, that hardly one third of the friars of the Order remained alive.⁹³ Some persons died immediately when they started to cough up blood, others died through pain in the groin because of bubonic abscess and swelling of the armpits, others through pus-filled abscess on the skin [545] accompanied by very high fever. These

92 William Farinier was Minister General from 1348 to 1356. In 1356-1357 he governed the Order as Apostolic Vicar with the authority of the Pope. Guillaume Farinier became a doctor of theology at Toulouse in 1344. On 24th January 1344 Pope Clement VI wrote a letter from Avignon to the archbishop of Toulouse Guillaume of Laodunum, commanding him to promote to the rank of master Guillaume Farinier, Minister Provincial of the Province of Aquitaine. William Farinier was elected General during the Chapter of Pentecost, 8th June 1354, celebrated in Verona, and published the famous *Constitutiones Farinerianae*. On 23rd December 1356 Innocent VI made him Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Marellino e Pietro. As Papal Legate he went to Spain to bring peace between the kings of Castile and Aragon. He died at Avignon on 15th August 1361 and was buried in the church of the friars Minor.

93 The Black Death was one of the deadliest pandemics in human history, peaking in Europe between 1348 and 1350. It is widely thought to have been an outbreak of bubonic plague coming from central Asia and the Crimea, and widely circulated by black rats on merchants ships. It spread like wildfire throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. The Black Death is estimated to have killed up to 60 per cent of Europe's population, reducing the world's population from an estimated 450 million to 350-375 million in 1400. The result was a series of religious, social and economic upheavals, which had profound effects on the course of European history. The Black Death affected religious Orders in the sense that a great number of religious died, and were often replaced by unfit candidates later on. It is considered to have been one of the root causes of the process of relaxation from the observance of the Rule in all religious Orders, including the Franciscan Order that saw the growth of Conventualism during the 14th century.

symptoms drove many to acts of schizophrenia. The illness was so contagious that no priest dared go to administer the Sacraments of the Church to the sick without fear of certain death. In that same year the aforementioned lord brother Gerard, patriarch of Antioch, who had been the 18th General, died in the city of Catania in Sicily, and was buried there.

During the same year the venerable father brother Rudolph of Cornac,⁹⁴ master of sacred theology, was elected Minister of Aquitaine.

In the year of the Lord 1350 the lord Pope Clement VI gave a plenary indulgence to all those who went to visit the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul and the other patriarchal churches of Rome.⁹⁵ The indulgence was valid for one year, and a great number of friars took advantage of it and travelled widely to obtain it.

In the year of the Lord 1351 this General celebrated a general chapter at Lyon. This chapter ordered that the friars should celebrate the feast of the new translation of Saint Anthony, which had been celebrated for the first time during the Jubilee year by the lord Cardinal of Boulogne,⁹⁶ bishop of Porto [546] on the 14th of the *Calends* of March. He also presided over the translation of the relics of Saint Ivo, confessor, who had recently been canonised on the 6th day of the *Calends* of November.⁹⁷

94 Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1352, n. 16. In the letter *Supplicat sanctitati vestrae*, the chancellor of the Paris University asked Pope Clement VI to promote brother Rudolph of Cornac, who was a *baccalarius formatus*, to the rank of master of sacred theology. The Pope answered him affirmatively with the letter sent from Avignon on 9th August 1346.

95 This was the second great Jubilee year. The first Jubilee was celebrated in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII (Bulla *Antiquorum habet fide relatio*, 22nd February 1300), who declared that the Jubilee should be celebrated every one hundred years. Clement VI, with the Bulla given on 27th January 1349 decreed that the Jubilee would be celebrated every fifty years.

96 This bishop was Guy of Boulogne, who was the son of Robert III, count of Boulogne and Auvergne, and bishop of Tournay and Cambrai. He later became archbishop of Lyon. On 20th September 1342 Clement VI made him Cardinal with the title of Santa Cecilia, but later on he changed his title when he became bishop of Porto e Santa Rufina. He died on 25th November 1373. The translation of the relics of Saint Anthony took place on 16th February 1350.

97 The translation of the relics of St. Ivo took place on 27th October. St. Ivo is the patron saint of lawyers, and the Order of Minors celebrated his feast on 19th May, since he had been canonized on that day in 1347. Ivo (Yves) of Chartres

This same General constituted a new Vicariate in Vacia⁹⁸ because of the conversion of many unbelievers and of the building of many convents by our friars.

In the year of the Lord 1352 the lord Pope Clement made the lord brother Pastor⁹⁹ from the Province of Provence, who was then archbishop of Yverdon,¹⁰⁰ Cardinal presbyter with the title of Santi Marcellino e Pietro.

[547] In the same year, a certain lay brother, Gentile of Spoleto from the Province of Saint Francis, together with some other brothers, was seduced to such a vain sense of devotion and proposed such an audacious form of life, that the entire Community of the Order opposed them and accused them of plotting the division of the Order.¹⁰¹

(c. 1040 – 23rd December 1115) was bishop of Chartres from 1090 and an important canon lawyer during the Investiture Crisis. He studied in the Abbey of Bec in Normandy under Lanfranc, where he probably met St. Anselm of Aosta. There is no certainty regarding the official canonisation of St. Ivo.

98 Vacia indicates probably Rascia, or Bosnia. But the Vicariate of Bosnia had already been constituted by Gerard Eudes in 1339-1340.

99 Pastor de Serrescuderio, from the Province of Provence, was created Cardinal in 1350. Pope John XXII had conferred upon him the title of master of theology in the letter written from Avignon on 17th January 1333. In 1329 Pastor was present in the Chapter of Paris as Minister Provincial. On 1st October 1337 he was elected bishop of Assisi and on 27th January 1339 he was transferred to the archbishopric of Ebordunum (Yverdon). On 17th December 1350 he became Cardinal priest of Santi Marcellino e Pietro. According to Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1350, n. 5-6, he died in Avignon on 3rd July 1354, and was buried in the church of the friars Minor.

100 *Castrum Ebordunense* (Yverdon), was a castle on the southern shore of Lake Neuchâtel on the Thièle river. It was the seat of a bishop during the Middle Ages.

101 The case of Gentile da Spoleto is considered to be the link between the Spirituals and the early Observants. The hermitage of Le Carceri had been inhabited by *Fraticelli* who had been condemned by John XXII. This hermitage had links with many early Franciscan reform movements. The movement known by the name of "Regular Observance" within the Order of friars Minor in Italy, officially started in 1368 with the initiative of brother Paoluccio dei Trinci da Foligno. However its origins can be traced much earlier. It essentially developed during the period of the Avignon papacy, as an orthodox manifestation of the ideals of the Spirituals and *Fraticelli* of the beginning of the 14th century. In the beginning the movement of reform had a strong element and also a weakness. It was a strong reform because it became a force against Conventualism, with the literal observance of the Rule. It was, however, a weak movement, since it became confused with the ideals of the *Fraticelli*,

Therefore they begged the lord Pope Clement and some other noblemen who were deceived by their form of vain devotion, to concede to them the use of some hermitages of the Order, in which they could observe the Rule literally.¹⁰² They also asserted that the Community of the Order was observing it with the commentaries and modifications contained in the declarations of the Popes, whereas they wanted to observe it to the letter and without Gloss, as Saint Francis had origi-

who had been condemned by John XXII. What were the links between this movement born officially in 1368 and the party of the Spirituals and *Fraticelli* who, as we have seen, had been condemned in 1317? The answer to this question is that Paoluccio dei Trinci was not the founder of the reform, but could rather be called the second founder. The reform had been born in 1334-1355, during the time when the remaining *Fraticelli* were still living in secluded hermitages, and exercising influence upon people like Paoluccio dei Trinci. It is sufficient to remind our readers that Angelo Clareno was still living in the Basilicata region of southern Italy (Santa Maria in Aspromonte) until 1337. The first attempt at reform in Italy began when brother Giovanni da Valle of Foligno received permission from the General Minister Gerard Eudes to follow the literal observance of the Rule in the friary of Brogliano, a hermitage between Foligno and Camerino. In this region the influence of the *Fraticelli* was predominant. Angelo Clareno had contacts in this area, and the same family dei Trinci, from which Paoluccio would be descended, had contacts and sympathies with the *Fraticelli*. Pope Clement VI gave Gentile da Spoleto, who became successor to Giovanni da Valle in 1350, permission to live the strict observance of the Rule in other Franciscan hermitages, besides that of Brogliano. These hermitages were those of Le Carceri on Mount Subasio; La Romita, near Porcheria; Monteluco, above Spoleto; and Giano, on the west of the Clitunno stream. These brothers were not priests, and they were initially known as *fratres simplices* or *fratres devoti* (simple or devout brothers), and their hermitages were known as *loca devota* (devout places). In 1354, however, the General Minister William Farinier suppressed the reform, since he declared it suspect to the tendencies of the *Fraticelli*. Cfr. D. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans. From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis*, 304.

102 On 13th December 1350 Pope Clement VI published the letter *Bonorum operum* in Avignon, in which he wrote: "To our beloved sons at Le Carceri and Monteluco, as well as at the hermitages of L'Eremita and Giano, to the Guardians or Vicars of these places and of the friaries of the Order of friars Minor in the dioceses of Assisi and Spoleto. We concede permission to the friars of these convents to live legitimately and in freedom in a simple way the Rule according to its primeval purity, and in no way are the Superiors or the Prelate of the Order to impede them in this manner of observance, or to trouble them or molest them." The text of the Letter is found in Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1350, n. 15-16.

nally handed it down. Therefore they pleaded that they be handed over four hermitages in the Province of Saint Francis, namely Le Carceri, Giano, L'Eremita e Monteluco, in order to house 12 friars, who would then be able to receive other friars of the Order of other seculars from all places, in such a way that nobody would be able to impede them from this plan. They immediately tailored for themselves habits which were smaller than those used by the Community of the Order and different in both measurements and form. They also proceeded to accept apostates and other less worthy persons, who were not secure in their calling. They also managed to draw others who wanted to flee from obedience and discipline of the Order, and who were looking for freedom; others came simply because they were pleased and joyful to see such a reform in the Order, and did not consider the appropriation of any hermitage against the precept of highest poverty, or consider any restriction against highest obedience, since they did not feel bound to obey the Prelates of the Order and considered this to be their privilege. They also did not consider it to be a transgression of the statutes to wear different habits and they showed contempt towards penalties. In all these matters they behaved as schismatics and became a scandal against fraternal charity.

During the same year, namely 1352, the aforementioned lord Pope Clement departed from this life on the feast of the Bishop Saint Nicholas. After some days the lord Stephen Aubert of Limoges,¹⁰³ who was then Cardinal and bishop of Ostia, was elected Pope in the papal palace of Avignon and chose the name Pope Innocent VI.

[548] In the year of the Lord 1352 the aforementioned brother John of Florence, who was a Nuncio of the Apostolic See to the emperor of the Tartars, returned with his legation carrying with him the letters of the Gran Khan, namely the aforementioned emperor, together with gifts. As a proof that he had carried out his legation,

103 Stephen Aubert (Adalberti) was a famous canonist at the University of Toulouse. He became a priest and then was elected bishop of Noyon, then of Cambrai, and in 1340 of Clairmont. On 20th September 1342 Clement VI made him Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Giovanni e Paolo *Pammachii*. (The church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo was founded by St. Pammachius [†409] who had been Roman senator and became a disciple of St. Jerome and later became a monk). Stephen Aubert was also major Penitentiary, and then became bishop of Ostia and Velletri. He was elected Pope on 18th December 1352 and was crowned on 29th December, Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity. He died on 12th September 1362.

he also brought a certain Bulla that had been sent by the emperor's predecessor to the lord Pope Clement IV. In this letter the emperor conceded the lord Pope the right to govern and exert dominion over all the Christians in the emperor's realms, no matter what Christian sect they belonged to. Now the Christians were innumerable in the empire. The emperor also asked the Pope to send preachers in order to convert his people. When John of Florence arrived at Avignon to the court of the lord Pope Innocent, he was benignly received and the Pope listened to him attentively. After having presented the report of his legation, the lord Pope ordered by writing that a general chapter should be celebrated in Assisi in the near future, and he also commanded that the same chapter would send trustworthy friars to the emperor, among whom he would also ordain Bishops. In the meantime, however, this fervour to send missionaries died down, and little else was done to meet those demands.

In the year of the Lord 1354 a general chapter was celebrated in Assisi.¹⁰⁴ During the same chapter the friars greatly feared that the privilege given to brother Gentile would create a division within the Order. So they wanted to go to the lord Pope and during a public consistory present the dangers and disadvantages that would result from such a privilege. The Community of the Order quarrelled with all its might against those friars in the Curia in front of the Pope. The General prudently bided his time to see whether to prepare his arguments and show that such an observance of the Rule would be, as others had been before, a scandal to the Order, and therefore he chose a longer but more secure method. In fact the same General received information that those friars were receiving men who were suspected of heresy, even though the same friars declared that they had nothing to do with their errors – they were receiving them in order to convert them and offer them a house, a bed and food, and they were keeping themselves away from such obstinate men – nevertheless since they had failed to reveal what they were doing but were giving the habit and receiving such men, it was evident that they had zeal for God *not with discernment* (cfr. Rm 10:2), but for other reasons.

Therefore, in the year of the Lord 1355, the same General, working in collaboration with the lord Cardinal priest Aegidius of

¹⁰⁴ The General Chapter of Pentecost, 1st June 1354, that also published general Constitutions.

Spain,¹⁰⁵ with the title of San Clemente, who was then Legate in Italy and afterwards became bishop of Sabina, received the privilege of placing brother Gentile into prison [549] together with two other friars of the same congregation. Upon the command of the lord Cardinal Legate, the privilege that the lord Innocent VI had given them was completely revoked.

In those days many heretical *Fraticelli* were found, and they were condemned by the Church and the Community of the Order. In Italy, the lord Legate and the General of the Order proceeded against them and multiplied their inquisitions, in such a way that many of them escaped and were punished according to the canonical sanctions¹⁰⁶.

In the year of the Lord 1356 the lord Pope Innocent VI made this General a Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Marcellino e Pietro. Nevertheless, he remained as Vicar of the Order until the election of the succeeding General, and thus governed the Order for 9 years.

The life of brother Gonsalvus Sancius

In the convent of Lugo in the Province of Saint James of Spain lived the holy brother Gonsalvus Sancius,¹⁰⁷ who was perfect in his exemplary way of life. Since he was powerful and noble, he was also very courageous in fighting and was also capable of committing violent acts. Once he was waging war on the frontier,¹⁰⁸ when he became seriously ill; the sufferings he had to endure brought him face to face with the cruel acts of his life, and he was filled with divine fear for the sins he had committed. A heavenly grace descended from heaven upon his heart and, in order to avoid damnation, he resolved to deny

¹⁰⁵ Aegidius Albornoz became Cardinal in 1350. The letter *Sedes apostolica, pia mater, quietem et pacem desiderans*, of Innocent VI, given at Villeneuve, in the diocese of Avignon on 18th August 1355, revoked the privilege given by Clement VI to Gentile da Spoleto. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1355, n. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Innocent VI addressed the Letter *Multa nec immerito mentem nostram amaritudo perfundit*, to the archbishop of Capua (29th October 1354), calling the *Fraticelli*, "superstitious men who are popularly known as *Fraticelli*."

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1361, n. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Gonsalvus was fighting for king Pedro of Castile (1333 – 23rd March 1368).

the world and to enter into the Order of friars Minor. In the meantime he went back to his home, but his illness grew even worse. He continued to nurture the thought of entering the Order even when he was still sick in bed, and therefore he called his wife, who was very noble, young and beautiful, and told her: "My dear wife, see that I am dying, and if you will do me a favour I will be sure of my salvation; if you do not want to do me this favour, I will die without having been helped by you to save myself because of the fact that I am in great desperation because of my sins." [550] She then promised him to do with certainty whatever he willed. So he told her: "Look, I want to become a friar Minor, but since I cannot do such a thing without your consent, I hereby beg you to let me at least spend the few remaining years of my life as a friar Minor." Since she truly believed that he would soon die, and she did not want to cause him any trouble in his state, she immediately conceded to him what he had asked of her. After acquiring the permission of the diocesan bishop, he received the habit of the friars Minor and commanded that he be taken, sick as he was, to the convent of the friars, where he would spend the remainder of his days until it pleased the Lord. The Lord, however, willed that after some time he was healed of his illness and, according to what he had accepted, he now began to live the life of a religious. But his wife, who loved him most tenderly, upon seeing that he was cured, called his relatives, who were very noble and powerful, and went to the friary, requesting the friars to give her husband back to her. She also stated that it was not true that she had given him license to enter the Order, but that, since she saw him seriously ill and did not want to see him suffering, she had simply given him verbal permission.

Brother Gonsalvus did not want to leave the Order or to continue keeping her as his wife. So the case was presented in front of the Bishop. Brother Gonsalvus appeared in front of him and repeated the entire story we have just narrated. He strongly asserted that he was freed from his wife according to law, and that he would never go out of the Order. The relatives, meanwhile, were shouting out aloud and threatening him and the friars. So brother Gonsalvus said: "Let me go and speak privately upstairs with my wife." So brother Gonsalvus went and spoke to his wife with the greatest fervour, using tender and loving words, but also indicating his fear and terror. He said: "My dear, if you truly love me as you say to me, then you should not contradict me, or afflict me, or confound me. How can one state

that he loves his friend, if he contradicts him in what he so greatly desires? Now if you really want me to leave this way of life, you should not accept me as your husband, but as your servant, and it might happen that I would treat you like an enemy, as if I were out of my mind. Now, if you really love my body, you should love my soul even more; in fact, it is better to be together for ever in heaven than to stay together for a short time in this life." Then he began to speak to her regarding the dangers of the present life and the terrible pains of those who are damned, and afterwards he began to speak about the sweetness of life in heaven, in such a way that, as she listened to him, she grew in fervour, and his words inflamed and melted her soul so that she was completely transformed and bowed to his will, telling him in a tearful voice: "My lord, remain in God's service, as it pleases you to do, but tell me what you command me to do for my own salvation, and I am ready to obey you." Brother Gonsalvus said: "I want to stay in this Order and I want you to enter into an Order of consecrated Nuns, so that both of us will end our days serving God." She then said: "Behold, my lord, I am ready to do what you are willing me to accomplish."

Then brother Gonsalvus took a pair of scissors, and with his own hands cut her golden locks of hair, and in front of the astonished onlookers, she received the monastic habit. Since Gonsalvus had two daughters, he placed them in different monasteries to become nuns, and his only son became a friar Minor. He abandoned all his earthly possessions, [551] and made restitution of all material possessions he was holding as a right. Since all this did not satisfy his strict conscience, namely to distribute all his riches, as we have just said before, he went to his other creditors and placing a rope around his neck, with many tears asked them pardon and forgiveness, in such a way that the same creditors were provoked to forgive him willingly, after being begged to do so with so many tears. What else can we say? He began to live the life of a new man, wearing only one habit, with a hair-shirt, and walking totally barefoot. His daily food was bread and water, his cell was the church, his bed was the bare floor; in fact he nearly always slept in the church. His example provoked to penance many nobles and those who had been wicked men, who wielded power and shed blood. They received the habit of the Order of friars Minor and entered the convent of Lugo, and with the lay brother Gonsalvus they led a life that was more angelic than human.

Brother Gonsalvus was marvellous in all these things, since he took his sins so seriously that he never found anything to judge in the other friars. He considered all others to be good and holy and himself to be the greatest sinner. When he saw children being hit, or brothers who were punished because of their defects, he was immediately moved inside and he would weep and say: "Woe to me, since I am such a great sinner that I should be hit and punished, whereas those are innocent; in fact, what harm did they do?" The man of God was always occupied in prayer, in tears and discipline, or in good works of piety. He went twice to Rome and Assisi to visit the holy places, and he went barefoot like a pilgrim, begging his food along the way. He used to procure willingly whatever he could in order to offer it to the brothers and the superiors. He forgot all about his own needs and carried out with joy and most humble tasks. When he came to the Curia, where he had been transferred, in the year of the Lord 1361, after a serious illness, he died devoutly, full of virtues, and brother John of Gandia honourably buried him in the same friary. He immediately began to shine forth for his miracles.

While many men and women were keeping devout watch around the bed on which his sacred body was lying, a certain woman from the Third Order of Saint Francis went out of the church, and since she got lost in the dark and went out of the road, she fell into a very deep well, which was full of water and had many great stones protruding from its sides. When the friars and the other persons discovered what had happened, they went and tied many ladders together, went down into the well and extracted that woman whom they considered to be dead. In fact, they were sure that she had hit those stones while falling down, and thus she drowned completely. A certain lay brother [552] went down half naked on those ladders and holding a light, descended into the depths. That woman, whom everybody thought would be dead, began to shout and say: "Why are you forcing yourself so much, brother? Go in the name of the Lord, because I am here with brother Gonsalvus Sancius, who has preserved me from being killed by hitting those stones." That very moment brother Gonsalvus disappeared, and the woman came out safe and sound from the well, and all those who saw and heard what had happened were astonished.

The fame of such a great miracle spread in the entire town, and three men who heard the story and were shut up in the prison of the royal castle made a vow with the holy brother Gonsalvus, begging

him to free them. Behold it seemed to them that they were being freely led out by someone who had come from the castle, and without being blocked by anything, they arrived devoutly to the tomb of the holy brother Gonsalvus. What astonished them most was that they could not remember the way they had taken to arrive at that place.

The times of brother John Bouchier, XXIth General of the Order (1357-1358)

[552] The twenty-first General was brother John Bouchier,¹⁰⁹ a master from the Province of Aquitaine. He was elected during the chapter of Barcelona, celebrated in the year of the Lord 1357. In that chapter it was decreed that, henceforth, the feast of the Translation of Saint Clare was to be celebrated by both friars and nuns on the second day of October.¹¹⁰

During the same year, a certain archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland,¹¹¹ in front of the entire consistory in Avignon, proposed many arguments against the Mendicant Religious and their status [553] and privileges that had been conceded to them and of which they abused. He stated that there were many friars who had embarked upon a voluntary mendicant life and consecrated their lives for Christ, but whose way of life was guilty, illicit and harmful. He also stated that Christ never begged and that he never gave any advice as to begging, but rather had prohibited the practice. Then he said that those who begged went against the laws of nature, against divine law, and against human law; that neither Alexius¹¹² nor Francis who

109 Jean Bouchier was a famous theologian in the *studium* of Toulouse. He was elected Minister General during the Pentecost Chapter at Barcelona, on 7th June 1357 and died soon after at Beaune in Burgundy, on 27th May 1358. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1352, 16; 1357, 1; 1358, 1.

110 The feast was later celebrated according to simple rite on 3rd October. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an 1357, 1-2, where the letter *In firramento militantis Ecclesiae* of Innocent VI (Villeneuve, Avignon, 25th May 1357) to the capitulars is published.

111 Richard Rudolph of Armagh, who had quarreled with the friars of Armagh and brought his case in front of the Pope in Avignon. He presented a *libellus* against the Mendicants, entitled *Nolite iudicare secundum faciem*, which received the answer of brother Roger of Coventry, in his *libellus* entitled *Confessio et pulcritudo in conspectu eius*. At this stage of history there was a great opposition to the Mendicant Orders (Preachers, Minors, Augustinian Hermits, and Carmelites) in the British Isles. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1357, n. 3ff.

112 Alexius or Alexis of Rome was an Eastern saint whose veneration was later transplanted to Rome. According to a Syrian legend, he was the "man of God"

begged voluntarily did so because they were prudent and perfect, but only because they were devout like Mark,¹¹³ when he amputated his finger. He affirmed furthermore that Christ as a man was the true lord of all temporal belongings, and that He was the only one to succeed Adam in the state of innocence, and that it was true that He had found all the world's dominions occupied by others, and therefore he did not want to enter into litigation with those who possessed. Next he affirmed that it was not possible to say that it is mortal sin to exert dominion over things which one possesses with a lawful title. Furthermore, it was against the state of the Mendicants to hear confessions, and that the privileges given to them regarding this ministry were harmful to their own souls, since it was licit to hear confessions only in the churches of the parochial clergy, except in cases of necessity. Those who confessed their sins to Mendicant Religious, who had received a general permission from the Apostolic See to hear confessions, were also obliged once a year to confess their sins to their own curate, and this they had to do, even if they did not wish to obtain absolution, but at least to observe the general statute of the Church in the Decretal: *Omnis utriusque sexus*.¹¹⁴

He was therefore preaching in England all these arguments and many more. Therefore the lord Pope Innocent nominated four Cardinals¹¹⁵ to give a hearing to these arguments. Then the Religious proposed arguments against him, stating that he was holding fast to

of Edessa, Mesopotamia, who during the episcopate of Bishop Rabula (5th century) lived by begging and shared the alms he received with the other poor.

113 Not Mark the Evangelist, but Mark the Anchorite (†400), disciple of St. Serapion, who lived in the Libyan desert at Trache.

114 Innocent III, during the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had published the decree *Omnis utriusque sexus*, with precise norms regarding the annual confession to one's own parish priest. It seems that the archbishop of Armagh was repeating what William of St. Amour had already stated against the Mendicants a century before.

115 The Cardinals were: William, bishop of Tusculum, Peter of San Martino in Monte, Elias of Santo Stefano in Monte Coelio, and Francis of San Marco, all Cardinal priests. After they had examined all the arguments, the Pope wrote a letter in favour of the Mendicants, entitled *Gravem dilectorum filiorum* (Avignon, 1st October 1358), addressed also to the Archbishops and Bishops of England. Since the controversy did not subside, the Pope imposed silence upon the archbishop of Armagh and confirmed the privileges of the Mendicants.

many errors and frequently repeated arguments that were suspect in the realm of faith, and that therefore he should be held as holding fast to heresy and be consequently condemned and excommunicated, and that his ideas were to be totally and not just partially repulsed. In the meantime, because of all these arguments and the writings that ensued, the discussions were prolonged.

The Martyrdom of brothers Nicholas of Montecorvino and Francis of the Province of Terra di Lavoro

[554] In the year of the Lord 1358, in spring,¹¹⁶ brothers Nicholas of Montecorvino and Francis of Terra di Lavoro were martyred in Cairo for the Catholic faith. A certain knight from Hungary, called Thomas, was led by the devil to deny his faith and became a Saracen. Since he was a warrior and a courageous man, the Sultan was greatly pleased to accept him and assigned to him a very generous salary. One day he came to the sacred place of the convent of the friars on Mount Zion. It was during Holy Week, and brother Nicholas of Montecorvino, full of fervour began to speak to him regarding the glory of paradise and the insults that Christ bore during His passion, as well as regarding the irrational nature of the religion of Mohammed. That knight was pierced by the sword of the fear of God, and thus he renounced the religion and rites of the Saracens and returned to the Christian religion and to the most perfect faith and cult of God. In the meantime the lord Thomas asked how he could satisfy such a great guilt before God, since he wanted to practice a way of perfect reconciliation. Brother Nicholas answered: "It is necessary that, since you have publicly renounced Christ and His religion, now in front of the Sultan you publicly declare your faith in Jesus Christ, true God, and you renounced the devil and the most harmful sect of Mohammed." The lord Thomas answered: "It is certain, my dear brother that, if I do such a thing, I will be killed in a most cruel way." The brother then said: "O lord Thomas, don't you know that, if you believe at the end you will certainly die? If therefore God gives us such a grace, that we

¹¹⁶ According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1358, 4, these brothers were martyred on 4th April 1358.

die for our faith in Him and immediately possess eternal life, how is it that you are afraid of such a death?" While the devout brother Nicholas was fervently expounding all these things, brother Thomas answered: "Therefore, most dear brother, I desire to die for Christ, but I am very afraid that, because of my weaknesses, if I offer up myself for torments I will not be comforted in the faith, and I will leave the way of truth and I will convert back to the Saracens, since I would fear to die." So brother Nicholas answered him with indescribable fervour: "I promise God and you, that if you want to come with me, I will courageously go to present myself in front of the Sultan and confess my faith in Christ, who is truly God, and I will deny the falsehood of the religion of Mohammed."

Thus they both promised to accomplish this. Brother Nicholas found brother Francis of the aforementioned province,¹¹⁷ who was full of fervour to die for Christ, took him as his companion and together with the lord Thomas and also with brother Peter of Rome, who was a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis and was also ready to offer himself to die for the faith, they went to the residence of the Cadi. The merchants, many nobles and other Christians [555] who were staying in that place got an inkling of what they were up to through the information given to them by an interpreter who accompanied the friars. So they were full of fear and told the friars to go back immediately, otherwise they would not avoid death, and moreover that they could become the occasion for a resurgence of persecution and death for the other Christians. But since the brothers did not want to go back from their intention, on the day after Easter¹¹⁸ they presented themselves intrepidly before the Sultan. The lord Thomas, the aforementioned knight, began immediately by uttering the following words: "I am not worthy of mercy, since I have that denied my Lord Jesus Christ is true God and that He was crucified for us, and I have embraced the religion of the Saracens that has been invented and propagated by the devil and by his servant Mohammed. Since there-

¹¹⁷ The Province of Terra di Lavoro, or Naples, which was one of the first Provinces of the Order. The presence of the friars Minor on Mount Zion (*Coenaculum*) was linked with the kingdom of Naples, since it was Robert of Anjou who had bought the holy place and gave it to the Franciscans, who on 21st November 1342 became the official guardians of Mount Zion with the Bulla *Gratias agimus* of Pope Clement VI.

¹¹⁸ Easter fell on 1st April in 1358.

fore my Lord Jesus Christ does not wish that I would remain in this falsehood, He has looked upon me with clemency and sweetness and has led me back to the way of truth, that I had abandoned since I had been blinded in my soul. Therefore, now here before you I want to confess this faith in my Lord that, upon the suggestion of the devil, I had denied before you.” The Sultan was infuriated at these words and said: “These *calogeri*,¹¹⁹ that is, Religious, have certainly induced you to such madness.” Brother Nicholas therefore answered courageously and said: “We have not compelled him to this confession through our own initiative, but it was the Lord Jesus Christ who did so through our ministry.” That very moment he began to preach marvellously about the faith of our faith, about the falsehood and irrational nature of the religion of Mohammed. The Sultan listened patiently to all his words. Afterwards he asked brother Nicholas’ companions, namely Francis and Peter of Rome, what they felt about those words. They answered that Nicholas was confessing the truth and that his words should be believed.

The Sultan immediately commanded his men to drag them to prison, and to separate the lord Thomas from the three other brothers. In the meantime the Saracens tried to compel Thomas to deny his faith, now by various promises, now by threatening him and terrorising him. They continued harassing him in this way, and they hardly gave him any food, but through divine grace, and through the merits of the other brothers who prayed for him, he felt comforted and asserted that, come whatever tribulation against him or any prosperity of this world, he would never decline from confessing Christ and the truth of the faith. After two days Thomas was again led in the presence of the Sultan, who immediately asked him whether he was still insisting in what he had asserted previously. Thomas answered him: “I hereby profess with all my heart the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the faith of the Christians, and I more firmly and with my whole heart want to detest the religion of Mohammed.” The Sultan turned towards him and the others and said: “All of you should know that, unless you revoke the words you have uttered against our religion and God’s prophet Mohammed, and unless you become Saracens by ac-

119 *Calogeri*, or *Calogers* (from the Greek *kalos gherôn*, meaning “good old men”) were Greek monks who followed the Rule of Saint Basil of Caesarea. They inhabited Mount Athos, and lived in monasteries or hermitages, dedicating themselves to agriculture and prayer.

cepting our religion and leaving behind you the religion of the Christians, this very day you will not escape death, which you merit according to our just laws.”

Brother Nicholas answered with great fervour: “If we were afraid to die for our faith, we would never have presented ourselves before you; but since it is most certain that we hold on to our faith, if we die because we confess it, we hope to attain to eternal life, whereas if we are try to despise our faith in order to flee from corporal death, we will end up dying for ever, just as Mohammed and those who observe his religion will do in the end.” The Sultan was enraged and sent all four of them to the Cadì, namely their Bishop, in order that he would condemn them to death. The Saracens arrived with fury, and they cut in half first the body of the lord Thomas and then those of brother Nicholas and the others, and hacked them to pieces. After they had finished their martyrdom, the Saracens secretly cremated their bodies, and [556] such a resplendent light emanated from them that all those present marvelled and remained dumbfounded. But immediately their priests began to declare that that radiant light had been sent by Mohammed, who rejoiced at such an act of vengeance committed towards blasphemers of his law. And thus blinded and deceived those Saracens hardly recognised that that was a divine miracle.

When the aforementioned General during the same time, in spring, decided to visit all Germany and celebrated the provincial chapter of the Province of Burgundy in the friary at Beaune, he died in that very place, on the day following the feast of the holy Trinity, after having governed the Order for one year.¹²⁰

The aforementioned lord Cardinal brother William¹²¹ was made Vicar General of the Order by the lord Pope Innocent VI; he immediately commanded the entire Order to gather during the following year in the friary of Genoa for the chapter, in order to elect the future General.

During that same year, when the aforementioned lord Cardinal was governing the Order, the most illustrious and noble prince, the lord Pedro *Infante* of Aragon, son of the lord king Jaime of Aragon

120 Jean Boucher died on 27th May 1358.

121 William Farinier was Vicar General of the Order from 1358 to 8th June 1359.

and of the sister of Saint Louis Bishop, after having been advised by divine revelation, entered the Order with devotion and with the admiration of many. The same lord Pedro *Infante* had been reflecting for a long time about leaving the world and serving the Lord in some state that would be pleasing to Him. Since during the same time in which he wanted to carry out his plan, the lord Pedro was still wrestling with various thoughts and was feeling many alternating sensations in his heart, certainly with the help of a divine instinct he dedicated himself to pray to God and begged Him humbly in his prayers. One night, while he was sleeping in his castle at Falceto, he saw brother Bernard Bruni, who was then Minister of Aragon, who entered his room and told him: "The lord Saint Louis, your maternal uncle, is coming to see you." In fact, during that same vision, he saw out of his room Saint Louis who was coming to meet him, dressed with the habit of the friars Minor. He was wearing a cloak, just like he used to see him in the painting in which Saint Louis was represented. With him he also saw a great number of friars Minor all dressed with resplendent and shining habits. Then the lord Pedro prostrated himself on the floor in front of Saint Louis, and he began [557] to kiss his feet with great devotion. The Saint did not let him do such an act of homage, but lifted him up and gave him the sweetest kiss on his mouth. The same lord *Infante* began to weep greatly and to shed copious tears because of the devotion and consolation he was feeling, since he felt that his whole soul was melting. Then the lord Pedro *Infante* asked Saint Louis who were those men who were coming so radiantly toward him. Saint Louis answered: "Those are all Saints, who have served in the habit of Saint Francis the Order of friars Minor, and who have merited such great glory, and this can also be your life." Having said these words he disappeared.

His chamberlains who guarded him during his sleep asked him what had happened to him, since they saw that he was crying so much. He tried to hide the vision from them, and told them that maybe he had been dreaming. From that moment his devotion towards the Order increased, and he did not want to resist that divine vision. So he sent to call the Minister of Aragon, the aforementioned brother Bernard, and revealed to him that vision and his plan to enter the Order. They both travelled to Barcelona and with the great devotion and humility and admiration of all those who were present, he received the habit of our Order. He also obtained licence from the lord Pope,

since he did not want to wait for the year of probation to end, but he made his profession in the hands of the aforementioned Minister in the presence of many nobles and ecclesiastical men, as well as of a multitude of people who were all bowing down before him. From that moment he progressed in all holiness and became a most capable and eloquent preacher, and he was intelligent that he solemnly preached on the day of Pentecost in front of the Pope and the emperor.

The aforementioned lord Cardinal governed the Order as Vicar for one year, and in this way he governed the Order for a total of 10 years.

The times of brother Mark of Viterbo, XXIInd General of the Order (1359-1366)

[557] The twenty-second General was brother Mark of Viterbo,¹²² a master from the Province of Rome, who was elected in the chapter celebrated at Genoa in the year of the Lord 1359. In that [558] chapter the Vicariate of Scotland was reasonably united to the Province of England.¹²³

In the year of the Lord 1360 the aforementioned lord archbishop of Armagh died.¹²⁴ He had been a great persecutor of the Mendicant Religious. He died according to the promise made by Saint Francis, namely that a persecutor of this Order would not remain long in life. All his statements against the Mendicant Religious were then obliterated without any other definition.

In that same year, in the *Calends* of December the holy countess of Ariano, Delphina died joyfully in the Lord. She was wife of the lord Saint Elzearius, of holy memory, count of Ariano. When she was 12 years old she married this count. It is said that, through a special grace of God, she lived with him for 26 years without ever sharing the matrimonial bed, and thus they both remained virgins until the day of their death. Delphina died wearing the habit of the friars Minor and was buried in the friary of Apt together with her most holy husband.¹²⁵

¹²² Mark of Viterbo was a doctor of sacred theology. He was elected Minister General on 8th June 1359. Pope Urban V sent him on various legations for the good of the Roman Church. On 18th September 1366 the same Pope created him Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Prassede. He died at Viterbo on 3rd September 1369, and a monument to him was erected in the church of the friars Minor of Viterbo. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1359, 6ff.; George Aquilina, *Marco da Viterbo (1304-1369) Ministro Generale dei Frati Minori, Cardinale e Nunzio Apostolico*, Roma 1971.

¹²³ The Vicariate of Scotland had very few friaries.

¹²⁴ The archbishop died on 16th December 1359 or 1360 in the Hainaut, Belgium. His remains were then buried in England. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1357, 8.

¹²⁵ Elzearus and his wife Delphina are two Franciscan saints belonging to the Third Order of Franciscan Penitents. He was born in Apt in Provence, sometime around 1284-1287, first born son of Ermengao de Sabran, count of Ariano and Laudana d'Albe de Roquemartine. He studied under the direction of

On the day of her death, until her tomb was closed, many religious and secular persons could hear in the air a most melodious sound of the tuba and other musical instruments. Such a sweet melody made them certain that that music was being played by the Angels. Delphina was resplendent with so many miracles during her life and after death that, according to the command of the lord Pope, after having made a close examination of the miracles, she is held to have been canonised in a very short time, together with her husband the count.

In the year of the Lord 1361 there was another great plague, in which the lord Cardinal William died.¹²⁶

During the same year, on the 18th day of the month of September, the aforementioned lord Fortanerius, who had once been General, and was then made patriarch of Grado, was created Cardinal priest by the lord Pope Innocent.¹²⁷ After about one month, when he was in Italy before he came to the lord Pope in order to receive the Cardinal's

his uncle Guillaume de Sabran, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Victor in Marseilles. King Charles II of Anjou ordered him in 1299, when he was still 18 years old, to marry Delphina of Signe. Both decided to live as husband and wife in total chastity all their lives. After the death of his father Elzearus inherited the title of count of Ariano, and went to the Irpinia region in southern Italy to take possession of his county, but the local populace was hostile to him. Robert of Anjou, king of Naples, greatly appreciated his good qualities, and sent him to release the Pope who was besieged in Rome in 1312 by the troops of Henry VII of Luxembourg. Elzearus was also in charge of delicate diplomatic missions in the royal court of France, where he became seriously ill and died on 27th September 1323, when he was still 38 years old. Since he was a Franciscan Tertiary he was buried in the church of the friars Minor in Apt. He remained famous for his works of charity and for his assistance of the victims of the plague. Urban V recognised his holiness, but it was his successor, Pope Gregory XI who officially canonised Elzearus on 5th January 1371. In 1791 his relics, together with those of his wife the Blessed Delphina, were transferred from the Franciscan church to the cathedral church of Apt. He is especially venerated in Apt, in Avignon, in the Abbey of St. Victor in Marseilles, in Ariano Irpino, and in the Franciscan Order, where his feast day is celebrated on 27th September, together with his wife, the Blessed Delphina.

¹²⁶ On 23rd December 1356 Innocent VI made Guillaume (William) Farinier Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Marellino e Pietro. As Papal Legate he went to Spain to bring peace between the kings of Castile and Aragon. He died at Avignon on 15th August 1361 and was buried in the church of the friars Minor.

¹²⁷ Fortanerius Vassalli had been archbishop of Ravenna, and was transferred to the patriarchate of Grado by Pope Clement VI (*Bulla Romani Pontificis*, from Villeneuve in the diocese of Avignon, 20th May 1351).

hat and title, he died, while the plague was still raging, and was buried in the friary of Padua.

That plague was so terrible, that the Order lost many of its most famous friars. From the only Province of Aquitaine 10 famous masters of theology died, of whom two were Cardinals, two Archbishops, two Bishops, two Ministers, one penitentiary to the lord Pope, another a most famous lector at the *Studium* of Saint Stephen in Toulouse. To them we must add many other famous friars who all died. Among these masters there was the famous master of happy memory, Rudolph,¹²⁸ Minister of Aquitaine, who was buried in the friary of Toulouse.

[559] In the year of the Lord 1362 a general chapter was celebrated in the convent of Strasbourg.¹²⁹

In that same year, during summer, the lord Pope Innocent VI died.¹³⁰ On the feast of All Saints or whereabouts, the lord William Grimoard, who at the time was Abbot at Marseilles and Legate of the Apostolic See in Italy, ascended to the papacy and chose the name of Pope Urban V.¹³¹

In the same year, in the empire of Media, the lord brother James of Florence, from the Order of friars Minor, bishop of Zaiton, was martyred by the Saracens for professing the Catholic faith.

Another two friars who were most constant in their faith were captured by the Nestorian heretics and died of hunger, and in this way departed from this life to the Lord in order to receive the crown of martyrdom.

¹²⁸ Rudolph of Cornac.

¹²⁹ According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1362, 3, the chapter was celebrated on Pentecost, 5th June. A total of 830 brothers gathered for the chapter. They were kindly received and given food by the generosity of bishop John II of Strasbourg and the civil authorities of the town. Wadding states that the alms were so abundant that the friars of Strasbourg continued to make use of them for one whole year. The same chapter ordered that no friar could be sent to a *studium generale* of the Order without first being examined by four masters.

¹³⁰ On 22nd September 1362.

¹³¹ Guillaume Grimoard was born in 1310 at Grizac in Languedoc (commune of Le Pont-de-Montvert, département of Lozère). He became a Benedictine monk and doctor of canon law, and lectured at Montpellier and Avignon. He was Abbot of Saint-Victor in Marseilles. When he was returning from Naples, where he was Papal Legate, he was elected Pope on 28th October 1362. He was crowned on 6th December and died on 19th December 1367.

In the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1363 the lord Talairandus,¹³² Cardinal and bishop of Tusculum, and Protector of the Order, died on the 13th day of the month of January.

After this time the aforementioned lord Pope Urban sent brother Mark the General to bring peace between the count of Savoy and the marquis of Monferrato. When he made them return to good and cordial relations, the same lord Pope sent him to the confederation of the Florentines and Pisans, who were waging war one against the other, with great harm ensuing from this conflict. After very hard efforts and work on his part and in spite of all dangers, against the hope of many, he led them back to peace. For the third time he was sent to unify the cities [560] of Italy against the great coalition that was trying to devastate the lands of the Church.¹³³

In the year of the Lord 1364, in the town of Gaza, brother William of Castellamare di Stabia, from the Province of Terra di Lavoro,¹³⁴ preached the faith in Christ and condemned the religion of Mohammed. The king first threatened and terrorised him, then he tried to draw his sympathy through favours and promises, in order to make him revoke what he had said and deny his faith in Christ. Brother William remained immovable and persevering in his faith, discarded the king's threats and terrors and despised his favours and promises. Therefore he had to sustain many insults on the part of the king, who finally ordered his men to saw his body in half. In this way he was crowned with a glorious martyrdom. After this his body was burned

¹³² Cardinal Talairandus Périgord was Cardinal Protector of the Order from 1343 to 1364.

¹³³ Urban V sent Mark of Viterbo as his Legate to the count of Savoy and marquis of Monferrato with the letter *Cum nos de tua fidelitate*, given at Avignon on 5th July 1363. With the letter *Commissum per nos*, given at Avignon on 5th February 1364, the Pope sent Mark to bring peace between the Florentines and the Pisans. With the Apostolic rescripts *Nuper per alias litteras*, given at Avignon on 8th April 1364 and *Quoniam funiculus*, given at Avignon on 28th May 1365, Mark was sent to encourage the Italian cities against a great disorganised army of 4000 bandits coming from England, who were devastating France, Spain, Italy and Germany, as part of the Hundred Years' War between England and France.

¹³⁴ Castellamare di Stabia, on the Gulf of Naples, in Latin *Castromaris* or *Castellomaritis de Stabia*. Regarding the martyrdom of William in Gaza, cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1364, 19.

together with his Breviary, in which he used to recite with great devotion the canonical Hours.

In the year of the Lord 1365 a general chapter was celebrated in Florence.¹³⁵ During this chapter, according to the command of the lord Pope, some bachelors of theology were assigned to read the *Sentences* in Toulouse, and afterwards to become masters in the same *Studium*, according to the customs of the Paris masters and the privilege of that University given first by the lord Pope Gregory IX, secondly by the lord Pope Innocent IV, and once again by the lord Pope Innocent VI.¹³⁶

During that same period the lord Pope Urban, through the services of the lord brother Peter of Aragon¹³⁷ *Infante* mentioned above, sent the relic of the arm of Saint Louis Bishop, encrusted with silver and precious stones, to the convent of Montpellier.

[561] In the year of the Lord 1366 the friars Minor accomplished a great conversion of heretics and baptised them in Bulgaria, in the kingdom of Hungary and in the Vicariate of Bosnia. The most Christian king of that same kingdom brought about these conversions also by force of arms, as is evident in the letter sent to the General by brother Mark, Minister of the Province of Saint Francis, during the period of the holy indulgence of the Portiuncula. The following is the text of the letter.¹³⁸

135 Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1365, 7, in which the author also gives us the letter of Pope Urban V, *Ordinis vestri sacra Religio*, given at Avignon on 11th May 1365.

136 The *studium* of Paris was founded in 1229. The letter of Gregory IX is dated 27th April 1233, whereas the letter of Innocent IV, organizing the *studium* of Toulouse is dated 11th September 1245. Until the pontificate of Innocent VI (1352-1362) it was very rare to confer the doctorate in theology in the University of Toulouse.

137 According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1366, 11ff., after entering the Order, Peter had a vision regarding Pope Urban, and Christ commanded him to go to admonish the Pope and to tell him to leave Avignon and to return to Rome in order to reform the Church. He therefore went to Avignon to convey the message to Pope Urban, who gave him the letter *Sacras reliquias brachii S. Ludovici*, published at Avignon on 28th January 1366.

138 The text of the letter is also found in Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1366, 15.

Letter regarding the conversion of many unbelievers through the efforts of the friars Minor

Most dear Minister. Yesterday I received with joy a letter from the illustrious king of Hungary and from my Vicar in Bosnia. The letter was full of a spirit of intense joy. Our meditations should completely be burning with the fire enkindled by the fervour of letting our tongues go loose in proclaiming in a lively way the powerful and valid effort to convert whole populations of unbelievers. This letter has announced to me that recently, through the efforts of your servants the friars of our Order, the Lord has worked so many wonders in the Vicariate of Bosnia that, since the number of the converts is very great, the number of those who run here and there to baptise them in the regenerating water or to administer to men the sacred Sacraments is not sufficient. I had greatly desired this one thing among many others. Upon the request of the most Christian and devout king of Hungary, my Vicar in Bosnia sent 8 Friars of our Order who are his subjects to the same kingdom and to the adjoining Vicariate. These friars, among many other things, in a matter of fifty days baptised more than two hundred thousand men. In order not to have scruples regarding such a great number, according to the command of the king, the names of the baptised persons have been annotated in a public document. It is written that, in those regions, not even a third of the inhabitants had converted. There was a strong hope that the Lord Jesus Christ would open the door of faith for them, and that the remainder would be gathered into the Lord's flock. Together with them many unbelievers among the commoners and the princes, both young people and virgins, old and youngsters, flocked in crowds to receive baptism. Also the heretics and the schismatics returned to the truth of the orthodox faith and to unity with the most holy Roman Church. Even their priests and monks became humble under the yoke of faith, although they had been stubborn in their heretical beliefs before. They wanted to build houses for our Order more than ever before, as the fruit of the unity they had accepted and of the faith in which they persevered. Therefore *let the heavens be glad and let earth rejoice* (cfr. 1Ch 16:31) and let all tongues glorify God. *The earth has shaken and the heavens have deluged at the countenance of the God of Sinai*, because in these days [562] *God has rained a downpour of blessings, and has given*

strength to His heritage (cfr. Ps 67:9-10). His heritage are the friars Minor, so that the light of Christ would not shine in vain upon them, but their hands would be filled with the multitude of converted nations.

There is, however, one aspect that mixes this spiritual joy with a piercing sorrow, namely, that *the harvest is rich but the labourers are few* (Mt 9:37). Behold *the fields are white, ready for the harvest* (Jn 4:35), but there are not enough harvesters to gather the fruits for eternal life. That is why I am led to weep, since if the number of brothers does not increase, this immense quantity of fruit for our faith will be neglected and many souls for whom the Saviour shed his precious blood will be left out and will be lost. The whole population of Bulgaria would be lost, after having been recently acquired with power by the invincible king of Hungary. I refer in a special way to the city of Vidin, very famous and large, in which a great number of friars have been destined. The Patarines and Manichaeans are very much willing to be baptised and to convert to Christ, the true light, but the ones who would show them this way of light are lacking. The aforementioned and most pious king is aware that there are many nations and kingdoms that nurture the same holy purpose, and therefore he is full of admiration and with devout joy requests that from these same regions two thousand friars should be sent. He is ready to build for them stable religious houses. The most faithful king is so inflamed with the zeal of the Catholic faith in order to convert the unbelievers that he is ready to expose himself to death and offer his whole life for the conversion of these people. Therefore, may many religious men, imitators of the Son of God and faithful sons of Saint Francis, wake up and offer themselves courageously for the harvest, so that they would reap with joy the seed that they have planted with faithfulness and hard work. In this way, whatever they sow and gather will be placed in the barns of the Lord so that they would then enter and eat at the glorious table of Christ.

Therefore I beg you, brother Minister that you order that these letter be read in a distinct and intelligible way to the friars who have gathered for the holy indulgence of the Portiuncula, or that you make them read it themselves, according to your ability of convincing them. In this way you will constantly encourage and push them to prepare themselves promptly to come and gather this fruit for salvation. On my part inform them that, if they want to progress in the spirit of

God, they are most welcome to come hurriedly and securely to my presence, so that, with the help of obedience and the blessing of your command they will place all their thoughts in the Lord's hands, and they will carry out this divine inspiration with freedom and security. Keep well in the Lord and pray for me.

In that same year the lord Pope Urban gave as Protector to the Order the aforementioned lord Nicholas of Limoges,¹³⁹ Cardinal deacon of *Sancta Maria in Via Lata* (in Trastevere), although the General had requested another Cardinal on the part of the Order.

[563] In that same year, on the 18th day of the month of September, the lord Pope Urban made the aforementioned General, brother Mark, Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Prassede.

After some time the aforementioned lord Protector sent letters to all the Ministers of the Order, so that together with the Discreets of the Provinces and the Custodes they would gather on the following Pentecost in Assisi for a general chapter in order to elect the future General.

On his part the lord Pope, even though required to do so, did not want to give another Vicar, but asked the lord Protector, after having given him the special seal of his office as Protector, to govern the Order as Vicar.

In the year of the Lord 1367 the aforementioned lord Pope, during spring, came to Marseilles, from where he departed by sea to cross over to Italy,¹⁴⁰ where he lived together with the entire Curia. The lord Cardinals hurried to follow him by land or by sea.

139 Nicholas of Besse (or Ressa) was created Cardinal on 20th September 1342 by Clement VI. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1366, 10.

140 The Pope left Avignon on 30th April and on 19th May made the sea crossing. On 16th October he entered Rome and on 31st October celebrated Mass on the papal altar of the Basilica of Saint Peter. The last Pope who had celebrated on that altar was Boniface VIII.

The times of brother Thomas (Frignano), XXIIIrd General of the Order (1367-1372)

[563] The twenty-third General of the Order was brother Thomas of Bologna,¹⁴¹ master of theology. He was Minister of the Province of Bologna when he was elected during the chapter celebrated in Assisi in the year of the Lord 1367.

[564] Around that same time the lord Cardinal Aegidius of holy memory died.¹⁴² He had been bishop of Sabina and Legate of our lord Pope in Italy for a long time. He was the father and lord of the Order, as well as a great Protector and most generous benefactor. He was buried in the Sacro Convento at Assisi, just as he had chosen some time before, out of his devotion to Saint Francis and the Order. The same General commanded that a Mass be sung in each convent of the Order, and that each priest should celebrate three low Masses of the dead.

During the time of this General, 12 friars who were living in the holy place of Mount Zion, were captured by the Saracens together with many other Christians. Since these friars persevered in professing the true faith, and did not want to waver from it in any way, 11 of them were shut in a squalid prison and then they were made to die in cruel way of hunger and beatings. The 12th brother, as far as we know, was still living in the year 1370, when he was still suffering a harsh imprisonment. The occasion for this persecution, as it was referred to us, was that the king of Cyprus had captured Alexandria, a most famous city of the Saracens.

¹⁴¹ Thomas of Bologna came from the family of Frignano of Modena. He was master of theology, and lectured in the *studium* of Bologna. He became Minister Provincial of Bologna, and on 6th June 1367, solemnity of Pentecost, he was elected Minister General. Gregory XI sent him on various Legations. On 1372 he became Patriarch of Grado, and on 18th September 1378, the Roman Pope Urban VI made him Cardinal priest of Santi Nereo e Achilleo, and then bishop of Tusculum in 1378-1381. He died in Rome in 1381 and was buried in the church of Aracoeli.

¹⁴² Cardinal Aegidius Albornoz died on 24th August 1367. Clement VI had made him Cardinal priest of San Clemente in 1350.

In the year of the Lord 1369, during the month of August,¹⁴³ the lord brother Mark, who had been General of the Order and Cardinal of the holy Roman Church, died at Viterbo.

During the same year, in the month of October, the lord Cardinal of Limoges, Protector of the Order, departed from this life. The Order then received as Protector the most circumspect and just lord Philip,¹⁴⁴ Cardinal priest with the title of Santi Marcellino e Pietro. He was the right arm of the Order and a most strong column of support, in such a way that he merited the name and office of Protector.

In the same year, in the town of Vidin in Bulgaria, five most perfect brothers suffered martyrdom for the defence of the true faith.¹⁴⁵ These were brother Anthony of Saxony, a man with a fiery eloquence who used to be enraptured in great contemplation; brother Gregory of Trau, a most venerable priest and interpreter, who was a man of profound humility and a great zealot for the orthodox faith; brother Nicholas, a Hungarian priest, who for 16 years did not eat except one meal a day after vespers, and that consisted only of bread and water, [565] and he used to wear a hair-shirt with iron rings around his flesh; brother Thomas of Foligno, a lay brother, a man of great devotion and of a most rigorous penance; and also brother Ladislao of Hungary.

When therefore the most Christian king of Hungary began to go through the iron gates of the aforementioned town of Vidin, which is built on the cliffs above the river Danube, our friars, as we have referred earlier on, baptised immense crowds and led them to unity of orthodoxy with the Church. But with the passage of time the schismatic king of Bassarat, with the consent of some of its citizens who were traitors, captured the town. This king began to reign over the town of Vidin from the other side of the Danube. In that town of Vidin at the time there lived 10 most perfect friars Minor, who disputed with the priests and monks, namely the heretic religious. During the capture of the town, five out of these ten friars, together with many

¹⁴³ Mark died at Viterbo on 3rd September 1369, and a monument to him was erected in the church of the friars Minor of Viterbo.

¹⁴⁴ Philippe de Cabassole was created Cardinal by Pope Urban V on 12th May 1367. He was Protector of the Order from 1369 until his death on 5th November 1372.

¹⁴⁵ These friars were martyred in Vidin (Widdin) on 12th February 1369, a town in northwest Bulgaria on the Danube River near the Romanian border. Trau, or Tragur, is a town in Dalmatia.

Christians escaped to two forts of the king of Hungary, which served for his personal protection. The enemies of the faith found the other 5 friars praying in a certain church. With a furious rage they cruelly killed one of them by cutting him into pieces. They bound the hands of the other 4 friars and led them to the king of Bassarat. When the Calogers, who were enemies of the Catholic faith, saw them, they were overjoyed and began to insult them and to say: "Now is the time to dispute regarding the faith, now we can dare to answer them back." The holy Martyrs were filled with the unction of the Holy Spirit more than them, and having taken more courage by the fact that they were tied with fetters, they courageously defended the Catholic faith and strenuously condemned all the great errors of their opponents. The ones who were listening to the friars considered them to be insane, since they marvelled at the fervour by which they held this present life in contempt, even though they were undergoing so much suffering.

When the holy friars did not want to deny their faith, the enemies of the faith began to ask the king to kill them. The king was more keen on taking the spoils of battle after having captured the town, and he hid his gaze from them and did not answer them. So these ministers of the devil immediately led the holy friars out of their town to the cliff overlooking the river Danube. When they realised that the friars would not budge from the solidity of their faith, they beheaded them; in this way the brothers offered their souls to God and gained the palm of martyrdom. After they died a great light from heaven descended on their bodies and many melodious voices, like the voices of a choir of children, could be heard resounding in the air. The ministers of iniquity returned to the town, and the king, after having settled his business regarding his material gains, asked them what had happened to the brothers. They answered him that the brothers had been beheaded. The king accepted the news with displeasure. When they told him that a great light had been seen descending upon their bodies and a marvellous harmony of voices resounded in the air, that same moment the king marvelled and hurried to the direction of the sacred bodies, in order to experience such an event. When he approached the place and heard the melodious voices and saw the light, the horse upon which he was riding, remained fixed to the ground and did not want to proceed any further, even though the king was kicking at its reins. So the astonished king descended from the horse and began brandishing his sword in the air, as if he did not know what to do be-

cause of his great wonder. Then many ferocious dogs were brought and were let loose against the bodies of the Saints. But when they approached them the dogs were as if struck with terror and escaped barking, although the same dogs [566] had no need to be provoked to devour the members of the other Christians who had been killed. But when the hands of each friar were cut off and thrown to the dogs, the same dogs escaped. When one of the dogs gave one bite at the body of one of the Martyrs, that very moment from its mouth it emitted such a fiery breath that it terrorised those who had been provoking it.

After these events the river Danube flooded its banks and snatched the bodies of the four Martyrs from land. Later on people could see four tombs in the riverbed, and whereas the river was all murky, it was clear above the tombs, not without the admiration of all the onlookers. The Lord glorified his Saints with many other signs, and with Him they reign forever and ever.¹⁴⁶

The Life of brother Philip of Aix who is buried in the monastery of Santa Chiara in Naples

In the year of the Lord 1369, on the 18th May, brother Philip of Aix,¹⁴⁷ a man of great perfection, died in Naples and was solemnly bur-

¹⁴⁶ The Quaracchi editors note that under the General Thomas Frignano, in the year 1368, a new reform began in the friary of Brugliano near Foligno. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1368: "In this year (1368) the reform of the Order, that others had attempted but without prudence, could start in a stable way through the efforts of a man who was humble in his state and stature, as well as in his bodily appearance and name, but who was to be admired for his great piety. He was Paoluccio of Foligno [...] He had been led by Giovanni da Valle and Gentile of Spoleto to the zeal of poverty and a more strict observance of the Rule in the hermitage of San Bartolomeo in the solitude of Brugliano, in order to live a way of life to which he had always aspired. Many began to follow him from a more relaxed way of life, and lived in that solitude with the permission of the superiors, in the tower that Ugolino dei Trinci, Prince of Foligno and a relative of his, had given him for his use." This was the beginning of the reform of the *Regularis Observantia* in Italy. Paoluccio dei Trinci started off with four or five companions. In 1374 the reform had spread to six more hermitages. In 1405 the Observants were living in 20 hermitages and convents and in 1415 they had 34, including the friary of the Portiuncula in Assisi.

¹⁴⁷ Regarding brother Philip *de Aqueriis*, Bartholomew of Pisa says that he came from Aix en Provence and was a relative of the Blessed Delphina. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1335, 14; 1369, 12ff.

ied in the church of *Corpus Christi* of the friars. Brother Philip came from the Province of Provence and the Custody of Arles, and he was descended from a noble family of the castle of Samonia. When he was still a boy he was led by the unction of the Spirit to desire to fulfil the will of Christ in the book of the Gospels. So he left the world and its cares, together with the seductions of the flesh, and entered the Order of friars Minor. He then crucified his flesh with abstinence, vigils, discipline and hard work, and grew in all grace to arrive at heroic and sublime virtue. Since he was living for many years in the Province of Provence and there he had progressed in all holiness, he then transferred to the holy place of Mount La Verna and established himself firmly there for another long period of time. Inflamed by the devotion to our holy Father Francis he went to the holy Mount Subasio, in the hermitage known as the *Carceri* of Saint Francis, near Assisi. There he lived for 6 years in all kinds of austerities of life and fought hard to give an example in the Order in which the Lord had called him. His fame arrived at the ears of the most Christian king of Sicily and Jerusalem, Robert, and of his most famous and devout wife, the lady Sancha. These royals requested from the General Minister letters of obedience in order to transfer brother Philip to the city of Naples. [567] Brother Philip lived and progressed in all honesty in that city, for as long as the king and queen, of illustrious memory, lived. After their death he returned to Assisi, where he remained for many years, until the divine Spirit prompted him once more to return to Naples and there he ended his days happily with a celebrated fame for his unique holiness.

In the same city and monastery of Santa Chiara, where there is also the convent of the friars, brother Philip, when he was still a young friar, was confessor of the nuns who live in that monastery and follow the Rule of Santa Chiara. He shone with so much profound humility, prompt obedience, seriousness of costumes, fervent charity, strict penitence, sublime prayer and most high poverty, that all those who saw him knew that he was a school of virtue and an exemplar of all perfection. Since such a resplendent light could not be hidden in the darkness, and such a lamp of charity could not be placed under the bushel basket, he began to become radiant in holiness, in miracles and in the spirit of prophecy. Once the most devout virgin of God Delphina, who was at the time wife of Eleazarius, count of Ariano, was very afraid that her husband, who was not yet totally separated from

the flesh, as he later on became when he was enlightened by divine grace, might desire to go back from his resolve to live in virginity, for the aim of having offspring, or else that he might let the instinct of the devil confound him. So she went to ask counsel from the holy brother Philip. His fiery words and his counsels regarding her secret proposals so strengthened her in her decision to live in virginity, that she was not afraid to die in order to observe it inviolably. With a prophetic spirit she became sure that she would never fall from her firm decision to live in chastity, and that she would observe perpetual celibacy together with her husband. All this was accomplished with the help of God's grace.

The nuns of the monastery of Saint Mary Magdalene in Naples, whom Sancha the queen, in her devotion to God, had drawn from prostitution and placed in religious life, under the government of the Order of friars Minor, according to the usual habit, were tempted by the proposals of the devil to go back to their former life and to return to their vomit. Since they could not resist the devil's temptations, *whose breath sets coals afire* (Job 41:13), the queen could not find a remedy and sent the holy brother Philip to them. He came to them and the Lord placed on his mouth such strong words and convincing virtue, that he drew them forth from the temptations of the flesh and they bathed their souls with the shining rivulets of tears and he animated them to make strict penance for their past sins and to continue observing faithfully their holy rule of life. When the queen heard how strong were brother Philip's words and prayers she marvelled, since he succeeded in confirming those nuns who had been wavering in their good intentions, in such a way that some of them began to demonstrate the height of their perfection also through sings and prodigies.

A certain lord Theobald, who was a knight, was carried to brother Philip with great devotion, since he was seriously ill and could not speak, and everybody thought that he would soon die. So brother Philip visited him and comforted him in the Lord, and after having prayed for him, he restored him back to his former state of health.

On another occasion, the wife of the same knight Theobald was very sick with an incurable illness, and was on the brink of death and everybody was thinking about her burial. Her husband was full of bitterness and went to brother Philip, since he by now had experienced the power of his prayers, and he humbly begged him to inter-

cede for his wife, so that she might be healthy once more. Brother Philip took pity on him and on his wife, and comforted him in the Lord, and after having given him advice promised to pray for him [568] and to come to his aid. That knight went back full of trust, and brother Philip hurried to pray for him, and the knight's wife woke up well and completely healed.

There was a certain man from Naples, who out of devotion assiduously used to provide the man of God with food and other necessities when he was ill. That man fell from his horse, and hit the ground so hard that he broke his foot and tibia or shin-bone, and many other bones broke in two parts. He was afflicted with intense pain and was expecting to die very soon. In the meantime he remembered brother Philip who was in sick in bed. So he sent his servant to him, told him what had happened to him, and begged him to help him with his prayers. When the man of God heard this he took pity on him and after having prayed, he sent the servant to tell him that on a certain day God would cure him. In fact, it happened exactly as he had announced, and the Lord on a particular day healed that man. In such actions the virtues and prophetic spirit of the Saint were evident.

Since this Saint had a great desire to experience compassion for Christ in His passion, he requested the Lord to give him the singular grace of being pierced with sweetness of love and of feeling with all his inner strength the pain that Christ felt on the cross. The Lord wanted to satisfy this desire. One day, while brother Philip was praying and was thirsting to feel the pains of the Lord's passion, the Lord Jesus appeared to him fastened to the cross. From His hands, feet and side there came out rivers of blood that hit him hard like an arrow and pierced Philip's hands, feet and side and made him bleed abundantly. That moment he felt such an intense pain in his body and such fervour of love in his soul that it seemed that he was fastened with Christ on the cross. From that very moment the image of Christ Crucified was impressed in his heart, and he felt with the inner sight of his soul that he was pierced by the nails and by the lance and could feel the same sufferings that Christ endured on the cross. In order that the wounds of Christ would be impressed on his mind and that he would feel those sufferings, he would prove such an experience by hitting his hands, feet and side with a pointed wood or a nail, and thus in those parts, while meditating fervently on the sense of Christ's passion he would strongly imprint the sufferings of Christ and renew them continually

in his own body. He also used to feel that he would enter into the wound of Christ's side as if it were a soft cave, and there he would devoutly stay together with John reclining on Christ's breast. The divine radiant lights of God's profound mysteries would be open to him, all the heart's secret thoughts would be laid bare before him, and he would also be able to uncover present and future events.

Once brother Philip was enraptured in prayer in the choir of the church of the monastery of Santa Chiara. He saw a certain young friar of his convent who was on the point of death, and who was being placed in the coffin just like the dead who were going to be buried soon. He understood in his spirit that that friar had committed a certain sin, and that he was deprived of God's grace, and was dead before God. When he understood this, the man of God called the master of that young man and narrated to him the vision he had, and also asked him to counsel that young friar to cleanse himself from that sin by leading him to brother Philip for confession. Thus he would take good care of his soul, and lead him to conversion through his strong words of encouragement. The master therefore immediately and with haste encouraged that young friar to go up to brother Peter, and narrated to him the vision that the Saint had had, namely that the dead brother was symbolising him, just as he had heard it from the Saint. That young brother was astonished at these words, since his sin had been so hidden that he had not even confessed it. It was evident that it had been detected by divine revelation. So that young friar was immediately pushed by divine fear, and he went to confess his sin in all truth and with abundant contrition. Thus with the help of the medicine of the Sacrament, he returned to the state of a good life and proposed to persevere in it.

On another occasion, when brother Philip was lying in bed and was seriously ill, the sacristan of the church of Santa Chiara lost the keys to the sacristy. He diligently looked for them for a long time, [569] but could not find them in any way. After many days he went to visit the Saint who was lying in bed. While he was speaking to him he told him that he had lost the keys and was very sad because of this. The Saint answered: "My dear do not be confused; go to search for them in that place in the garden, and you will certainly find them." He immediately went and found the keys in a place in which brother Philip had never been, but could only foretell where they were through divine revelation.

When the most illustrious lady queen Johanna¹⁴⁸ came to visit brother Philip to inquire about the salvation of her soul and to devoutly request his prayers regarding some important issues, after having prayed for a time, Philip assured her that the lord king Louis would depart from this life shortly and that she would survive him by reigning on his kingdom during times of prosperity. Another time brother Philip was speaking with this same lady queen Johanna, and foretold the death of her husband king Louis, even though at that moment there were no signs to show that the king would die.

After the death of the king the lady queen Johanna took as her husband the lord James, son of the king of Majorca. The same lord James, who had great admiration towards the lord prince Edward of Aquitaine,¹⁴⁹ wanted to go to him and take him to Spain in order to help the king Pedro.¹⁵⁰ Brother Philip foretold the unfortunate end of this expedition, and of the events that happened afterwards in Spain.

Since the Lord wanted to make brother Philip go through the experience of sickness and the furnace of tribulation, in order to show his constant patience, Philip began to suffer from many infirmities. In fact his whole body was covered with ulcers, and these ulcers developed in wounds that were so wide as to be able to contain a closed fist inserted in them. They were so serious that worms would continually breed in them, and they were so persistent that Philip had them for over 30 years and he suffered from intense pains because of such wounds. In spite of all this suffering he never showed himself confused, he never uttered one single word of complaint, he never showed any outward sign of irritation and sadness, but he was always praising the Lord for everything, both internally and externally in his behaviour. For 6 years before his death his infirmity got worse and the hand of the Lord fell upon him. His wounds grew, while other new wounds erupted from his body and covered his whole body, and

148 Johanna was born circa 1328. She was daughter of Charles, duke of Calabria (†1328) and niece of king Robert. On 18th September 1333 she married Andrew of Hungary, who succeeded Robert in 1343. After the death of Andrew on 20th August 1346 she married Louis, who died on 25th May 1362, and in the same year she again married Jaime (James) IV, who died in 1375.

149 He became Edward III, king of England (1327-1377).

150 Known as Pedro *Crudelis* (the cruel one). He was king of Castile, and was driven away from his kingdom by his brother Henry. After Pedro's decisive loss at the Battle of Montiel, he was murdered by Henry on 23rd March 1369.

eating his flesh little by little they rendered him so weak that he could hardly move from his bed. The ulcers emitted such a foul-smelling odour that the persons who ministered to him could hardly bear it. The more he used to bear up with patience in front of such sufferings sent by the Lord, the more God transmitted to him many [570] consolations both spiritual and corporal. The Angel of the Lord was assisting and comforting him, and as he was tenderly touching his flesh brother Philip was feeling that the spiritual and corporal sufferings were changing into sweetness. The brothers wanted to understand what was secretly happening to him, and they had some inkling through external signs. In fact, with great fervour he was saying: "I thank you, Lord, since you have touched me and consoled me." Then the brothers noticed that he was extending his hand and then drawing it firmly around as if he was embracing something. Sometimes he would hold both hands together very strongly, as if he was embracing somebody who was dear to him. After some time, since through divine revelation he knew that the end of his life was drawing near, he called his Guardian, and in his hands he renounced all those things which he used to legitimately use, namely a most poor tunic and a rough cord, which he was content to have as his only things in life. When the harsh hour of death drew close, while he was praying at midnight, two demons appeared to him by his bedside. Since they found out that he did not possess anything and that he was powerful in his prayers, the demons immediately escaped from him. After this he received with great devotion the Sacrament of the Eucharist and Extreme Unction. Thus on 18th May of the year of the Lord 1369, that was a Friday, at the hour in which Christ's body was being elevated during high Mass, the servant of the Lord who was nearly one hundred years old, passed from the labours of this present life to eternal rest.

Once he left the wickedness of this life, God willed to show externally what kind of life brother Philip used to lead. Thus he began immediately to shine forth with miracles, so that God would show by His manifest prodigies that He was now holding him aloft on a throne of glory in heaven. In fact, after his death his body, that emitted such a foul-smelling odour before, because of his ulcers, now began emitting such a fragrance that all those who came to see him felt the strong scent of that fragrance. His most sacred flesh became so tender to touch that it seemed to have been transformed and returned to the tenderness of the age of childhood.

Since the news of his death was not known, except to a few brothers, it pleased God to spread the news far and wide in the city of Naples. Nearly all the people acclaimed: "A certain most holy friar Minor has just died in the monastery of Santa Chiara. Let us go to see him." Immediately so many persons of all ages and sexes flocked to see him that because of the crowds the friars could not give brother Philip ecclesiastical burial. In fact, the crowds were running with great devotion to see his body, and they were tearing at his clothes, others were taking his hair, others were cutting his nails, and others were touching his hands, or hood, or the other items on his body. A powerful energy was going out of him and was healing many. There was also a wonderful sign. While some persons were cutting his nails, living blood came out of his dead body. It was gathered in small pieces of cloth and afterwards restored the remedy of health to many. In fact the people tore with great fervour and devotion no less than 8 habits with which the friars successively dressed him.

On the same day of his death a certain daughter of Constantine *de Duratio*, from the city of Naples, who had been born with contracted feet, was immediately restored to perfect health upon touching the body of the holy brother Philip.

The daughter of the lady Johanna, called Catherine, who had also been disabled from birth, was taken to the church of Santa Chiara before the Saint's body was buried. Her mother placed her on his body with great trust, and the girl immediately restored to health and could walk freely.

[571] On the same day a certain lady from Sulmona, called Dulcia, who had a serious illness in her head for 18 years, with great devotion placed the hand of brother Philip, which was still tender to hold, upon her head, and immediately regained the healing that she had come to plead the Saint to bestow upon her.

Gentile Gerardi had lost the light of his right eye. He could not approach the sacred body in order to touch it, because of the great multitude of people present. So he begged the person close to the sacred body to touch the sacred relics with the hood that he was wearing, after having taken it off and handed it to that person. Then he took that hood back and for a short time rubbed it to his eye, and miraculously regained perfect eyesight.

A certain woman who suffered from a haemorrhage touched some leaves upon which the body of the servant of God had been placed, and she was immediately restored to health.

The lady Laversa of Candia, who had lost the light in her right eye, came on that same day to visit devoutly the sacred body, and placed a small piece of cloth taken from the habit of brother Philip on her eye, and was immediately cured from her blindness.

The lord Thomas *de Concha*, who was a doctor of law and a judge, was suffering from a serious illness in his ears. He placed a small piece of cloth that had been cut off from the Saint's habit and was also placed in contact with the Saint's blood, and he was immediately cured from that illness.

Another lady called Jacoba from Palermo, who also suffered from a haemorrhage, as soon as she touched the leaves upon which the body of the Saint had lain, was immediately restored to her former health, as soon as the Saint's body was buried.

A certain man called Paul, who could not speak, and whose hand and foot were contracted, on that same day touched the body of brother Philip, in front of many onlookers, and immediately regained the health of his entire body.

Thomas, who was a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, for 8 years had one of his arms totally contracted and withered. He approached with devotion, and on that same day touched his bare arm to the sacred body. That very moment he began to feel life in his arm once again and could move it just like when he was perfectly healthy.

Andrew Colle had suffered from an incurable hernia ever since he was a boy. On the same day of the death of the Saint he commended himself to him in prayer, and the following night he was totally freed with great astonishment and joy on his part.

A certain man called Lizardus, was so sick in his hands, feet and kidneys, that he could hardly stand upright, but was bent over. When he heard about the wonders worked by the holy brother Philip, and the entire population of the city that was spreading news about them, he was helped by others who led him by an arm to go and visit the body of the Saint, and after a brief prayer he regained the perfect health of his body.

The lady Margaret, wife of the lord Philip, who was a doctor of law, was afflicted with a serious illness in her head. On that same day she went to visit the body of the Saint and took a small piece of his habit and placed it on her head, and was completely freed of all her sufferings.

Ludovica, who was the sister of the Provincial and a nun in the monastery of the Order of Saint Clare in Naples, had a contracted arm. As soon as she had touched the offerings that the nuns had sent with the friars, begging them to apply them to the feet of the holy brother Philip, she was immediately freed from her illness.

A servant of a certain judge called John, whose name was Catherine, was vexed by a demon. She visited the body of the Saint and was completely freed from the devil's vexations.

These are some among many other miracles that God worked through the merits of his servant the holy brother Philip, before his body was taken to be buried in the church. [572] From that moment, however, the Lord worked many other miracles through the holy man's prayers, and still continues to do so unceasingly. Here we shall refrain from mentioning them for brevity's sake.

During the same year, on the Octave of Easter, the lord Pope Urban included Saint Eleazarius in the catalogue of the Saints.¹⁵¹ Eleazarius had been count of Ariano. He was buried in the friary of Aix in Provence, dressed in the habit of the friars Minor.

In the year of the Lord 1370 a general chapter was celebrated in Naples. During that chapter the lady Johanna, queen of Sicily, demonstrated her devotion to the Order by showering upon it many gifts, honours and favours.

Roughly around that same time the lord Pope Urban sent the most generous lord brother William du Prat,¹⁵² who was a master of sacred theology in Paris, to the empire of Cathay. He went in those regions together with other masters and nearly 60 friars. There he became Bishop. The friars placed the foundations of the Catholic faith and sowed the seeds of the Word of life.

¹⁵¹ The Octave of Easter in 1369 fell on 15th April.

¹⁵² In Latin, *de Prato*. Guillaume du Prat came from Auvergne. In the letter *Religionis zelus*, given at Avignon on 17th November 1363, Pope Urban V commands Grimerius Bonifacii, chancellor of the Paris University, to admit as a master in the University Guillaume du Prat of the Order of Minors, "who came from the city of Paris and for many years studied in the University of studies in Oxford and lectured in the faculty of theology, and in that same place had received the honour of the *licentia docendi* and *magisterium*." Guillaume was elected Archbishop of Khambalik (Beijing) on 11th March 1370. The Pope destined him as leader of all the friars who were sent to the lands of the Saracens, Alani, Goths, Sciti, Ruthenians, Jacobites, Nubians, Nestorians, Georgians, Armenians.

During that same year, namely 1370, the aforementioned lord Pope Urban returned from Italy to Avignon with a large number of galleons.¹⁵³

[573] That same year Pope Urban died. The lord Peter Roger, Cardinal deacon with the title of Santa Maria Nuova, and nephew of the lord Pope Clement VI, ascended to the papacy in the apostolic palace at Avignon and took the name Gregory XI.¹⁵⁴

In the year of the Lord 1371, on the feast of Pentecost, the lord brother Bertrand Lagier, master in sacred theology and bishop of Glandèves, from the Province of Aquitaine, was made Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Prisca by the aforementioned lord Pope Gregory.¹⁵⁵

In the year of the Lord 1372 the aforementioned lord Philip,

¹⁵³ He left Corneto on 5th September. On 16th September he disembarked at Marseilles and on 24th September entered Avignon.

¹⁵⁴ Pope Gregory XI (c.1336 – 27th March 1378), Pierre Roger de Beaufort, Pope from 1370 to 1378, born in Maumont, in the modern commune of Rosiers-d'Égletons, Limousin around 1336. In 1348 he was created Cardinal deacon of Santa Maria Nuova. He succeeded Pope Urban V (1362–70) in 1370 as one of the Avignon Popes. During his pontificate vigorous measures were taken against the heresies which had broken out in Germany, England, and other parts of Europe; a sincere effort was also made to bring about a reformation in the various monastic orders. The 19 propositions of John Wycliffe (c.1320–84) were formally condemned by Pope Gregory XI in 1377. His return to Rome on 17th January 1377, is attributed in part to the stirring words of St. Catherine of Siena. This had been attempted by Gregory's predecessor, Urban V, without success. The project was delayed by a conflict between the pope and Florence. The pope put Florence under interdict for a time. Gregory XI died on 27th March 1378. After his death the College of Cardinals was pressured by a Roman mob, which broke into the voting chamber, to vote an Italian Pope into the papacy. This Italian Pope was Urban VI. Soon after being elected, Urban gained the Cardinals' enmity. With the encouragement of the French king, the Cardinals returned to Avignon and in 1378 elected a French pope, Clement VII. Subsequently, the Western Schism created by the selection of a rival pope forced the people of Europe into a dilemma of papal allegiance. This schism was not fully resolved until the Council of Constance (1414–1418). The Council boldly deposed the current popes and elected Martin V as their successor.

¹⁵⁵ Bertrand Lagier or *de Figiaco* (Figeac). Pope Clement VI made him bishop of Aiaccio in Corsica. In 1348 he transferred to the diocese of Assisi, where he was bishop for 20 years. In 1368 Urban V made him bishop of Glandèves. On 8th June 1371 he was made Cardinal and in 1378 bishop of Ostia. He died on 16th November 1392 at Avignon.

Cardinal and Protector of the Order, died.¹⁵⁶

In that same year, brother Thomas the General was sent as Legate to Italy, in order to bring peace among the citizens of Genoa. In fact they were waging a dangerous civil war among themselves. [574] When he had brought peace among them, the lord Pope Gregory made him patriarch of Grado.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Philip was Cardinal priest of Santi Marcellino e Pietro, and then bishop of Sabina. He died on 27th August 1372 at Perugia, where he was Legate of the Apostolic See. His body was taken to Avignon and buried in the monastery of the Carthusians at Bonopassu.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Frignano was sent as Legate on 8th October 1371, as is evident in the letter *Litteras tuas* given at Avignon. On 20th April 1372 Pope Gregory XI continued to encourage him in his pacifying mission in Genoa. It is probable that Thomas was made patriarch of Grado on 27th December 1372, according to the letter *Propter discordiam* given at Avignon. Some manuscripts contain the following addition: "This Minister Thomas was defamed at the Roman Curia by the bishop of Narni, who was a friar Minor, and by the Minister of the Province of Saint Francis and some other persons. Pope Urban VI, who was then residing in Rome, suspended him from office for nearly one year and a half. After this, he was absolved in the church of Saint Peter, and three Cardinals, in front of a great crowd composed of the aforementioned Religious, and other clerics and noble laymen, took an oath to give witness in favour of his innocence together with more than one hundred other witnesses. Thus he was restored with honour to his office, upon the advice of all the Cardinals." Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1386, 14.

The times of brother Leonardo di Giffoni, XXIVth General of the Order (1373-1378)

[574] The twenty-fourth General was brother Leonardo di Giffoni,¹⁵⁸ master from the Province of Terra di Lavoro. He was elected when he was Minister of the same Province, during the chapter celebrated in Toulouse in the year of the Lord 1373.

During that chapter, the lord Pope Gregory XI, who was a most special father and sweet friend of the Order, sent many Bullae containing privileges that were useful to the entire Order. One of them stated [575] that the Protector of the Order was not to interfere in the government of the Order or in its correction except in three cases expressly mentioned in the Rule, namely in the case when the Community of the Order would deviate from obeying the lord Pope or the Roman Church; in the case when the Order would waver in its faith, or when it did not observe the Rule; and in the prohibition that no friar could request any promotion from the Protector of the Order, and could not accept such a promotion if it were given to him under pain of excommunication, that would be incurred *ipso facto*. – The Pope also sent a Bulla stating that the General of the Order could not choose as Vicar any person who was not subject to him, since many inconveniences resulted from decisions taken in opposition to this norm.

In that same year the Order requested and obtained as its Protector the lord Guillaume of Limoges, Cardinal priest with the title of San Clemente.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Leonardo Rossi of Giffoni Valle Piana, a town in the region of Campania, close to Salerno. He was elected Minister General on 5th June 1373 in the chapter of Toulouse, presided by Cardinal Bertrand of Santa Prisca. On 16th December 1378, during the beginning of the Western Schism, the Avignon Pope Clement VII (1378-1394) made him Cardinal priest of San Sisto. The other Avignon Pope Benedict XIII (1394-1417) made him bishop of Ostia and Velletri. He died after 17th March 1407 at Avignon, and was buried in the church of the friars Minor.

¹⁵⁹ Guillaume de la Jugie (*Judicis*) was the nephew of Pope Clement VI. He died in 1374.

In the year of the Lord 1378 the same lord Protector departed from this life.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ In the list of Cardinal Protectors of the Order, there is a gap between 1374 and 1390 in which the Order does not seem to have had any Cardinal Protector. It was only in 1390 that Francesco Carbonari was elected as Cardinal Protector. The year 1378 marks the beginning of the Western Schism and the *Chronicle of 24 Ministers General* ends at this point. Various editions of the *Chronicle* present different conclusions, of which these are the most important: (1) “End of this work in the day before the vigil of the Nativity of the Lord of the year 1491 by me, brother Nicholas Glassberger, who worked in intense cold and discomfort because of the wintry conditions of the weather. Amen [...] End of the Chronicle of the Order of Minors of our holy Father Francis.” (2) “End of the Chronicle of the Order of friars Minor, concluded in the year of the Lord 1470 on the day of the translation of the most holy Virgin Clare (3rd October).” Many of the editions, after the verb *migravit*, add the section on the Appendixes, which strictly speaking are not a continuation of the *Chronicle*, but additions giving new details regarding facts that have already been treated in the same *Chronicle*.

ARNALD OF SARRANT

CHRONICLE OF THE TWENTY-FOUR GENERALS OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR [1369-1374]

English Translation by NOEL MUSCAT OFM
from the original Latin text

*Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,
in Analecta Franciscana ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum Spectantia,
edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae,
Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), prope Florentiam,
Tomus III,
1897*

Section 5
APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

1

Passion of the holy Martyrs of Morocco
brothers Berard, Peter, Adiutus, Accursius, Otho

First we start our account from a certain Legend of Saint Francis:

[579] When our most holy Father Francis, like the Patriarch Jacob, saw that his sons were growing to become a numerous nation, and were multiplying like the stars of heaven, he greatly desired, according to a revelation he received, that his sons would spread out to the four corners of the world, and that the great tree of his Order would extend its branches to the farthest limits of the earth. Therefore during a certain general chapter he sent his brothers in all the provinces of the world, where the inhabitants lived in the catholic faith. However, since they did not carry with them any rule with a bulla or seal, neither any authentic letter regarding the approval of the Order, people looked at them suspiciously and considered them as false religious, especially in the regions beyond the mountains, and the brothers were driven away by both the faithful and the clerics. Since in those days a great multitude of heretics¹ were living together in Spain, in order not to let heresy spread in those regions, Saint Francis sent there some friars, who would oppose the heretics and strengthen the faithful in the Catholic faith. When they arrived in the kingdom of Portugal, the people saw that the brothers were different from other persons, since they went barefoot, they were half naked, they did not know the language. They were afraid that those brothers were heretics, and therefore they did not welcome them and they did not permit them in any way to live in their midst.

In those days the king of the Christians in Portugal was Alfonso III.² He was the second son of king Sancho II, of praisewor-

¹ The heretics were Cathars, known as Albigensians in southern France.

² Alphonso III was king between 1246 and 1279. He was the second born son of Alphonso II (king from 1212 to 1233) and brother of Sancho II (king from 1233 to 1246), not the son of Sancho, as is here mistakenly asserted. Sancho died in 1246 at Toledo, when he was 39 years old, and had no sons. It is evident that the author also errs when he says that the king of Portugal at the time was

thy memory. His wife was the lady queen Orraca, who was also pious, honest, humble and devout. When the friars heard about her fame, [580] they went to visit her, and humbly begged her, after having explained the sufferings they had to endure, to be kind enough to provide an opportune remedy for them out of reverence for God. She diligently examined them regarding their way of life, the reason why they came, and their intentions. She then realised that they were faithful servants of God. So she pleaded with the king in order to let them live in two places in his reign. The friars were overjoyed and they chose Lisbon and Guimarães, where they built two hermitages with the favour and protection of the same queen, since she loved the brothers like a mother, seeing that they served the Lord.

During that same time and in that same kingdom, in the place known as Alenquer, there lived another lady who feared God. She was Sancha, of reverent memory, the daughter of the king of Portugal, and sister of Alphonso, who was king at the time, as well as of the lord Pedro *Infante*.³ Pedro had quarreled with his brother king Alphonso, and escaped to Morocco and there he helped his brother against the other infidels. That same lady Sancha was called “queen”, not because she had been married to any man, since she was a most pure virgin, and she was never drawn to marry and go against her love for virginity; but rather because people said that, since she did not have a husband, as soon as she died she entered paradise. She was generous towards the poor and made harsh corporal penance. In fact she would fast, she wore a hair-shirt and slept for short periods of time on shreds taken from the barks of trees. She used to spend the nights in prayer and occupied her time in works of piety. When she heard about the fame of the holiness of those friars Minor, she felt a great desire and was spiritually thirsting to see them. So she frequently would call them to come to her in order to listen to the words of life they would utter. She became so familiar with them, that she would keep a habit of the friars in her house, in order to welcome them and give them a dry habit if one of them would arrive wet with mud from the roads. While she used to speak to them with such fervour, among

Alphonso III. The king, in fact, was Alphonso II who, as we have seen, reigned from 1212 to 1233.

3 Sancha was the sister of Alfonso II. She died in 1229. Pedro was born in 1187, was prince of Majorca and died in 1258.

the brothers there was one who was very devout, and who lived a solitary life, dedicating his time to prayer, and fleeing from the company of women. A certain damsel whose name was Mary Grace would frequently go to him in order to talk to him. That friar, however, did not want to look at her or even to speak to her, but he would hurriedly escape from her presence. Once he was praying in a secluded place all by himself, and that damsel Mary came to him importunately. So the friar told her: “Do you want to know why I do not want to talk to you?” She answered: “Yes.” So the friar told her: “Bring me fire and straw, and I will clearly show you why.” When she had brought them, the friar told her to apply fire to the straw in front of him. They he told her: “Just as this straw burns and comes to nothing with this fire, so it is a waste of time for a man of God to speak with a woman; instead, when he speaks with God, he acquires great fruit.”

When this friar, who was full of virtue, arrived at the end of his days, God willed to show his holy way of life through signs. In fact, many people saw such a radiant light coming down from heaven, and shining upon his dead body where he lay, that all those who beheld the spectacle marveled. During that same hour a certain canon of the monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, whose name was Fernando Martino, and who afterwards entered into the Order of friars Minor and was called Anthony, and was declared a Saint, while he was celebrating Mass, he saw the soul of that friar [581] going up to heaven in the guise of a swift bird, passing through purgatory along its journey.

Regarding how Saint Francis sent them to Morocco From the history of Portugal:

In the year 1219 of the Incarnation of Christ, which was the 11th year from the beginning of the Order of friars Minor, it was revealed to Saint Francis that he should sent his friars in all parts of the world, not only to the faithful but also to the unbelievers.⁴ Therefore, during a certain general chapter in which the Ministers were elected and were assigned to Provinces, he carried out what had been revealed to

4 We refer the reader to the footnotes regarding this episode in the first section of the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General*.

him. Since the anger of the Saracens was burning against the Christians in two parts of the world, namely towards the East in the parts of Syria, and towards the West in Africa, where the king Miramolin of Morocco was full of zeal against the Christians, the same Saint Francis prepared himself to go to Damietta with twelve brothers, whereas he thought about sending to Morocco six among his most perfect brothers, namely brother Vitalis, brother Berard, brother Peter, brother Adjutus, brother Accursius, and brother Otho. The Saint called them to himself and said: "My sons, God has commanded me to send you to the lands of the Saracens in order to preach to them and to confess your faith and to speak against the religion of Mohammed. On my part, I will also go to the other regions and I will send brothers to the lands of the infidels in the entire world. Therefore, my sons, prepare yourselves to carry out the will of God." The brothers bowed down and said: "Father, we are ready to obey you in all things you command." Saint Francis was overjoyed at such a prompt act of obedience and with sweet words told them: "My most dear sons, in order to carry out God's command in the best way, for the salvation of your own souls, see to it that there will be peace and concord among you, and keep steadfast in the bond of enduring charity. Flee from envy, which has marked the beginning of our perdition. Be patient in tribulation, humble in prosperity, and in this way you will be victorious in all battles you will endure. Be imitators of Christ in poverty, obedience and chastity. Our Lord Jesus Christ was born poor, He lived in poverty, he taught the value of poverty and died a poor man. In order to show us that He loved chastity, He wanted to be born of a Virgin, his forerunners were an army of virgin innocents, He counseled virginity and lived as a virgin, and died surrounded by virgins. He also kept obedience from the very beginning of his life to his death on the cross. Our hope is only in God, who loves us and is enough for us. Carry with you the Rule and the Breviary in order to recite in a perfect way the divine Office. You are all to obey your elder brother Vitalis. My sons, although I am overjoyed at your good will, at the same time I feel a loving sorrow because I will be separated from you when you go away; but it is necessary that we should prefer God's command to our own will. I beg you to keep always in front of your eyes the passion of our Lord, that will give you strength in order to suffer and will make you grow stronger in your spiritual resolve."

The holy brothers then humbly answered: "Father, send us wherever you want, since we are ready to carry out your will; however, we beg you, Father, to help us through your prayers [582] in order to carry out this command. We are young and have never gone out of Italy, and those people are unknown to us. They are full of malice and anger against the Christians, and we are unlettered and hardly know any word of Arabic. When they will see us in our poor habits and cords they will mock us as if we were out of our minds and incapable of sowing the word of life; that is why we badly need the help of your prayers. Our pious father, how can we go away without you? How can we separate ourselves from you? How can we become orphans and sad without you, and accomplish what God pleases, if we are not comforted by His grace?" Saint Francis melted with sweetness and with great zeal told them: "Go, sons, and trust in God, since He, who is sending you, will also give you strength in order to serve Him in what is pleasing to Him." Then all the six brothers knelt down and with many tears kissed his hands and asked for his blessing. Saint Francis was bathed in tears, and raising his eyes to heaven he blessed them saying: "May the blessing of God the Father descend upon you, as it descended upon the Apostles, and may it strengthen you and guide you to comfort you in all tribulations; do not be afraid, since God is with you like a strong warrior."

Regarding how they had to leave brother Vitalis, who became sick, by himself in the kingdom of Aragon, and continued on their journey

The holy brothers then left on their journey, and according to what the rule of the Gospel prescribes, they went without carrying a sack, without sandals and travelling on foot they arrived in Spain, led by God. When they arrived in the kingdom of Aragon, brother Vitalis began to become seriously ill. After they waited, when Vitalis realised that his illness would be prolonged, he did not want that his sickness would hinder the mission on which the brothers had been sent. So he called to him other five brothers and told them: "My most dear brothers, you can see by yourselves that my illness will be prolonged, and in no way do I want to obstruct you any longer from carrying out God's own mission. I greatly desire to continue this journey together

with you, if this is pleasing to Our Lord Jesus Christ, but perhaps God wants to keep me here, since I am a sinner, and I am unworthy to stay in your holy company, or else He has other plans for me. Therefore I beg you to continue on your way and to carry out the will of God and the command of our Father brother Francis, and I will remain here all alone for as long as God wills.”

The other five brothers then told him: “O brother, how can we leave you here alone and sick, and abandon you among strangers, without any relatives or friends?” Brother Vitalis, bathed with tears, then said: “My brothers, if it is God’s will that I remain here, you continue on your journey. Since our battle against the devil is great and hard, I beg you always to remember the counsels of our Father brother Francis and not to go against his commands, and to pray for me to the Lord.” Then the five brothers embraced brother Vitalis and wept profusely and said while sighing: “If only we shall see one another again in God’s kingdom.” Thus brother Vitalis remained behind, and he did not see them any more after that moment. When he heard about their martyrdom, he was overjoyed, but he also felt sad that he was not there with them to suffer martyrdom, and he continued suffering from this sadness and his desire to die for Christ till the day of his death.

Regarding how they foretold their martyrdom to the queen of Portugal, and also truly announced to her the day of her death

[583] When Vitalis had dismissed the holy brothers, they left and arrived in the kingdom of Portugal. When they had entered Coimbra, the lady Orraca, the aforementioned queen of Portugal, who was devout to God, called them to come to her presence. She asked him who they were, from which land they were coming, and where they were going. They answered her and told her in an orderly way what they intended to accomplish, and revealed their plans to her. They also spoke to her in a most fervent way about God. When the queen saw that the friars held the world in such contempt, and how they were full of zeal in their resolve to die for Christ, she considered them to be most perfect servants of God. So she insistently asked them to pray to the Lord, for whom they wanted to suffer, that He would reveal to her the day of her death. The brothers, who were

humble men, began to excuse themselves saying that they were sinners, and therefore did not presume to ask for such a thing in their prayers, since they were not worthy to receive God’s secret revelations. The queen, perhaps inspired by God, began to beg the brothers with many tears, so that they would pray to the Lord to reveal to her the day of her death.

The brothers could not resist such a great devotion, and finally promised her to pray. While they were fervently praying according to her intentions, it pleased God to reveal to them what the queen had asked for. Therefore they went back to the queen and said: “Lady, do not be sad when you listen to what God will reveal to you through us; but rejoice in the Lord, since in this whole world nobody loves us with the same intensity as God. He has sent us to you to tell you that in a short time God will call you to depart from this life before your lord the king. Regarding your death there will be a most sure sign; you are to know for certain, that we, who you are now beholding in front of you, will shortly suffer martyrdom for our faith in Christ. We are overjoyed to know this, since the Lord, who has suffered so much for us, now wills to enlist us among his Martyrs. Therefore, when we will end our days as martyrs in Morocco, the Christians will devoutly carry our dead bodies to this city, and they will bury us here, and you and your people will come to welcome us with honours and devotion. On that occasion remember what we are now revealing to you, so that you will know that what we are telling you will come about without any doubt.” All these words, which they prophesied, did in fact come true; therefore the queen was very devout to the Order from that day onwards.

Regarding how they came to Spain, and after having been condemned to death, they were freed

The lord Francis:⁵

The friars then proceeded on their way and arrived at Alenquer, where there was the aforementioned lady Sancha, daughter of king Sancho of illustrious memory, who was buried in the monastery of Santa Cruz at Coimbra, and of the lady queen Aldoncia, who came

5 This narration was made by a certain lord Francis who was a priest.

from Aragon.⁶ The lady Sancha was a most honest and perfect virgin, who [584] after having listened for a long time to the friars who preached the word of God, came to know also what their intentions were. She approved their plans, and gave them secular clothes, since otherwise the Saracens would not permit them to pass over to their lands, and the Christians would not accept them to cross the sea in their ships. In fact, the Christians, and particularly the merchants, were afraid to offend the Saracens, since they were engaged in lucrative business with them and were getting richer by the hour. Therefore, if they came to know that the friars were going to preach to the Saracens, they would strongly oppose them in their resolve, since they loved more their material gains than God's glory. Thus the friars, disguised in secular clothes, went to a town of Spain called Seville. They entered the town and for eight days hid themselves in a hospice where some Christians were lodged, and they also left their secular clothes in that place. On a certain holy day the brothers, full of spiritual fervour and without being accompanied by anyone, went to the main mosque or oratory, where they fearlessly spurned all tribulations that they had to endure in this world, and dressed in their Christian clothes they greatly filled with anger the Saracens, enemies of the faith, who saw them. But the holy friars, growing in their zeal, tried with all their might to enter in that temple or mosque. The Saracens were indignant and were shouting at them, and hitting them with blows and pieces of wood, and did not permit them in any way to enter the mosque.

The holy friars were not afraid of what was happening to them, but they were inflamed with spiritual sweetness and a strong resolve to suffer martyrdom, and were telling one another: "What shall we do, since we are living here without preaching? It is necessary that we expose our corporal lives for the faith in Christ and for His honour, and therefore we should go and courageously confess in front of the infidel king that Christ is truly God." Thus they encouraged one another until they arrived at the door of the royal palace. A certain prince saw them and asked them: "Where are you coming from?" The brothers answered: "We come from the region of the Romans." The prince then asked: "What are you looking for and for what reason have you

⁶ Her name was Douce, and she was the daughter of Raimond Berenger IV, count of Barcelona. She died in 1198.

come here?" They said: "We would like to speak with the king for the sake of his own salvation and for that of his entire kingdom." That prince then said: "Are you carrying official letters or recommendation for your mission?" The friars answered: "For our mission we have brought no official documents, but only our hearts and our tongues." So the prince told them: "Tell me what is the purpose of your visit, and I will faithfully refer your words to the king." The brothers answered him: "We must first speak with the king, and only then, and not before, will you come to know the purpose of our visit."

So that prince went to the king and narrated to him in an orderly manner what the friars had told him. The king asked that the holy friars be brought to him. He then immediately asked them: "Where do you come from and who has sent you here and why have you come?" The holy friars answered his questions with courage and in an orderly manner: "We are Christians and are coming from the regions of the Romans. It is the King of kings, namely Our Lord God, who has sent us to you, for the salvation of your soul, and so that you may relinquish the superstitious sect of the most vile Mohammed, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive baptism, since without it you cannot be saved." The king was enraged and he said: "You wicked and perverse men, are you saying these words to me alone, or to my entire people?" They answered him with courage and with joyful looks on their faces: "O king, you are to know that if you, as the head, promulgate such a wicked religion because of your friendship with that deceiver full of the spirit of evil who is Mohammed, you will be the worst among the evil ones, and a more grave punishment will be reserved for you in hell. Therefore we want to tell you especially this one thing, so that we will lead you and all your people to the truth, and thus finally you can be saved." When he heard these words the king immediately ordered his men to cut their heads off.

[585] The friars were looking overjoyed in front of the king and they were telling one another: "Come on, brothers, we will now find what we have been looking for; let us be constant and let us not minimally be afraid to die for Christ." The prince then said: "O miserable men, why do you want to die in such a manly way? Listen to my advice. Revoke what you have declared against our religion and against God's prophet Mohammed and become Saracens, and you will live and you will possess many riches in this world." The holy brothers answered: "O miserable man, if only you would know what good

things we are waiting for and will acquire through death in eternal life, you will never offer to us these temporal riches.” The king’s son saw the brothers and felt compassion for them and prudently spoke to his father: “Why have you uttered this sentence, my father? Why have you commanded to kill them without a just reason? Refer to the law first of all, ask the elders to give you their advice, and then according to what they tell you judge these men.” The king calmed down at these words, and ordered his men to shut the friars up on the summit of a tower. They were full of the fire of the Holy Spirit, and with loud voices from the top of that tower they began to preach the faith in Christ to all those who went in and out of that place, and were condemning the religion of Mohammed and those who observed it. When he heard them the king ordered his men to shut the brothers up in the very bottom of the tower in the dungeon. Then he ordered them to present themselves in front of him and said: “You miserable and insane men, how come that your hearts have not yet been turned away from such falsehood?” They answered: “Our hearts are now stronger and steadfast in our faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then the king called his elders and his wise men in order to give him counsel. He made the holy friars appear before them all, and when he saw that they were still constantly professing their faith, he asked them: “Do you want to go back to Christian lands, or do you want to cross over to Morocco?” The brothers answered: “Our bodies are in your power, but you will never be able to harm our souls. Therefore wherever you want to send us, we are ready to go and to suffer any kind of death you decree against us, for the sake of Christ.”

Regarding how they went to Morocco and were captured
From the letters of the archbishop of Lisbon:

Upon the king’s command the five brothers were sent to Morocco, in the company of a noble Spanish Christian, namely the lord Pedro Fernando, and in the company of other Christians. They entered in a hospice, in which dwelt the aforementioned lord Pedro *Infante*, son of the king of Portugal, who had quarreled with his brother, the king Alphonso, and out of fear had come to be of help to the king of Morocco. The lord *Infante* welcomed the brothers with charity and great devotion and provided them with their food. The friars then,

wherever they beheld the Saracens gathered in the marketplace or in other places, would go over to them and with great courage they would preach to them the law of God. The Saracens marveled at the friars who preached, and they ridiculed them as insane men. The one who spoke out was brother Berard, who knew how to speak the language of the Saracens. When brother Berard went up on a high place in order to preach, as he would normally do, it happened that king Miramolin, whose proper name was Aboidile or Abiacob, passed through that place, since he was travelling to go to visit the tombs of the kings [586], his predecessors, which were found outside the walls of the town in Morocco. When he saw the friar preaching fervently he marveled and scolded him since he thought that he was insane and out of his mind. But since the friar did not want to desist from preaching, and he was proclaiming that the religion of Mohammed was wicked and that the religion of Christ was the way to salvation, the king mounted in fury and commanded the Christians to banish brother Berard and his four companions from that town and send them back to their countries, since their coming and preaching had displeased the Saracens very much.

Then the aforementioned lord Pedro *Infante* gave them some of his own servants, who would accompany them to Ceuta and from there transfer them as soon as possible to the lands of the faithful. The holy friars sent back those servants during the journey, and returned to Morocco and entered the town and began to preach to the Saracens who were in the marketplace. And behold that a certain person came to the lord *Infante* and announced to him that the friars, who he had sent away from that land, were preaching in the marketplace. King Miramolin heard that they had come back and were preaching, and he commanded his men to close them in a dungeon, and commanded the prison wardens not to give them any food or drink, or to permit anybody to administer anything to them. The wardens carried out this order in a most diligent manner. After the friars had been there for 20 days and had only received the nourishment of spiritual consolation, it happened that there was a heat wave that was followed by very stormy weather. The *Ababoturim* of the Saracens counselled the king to show respect towards the religion of the Christians, and to free those friars from prison, since it was because of them that the inhabitants were being assailed by those storms. So Miramolin hurriedly freed them from prison, and commanded the Christians who were liv-

ing there, to send the brothers back to the Christian lands as quickly as possible.

The friars were taken out of prison and led to the presence of the king. The king and those who stood around him were amazed that those friars were still alive, after having been left 20 days without food. When the king asked them how they managed to get nourishment when they were shut up in a dungeon for so many days, brother Berard answered him that if he was ready to learn the Catholic faith, he would tell him with all certainty how they managed to remain alive for so many days without food or drink. When they were freed, the brothers immediately wanted to preach the word of God to the Saracens. However the Christians did not permit them in any way to do so, since that would have enkindled the hatred of the inhabitants, who would certainly put them to death. So Berard secretly smiled and stopped preaching to the people. The Christians then took the brothers and sent with them some Christian guides, who would accompany them to Ceuta. When these had gone away from the brothers, they returned once again to Morocco. Therefore, after having taken counsel from the Christians, the lord Pedro *Infante* kept them in his own house and did not permit them to go out in public, but kept them under the control of his guards, since he was afraid that they would preach once again, enkindle the king's fury, and place all the lives of the local Christians in imminent danger.

Regarding how the Saints obtained from God abundant and living water in the midst of a drought

After these events the aforementioned *Infante*, together with other Christian barons and many Saracens, gathered an army, and went out to wage battle against a certain tribe of Saracens who did not want [587] to obey the king. In that place there lived a certain Saracen, who was very devout and was held to be very wise by the other Saracens. He had often entered into lively discussions with the friars and they had always defeated him. He was so confused that he departed from that land and he was not seen any more in the army or in Morocco. Therefore, when the Christians and the Saracens were returning from the battle, they arrived in a certain place where they could not find any water to drink neither for themselves nor for their

horses. When they had travelled for three *dietas* and could not find any water, the whole army was so worn out by thirst, that the men were applying their lips to the humid ground, in order to lick any drops of water that could be found there. They were burning with thirst, and everybody began to despair about remaining alive. So brother Berard, after having prayed, took a short tent peg in his hand, and began to drive it into the ground. All of a sudden a fountain of water sprang up, and all those men and beasts could drink their fill and they also filled with water all their water-skins. When the Saracens beheld such an evident and necessary miracle, they together with the Christians began to kiss the holy friars' feet and their habits, and from that moment onwards they held them in great devotion and reverence. When the men and the animals had quenched their thirst and all their water-skins had been filled, that same fountain of water dried up at that very spot.

Regarding how the brothers were captured and made to suffer greatly

From the letters of the archbishop of Lisbon and the lord priest Francis:

After these events, the holy friars returned to Morocco and were welcomed in the house of the lord *Infante*. They could not go out to preach as before, since they were held under custody. Nevertheless on a certain Friday they secretly managed to go out of the house. King Miramolin, as before, came to visit the tombs of the kings, and behold the brothers were courageously preaching. So the king was furious and commanded a certain Saracen prince, who had seen the aforementioned miracle, to capture them and give them capital punishment. That prince took pity on them, and from the hour of Tierce until Vespers he pleaded with the king to revoke his order, since he also believed that some noble Christians would request that the king would revoke such a cruel sentence. In the meantime all the Christians, both nobles as well as the common people, except those who had been captured by the Saracens, were aware that the king was so angry that they were afraid that he would kill them all. So they all escaped to their own homes, and hid themselves inside and locked the doors of their houses. The Saracens were keeping all tightly shut up inside

and were surrounding the Christians in a most diligent manner, and everybody was expecting that those friars would be killed, since the anger of the king was greatly inflamed against them. That prince sent his lieutenants and commanded the friars to present themselves before him. When the friars saw the messengers of the prince they were overjoyed and armed themselves with the sign of the cross, and then went to his house. Since he was not there, however, some guards took charge of them and left them under the care of a Latin heretic who kept them shut up in custody.

Early the following morning, the friars were led once more to the house of the aforementioned prince. Since, however, they could not find him, the ministers of the devil were incited by a diabolic spirit to hit them hard with various blows and to close the brothers in the great dungeon. When they were shut up in the dungeon the friars were fervently preaching the word of God both to the Christians and to the heretics. After three days that prince commanded that the friars be presented before him. The ministers of the devil, who were all murderers, [588] undressed the holy friars, tied their hands behind their backs and flogged them and tore their flesh until they presented them in front of the prince with their faces bathed with blood. The prince then asked them: "Where have you come from?" They answered: "We are Christians and have come from the regions of the Romans." The prince then asked them: "How come you dare presume to come in our midst, when you know that there is such a great battle going on between us and the Christians?" Brother Otho then answered him: "We have come here with the permission of our elder brother Francis, who has gone journeying to other parts of the world for the salvation of men, and we preach to you infidels that, although you consider yourselves to be our enemies we still want to love you for God's sake and announce to you the faith and the road to truth." The prince Abosaide then said: "And what is the way of truth?" Brother Otho answered: "This is the way of truth, namely, that you believe in one God the Father and in the Holy Spirit and in the Son who became man and was finally crucified for the salvation of all. Those who will not believe this truth will be burnt eternally in the fire out of which there is no returning back." So the prince Abosaide smiled and said: "In what way do you know these things that you are saying?" The brother replied: "I know these things since they have received the wit-

ness of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as that of all the Patriarchs and Prophets, and of the same Lord Jesus Christ, who is the way, out of which all men will fall into error; who is the truth, without which all be deceived; who is the life, without which all will die forever. And therefore Mohammed has led you to eternal death, because he has deceived you and told you lies, and he together with all those to adhere to his teachings will burn forever in hell."

The prince of the king then said: "Since you are uttering such words, you are certainly filled with the spirit of the devil." Mounting in fury he commanded his men to torture them in various ways and to separate them from one another in different houses and flog them mercilessly. The ministers of the devil bound their hands and feet, placed ropes around their necks, and began to drag them back and forth, and to flog them with such cruelty that their entrails became visible. On their wounds they applied boiling oil and vinegar, and then made them lie down naked on broken shreds of glass and began to roll them back and forth and continued to torture the Saints during that whole night with various kinds of torments and in a most cruel and harsh manner. The people were telling them: "You miserable men, why are you sustaining so much suffering for your falsehood? Convert to our religion and live." They did not answer them, but like valiant soldiers they praised God for having been inflicted with so many wounds. Then they started calling one another with loud voices and to exhort one another to have patience and to endure death. Thus they were guarded and flogged in a most cruel way by 30 Saracens during nearly that entire night.

On that same night the guards saw a great light descending from heaven, and taking up the holy friars up to heaven with an innumerable multitude. So they were greatly terrified and went to a certain man called Pedro Fernando, who was a Spanish captive and had been for a long time shut in the palace as a seneschal, and told him that they had clearly seen those friars going up to heaven with great radiance. He [589] answered them: "They have not been taken away, but they are still shut up in prison, and I have heard them praising God all night long; therefore do not be afraid that they have departed from this life." Those however continued to assert strongly that they had seen the opposite of what he said; nevertheless at last they found them praying in prison.

Regarding how the king of Morocco killed the Saints with his own hands

The king of Morocco, after having heard what happened, was enraged and commanded that the friars be brought in his presence. When the most Christian man the lord Pedro *Infante* heard what was happening, he thought that the friars would now be led to death. Therefore, very early in the morning he went to the prince and asked him that, if the friars would be killed, he would concede that they could be buried among the Christians. The prince promised him that he would do so. The Saints, with their hands tied and naked, barefoot and full of wounds, with their mouths full of blood, were continually being flogged as they were led to the king's presence. When they had arrived in front of the walls encircling the royal palace, one among the major princes of the king met them and said: "O miserable and insane men, why are you suffering so many cruel torments for your false and wicked faith? Now listen to my advice and you will receive honours and riches and after this life an eternal kingdom. Convert to the religion of the Moors and we will forgive you all the words you have uttered against us and our religion, and you will become great men among the Saracens."

At that moment brother Otho courageously answered him: "Do not take any pity on us, since we believe that after these brief and light torments we will hurry to the eternal glory. Take pity rather on your unhappy soul, since the fires of hell are waiting for you, if you do not convert with all your soul to the Lord Jesus Christ and to our faith, and receive baptism in water and the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins. What is, in fact, your most wicked religion, to what kind of false doctrine do you want to convert us, and who is your most vile Mohammed?" Having uttered these strong words he spat on the ground with a gesture of contempt and disgust. So the prince Abosaide was greatly angered and hit him hard on his right cheek. Brother Otho immediately presented him with his other cheek and said: "May God forgive you, for you know not what you are doing; behold my other cheek, hit it if you will, since I am ready to sustain everything with patience for the sake of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then the prince asked the Latins who were there: "What did he say?" They answered: "Nothing, except that may God forgive you."

Then the friars were led in the presence of the king. When the king saw them, he commanded that all those who were in the hall should go out, except for some women. When they had gone out, the king told the holy brothers: "Are you the ones who are blaspheming against our religion and despising our faith and God's prophet?" The brothers answered: "We do not despise any true faith, since your faith is not a true faith at all, but a most false religion; it is only the faith of the Christians which is the true faith, since it is most certain, and we will never despise it, but will continue to [590] defend it and venerate it with all our might." The king then told them: "Convert to our faith, and I will give you these women as your wives and a great quantity of money and you will be honoured in my kingdom." But the blessed Martyrs answered: "We do not want your women or your money, but we despise everything for the sake of Christ." At these words the king flew in a rage and said: "My power and my sword are the best way to punish you for these stupidities." The Saints answered: "Our bodies and our miserable flesh are in your power, but our souls are in the hands of God alone." Then the king mounted up in fury and commanded his men to bring him his sword, and he took it in his own hands. Then he commanded them to separate the Saints one from another, and then with his sword he struck blows on their heads and opened them in half. He gave three blows of his sword on the head of each one of them and in this inhuman and cruel way he killed them with his own hands. They completed their martyrdom in the year of the Lord 1220, on the 17th day of the *Calends* of February,⁷ on the 4th year of the pontificate of the lord Pope Honorius III, roughly seven years before the death of Saint Francis.

Regarding how the infidels retained their bodies after their death and rose against the other Christians

The lord Francis:

After their death, the women threw the bodies and heads of the martyrs out of the palace. The most wicked crowd tied their dismembered feet and arms with ropes and carried them out of the royal

⁷ Saints Berard and companions were martyred at Marrakesh in the Sahara Desert in Morocco, on 16th January 1220.

palace and of their city, and threw them out of the town. They carried the other members of the bodies around the city with loud howls and shouts. For that whole day they continued to dismember the sacred bodies and heads and to disperse them, and when night came they threw them here and there in the fields with such cruelty that not even the death of the martyrs seemed to have been able to satisfy such a great thirst for hatred. When the Christians saw how the holy brothers had ended their lives in such a glorious martyrdom, they lifted up their hands to heaven and blessed the Lord, while some of them tried to go out and secretly collect the relics of the martyrs. The Saracens gathered in countless numbers and in their fury they began to hurl stones against the Christians, so that the tempest of stones they were throwing was seen to be darkening the sky. But through the merits of the Martyrs all the Christians managed to flee to their homes without being harmed. Out of fear they remained shut up in their homes and hiding for three days, especially because during that time the lord Pedro *Infante* had sent two shield-bearers to the market, namely Pedro Fernando and Martino Alphonso, who had been immediately killed by the Saracens.

Regarding how the holy relics did not burn in the flames

Upon the suggestion of some Saracens the king ordered that the bodies of the friars should be burnt, so that the Christians would not venerate the relics of the Saints and despise the Saracens. A great fire was lit in a field, and the bodies of the Saints were thrown into that fire, so that they would be totally cremated. However, through divine power, the flames retreated from the bodies of the Saints as if they were [591] contrary to its nature, and was totally extinguished. This fact was witnessed by some captive Christians, who were more courageous and approached the scene, as well as by some Saracens, who were friends of the Christians, and who referred all these facts to the lord *Infante* and to the other Christians. The head of one of the Martyrs was frequently thrown into the fire and every time no sign of burning could be seen, not even on the hair, and to this very day it appears incorrupt with its skin and hair in the monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, where the bodies of the Saints were laid to rest. From that moment a sweet-smelling liquid substance which looks like blood oozes out of those remains, as it has been publicly declared and made known.

Regarding how those who committed that sin and dared touch the holy relics were punished

From the letters of the archbishop of Lisbon:

Some Saracens, out of friendship, and in certain cases also out of an interest to gain money, together with the Christian slaves, went to gather the relics of the Saints and offered them to the lord *Infante*. He received them with great devotion and placed them in the care of John Robert, who was a canon of the monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, and who was his chaplain, a man most famous for his devotion, as well as in the care of three innocent pages, among those who he reputed to be the most innocent and pure among his household, so that they would guard the relics with the greatest diligence, and so that they would not go out of the palace and stain their purity with women. Upon the command of the *Infante* they placed the bodies of the Martyrs on a secret terrace. They separated the flesh from the bones, so that the flesh and bones would dry in the heat of the sun. During that time in which, as we have said, the relics of the Martyrs were drying up, and these persons were guarding them, a certain man called Pedro Rosario wanted to go up to the terrace where the holy relics were being conserved. This man had a concubine, whose name was Rosaria, from the town of Burgos, whom he loved most ardently, and who he kept securely with him for a long time, in such a way that she had also taken his own surname. When he arrived at the middle of the stairway that led up to the terrace, he became immobile and could not go up or down the stairs in any way. So he became to call out in a loud voice: "Help me, help me; take me to confession." The aforementioned canon heard him calling him for confession. After having heard his confession that knight promised to send away his concubine once and for all. At that moment he regained physical strength and came down the stairs, but he could not speak in any way, until on the command of the *Infante* the canon placed one of the heads of the Martyrs on that man's breast, and that moment he was able to regain his speech and become a healthy man like before.

Regarding how the holy relics did not permit a shield-bearer who committed fornication to touch them, but began to ascend high up in the air

The Minister of the province of Saint James
during the general chapter:

A certain shield-bearer, upon whose shield the Saints' relics were placed in order to dry up, wanted to touch them out of devotion. But he had once committed an act of fornication. When [592] he wanted to go back, as usual, to arrange those relics on the shield, that shield upon which the relics stood immediately began to lift itself high up in the air, in such a way that he could not reach it. He was led to penance, and that very moment he felt sorry for his sin and went to confession. When he had done so those relics descended to their usual place, and they permitted the shield-bearer to touch them with his own hands.

From these miracles and many others that occurred regarding those holy relics, the *Infante* and many other members of his family learnt how to show them the greatest respect, in such a way that nobody dared enter the palace, where the relics were being kept, if he was guilty of a perverse sin or even if his own conscience accused him. A certain knight, whose name was Stephen Peter, who was known as Margarido of Santarem, was present and gave witness to these events by taking an oath in front of the bishop of Lisbon. He said that in that place he had gone to confession and frequently abstained from any kind of transgression, so that he would not be refused by the power of those holy relics from the grace of keeping watch over them and sometimes touching them, as had happened to the other knight who had been caught in a state of sin.

Regarding how the lord Pedro Infante was freed from great danger through the merits of the holy relics

The Archbishop of Lisbon:

After these events the lord *Infante* ordered two silver arks in which to place the holy relics, one for the heads with the dried up flesh of the martyrs, and the other one for their bones. He kept these relics in his chapel and frequently and with humility he pleaded with the holy Martyrs to obtain for him God's grace, namely that of returning to his lands from the lands of the Saracens, since he had stayed for too long in those regions and was being detained there against his will. The king Miramolin then called the lord *Infante* to his presence and willingly gave him leave to go back. He also told him that his men had counselled him to kill him, but that he considered such an act a great

injustice, and he did not want to humiliate such a famous man by condemning him to capital punishment. The *Infante* was therefore permitted by the king to go away from Morocco with all his belongings. After journeying for one day, at night he came to a certain place where one could hear the roaring of lions and other terrible howls of savage beasts, so that all those who were accompanying him were terrified. Therefore, they decided to place the wooden ark, in which the two silver arks containing the relics of the saints were placed, between themselves and the place from which they could perceive that the lions were coming towards them. From that moment they could not see the lions any longer, and neither could they hear their roaring.

The following day they continued walking and at night they arrived to a certain place, from which many roads forked out. All of them began to doubt which way was the most secure, since they did not have any guides on their travels. The lord *Infante* commanded them all to place their full trust in their prayers to the holy Martyrs. He commanded that the mule that was carrying the relics of the Saints should be left alone to go wherever it liked, and that all the knights and other men were to follow it along the road that it chose to take. In their doubts they placed their trust on the choice of a beast without reason. That mule, being led by the Lord, immediately chose to go away from a road along which many Saracens had laid a snare for the lord *Infante*, as it was later referred to him. In fact, he and his man were not aware of such a trap. They followed the mule along a very strange and difficult road that went winding up mountains and down valleys, and in this way that beast without reason led them by a more secure way until it brought them to Ceuta. [593] There, according to God's own plans, they found some ships and they hurriedly boarded them and, after God sent them a favourable wind, they began to navigate towards the lands of the Christians. Now during the first night of their journey by sea, darkness fell over the sea, and they were afraid lest the two ships which that had boarded would run aground on a rock and sink. Therefore, all those who were in the ships, prostrated themselves in front of the ark in which the relics of the Martyrs were kept, and began to pray with great devotion to the holy Martyrs to liberate them from such a danger. That same moment the sky became full of light, and in this way the navigators could see distinctly the sea in front of them. They clearly saw that indeed the ships were heading for some dangerous rocks, that appeared in the open sea, but

they were graced by that light and were led to avoid those dangerous rocks in such a way that they avoided danger and all the persons and belongings landed safely to the desired shore at Algeciras and Tarifa and then in Spain.⁸ The king of Morocco then repented because he had let *Infante* return. So he hurriedly sent messengers on ships to invite him to go back. Some Christians came to know what the king's messengers were up to. They went to inform *Infante* of the king's plans, so that he and his men could hurry up and go to Castile as fast as they could. The sailors had hardly raised the sails when the knights of the king of Morocco arrived and wanted to capture the lord *Infante* to take him back and to cut off the heads of all his companions, according to the orders of the king of Morocco. But through the merits of the holy Martyrs they were all freed and could enter Spain safe and sound.

Regarding how the queen of Portugal with all the people of Coimbra gave honour to the relics of the holy Martyrs

When the lord Pedro *Infante* had entered Portugal and the fame of the holy relics spread everywhere, when he and his men were approaching Coimbra, the lady Orraca, who was, as we have said, queen of Portugal, came together with all the people to meet the relics, and with great devotion and solemnity they carried the relics to the monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra and there they deposited them with honour. From that place the relics shone with many miracles to the praise of God. When Saint Francis, who was still alive, heard about the martyrdom of his friars, he was overjoyed and exclaimed: "Now I can truly say that I have five brothers."⁹

8 The journey by sea left Ceuta on the Moroccan coast and proceeded straight north towards Spain. The rocks that the chronicler mentions refer to the Rock of Gibraltar, at Europa Point, which is the southernmost tip of the tiny peninsula jutting out in the entrance to the Mediterranean. From there they continued west to Algeciras and south-west to Tarifa.

9 These words attributed by Arnald of Sarrant to St. Francis were written in the second half of the 14th century. In his *Chronicle*, 8, written at least 100 years earlier, in 1260, Jordan of Giano also recounts the martyrdom of Berard and his companions. But the reaction of St. Francis to the news of their death was different: "When the life and history of these aforementioned martyrs were brought to Blessed Francis, hearing that he himself was praised in them

Regarding how after their death the Saints appeared in glory, and how their prophecy regarding the queen's death became true
From a popular history of Portugal:

In order that the prophecy of the holy brothers would be fulfilled, according to the way it was revealed to the aforementioned queen, after some time the lady queen Orraca, full of virtues, departed from this life at night. During that same hour the lord Pedro Nunho, who was a canon and sacristan of the monastery of Santa Cruz, and who was a man who shone with holiness and was confessor of the same queen, saw an innumerable crowd of friars Minor who were entering in procession in the choir of the canons and there they began to sing Matins with the most sweet melody. He remained dumbfounded and began to reflect why such a great multitude of friars had entered, since the doors of the monastery were close, and he could not believe that there was such a multitude [594] of friars Minor in the universe. Then, in an unusual manner, without having rung the bells, they said Matins. Thus he stood there astonished, since he entered the choir and saw it full with friars. He therefore asked one of the brothers from where those friars had come and how they entered in that hour. He answered him: "All of us, whom you are seeing, are friars Minor and we are now reigning gloriously with Christ. Since we do not belong to this world, we have not found any obstacle in our way that hindered us from entering this place, as you have clearly seen when you beheld us coming in." Then the lord Pedro asked him why they had gathered in that place and were praying Matins with such melodious voices. That friar answered: "You should know that the lady queen Orraca has departed from this life. Since she loved our Order and Saint Francis with all her heart, the Lord Jesus Christ has sent us all here, so that in her honour we will solemnly celebrate Matins. And since you were her confessor and special friend, God wills that you see all this." Then the same lord Pedro said with great affection: "If only it would please God that I will see Saint Francis in this life!" That

and seeing that the other brothers were taking pride in the sufferings of these brothers, in as much as he held himself in the greatest contempt and despised praise and glory, he spurned the accounts and forbade them to be read, and said: 'Everyone should glory in his own suffering and not in that of another.'" (*13th Century Chronicles*, Translated by P. Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 24).

same moment the brother showed him Saint Francis resplendent in glory. When he saw this, the same lord Pedro rendered thanks to God and told the friar that he had been consoled in an inexpressible way through that vision. Then that friar showed him five other friars who were solemnly entering in procession and said: "These are the friars, who for the sake of Christ received a glorious martyrdom in Morocco and are buried in this monastery." The same lord Pedro, although he felt that he had received great spiritual benefits and sweetness from such a great vision, nevertheless continued to have doubts regarding the death of the queen. So the friar told him: "Regarding the queen's death, do not have any doubts, but believe that what I have told you is true. This will be a sign for you: some time after we will have left this monastery, that very moment you will hear the door knocking and you will be told the news regarding the death of the queen." That very moment the procession of friars went out of the closed doors of the monastery. Immediately some members of the family of the said queen came and knocked on the door, and announced that the queen had paid the debt of human nature. In this way the prophecy of the Saints was shown to have been true, namely that God had received her because of her devotion towards the Order of friars Minor.

Regarding some miracles that occurred after their death

We have included here some of the many miracles of the holy friars Minor, namely the aforementioned Martyrs, about whom we shall narrate the history, in order to commend them to memory. We start with the story of how some Christians washed the holy relics that they had picked up, and a certain shield-bearer sprinkled that water upon his foot that was wounded, and immediately through the merits of the Saints regained his health.

Regarding how a man was cured from a wound in his eye

Martin Lupus, while he was in Morocco and was with other Christians gathered the bones of the holy Martyrs, was seriously wounded in one of his eyes by the Saracens. A certain fly that had touched the bodies of the Saints came to rest on his eye, and Martin

rubbed his eye with his hand. That very moment, through the merits of the holy Martyrs, as soon as he had touched his eye all pain and inflammation disappeared from his eye and he was restored to his former health.

[595] Regarding how a priest was cured from a disease in his face

A certain priest was suffering from a disease in his face. He touched it with the hand that had touched the holy bodies, and he immediately regained his health.

Regarding a man cured from an eye disease

A certain man suffered greatly from an eye disease. He sprinkled his eyes with the water that had been used to wash the relics of the holy Martyrs, and he merited to obtain complete healing.

Regarding one who was cured from an illness in his eye

A certain young man was suffering from a grave and serious corporal illness. So with great devotion he asked the chaplain of the lord *Infante* and said: "Lord, see what a serious illness I am suffering from. If through the merits of these Martyrs I could touch some part of these relics, I trust that I will be freed." The chaplain therefore took one of the bones of the holy Martyrs and placed it in water; when the sick young man had drank that water he was restored to his former health.

Regarding a girl who was freed from the devil

A certain young girl, who had been baptised by that chaplain, since she had been an infidel, was seriously vexed by demons. She was led in front of the ark in which the bodies of the Saints were resting, and as soon as the ark was opened she was immediately freed.

Regarding a dumb and paralytic man who was healed

When the lord Pedro *Infante* with his family was returning from Morocco, as we have said before, he arrived with the Saints' relics to Astorga. The host who welcomed him in his house heard about the miracles that were happening through the power of the relics of the Martyrs. He was unable to speak, and therefore he humbly begged the lord *Infante* to give him a great gift, namely, that of letting him pray in front of the ark in which the holy relics were placed. That man had been afflicted for 30 years with paralysis and was reduced to great misery, since he could not use his tongue or his other body members. At his prayers the lord *Infante* was moved with mercy and presented to him the ark in order to let him pray in front of it. That man prostrated himself completely in front of the relics and began to pray fervently with many tears to the holy brothers. In front of all the onlookers, in that same place, he immediately regained the use of his tongue and of all his other body members.

Regarding how the king of Morocco and his kingdom were punished for five years

That same year, in which the holy brothers had been killed, the anger of God was kindled against the king of Morocco and his entire kingdom, as an act of vengeance because of his wickedness towards the friars. In fact arm and hand of the wicked king, that he had used to kill the holy friars, together with all the right-hand side of his body down to his feet, became totally [560] withered. For three whole years from the martyrdom of the Saints no rain fell in that land. Thus there followed such a drought and pestilence that for five whole years people continued to die because of the plague. The disease was incurable and very stubborn, so that the great majority of the inhabitants of that kingdom were wiped off. According to the number of friars who had died they had to suffer for five consecutive years in order to make up for the measure of their guilt.

Regarding a blind man who marvelously regained his sight

Alfonso Dominici, an inhabitant of Seville, one night closed his eyes to sleep, but when he rose he could not open them or see

anything at all. Since he could find no remedy for them, he came to the monastery in which the relics of the holy Martyrs were venerated. After having prayed because of his blindness, that same moment his eyes opened up and he could see as clearly as before.

Regarding another blind man who regained his sight

Martin Limonis, an inhabitant of Coimbra, was suffering from blindness in his eyes for three whole weeks. He came to the tomb of the holy Martyrs and there he prayed, and after one and a half hours he regained his eyesight in a perfect way.

Regarding a man who was cured from a blockage in his throat

Dominic Stephani, who also lived in Coimbra, was once eating and a bone went down in a transversal way in his throat, and could not be dislodged. He could not speak, and his situation was getting worse. Having made a vow that, if he would be cured he would go to the tomb of the Martyrs, he was immediately cured and could speak once again.

The healing of a man who swallowed a goose's bone that got stuck in his throat

Velasco Stephani, a native of Braga, was eating a goose, when a piece of flesh of the tail with bones in it got stuck in his throat and remained fixed in such a way that it blocked his wind-pipe. He could not eat or drink or even speak at all. After having prayed to the holy Martyrs, he immediately vomited that bone and regained perfect health.

A similar miracle

Dominica, daughter of Dominic Stephani from Coimbra, in a similar way had swallowed a bone in her throat. For three days the bone remained fixed in a transversal way, in such a way that she could

not eat or drink or even speak at all. After having prayed, through the merits of the holy Martyrs she was completely freed.

The Lord worked many other wonders and miracles through the holy Martyrs, both during their life as well as during their death. These have been confirmed and written down faithfully in front of Bishops, religious men and other persons worthy of belief, who have confirmed them by taking an oath, to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

2

Passion of the holy Martyrs
brothers Monaldo of Ancona, Francis of Petriolo,
Anthony of Milan, of the Order of Minors

[597] To the reverend father in Christ, brother C., Guardian of Genoa, brother Carlinus de Grimaldis, sends his reverent homage in the Lord. Since I believe that you have still not been able to receive the news, regarding how the holy Martyrs, brothers of our Order of Minors, namely brother Monaldo of Ancona, brother Francis of Petriolo or of Fermo, brother Anthony of Milan, gave up their bodies for the sake of Christ, therefore I will truthfully write down the narration of their martyrdom. I have received the information after diligent interviews with the Armenians and Greeks who were present, as well as with a certain faithful messenger, whom we especially sent in order to investigate the truthfulness of these facts. You should therefore know that, when the aforementioned friars decided to expose their lives to death for the sake of the truth of the Catholic faith, they were living in Erzincan.¹⁰ On a certain Friday during Lent they went to preach to the Saracens living in that same town. On that Friday, in front of the Cadi and the other Saracens, they announced that Christ was true God and true man and that He was killed for the salvation of mankind, and that if the Saracens did not believe this, they were not living in the light of truth; in fact the Saracens deny that Christ is truly God.

¹⁰ Erzincan is a town in eastern Turkey, in what used to be Armenia. The friars received martyrdom on 15th March 1288 or 1314.

3

Passion of the holy Martyrs
friars Minor Thomas of Tolentino,
James of Padua, Peter of Siena, and Demetrius

From the letters of brothers Jordan and Francis, friars Preachers,
compiled by brothers Odoric, Peter James, who afterwards was
Vicar of the Orient,
and Hugolino, of the Order of Minors

The great Raphael said to Tobias: *It is right to keep the secret of a king, yet right to reveal and publish the works of God*, and also: *Now bless the Lord on earth and give thanks to God* (Tob 12:7 and 20). Thus I, brother Peter de Turri, Vicar of the Orient, would not like to be scolded for being negligent. Therefore, out of charity for you and with the most pious devotion, I have tried to write down with all the truth, as I could, the marvelous wonders of God and His great deeds. In fact, in these last days, *God's grace has been revealed, our Saviour Jesus Christ* (Tit 2:11), in his servants, and according to the prophecy of Zechariah a chariot with the strongest red horses came out in order to gallop along the entire world. In the same way the four winds that stand before the Dominator of the whole world came out with full force (cfr. Zech 6:2ff). These are the four friars of the Order of Minors, namely Thomas of Tolentino, who was at the time sixty years old, brother James of Padua, both of them priests, brother Peter of Siena, and brother Demetrius of Tbilisi, from Georgia, all of whom knew many languages, and who were a man of great [598] austerity and of the most perfect holiness.¹¹ In the year of the Lord 1322, on the

¹¹ The cult of Blessed Thomas was confirmed by Pope Leo XIII in 1896 and the Order celebrated his feast day on 7th April. Thomas was born in Tolentino circa 1250 and entered very young in the Order of friars Minor. He was subsequently imprisoned on the accusation of being a Spiritual, but was liberated by the minister general Raymond Godefroy. Together with the other Spiritual friars Angelo Clareno, Marco of Montelupone, Pietro of Macerata and Angelo of Tolentino he was sent as missionary to Armenia. In 1308 he went to Poitiers, where Pope Clement V urged him to go to the missions of China, on the invitation of John of Montecorvino, bishop of Khambalik (Beijing). He left for Persia, and in 1320 he departed from Hormuz bound for India, together with James of Padua, Peter of Siena, Demetrius of Tbilisi and the Dominican Jordan of Severac. The missionaries landed at Thana, where they were martyred on 9th April 1321. Blessed Odoric of Pordenone, passing through Thana

Thursday preceding Palm Sunday, they received sacred martyrdom in India, in the town of Thana.

These four brothers, together with brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, were burning with the desire for martyrdom and to preach the true Christian faith and saving penance to the pagan Saracens and to other infidels. They left from Tabriz¹² in order to go to Cathay. When they were in Hormuz they made an agreement with the crew of a ship in order to take them to Polumbum,¹³ from where they were taken to Sur¹⁴ and against their will on to Thana, which is a three months journey away from Tabriz. They wanted to go to visit the church of Saint Thomas the Apostle. In Thana there were 15 Christian houses, but these were Nestorians, who are schismatics and heretics. One of them offered hospitality to the brothers.

From the letter of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, who was the companion of the Saints:

They dwelt there for 8 days, and they persuaded the aforementioned Christians to let some of us five to travel to the town of Paroth, where there were many who called themselves Christians, but who were not baptised, so that we would instruct them in the faith of Christ and afterwards baptise them. Upon the counsel of all the brothers I, brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, since I could understand perfectly the Persian language, departed in order on the journey to go and baptise those persons. With me I took two secular Christians as my companions, one of whom was an expert in the Persian and in the Indian language, so that he would be my interpreter. We boarded a small vessel and arrived in a certain town called Supera, where a certain beautiful church dedicated to Saint Thomas Apostle had been built,¹⁵ but was then destroyed by pagans, and afterwards

on his way to China, transported the remains of Blessed Thomas of Tolentino to Zaiton. The relic of Thomas' skull is preserved in the cathedral of Tolentino.

12 Tabriz is a city in north-west Iran (Persia), in East Azerbaijan Province.

13 Polumbum is the city of Colam (Quilon) in Kerala province, on the Malabar coast of India. Thana is located on Salsette Island, close to Mumbai.

14 Sur in Oman, south of Masqat (Muscat), on the southeastern tip of the Arabian peninsula.

15 St. Thomas the Apostle is traditionally considered as having evangelized the Malabar coast of India, in Kerala, south of Goa, and that he was buried in

the Christians constructed another church. There I, a poor member of the aforementioned Order of friar Preachers, baptised up to twenty Christians and heard their confessions and administered communion to them. After 16 days I continued on my journey, wishing to arrive in the town of Paroth. But behold, in front of the astonished onlookers, in complete calm weather that small vessel upon which we were to board, which was still tied to the sea shore, and was not moving, all of a sudden sank in that spot, and thus nobody suffered any harm by boarding it. Since I marveled at such an extraordinary event and I did not know that the satanic angel was working against those brothers whom I had left behind in Thana, I had a great desire to write to them and send them a letter through a messenger. Against my usual custom, I did not know what I was to say, and therefore I began to write thus: To the reverend fathers, brothers Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, Peter of Siena and Demetrius, glorious messengers, etc., and I sent the letter to them through the services of my two Christian companions. In the light of the night sky I was sighing and praying in that church, so that our Lord Jesus Christ might direct the actions of my companions the friars. It was the Friday before Palm Sunday and on that preceding day many facts had occurred that I was not yet aware of. On the following night I was awoken by the Christians, who tried to convince me to flee, and to were asserting that my holy companions had been captured. I trusted in the good Jesus and immediately answered: "I will not accept to flee and abandon my companions in their chains. I will immediately hurry to go back to Thana and to be ready to stand in front of Lomelic. Since I am more expert than all the others in the Persian language, I will be able to answer any interrogations." So I began my journey back to Thana and I arrived in a certain village, where I found my [599] Christian companions, with whom I had sent the letter, and I began to wonder why they had not yet arrived at Thana. However I looked at their faces and I saw they were very confused, as well as others with them, and therefore I asked them whether they had received some news. They were afraid to tell me what had happened, and therefore I started to shout at them and at

Maylapore, and then his remains were transferred to Edessa. The reference to the towns visited by brother Jordan (Paroth and Supera) is very difficult to locate on a modern map of India, but he was travelling along the southwestern coast of the Indian subcontinent, south of Mumbai.

last made them speak, and they told me that my holy companions had been killed. This was the way in which they suffered their martyrdom.

The Vicar of the Orient, brother Peter:

When the aforementioned four Minors were staying in the town of Thana in the house of a certain schismatic, hiding out of fear of the Saracens, it happened that a great quarrel ensued between the lord of that house and his wife, since that man began to hit his wife. Therefore she could not bear her husband's cruelty and went to the Cadi, who is like a Bishop among the Saracens, and requested to be a judge in her case. When she appeared before him she managed to attain what she asked for. The Cadi asked her whether there was anybody who could prove that what she was stating was true, and she answered that in her house there were four Franks who were priests, that is Latin Religious, who had seen what had happened to her and could give witness.

From the letter of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

The Cadi then answered: "Let your priests, namely the Christian friars you mentioned, come and present them as witnesses for your case." She said: "They do not know how to speak our language very well, and therefore they cannot truly judge what happened between me and my husband." When a certain Saracen from Alexandria, whose name was Yussuf, heard these words, he said that the religious who were Franks, that is Latins, were great and learned men in the Scriptures, and therefore it was a good thing to dispute with them. He went out to Lomelic, that is, the mayor, magistrate and president of that town, and he persuaded him regarding the case of the aforementioned friars. Therefore Lomelic called them to come in front of him. He asked them who they were and where they were going. The Saints answered in an orderly way to all his questions, as it befitted him, saying that they were Latins, that is, Christians, and that they had embarked on their journey for the sake of preaching Christ. After hearing their words Lomelic dismissed them politely and they returned with great joy to their home. When Yussuf of Alexandria saw what happened he became pierced with envy in his heart, and went to Lomelic to tell him that those friars and all the other Latins similar to them were enemies of the Saracens. He continued to pretend to deceive Lomelic until the following morning and convinced him to send

for them once again and to investigate them diligently regarding the faith and the state of the Franks. Lomelic received satisfying answers for all the questions he asked them and for a second time he let them go back home unharmed. After some other days that famished dog from Alexandria came to the friars and told them that Lomelic had called them. The Saints answered him: "What does Lomelic want of us? We are poor pilgrims of Christ and possess nothing in this life." That dog told them once more: "Follow me and do not be afraid, and bring with you your Bible."

Therefore the Saints went to Lomelic and after having been interrogated with many words, when they were asked whether they had any books with them, they offered him their Bible. He admired the beauty of that book and asked them who had written it. They said that it contained the old law and its continuation in the new law. Then Lomelic said: "Are these books approved among you?" They answered: "Yes they are." [600] Then he said: "That means that the Koran is not approved among you?" They said: "No." Lomelic then asked: "Why not? This book of God has been sent to us by God." Then he began to say many things regarding his most abominable faith and at the end he added: "Our faith and your faith are good." The Saints answered: "Our faith is good." Then, nearly threatening them, he said: "What are you saying?" They replied: "We are saying the truth." After many other words the Saints said: "Lord, let us go; we are poor men of Christ and we do not possess anything in this life and we are planning to travel to another place." Lomelic said: "Go in peace, but leave the Bible to the Sultan." The Saints said: "We cannot do this in any way, since we cannot part with this book." Since they wanted to keep the Bible, after being asked by some pagans who were not Saracens, Lomelic gave them back their Bible and gave them leave to depart. At the same time, however, upon the suggestion of the aforementioned Yussuf of Alexandria, the holy friars were summoned in front of the Cadi, and the Saracens began a disputation with the holy friars regarding our faith. The Saracens were stating that Christ was not God, but that he was only man. Brother Thomas was strongly opposing them and asserted with proven arguments that Christ was not only a simple man but truly a God-man. He also declared that this truth could be proved with reasonable arguments. The Saints continued to declare with many words the truth regarding the blessed Trinity, asserting that God was three and one, and continued to speak to the wicked ears

of the Saracens, who were listening to them as if they were listening to a horrendous blasphemy. With many words the Saints explained the truth of the arguments leading to the Trinity and to Christ as Son of God, but since the Saracens could not bear to listen any more to them the same Saracens remained hard-hearted infidels just the same.

From the book of the Wonders of the world, by brother Odoric:

When the Cadi saw that the people were so confused, he was angered and asked: "What do you say regarding Mohammed?" In fact, the Saracens have the custom that, if they cannot defend themselves with words, they make recourse to blows and to the sword. After having been interrogated in such a way the brothers answered: "As we have already proven before you with rational arguments and examples, Christ is truly God and man, and He gave us our law on this earth. Mohammed gave you a law that is contrary to our law, and he taught that Christ was not truly God. Now you can judge whether he was more wise than the arguments we are now using." Then the Cadi and all the Saracens who were present began to cry out loudly: "Tell us plain and simple what you believe and feel regarding Mohammed." So brother Thomas answered: "You yourselves can state what you are asking of us, since you know that I will not be silent regarding what I feel inwardly. If you gaze at my face alone I will tell you what we think about Mohammed, namely, that Mohammed is the son of perdition and that he is in hell with the devil, who is his father, and that he is there not alone, but together with all those who observe his law, which is a pestiferous, irrational and wicked law that goes against God and the salvation of the soul."

The Vicar of the Orient:

"Mohammed is not God's prophet, and neither is he God's friend, but he is the most wicked enemy of God and it is abominable among the faithful just to mention his name." When the Cadi heard these words, mounting up in fury he ordered his men to give him a sword, and he swung it over their uncovered skulls in order to induce them to terror, so that they would profess that Mohammed was God's prophet. Since they did not want to do this, but were still affirming the opposite with strong arguments, those Saracens together with the Cadi tried their best to soften those knights of Christ with promises and exhortations, but they could hardly do so, since the friars always

won over every single word that the Saracens would utter.

[601] Brother Odoric in the aforementioned book:¹⁶

When the Saracens heard these words they began to shout loudly: "They deserve to die, since they have uttered so many wicked things regarding our prophet and his holy law." With great noise and confusion they captured the friars and tied them up by their necks and left them thus tied in the sun, in order to make them die a most cruel death exposed to the strong rays of the sun. In those lands the sun is as strong as a furnace, in such a way that nobody can live for more than the space of one Mass exposed to its rays. However the Martyrs, as a sign of a great miracle, remained unharmed, tied in that place from the hour of Tierce to the hour of None, and were still strong and healthy, and they never refrained from praising the Lord all the time.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

The friars who were tied in the burning rays of the sun filled all the onlookers with awe and wonder, since it seemed that some divine power was mitigating the strength of the sun's rays and that those rays were not able to molest the brothers in any way. Therefore they were untied from their fetters and taken back to be presented to Lomelic and the Cadi, who found them unwavering in their faith just like they had been before, even though they again interrogated them with promises and threats. Those dogs therefore ordered that the brothers be taken to the *maydano*, that is, the public square of the town, and they also commanded that a great fire be lit.

Brother Odoric in the aforementioned book:

When they gathered in council, the Saracens marveled that those friars remained unscathed in the sun's heat, and therefore they were confused when they beheld an obvious miracle, and told them: "We shall now throw you into a great fire and if, as you say, your faith is the true faith, the fire will not burn you; but if it is false, it will consume you." The brothers answered: "We are ready to face fire and to enter prison and to sustain for the sake of Christ any kind of torments. You should know one thing, however, that if we will be consumed by the fire, that will not happen because our faith is false, since it is the

¹⁶ *De Mirabilibus mundi*.

most certain faith by which alone one can be saved. In that case you are to attribute our death to our sins and to the divine permission. However, if we avoid death in the fire, you are to ascribe our deliverance to divine clemency and to the truth of our faith.” Meanwhile, in the *maydano*, or the public square of the town, a great fire had been lit, where the friars were to be burnt. That same moment the news spread like wildfire in the entire town. All the inhabitants both men and women assembled in the square to behold the spectacle of the death of the holy Martyrs. Those holy athletes of Christ were led to the square. Brother Thomas was inflamed with zeal for the faith and wanted to enter freely into the fire. But when he was going, a certain Saracen held him back by the hood and said: “You shall not go in first, since you are the elder, and maybe it would be better that you will be put to further tests, since the fire might not be able to burn you. You have to permit that younger member of your company to enter the flames before you.”

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

All the people who had gathered began to shout and say: “Let not the elder one enter the flames, but the younger.” In fact, the Orientals show greater respect towards the elders because of their white beards. Therefore the command was given to throw first brother James in the flames.

From the book of brother Odoric:

At that moment four persons began to lead brother James to the fire and violently pushed him and at last threw him into the flames. But he was saying to them: “Permit me to go alone, since I will enter the fire out of my own free will.” They however did not want to pay attention to his words, and threw him into the flames in front of all those who were present.

[602] Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

He first armed himself with the sign of the cross, and then fell into the flames and remained unharmed as if he were in the midst of a rose garden. The flame was so high that he could not be seen, even though the flames sometimes subsided because of the great wind that was blowing. Then they could hear his voice continually calling upon

the blessed Virgin to come to his aid. The servant of Christ remained in the midst of the flames for the length of time that was necessary so that the fire would extinguish itself. When the fire was extinguished the athlete of God went out unharmed not only in his body, but his skin and his clothes were not burnt at all.

Brother Odoric:

Brother James stood on the red-hot coals full of joy and exultation, with his hands lifted up to heaven in the form of a cross, with his mind totally sane and praising God with a pure heart. And although the flames were so big, the fire did not harm him in any way. When the people saw this spectacle they began to cry out unanimously: “These are holy men, these are holy men; it is a crime to offend them, since we have now seen that their faith is holy and good.” When they had said this brother James came out of the fire full of joy. When the Cadi saw this he started to shout in a loud voice: “He is not a saint, he is not a saint. The fire did not burn him because the tunic he is wearing is woven from wool coming from the land of Abraham, that God has blessed. Therefore undress him and throw him naked into the flames”. That very moment the Saracens again lit the fire and made it double the size it had been.

The Vicar of the Orient brother Peter:

That moment the Cadi ordered them to undress brother James totally and to smear his head and his entire body with oil and butter, and also to spread abundant quantities of oil and to smear butter on the wood of the furnace, and then threw brother James totally naked, as if he had just been born of his mother’s womb, into the flames.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

But although brother James remained for a long time in the flames and everybody was looking at him and saw that he was unharmed, except for the fact that his feet were partially burnt because of their contact with the burning twigs. Many pagans had gathered to behold such a spectacle, together with others who adored the fire and the Saracens and some Christians. Again everybody cried out that those men were good men. In this way the Saint again came out of the flames unharmed. Since he was found to be most constant in his

faith, together with his companions, in spite of all the trials they had to endure, the Cadi finally ordered his men to behead him.

Brother Odoric in the aforementioned book:

When the people saw this they unanimously cried out: "It is a sin, it is a sin to offend them, since they are holy men and they are dear to God." Thus the news of the great miracle spread like wildfire among the people. When he saw the miracle Lomelic, that is the magistrate of the town, called brother James to him and made him dress his clothes once again and said: "Behold, brothers, go away from this place with the grace of God, in order that we may not harm you any more. Indeed we have seen that you are good and just men and that your religion is holy. Therefore we advise you strongly, on our part, to go away from this land as fast as you possibly can, [603] since this Cadi has resolved on his part to take away your lives." It was the hour of Compline. All those persons, together with the pagans and all the others who were gathered there were all marveling and saying: "We have seen so many wonderful things today in these men, that we do not know what we are now bound to observe in our religion." The Lomelic commanded that the three brothers be taken to the other side of the sea that surrounded that town in such a way that the town seemed to be an island. So the brothers were taken some distance away from the dry land, and beyond that river, where there was a certain village. The man who had offered them hospitality in his house in the town also went in their company. When they arrived in that village the brothers, through the good services of that man, were offered hospitality in the house of a certain pagan.

Regarding how the Cadi tried to convince Lomelic to put the Saints to death

From the letters of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

When night settled in, the Cadi, namely the minister of the devil, together with the aforementioned Yussuf, went to Lomelic and told him that since the friars had made the sign of the cross in front of all those who saw them, they had to be killed and beheaded, since otherwise the faith in Mohammed would be considered as nothing. Lomelic was horrified at such a crime, and said that the holy brothers

had done no harm to the Saracens, and that the sufferings that the innocent pilgrims had endured were enough. The Cadi then became very angry and said that, if the brothers were liberated unharmed, many Saracens and other pagans, because of their preaching and miracles, would become Christians, and that the faith in Mohammed would suffer. He also added that, whoever killed a Christian, would gain more merits than if he went to visit Mecca, namely the place where Mohammed is buried. Since he could not make Lomelic say yes to his proposals, since Lomelic was very afraid to lay his hands upon the servants of God, the wicked Cadi said: "If you will be afraid to kill them, you will have to render an explanation regarding your behaviour on judgement day; do not worry, since their blood will fall upon me and upon my sons." Thus Lomelic was won over and he commanded four soldiers of the devil to obey the order of the Cadi and go to kill the servants of God.

From the book of brother Odoric on the Marvels of the world:

In the meantime Lomelic captured the Christians who were living in that town, and he ordered his men to imprison them. The four armed men arrived in the village where the friars were staying, but since it was night, although they searched for them, they could not find the brothers. Around midnight the brothers woke up to say Matins, and thus those armed men found them and led them out of the village. When they had taken them under a certain tree they told them: "We have received the command from the Cadi and from Lomelic to kill you. We are doing such an act against our will, since you are good and holy men, but we are afraid to do otherwise since, if we do not obey, we will be killed together with our wives and children." The courageous friars answered them: "Most dear friends, do what you have been commanded, since through this corporal death we will gain eternal life. For the sake of Christ we are willing to sustain with joy death and all other torments you wish to inflict upon us." That Christian man, who had come with the friars, began to quarrel loudly with those men and told them: "If I had a sword, I would defend them personally even unto death. Indeed, what evil have they done?"

Regarding their precious death

From the letter of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

[604] Those soldiers of the devil, according to the command received, undressed the Saints and left them naked. The brothers be-

gan to comfort one another with counsels of salvation and with the promise of the crown of eternal life. The first one among those ministers of the devil swung his sword over brother James and then with one single blow across the head he killed that athlete of God who fell to the ground.

Brother Odoric:

One of them hit brother James with a strong blow on the head and struck him as far down as his eyes.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

When he fell down, he said nothing and immediately expired.

From the letters of the Vicar of the Orient:

Brother Thomas, upon beholding what had happened, knelt down and began to pray intensely. One of the soldiers came over and took him by his beard and with a cruel blow he massacred him with his sword.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

The second minister of the devil hit brother Thomas over his shoulder in a similar way. He immediately fell down and rolling over in his own blood he repeated two or three times: Holy Mary, Holy Mary, Holy Mary, with a clear voice.

The third minister of the devil wounded brother Demetrius, who was a lay brother, on his belly, and together with the other ministers of the devil they finished him with great cruelty with their swords. Finally they cut off the throats of all the brothers with their swords. In that same hour, as soon as the Martyrs of Christ had been killed, the moon shone so brilliantly and gave such radiance, that everybody was astonished at such a wonderful sight.

From the book of the Marvels of the world by brother Odoric:

That same moment there was so much lightning, thunder, and hailstorms that nothing similar had ever been witnessed and everybody thought that they would all die. The ship that was supposed to take the saints to Colam and then had had deceivingly brought them to Thana against their will, as we have shown further up, was totally submerged, and sunk in such a way that not a single part of it could

be salvaged; this was also a marvelous and unheard of thing, namely, that a ship would sink in such a safe harbour.

4

Passion of brother Peter of Siena

From the letter of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

In the meantime brother Peter of Siena was still at home, and was not aware of what had happened to his companions. That very moment arrived about 20 military officials carrying lanterns and they led him by the hand to Lomelic's house and made him appear before him.

[605] Brother Odoric:

In the meantime the Cadi sent his men to plunder the belongings of the friars who had been killed. These were in the house where the brothers had received hospitality. In that house the men found brother Peter of Siena, who had been left behind by the brothers in order to guard their belongings. When the messengers of the Cadi arrived, they captured him and led him to the Cadi. The same Cadi and the Saracens spoke to him and promised him great riches, if he would deny his faith and would accept the religion of Mohammed. Brother Peter, however, spoke with contempt regarding them and their religion, and he was continually ridiculing them.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

After having been interrogated by many and continually answered according to the truth, he was sent to be tied up in prison. The following morning he was taken out of the prison and interrogated once more, but he continued to be strong in his resolve to be firm in the Christian faith, both by words and actions.

Brother Odoric as above:

Those men were enraged at him and from the morning until noon they made him suffer many cruel torments. Nevertheless he remained constant and firm in his faith and he was continually condemning and ridiculing them and their faith.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

Then Lomelic ordered his men to flog brother Peter without mercy. He remained steadfast in the midst of all those beatings, and the Saracens were trying to make him utter the word *Allah, Ylal*, that is, one God, and in this way they thought that they could make him deny his faith in the Trinity. When he refused to do so they continued to flog him to the point that he was on the verge of giving up his spirit. When those soldiers of the devil saw that the athlete of God remained firm in his faith in Christ, they went to Lomelic and told him that they could not make brother Peter waver from his faith in any way, and that he would never accept to become a Saracen. Lomelic flew up in a rage, and ordered them to hang the Saint of God by the neck, but before to raise him up high with great weight and then let him fall down headlong. After they had tormented him in this way he continued to persevere and in no way did he waver from his faith in Christ. So they hanged him by the neck to a tree. He remained hanging for two days, and he did not die just the same. After he was brought down to the ground and seemed to be unharmed, the wicked judge ordered his men to take him out of the town and to behead him.

From a letter of brother James of Camerino sent to the Custos of Tabriz; the Vicar of the Orient:

When brother Peter of Siena remained hanging for a long time with a rope tied around his neck, in the same way in which criminals are hung in France, and he could not die in any way, since the divine power was protecting him, the wicked Saracens, whose eyes were blinded because of their great malice, were full of admiration, together with the pagans and other infidels and the Christians. So they brought down brother Peter alive from the scaffold and immediately after they beheaded him. A certain young man called Lanfranc from Genoa brought this information not only from the Christians who were in that place, but also after having interrogated with haste the Saracens themselves, who with great admiration and certitude confirmed the truth of these events.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

These things happened during the hour of Vespers on the Saturday preceding Palm Sunday. [606] On the following day, which was Palm Sunday, his body was not found, and hardly any trace could be

found of the blood he had shed, and there was no sign of any blood in that place, but it seemed that he had been taken to heaven in body and soul.

Brother Odoric:

Truly a person worthy of trust received the revelation that God had taken his body and hidden it for a time, until when it would please Him to reveal its great glory and that, as the omnipotent God Himself showed, the souls of the martyrs soul had now obtained the reward of the kingdom of heaven.

Regarding some visions

From the letters sent by Hugolino to the brothers of Tabriz:

Some of the letters of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers contain other details regarding the holy friars who were martyred in Thana. These episodes were not written in the letter that spoke of their martyrdom. One of these episodes states that, all four Martyrs appeared to a certain Christian in Thana. When the same Christian asked them whether they were still alive, or whether they had died, they answered that they were not dead, but alive. Then he asked them again: "What has happened to your companion, brother Jordan?" The Saints answered: "Behold now he has just arrived at Thana and is coming down from the ship in the port of Thana."

Once, when the same man was at Soldania, in the convent of the friars Preachers, where one of the jaws of those holy martyrs is venerated, he did not know to whom it belonged. A certain pious woman from Soldania prayed the blessed Virgin to show to whom among those friars that jaw belonged. When she had finished praying, that woman fell asleep. During her dreams she saw in a vision a certain friar Minor dressed in a glorious habit and an amphora full of glorious bones. In truth it had happened that on that same day brother Jordan, in the town of Supera, had received the bones of those Martyrs and had placed them in a certain amphora, and then placed them in a certain church in that same town of Supera. That woman therefore asked the friar who had appeared to her and to whom that jaw belonged. He answered that it belonged to brother Demetrius.

Then that woman asked him again: "What has happened to the body of brother Peter of Siena?" He answered her: "When it pleases God, He will reveal his body that is in eternal glory."

Regarding how the Saints' bodies remained incorrupt in the sun

Brother Odoric:

In that region the bodies of the dead were never buried, but they were left out in the fields, and with the great heat of the sun of these regions, the bodies would totally decompose. The bodies of those Martyrs were therefore left for 24 days in the sun, but after that time they were found to be incorrupt as they had been on the day they were killed.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

The bodies of the three Martyrs were not touched by beasts or birds of prey for three days, and they were totally incorrupt and in a singular way remained white and [607] beautiful as if they had been embalmed. Because of fear of Lomelic and the Cadi those bodies remained for a long time unburied, until the day when brother Jordan, convinced by the Christians in Paroth and after having baptised them, returned to Thana, and gathered those bones as he best could, and buried them secretly.

Brother James, Custos of Tabriz:

A certain young man from Genoa whose name was Lanfranco, told us that he was a companion of brother Jordan, whom we have often mentioned, and that on the third day after the martyrdom of the holy Martyrs, he had come to Thana with brother Jordan and saw those bodies of the Martyrs still incorrupt and unharmed although they were exposed to the sun's rays, and from their heads a great fragrance was being emitted. That same young man touched those heads with his own hands and smelt that fragrance.

Regarding how those who killed them were punished

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

After the Saints had been killed, on the following day, the companion who was closest to Lomelic, and who had agreed to everything,

and knew what was to happen and even counseled it, was riding on his horse in the town. He fell down from the horse and broke so many of his bones that he died miserably. When the people saw this, they did not doubt that it had happened as a just punishment for the Saints' death.

After some other days had passed Lomelic, full of avarice, began to plunder the Saints' belongings and placed two Christians in chains in prison, and tried to find a good occasion in order to kill them.

Brother Odoric:

Behold, the aforementioned Lomelic, that is, the magistrate of that land, went to sleep. While he was sleeping, those glorious Martyrs appeared to him. They were as radiant as the sun, and they were swinging fiery swords over Lomelic, in such a way that it seemed that they wanted to cut him in pieces.

Brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

The four Saints who had been martyred were standing above the four corners of his bed. They appeared in a wonderful way and he could not understand what they were saying but they wanted to throw fire upon him. The unhappy Lomelic saw the Saints in their glory and trembling with fear began to cry out and say: "Help me, help me, come to my aid."

Brother Odoric:

When they heard him crying out in that way his entire family ran over to him. When they asked him the reason why he was so terrified he answered: "Those Frank priests, that is the Latin Religious, that I ordered to be killed, have appeared to me wielding fiery swords, and they seemed to want to kill me; that is why I cried out full of terror." That same moment Lomelic sent for the Cadi, in order to ask him for advice about what he had to do, and narrated to him all that he had seen, since he was truly afraid that the Saints would kill him. The Cadi gave him the advice to make a great alms offering for those friars [608] if he wanted to avoid death as well as the anger of the Saracens. That very moment Lomelic sent for those Christians whom he was keeping in prison. When they came to him, he tried to befriend them and make them his companions, and admitted that he

had treated them badly, and humbly confessed his guilt, begging them to forgive him. After having done so, he commanded under pain of death that no one was to offend the Christians, and he promised to send them all free.

From the letter of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers:

On the following day Lomelic organised a great banquet for the poor and was very kind with the poor people in order to make up for the Saints' death. Then he issued an edict in which he wrote to the rest of the Christians, who had escaped from the town on account of the holy friars' death, in order not to be afraid but to come back freely to their homes, and to live as before, as free citizens in the town.

From the letter of brother Peter, Vicar of the Orient:

It is said that Lomelic did such acts and many more, in such a way that many infidels began to have doubts regarding his faith and to say: "We have seen such things, that we do not know whether we are to continue to be faithful to our religion any longer." Some other Saracens arrived at Tabriz. They had been present during the moment of the martyrdom of the Saints, and they began to spread the news of the many miracles and wonders that had happened.

Regarding how the Saracens wanted to receive baptism
The Custos of Tabriz:

Because of these and many other miracles that God condescended to work through the holy Martyrs, many Saracens came to brother Jordan and asked to be baptised. The Cadi therefore had to declare that, whoever would be baptised, would receive capital punishment. Therefore brother Jordan began to fear that the many Christians who lived there would be in danger, and he stopped from baptising Saracens and did not accept anyone who came to baptism.

Regarding how Lomelic was killed
Brother Odoric:

After these events, Lomelic commanded his men to build four mosques, that is, oratories or churches of the Saracens, in honour of the holy Martyrs, in which he also instituted some priests.

When the emperor Daldilus heard that the friars had suffered such a death sentence, and also about the miracles that had occurred, he ordered his men to capture the aforementioned Lomelic and to present him in front of him with his hands tied. He then interrogated him regarding the reason why he had permitted that the holy brothers be killed in such a cruel way. Lomelic answered him: "They wanted to subvert our religion and began to insult our prophet Mohammed." The emperor then said: "You are a most cruel dog. In fact, when you saw how God freed them from the flames, how did you dare touch them and kill them in such a cruel way?" Thus in his anger the emperor commanded that Lomelic and his entire family should suffer the same death that he had given to the brothers. When the Cadi heard what had befallen Lomelic, he secretly escaped from the entire region of the empire.

[609] From the letters of the Vicar of the Orient:

In order that your conscience would not hesitate to believe all these things, I would like you to know the news that we have received. A certain Latin Christian from Genoa, whose name is Giacomino and who is a merchant, went in the company of the holy brothers in India, and then returned and lived on a certain island, whereas they went on to Thana and there received martyrdom. After the Saints' death, namely on the Thursday of the Last Supper of the Lord, that is on the eighth day of that martyrdom, he landed at Thana and interrogated all the people there with full trust in order to know what had happened. He also interrogated brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers. Then Giacomino returned to Tabriz carrying with him special letters from brother Jordan, and afterwards took an oath in front of the Custos of Tabriz and in front of the friars Minor and friars Preachers stating that he would speak the whole truth. So that faithful and well-off man recounted in an orderly manner all that had happened. The contents of that letter, which he had carried to the friars from the part of brother Jordan, include the following, word by word:

To the Reverend fathers and brothers in Christ, the friars Preachers and friars Minor of Tabriz, and to Dyagorgano and Meregá who live in that town, brother Jordan, the least among the brothers of the Order of Preachers, commends himself to you for his own salvation and sheds tears as he kisses the feet of these Blessed brothers.

Let your venerable Paternity know all the truth. I am alone and without any companion in India, and I live like a poor man and a pilgrim. In fact, after the passion that my companions of the Order of friars Minor suffered, namely the glorious saints Thomas, James, Peter, and Demetrius, God has permitted me to remain alive, in spite of my sins that judge me. The same God, who plans everything in the most perfect manner, according to His will, knows how in spite of everything, I have been blessed in all things. After the joyful martyrdom that occurred on the Thursday preceding Palm Sunday in the town of Thana in India, I was staying in a place that lies in a ten-day journey distance from that place, and which is called Paroth. There I baptised about ninety persons and I still have not refrained from administering baptism, since afterwards I baptised more than 20 other persons, and both in Thana and Supera I baptised another 35 persons. Praised be Christ, Creator of all. If I would have a companion, I will remain here for some time. Now I am going to prepare the church for the other brothers who will come and I will send my things, together with the clothes and books of the martyred brothers. I ask forgiveness from everybody, because of my commitment to the faith and other hard work I had to endure etc. I therefore heard and read a certain long letter of some Latins, which had been written in India, where many of these things and many other details pertaining to the aforementioned martyrdom were written. This letter especially stated that, if we had to seriously and faithfully recount all the facts pertaining to the martyrdom of the brothers, it would not be sufficient to do so in one year. These Latins had gone to India with the aforementioned holy brothers.

A sorrowful plea by brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, since he had not received martyrdom with the Saints, and in which he recounts his corporal afflictions

After the Martyrs of Thana had received their crown of glory, as I have already said, I went to bury the bodies of the Saints, as I have also stated before. Then I remained in that town and in the regions of that province for two and a half years, and I could go in and out with freedom, unworthy of having the honour to feel part of the crown of

glory of my happy companions. Woe to me, my fathers, woe to me, now that I am an orphan and a pilgrim in this place of horror and in this vast solitude where I have to remain with so much sorrow! Woe [610] to that horrendous hour, to that hateful hour, in which I sadly separated my self from my holy companions, in order to go and work for the salvation of others, since I was not aware of the future crown that was awaiting them! If only it would please the most high God that I would be swallowed alive by the ground and that I would not be preserved alive after my holy companions in the midst of so much wickedness, and sad and miserable in so many adversities! Who can narrate all the tribulations I have had to suffer after their martyrdom? Indeed, I was captured by pirates, I was thrown in prison by the Saracens, I was accused, cursed, abused and just like a vagabond I was left with only a miserable shirt and deprived for a long time from the habit of my holy Order, and left in this state to this very day. I had endure hunger, thirst, cold, heat, harsh treatment, curses, bodily infirmities, poverty, persecution, accusations by false Christians, bad weather and an infinite number of other tribulations after the Saints had gained the joyful crowns of their passion! Woe to me, who will give floods of tears to my eyes, in order that I will weep over my unhappiness and desolation in the sadness and distress of my heart? But why do I suffer all this? In fact I am ready to sustain even greater sufferings and I am even ready to face death in the same sweetness because of my sweet Jesus, so that at last I will arrive at the happy end together with my joyful companions in order that they will welcome me in their joyful company. After I have mentioned my infinite sufferings, I also say that I am undergoing many other tribulations because of my extreme poverty and because of the bodily sufferings. In fact, I feel pain now in my head, now in my chest, now in my belly and I am feeling as if I am crucified with pain in all the other members, and I am now left alone, and lack all kinds of human sympathy. Because of me the people are divided, and I have also become an object of hatred; in fact, one says: "He is a good man," while the other says: "No, he is a bad person and he leads people astray." But beyond all this, I have baptised with joy one hundred and thirty persons of both sexes, and therefore I feel that a glorious fruit has ensued from my work. If more holy friars would come over here, as long as they are ready to sustain with all patience and joy all tribulations and prepare themselves for martyrdom.

Brother Jordan invites the brothers to come over in order to reap greater fruit

Therefore, most dear brothers, I now turn towards you, and since you want to console this unhappy pilgrim, I now implore you through the merits of the tears shed by my holy friars companions. Let the holy brothers therefore come, let them come well founded in patience, so that the fruits of those who have been baptised may persevere in time and the hay that has been harvested may be placed in the granary of the Lord. May you all pray for this pilgrim of Christ, and that the Indian and black neophytes may through your prayers be cleansed in their souls and may be holy in front of the good Jesus. At the end of these my words I implore you with sighs, and I commend myself totally to your prayers from the intimate recesses of my heart.

Given at Thana, a town of India, where my holy companions have been martyred, in the year of the Lord 1323, in the month of January, on the feast day of the holy Martyrs Fabian and Sebastian.¹⁷

I will now write shortly about the way of Etiophia, which is the best way to follow, if one wants to come here in order to preach. With a minor expense, one can come to the place where I now find myself, and according to this road, as I heard, one can arrive here in order to spread the faith in a glorious way. I inform you, that our name of Latins is held in great esteem by the Indians, as it is held among us Latins. However they continually wait for us Latins to pass through these lands, since in their own books they have often found written that they should without delay pray to God all day long in order to hasten in the best way the arrival of the Latins. O, if only the lord Pope would send to galleys to these seas, what great riches would he reap and what detriment would that mean for the Sultan of Alexandria! [611] O, who will go among you fathers to announce this to our most holy Pope? I am a pilgrim and I can hardly do this, but I commend this task to you holy fathers. Therefore stay well, holy fathers, and always remember this pilgrim in your prayers.

From the letter that the Custos of Tabriz sent to the Vicar of the regions of the Orient:

¹⁷ 20th January 1323.

You should know that the letter explains the passion that our brothers have endured, namely the brothers that were martyred in India, and who were sent to us by the friars of Tabriz. This letter was not written by the hand of brother Jordan of the Order of Preachers, but it was written by brother Hugolino of Soldania, to the brothers who are in Tabriz. It was written and sent by brother Francis of Pisa of the Order of friars Preachers, who were in Soldania, together with many other letters that he had received from brother Jordan of the same Order, who was the companion of the aforementioned holy Martyrs.

Letter of brother Francis of Pisa of the Order of Preachers sent to two noble ladies together with the relics of the aforementioned Martyrs

To the beloved holy and noble ladies and sisters in Christ, the reverend Teresia and Titiae de Cinquisuis [?] brother Francis of the Order of Preachers, pilgrim in Persia for the sake of Christ Jesus and Him crucified. As a man worthy of your devotion I offer myself as a poor pilgrim. I have found a praiseworthy office that I embrace with the sweetest embrace, namely, to transmit to you the passion of the new knights, that is, Thomas, James, Peter and Demetrius, who have been martyred among the Indians. They were members of your holy and well-known Order of friars Minor. So that you may receive and accept as true and most dear what I am stating, I will add other precious things and send them to you, namely some relics of the holy aforementioned Martyrs, that is two sacred teeth, that are carefully wrapped in these same letters. During these last days I have received one half of the jaw-bone of one of the Martyrs on the part of brother Jordan, a member of our Order, who was a companion of the Martyrs and who is a most sweet and dear friend of mine. I have received these sad letters from India. Therefore I have just taken care to send to you the narration of what happened to these martyrs, together with the two sacred teeth. May you, holy sisters and reverend mothers, receive this task on God's behalf with the proper praises as well as the words written to you from India by brother Jordan and by me, Francis, a sinner, who have written to you with greater devotion so that you will remember us in your prayers. Finally I write to you that I will be happier if I chose with all my heart to precede you before Christ

by receiving martyrdom. Farewell my most dear sisters in Christ, and commend me sweetly to all those holy men and women in Christ whom you know.

Regarding the miracles that the holy Martyrs accomplished after their death

The Custos of Tabriz

A certain man, called Giovannino, son of Huglino of Pisa, was sailing in the Indian Ocean. Out of devotion he had stolen the head of one of the aforementioned Martyrs. Two ships were also sailing in his company. Suddenly they met pirates, who captured the other two ships, but left alone that ship in which Giovannino was sailing, and [612] in which he was keeping the heads of the holy Martyrs. The pirates not only could not capture it, but through the power of those heads of the saints they could not even attack it.

Regarding a man freed from dysentery

A certain young man from Genoa called Lanfrancino, who was a relative of Gatucci, whom I believe was companion of the aforementioned brother Jordan, told me that there was a certain Christian who suffered from dysentery for many days. Since that illness became more serious and was a source of grave danger to him, brother Jordan took one of the teeth of the head of brother Thomas and gave it to this Lanfrancino in order to wash it in the water and then give the water to the sick man. After the sick man had taken that water, on the second day he was restored to perfect health.

The same young man Lanfrancino narrated that two ships foundered in tranquil waters in the port of Supera on the day following the night in which the holy brothers were killed. In the letter that brother Jordan wrote regarding the narration of the martyrdom, it is said that only one ship foundered; yet this young man said that he saw the two ships founder with his own eyes, since he was present in that place.

Regarding how brother Odoric was freed from fire through the merits of the Saints

From his treatise regarding the Marvels of the world:

I, brother Odoric, after having heard about their glorious martyrdom, went to search for the bodies of the Saints in order to take them for burial. I took them away and I wanted to carry them with me to the northern regions of India to a certain place where the friars Minor lived. During the journey the relics shone forth with many miracles. When I, brother Odoric, was staying in a certain house and I had placed the bones of the holy Martyrs in beautiful cases and they were to be found close to me as I was sleeping, that same night the house I was in was set alight by the Saracens. Since I was sleeping I was condemned to die burnt alive. In fact, the emperor had commanded that I would immediately die in the flames that burnt that house. While the house was burning my servant and companion went out, while they left me inside with the sacred bones. So I took those relics and went to crouch in a corner of that house, while the people were surrounding the house and shouting aloud. The fire burned all the other three sides of the house. For as long as I remained in that angle of the house together with the holy relics, the fire did not harm me in any way, but continued to burn high above me. So I could go out with the bones of the holy Martyrs. As soon as I went out those immense flames fell down and burnt the part of the house where I was standing, and they also continued to burn many other houses standing nearby. So through the merits of the Saints I escaped unharmed and could flee from the hands of the Saracens.

Regarding how a jaw of one of the Martyrs was lowered in the water, and a favourable wind ensued, and how the infidels who searched for the holy relics could not find them

Another miracle happened to me as I was on that journey. I boarded a ship together with many Saracens and other pagans in order to go by sea to Colam, where pepper grows in abundance. But there was no wind on the sea. For two days the pagans prayed their gods in order to send us favourable winds. The Saracens did the same thing and multiplied their prayers. They then commanded me and

my companion to pray earnestly to our Lord in order to have a favourable wind, and they told us that, if the wind would start blowing, they would give us great honours. The pilot of that ship spoke to us in the Armenian language, so that the others would not understand him, and told us that, if the favourable wind would not start blowing, those men would throw the bones of the holy Martyrs in the sea. Therefore [613] my companion and myself, having heard these words, began to pray earnestly and to plead to God. Since nothing happened, we promised to celebrate many Masses in honour of the Virgin, in order to gain a favourable wind. When this was also in vain and we could not obtain the grace I, brother Odoric, took some bones of the holy Martyrs and gave them to my companion, and told him to go to the ships' bow and tie them with a rope and throw them in the sea. When he had done so, that very moment a favourable wind started to blow, and it continued to blow in that direction until we arrived in port safe and sound through the merits of the Saints.

When we arrived in the port at Colam we boarded another ship in order to travel to northern India. In this ship there were seven hundred men between sailors and merchants. The pagans, according to their customs, searched all over the ship in order to see whether there were any bones of the dead. Although there were the bones of the aforementioned Martyrs in great quantity, through the merits of the Saints, no one could find any of them. In fact, if they had found them, they would have thrown them overboard and we would have been in grave danger. Thus with the relics of the saints we arrived in a certain town, called Zaiton, in which there are two convents of the friars Minor. We placed those holy bones with great reverence in one of those places.

The Lord worked many other miracles through the merits of those brothers, and even nowadays He works miracles among the pagans and the Saracens. In fact, all those who are afflicted by disease, take some of the earth in which the aforementioned brothers were thrown when they were killed, and they place that earth in water or wine and drink it, and they are freed from their illness, through the witness of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God for ever and ever. Amen.

5

Passion of the holy brothers
Daniel, Agnellus, Samuel, Donnolo, Leo, Nicholas, Hugolino
of the Order of friars Minor,
who suffered martyrdom in Ceuta, a town of Morocco,
in the year of the Lord 1227

The passion of the seven holy friars Minor, namely brothers Daniel, Agnellus, Samuel, Donnolo, Leo, Nicholas, and Hugolino, who suffered martyrdom in Ceuta, a town of Morocco, on the sixth day of the *Idus* of October¹⁸ of the year of the Lord 1227, one complete year after the death of Saint Francis. The facts regarding this most precious martyrdom, as we have partly seen and heard it, are the following. The aforementioned brothers received permission from brother Elias, who remained the general governor¹⁹ of the Order after the death of Saint Francis, in order to depart from the parts of Tuscia since they wanted to go to the land of Morocco in order to preach the Catholic faith to the Saracens. They first arrived at Tarragona, a town of Aragon, where brother Daniel, who was their Minister, boarded a ship together with another three brothers, leaving the others behind, since it happened that they could not sail together in the same boat. They arrived at Ceuta,²⁰ a town of the Saracens, where they awaited the arrival of their other brothers. In the meantime brother Daniel and the other brothers preached for some time the word of God to some Catholic men from Genoa, Pisa and Marseilles, who were merchants, and to many other Christians who were in that town. Finally the other three friars whom they had left behind arrived at the port of Ceuta, on the second day of the *Calends* of October.²¹

[614] Therefore brother Daniel, who was a wise and prudent man, and who had been Minister of Calabria, together with the other

18 10th October 1227.

19 Elias was Vicar General of the Order until the Chapter of Pentecost of 1227 when John Parenti was elected as first Minister General after Saint Francis.

20 Ceuta is a tiny Spanish enclave on the North African coast of Morocco, just opposite Gibraltar. The Almohads had conquered Ceuta from the Arabs in 1147, and after various vicissitudes it was annexed to the Spanish crown in 1580 and has remained Spanish ever since.

21 30th September.

six aforementioned friars, who were devout to God and full of spiritual fervour, desired with all their hearts the salvation of the Saracens, and were not afraid to expose themselves to death, as long as they could offer them as excellent fruit to God. The holy brothers were living together with other Christian merchants in a certain village outside the walls of the aforementioned city, since no Christian could legitimately enter the town without receiving a special permit from the Saracens. Therefore the brothers wanted to enter secretly, without telling anybody else about their plans, so that they would not be hindered from accomplishing what they had planned, namely to preach the word of Christ the Lord to the enemies. Therefore on a Friday they spoke together in secret about the salvation of their own souls. On the following day, which was a Saturday, they all went to the sacrament of confession to brother Daniel, and then they received with no less devotion the Sacrament of the Eucharist and commended themselves totally to God. During the night that followed that same day they imitated the example of the Lord Saviour by keeping watch, and with great humility and devotion they washed one another's feet, and they occupied themselves in divine discourses and prayers. Thus, fully armed like knights of Christ ready to engage for battle, they went out early on Sunday morning. They secretly entered the town, and having placed ashes on their heads they went to the centre of the town fearlessly, comforted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and began to confess publicly the name of the Lord in the middle of the square and to announce that there is no other salvation than in His name. Their words were like a blazing furnace and the hearts of each one of them nearly melted, since they could not bear to sustain such divine sweetness.

The soldiers of the devil, namely the Saracens, began to hit them on their heads and to inflict many other blows and physical abuses upon them. At last they captured them and led them in front of the king. In his presence, through the help of an interpreter, they confessed the name of the Lord as if they were drunk with the Spirit. The king and the members of the royal court considered them to be insane and mocked them, and then he commanded his men to lock them in prison and bind them with iron chains. They remained in prison for eight days and, as we believe, they suffered many tribulations in there, since we could be sure of what was happening to them until the eighth day. However those holy friars wrote a letter full of

tears from the prison, and sent it to the lord Hugolino, a prelate of the Genoese, and to another two friars, one of whom was a member of the Order of friars Minor, and the other a member of the Order of Preachers, who had come during those days from the interior regions of the lands of the Saracens. The letter was also addressed to the other Christians of Ceuta and contained the following words:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows (2Cor 1:3). He prepared for the Patriarch Abraham the victim of the holocaust (cfr. Gen 22:13); and according to the Lord's command, Abraham *set out* from that land, *without knowing where he was going* (Heb 11:8), and thus God *counted this as making him justified* (Gen 15:6; cfr. Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6) and *that is why he was called the friend of God* (James 2:23). In fact, *if any one thinks of himself as wise, then he must learn to be a fool, because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God* (1Cor 3:18). You should know that *the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us* (cfr. 1Pt 2:21) and said: *Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature* (Mk 16:15); and also: *No servant is greater than his master* (Jn 13:16); also: [615] *If they persecuted me, they will persecute you as well* (Jn 15:20). He has led our ways along His paths for the praise of His name and for the salvation of the faithful and the honour of the Christians, and for the death and damnation of the infidels, as the Apostle states: *We are Christ's incense to God: for those who are being saved the sweet smell of life leads to life, for the others the smell of death leads to death* (cfr. 2Cor 2:15-16). In fact, Christ says: *If I had not come, if I had not spoken to them, they would have been blameless; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin* (Jn 15:21). Thus the name of Christ has been proclaimed before the king and we have confessed to him that there is no salvation except in that name, and we have proved this with many reasonable arguments through an interpreter in front of his wise and learned men. *To the eternal King, therefore, the undying, invisible and only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

On the morning of Sunday of the sixth day of the *Idus* of October,²² when we were praying the divine office, the holy friars were led out of the prison and brought before the king. After having been

22 10th October 1227.

interrogated as to whether they repented from their former affirmations against the religion of Mohammed, they courageously answered that they did not; indeed they confirmed everything they said and added that there was no salvation in the religion that the Saracens followed, and that they could not be saved, unless they accepted to be baptised and to believe in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that they, the friars, were prepared to die for such a faith.

Then the Saracens gathered in counsel, and they examined the brothers one by one and promised them many riches if they became Saracens; if not, they told them, they had to punish them by applying the capital sentence. The Lord, however, gave the friars such strength, that they intrepidly and unanimously answered that they were ready willing to accept death rather than life. The also confessed that Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God and that Mohammed and his followers would be thrown in hell. Then the wicked fighter, namely the king, was enraged beyond control and went over to brother Daniel, who was the Minister of the others, and hit him on the head with his sword and began to swing it in front of his eyes, threatening him and telling him to become a Saracen, in order to instill fear in him. When brother Daniel remained intrepid in front of him, the judge, who is known as *ascaldus* in the Arabic language, and a certain other elderly Saracen, began to exhort the brothers and to say: "Why do you want to lose the pleasures of this present life? Accept our faith and the religion of Mohammed, and you will receive back your lives and many honours in this world." Then brother Daniel faced that elderly Saracen who had spoken to him and said: "O hard-hearted man in your wicked days, how have you let yourself be deceived in errors by Satan! Your Mohammed is a minister of the devil and is the cause of eternal death to all those who follow him. You, therefore, should convert to our Catholic faith, in order to be saved, since you have been deceived enough in the errors of your religion of the most cursed prophet Mohammed." Then the other holy friars began to grow in fervour and ran over to brother Daniel, who was their father and pastor, and began to kiss his hands and his clothes, and to thank God since He had led them to that most advantageous place, and one by one began to tell him: "Father, bless me, and give me permission to offer my body for death for the sake of Christ so that my soul will follow you on the way to heaven." Then he blessed them, and with tears those invincible knights of Christ let themselves be undressed by the ministers of

the devil, who tied their hands behind their backs, and led them out of the king's palace *outside the camp carrying Christ's deprivation* (Heb 13:13) like lambs led for slaughter. The friars seemed to be as joyful as if they had been invited to a sumptuous banquet and hurried to the punishment of death. After they had been led to the place of the martyrdom, those wicked men, with their own hands [616] cut off their sacred heads, and thus bathed in their blood they offered their most holy souls to the Lord.

We have tried to write down these things to you as they have been handed down to us, to the best of our ability. We have narrated those facts that we have seen or heard them from persons who are worthy of our trust. The ministers of the devil were not content with what they did, but as we ourselves saw, they broke in half the heads of the brothers and then they dragged their lifeless bodies through the town and dismembered them, so that their wicked cruelty would be satisfied in death, before death and after death. In this way these same Martyrs imitated Christ in many events of their lives, and like him in death they were *scorn of mankind, jest of the people* (Psalm 21:6), and in the same way they were thus crowned with eternal joy. The Christians nevertheless miraculously gathered their bodies almost whole and they honourably laid them to rest in Alfondagia, namely the village of the Christians of Genoa, Marseilles and Pisa, where the holy martyrs merited to be very famous through the miracles that occurred through their intercession.

END OF THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES OF SAINT FRANCIS

APPENDIX II

1

Blessed James *de Porta* who is buried in Basel

[617] During the time of the generalates of Michael of Cesena and Gerard Eudes of Aquitaine, there lived a certain brother from the Province of Argentina²³ who was buried in the friary of Basel, and whose name was James *de Porta*. In the year of the Lord 1301, when he was 19 years old, his mother, who was a devout woman, offered him to God and to Saint Francis; whereas he offered himself to God and placed his will into God's own will. Afterwards this same son entered the Order of Saint Francis and was called brother James. During the first year in the friary, one day after Compline he was standing before the image of the Virgin Mary and was shedding tears and saying: "Virgin Mary, I beg you to ask your Son to give me the grace of perseverance in holiness during this life." That same moment he fell asleep on his mattress. The Virgin Mary placed her finger in his mouth and continued to keep a tight hold of his teeth. Then the Virgin Mary dragged him to make him sit up on his mattress, and he felt himself full of a great sweetness. After this episode God worked great wonders through him.

Regarding his austere life and penance

In fact, he was given the grace to pray unceasingly for one hundred years considered according to the amount of his prayers, and every year he would recite 20 thousand *Hail Marys*, so that he would crown the Virgin Mary with tiaras of roses on the day of his death. After he had celebrated his one hundredth birthday, every year he would pray 25 *Salve Regina*, so that the Virgin Mary would gain great graces for him in this life and in eternal life. Then he would make long prayers to the Virgin Mary and would say: "Pray for me and for all those who

²³ The Province of Argentina in the Franciscan Order refers to the region of Alemania or northern Germany.

truly live in penance, who always remember you, since you always stand before your Son and show him your bosom and your breasts, just as your Son shows his wounded side to the Father. Therefore may you not repulse any of the prayers of those who recur to you so often with unique charity, in order that they may gain remission of all their sins regarding corporal punishment and guilt. Do not answer us with words, but through miracles. First of all ask for us a sign from the Father, namely that in 70 hours I will be able to live without corporal nourishment." He then accomplished this act of penance in a most gracious way, according to the hours he had counted – "Secondly, ask your Son to give us a sign." He was praying that a certain sick woman called Margaret would be freed from danger of death. – "Thirdly, ask for us a sign from the Holy Spirit." It happened, that a certain nun called Elisabeth, whom everybody thought was dead, regained her health and lived. Then he said: "O sweet Virgin Mary, may this [618] indulgence be announced to the entire world, and may it be for us first of all a sign from the Father." It happened that when a certain brother Peter was in agony, he regained his health – "Secondly, ask your Son to give us a sign." So it happened, a certain sister Margaret, who was on the point of death, regained her health. – "Thirdly, ask the Holy Spirit to give us a sign." And it happened that a certain Catherine was liberated from the dangers of death.

Saint Bernard says: "Ingratitude is a hurricane that howls and dries up the fountain of divine clemency."²⁴ Saint Paul, in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, says: *Always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (5:20). In order that I, brother James, a poor man, will not appear ungrateful in God's presence regarding all these graces that God has willed to bestow upon me, therefore on the 9th day of the *Calends* of November²⁵ of the year of the Lord 1339, brother James gave thanks to God in this way. For one whole year every day he placed himself upon a cross that he had constructed, in order to ask for this indulgence, and he would repeat for 15 times: *Have mercy on me, Lord* to the very end of the Psalm; then he would recite the *Hail Mary* for 15 times; then for 15 times he would say: "Lord, do not re-

²⁴ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo 51 in Cantica*, n. 6.

²⁵ 24th October.

member my sins," etc;²⁶ then he would say for 15 times: "Lord, do not judge us according to the sins we have committed,"²⁷ etc; afterwards he would recite for 15 times the prayer that goes: "Lord, incline your ears to your servants", etc;²⁸ afterwards he would again pray: *Have mercy on me, Lord*, until the end of the Psalm; afterwards he would say: "We give you thanks, almighty God"; and: "Blessed be God for His gifts";²⁹ and: *Blessed be the name of the Lord now and for evermore* and on to the end.³⁰ Then he would say: "O sweet Virgin Mary, I hereby beg you, since you stand before your Son. I therefore pray that the words that He said become true, namely: *I have not come to call the virtuous, but sinners to repentance* (Lk 5,32), and therefore I ask you to come to my aid, since I am a sinner in this world." Thus he rendered thanks to the Son for one whole year; in the same way he rendered thanks to the Holy Spirit for one whole year; and for another year he rendered thanks to the divine Majesty; and finally he thanked Christ for His saving wounds for one whole year.

After this he placed the Father upon his heart, the Son upon the right-hand side of his bosom, the Holy Spirit in the middle, and the Virgin Mary on the left-hand side of his bosom. In this way, he stayed on his cross and with spiritual mystical elevations he went up to the nine choirs of the Angels and offered himself in the wounds of Christ. Thus he offered himself to God the Father in order to gain the graces he asked for him and for the entire world.

Afterwards, while he was sleeping, he saw the Virgin Mary who placed her Son upon her heart and the Son was sucking at her breast on the right and left sides, and brother James was filled with a great sweetness.

26 This was an antiphon found in the Roman Breviary: *Ne reminiscaris, Domine, delicta nostra vel parentum nostrorum; neque vindictam sumas de peccatis nostris.*

27 These were the words of the *Tractus* of the Mass of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th ferias after Passion Sunday in the Roman Missal.

28 This was a liturgical prayer formula found many times in the Roman Missal.

29 This prayer in Latin was found among the prayers for the refectory: *Agimus tibi gratias, omnipotens Deus, pro universis beneficiis tuis: qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.* The other prayer sounds like this: *Benedictus Deus in donis suis et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis: qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum.*

30 Psalm 112,2.

[619] Once he placed himself upon the cross and began to recite the hymn of the Holy Trinity: "On the throne of Majesty Three Persons sit," etc.³¹ He prayed this hymn 20 times and many other times when he was not on his cross. Then, at dawn, he read 7 Masses, namely those of the Nativity of Christ, of the Holy Trinity, of the remission of sins, of the blessed Virgin, of the Holy Cross, of Saint Francis, and of the dead. He also recited the seven penitential Psalms, the *Placebo*,³² with two nocturns and three lessons, and the fifteen gradual Psalms. He would pray all these formulas every single day.

Then he would kneel down on his bare knees on the wooden step and recite the following Prayer: "Most loving Lord, I beg you, through the merits of your most excellent charity, since you have loved all men, when you, O Jesus Christ, king of heaven, were hanging on the cross with in your divine love." He would read this prayer for one hundred times, and then for another 13 times, in such a way that he would not rise from the place where he was kneeling. Then he would immediately bow his head over the wooden step, in order to have a rest.

After this he would immediately continue to kneel on his bare knees and would read the Prayer: "I beg you, most loving Lord," for

31 Cfr. *Analecta Bollandiana*, Repertorium hymnologicum, p. 509, n. 8669. This hymn is found among other sources in the codex 15955 (fol. 8) of the royal library of Munich. This codex presents an old Breviary dated 1392. These are the words of the hymn, transcribed by Parthenius Minges, lector in sacred theology in the friary of Munich:

In Maiestatis solio / Tres sedent in triclinio, / Nam non est consolatio / Perfecta solitario.

Aeternae mentis oculo / Dum Pater in se flectitur, / In lucis suae speculo / Imago par exprimitur.

Imaginis consortium / Nativus praebet exitus / Consorsque spirans gaudium / Ingenitus et genitus.

Hoc gaudium est Spiritus, / Quo Patri Natus iungitur, / Et unum bonum funditus / In tribus his concluditur.

In tribus est simplicitas, / Quos nos distinguit qualitas / Nec obstat tribus unitas, / Quos ampliatur immensitas.

Per solam vim originis / Communio fit numinis / Nativi ductu germinis / Votivique spiraminis.

Ingenito et genito / Cum Spiritu Paracleto, / Honoris ampli debito / Psallamus corde debito. Amen.

32 *Placebo Domino in regione vivorum.* The first antiphon of Vespers of the dead.

5 times in honour of the five wounds of Jesus Christ, so that the loving Jesus Christ would take note of the many good works and signs of charity. He used to do this for two periods of seventy days.

Afterwards he would recite the hymn of the Holy Trinity for the same number of times as he did for the Prayer: "I beg you, most loving Lord." He did this for four periods of seventy days each.

After this, while standing on his cross, he would recite thirty four *Our Fathers* and the same number of *Hail Marys* in honour of the Holy Trinity; then he would recite 11 thousand *Our Fathers* and the same number of *Hail Marys* in honour of the wounds of Jesus Christ; then he would place an iron cross that would pierce him upon his heart, that is one on the right arm, one on the left arm, and one on his [620] back, and thus he would spend night and day in pain. After this he made a hair shirt out of porcupine spikes, with 8 crosses perforated with iron spikes, and thus forming a chain he would tie it around himself. During the night he would tie it around his waist in order to stay night and day in pain. Afterwards he would take three rods made of white thorns. With the first one he would inflict a harsh discipline upon himself; with the second one, and with the third one he would repeat the same discipline. Then he would apply them all three together. Thus he continued to do for 40 days, and he would do the same in many feasts of the Saints and during Ember Days, as well as on Fridays, until he would draw blood out of his wounds.

Then he beat himself for 5 periods of 40 days each with the rods, in order to draw blood out of his wounds. He also took three sticks with iron nails and with them he also inflicted discipline upon himself for 15 periods of 40 days each, until blood would come out of all his wounds. Every day he would go in front of the image of the Virgin Mary and would recite the name of the Virgin Mary for 72 times, so that when he would die she would make him heir with her son Jesus Christ. On his cross he would stretch his bare arms wearing a hair shirt made of horse's mane and of porcupine spikes with 8 iron crosses that perforated him and he would say: "I beg you, Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits of the tears you shed," etc. He would say this Prayer for 11 periods of 40 days each. He also used to pray: "I beg you, Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits of the tears you shed," etc., for 20 thousand times. After this, when he was sleeping during the Advent of the Lord, he saw the Trinity in the glory of an aureola as bright as the sun's rays. So before sunrise and before sunset he

would recite a special Prayer to the Holy Trinity and he also wrote a new treatise on the Holy Trinity, so that his wish would come true in a quick and sweet manner. After this he would live a harsh penitential life that is more to be admired than imitated, for his zeal towards the salvation of souls. Thus the Lord worked many miracles in response to his prayers and approved them as an indulgence for sinners, as it has been shown quite often in public documents that have been written by notaries who are worthy of trust and who have applied their own seal on such documents.

Once he had been fasting from the feast of All the Saints to Easter Sunday,³³ and he was feeling very weak. On Palm Sunday, that was also the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, he was struck by a great infirmity, and continued to be ill until the feast of the holy Cross. Thus he was filled with great bitterness, and began to pray: "O sweet Jesus Christ, you said in the Apocalypse: *I am the One who reproves and disciplines all those he loves. Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to dine, side by side with him* (Rev 3:19-20). O most sweet Jesus Christ, for my sake you have suffered a passion inside your body and also outside in all its members; in order that I may render myself gracious to you, and in order that I will merit to welcome you to dine with me, you have prepared me exteriorly for six periods of 40 days each, for 40 periods of 40 days each, and for one period of 40 days; and now with this 90th period of 40 days you have prepared me interiorly."

"O sweet Jesus Christ, your Angel revealed these four mysteries to Saint Francis: 'Your Order will never end, it will suffer tribulation, but it will not be destroyed; those who [621] wear the Order's habit can never do anything out of an evil will; no persecutor of the Order will live for long; the friends of the Order who show devotion towards it, even though they may be sinners during life, will finally find grace before death.' Saint Francis revealed these four mysteries to brother Rufino, and brother Rufino revealed them to brother Leo.³⁴

33 The period between 2nd November 1346 and 1st April 1347, since on that year Palm Sunday fell on 25th March, which was the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The feast of the Holy Cross falls on 3rd May.

34 Thomas of Eccleston, *The Coming in England of the Friars Minor*, Collatio XIII, in *XIIIth Century Chronicles*, Translated by P. Herman, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 61-62: "But Brother Leo, the companion of St.

There are many examples to be gleaned from this: the first example is that regarding a certain man who was devout to the Order: A certain parish priest," etc.

When he was 62 years old, in order to complete one hundred years of prayer, every year he prayed 20 thousand *Hail Marys*; similarly, until he arrived at one hundred years of prayers, every year he would pray 25 thousand *Salve Regina*, as we have said before. In that year, when he was thanking the divine Majesty, on the Tuesday of the last week in the feast of Saint Hilarion Abbot,³⁵ he saw marvellous visions and continued to behold such visions until he was 67 years old. He also accomplished the 40 periods of 40 days each, as we have already seen above, as one can clearly see word by word in the book of Basel that speaks about him.

In the year of the Lord 1366, when he was 76 years old, that was the 55th year of his conversion, he was on his cross praising the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and giving thanks. Brother James, who always praised the Holy Trinity, was suffering because of fasting, cold and very hard labour, as well as suffering from chest pains, and illness of the liver and spleen. He was feeling very weak, but in order that Jesus Christ would fulfil his desire, on a Monday that fell on the *Idus* of June, after the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension of the Lord,³⁶ he began the seventh period of 40 days. He first wore a hair shirt of horse's mane and on his cross he would recite the Prayer: "I beg you, Lord Jesus Christ," as he did in all the Lents he celebrated. Then he wore the hair shirt made of porcupine spikes

Francis, told Brother Peter, the minister of England, that the apparition of the Seraphim came to St. Francis while he was rapt up in contemplation and more clearly even than was written in his life; and that many things were revealed to him at that time that he did not communicate to any living person. But he did tell Brother Rufinus, his companion, that when he saw the angel from afar, he was greatly afraid, and that the angel had treated him harshly; and he told him that his Order would continue to the end of the world, that no one of evil will would remain long in the Order, that no one who hated the Order would live long, and that no one who truly loved the Order would come to a bad end. But Saint Francis commanded Brother Rufinus to wash and anoint with oil the stone on which the angel had stood; this he did. These things Brother Warin of Sedenefeld wrote down from the lips of Brother Leo."

35 21st October.

36 It was 6th June, since on that year Pentecost fell on 12th June, Easter on 24th April, and the Ascension on 2nd June.

with 7 iron crosses that perforated his body, and he also placed another hair shirt of pig's hair on his heart and on the cross he read the Prayer: "I beg you, Lord Jesus Christ." Thirdly he took the three rods with the iron spikes and with the first one he administered himself a harsh discipline on his entire body, in such a way that blood flowed from his wounds, and he prayed: "Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us." The same thing he did with the second rod, and similarly with the third rod, and then he applied them all three united together and thus made blood flow on the cross and for another time he recited the Prayer: "I beg you, Lord," etc.

Afterwards, when brother James concluded his seventh Lent on the *Idus* of July,³⁷ that was the feast of Saint Margaret, on the 17th day of the *Calends* of August³⁸ he started the eighth period of Lent, in the same way that he did during the seventh one. The on the feast of Saint Bartholomew he finished the eighth Lent. On the 8th day of the *Calends* of September³⁹ he began the ninth Lent in the same way. On the 5th day of the *Nones* of October⁴⁰ he completed his ninth Lent, in the feast of Saint Francis he began his tenth Lent, as is described above. On the feast of Saint Dionysius⁴¹ he prayed: "O most sweet Jesus Christ, today it has been a year since I have begun these ten Lents on a Friday; when it pleases your sweetness and the Holy Trinity, do make me fulfil my wish."

On the feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist⁴² an earthquake destroyed the town of Basel in the year 1356. While all the friars went out of the convent [622] of Basel, brother James remained with another friar in the refectory for seven days and seven nights. And when the earthquake would rock the refectory, brother James would pray: "O sweet Jesus, since you are angry, have mercy on us and remember us."

Afterwards, when brother James, received strength from the Holy Trinity, in the year of the Lord 1367, on the vigil of Saint Clare,

37 14th July. The feast of St. Margaret, Virgin and Martyr of Antioch, is celebrated on 20th July.

38 16th July. The feast of St. Bartholomew is celebrated on 24th August.

39 25th August.

40 3rd October.

41 St. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, whose feast day falls on 17th November.

42 18th October.

he prepared for himself another cross, in order to complete his tenth Lent on the eighth day of the *Idus* of September.⁴³ On the vigil of the Nativity of the glorious Virgin he began his eleventh Lent, as he had done the seventh Lent in the way we have described above, and he finished that Lent on the 17th day of the *Calends* of November, on the feast of Saint Gallus.⁴⁴ Bowing down in the form of a cross he said: “O sweet Jesus, when it pleases you and the Holy Trinity and the divine Majesty, make my wish come true.” Then he added the following Prayer: “I beg you, Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits of the tears that you shed,” etc. He read this prayer 20 thousand times and more, than in the Advent of the Lord he recited the prayer: Search for the following sign † (cross) until the words: you have prepared me interiorly.

In the year of the Lord 1359, when he was 79 years old, on the 53rd year of his conversion, on the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, brother James went down on his knees and prayed: “Sweet Virgin Mary, today it is a year since I have fallen in a great illness, in order that your sweet Son will prepare me interiorly and exteriorly with grace to sustain such sufferings and discipline, and at the end, will give me the crown of glory together with him. During this night of your gracious feast I have seen in my dreams a white ladder stretching from West to East and I was wearing a white robe and a great multitude was following me, also dressed in white robes. One of them placed three coins in my hands, and I and all those who followed me were grateful to him. O Virgin Mary, this is the ladder that the Patriarch Jacob saw when he was sleeping on the stone, that is, when he was living a hard life of penance; he in fact became rich because he led an active life, symbolised by his wife Leah, and a contemplative life, symbolise by his wife Rachael.”

In the year of the Lord 1360, when he was 80 years old and it was the 69th year of his conversion, on the vigil of the Holy Trinity and in the feast of St. Felix, Pope and Martyr,⁴⁵ brother James began his 12th Lent with the iron spikes that he applied to his body until blood flowed from his wounds. After this he applied the hair shirt made of horse’s mane with the four iron cross that perforated his body, as well

43 From 11th August to 6th September.

44 St. Gallus Abbot, celebrated on 16th October.

45 30th May.

as the one made of porcupine spikes, that he tied firmly to his waist with an iron chain, and thus he stood bleeding on the cross and for three times he recited the following Prayer: “I beg you, Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits of the tears that you shed,” etc. Thus he completed the 40 days, together with six periods of Lent, with another 62 Lents, and on the 7th day of the *Idus* of July he began to the third Lent, on the feast of Saint Alexius.⁴⁶ He also prepared himself for many other acts of penance, since he was full of zeal in praying the Holy Trinity to graciously acquiesce to his request.

[623] For twenty years he had implored such a grace from the Lord. In the year of the Lord he requested many notaries to note in writing his desire and publish it in a public document, as is evident in the following words. This is the first instrument of this kind:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Since, according to the authority of the Holy Scripture, “grace should be increased and not restricted,” therefore for the edification and salvation of souls of all the faithful and for the strengthening of the Catholic faith and for the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and for the glorious Virgin Mary Mother of God, let it be known to all those who wish to inspect every single detail, or to those who wish to listen in the whole world, both present and future, that in the year of the Lord 1339 on the feast of Saint Peter *ad Vincula*, in the town of Basel in the convent called *Gnadenthal*,⁴⁷ that is in the Curia of the same convent, in the presence of me, the undersigned public notary, the religious brother James known as *de Porta*, from the Order of friars Minor, of the same convent of Basel, being bound by his own conscience, pleads, asks and requests me under oath, that no believer should have any doubts regarding the sings and miracles that the glorious and unblemished Virgin Mary, mother of mercy, has requested from her Son Jesus Christ and from the Holy Trinity and from the divine Majesty, for the benefit of all sinners present and future. Such miracles have been faithfully and diligently examined and I have accomplished careful investigation re-

46 The feast of Saint Alexius is on 17th July.

47 The feast of Saint Peter *ad Vincula* falls on 1st August. The friary of Gnaden-thal near Basel was built in 1276 and suppressed in 1529 during the Reformation.

garding them and will now place my seal upon them. I am doing this with the counsel of the wise man brother Adam of England, master of theology in the aforementioned Order. I have received this pious supplication with devotion for the salvation of all the faithful both living and dead and for remedy of my own soul, and I have received the account of these miracles and examined them faithfully and diligently from any person who witnesses to these single miracles in the faith of the name of the Sacrament and also from the same aforementioned brother James, who testifies that they have occurred in this same way, as he, brother James has asserted in front of me by taking an oath and as he has written in his treatise, where these same miracles are enlisted, and are gathered in a complete collection. In true and strong faith of all this information I hereby render witness. I, master Johannes Schilling, cleric of Basel, public notary officially recognised with full imperial authority, have written this present letter with my own hand and I have signed it with my usual signature. I have done as I have been requested.

The miracles approved now follow one after another.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for everlasting memory.

The Magi returned to their country by a different way (Mt 2:12). Gregory, in his homily on Matthew, states: "We also should return from our own regions, namely from our pride, disobedience, from our lust for earthly things, from our craving to taste the forbidden food. It is rather necessary for us to weep, to obey, to despise all visible realities and to refrain from giving way to the appetite of the flesh." In this way the Virgin Mary requested an indulgence from all sins, as is evident in these signs and miracles contained below, that I, master Johannes Schilling, notary public, have examined. I will publish before all this present letter addressed to all those who wish to inspect or to listen, namely regarding the request done in the year of the Lord 1339, on the *Calends* of August, [624] on the feast of Saint Peter *ad Vincula*, on the part of brother James *de Porta* of the Order of friars Minor, upon the obligation of his conscience that prompted him to make such a request for the great honour of the Holy Trinity, of Jesus Christ and of the Virgin Mary, and upon the counsel of brother Adam and for the sake of obedience to his Minister, who willed that these miracles be written down under oath of witnesses. Therefore he begged us on his knees, so we consign to perpetual memory these signs

and miracles, which I have written down authentically and placed my seal upon them. This request was also the one that the Virgin Mary asked of her Son Jesus Christ and from the Trinity and the divine Majesty, namely, that of an indulgence from all sins, corporal punishment and guilt. Such an indulgence would be granted through the merits of the signs and miracles, that have been requested, proved, examined, confirmed, published, and it will be publicly announced to all sinners, men and women, present and future, to religious men and to seculars who live in humility and wear penitential clothes, and who gather in large crowds in the middle of the choir in the present and in the future, in order to fulfil their vows in front of the altars, consecrated to the honour of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary and all the Angels and all the Saints, kneeling down with a great and sincere contrition, with a pure confession, with a general penance and reciting the following prayer to the Virgin Mary: "Sweet Virgin Mary, we beg you (or: I beg you), since you stand before your Son and show him your bosom and breasts; and since your Son stands before the Father and shows Him the wounds on His side; may nothing of what I am begging be denied me, where so many clear signs of charity are present. Therefore we beg you (or: I beg you) to gain for us the indulgence of all our sins."

The secular women who come dressed in humble clothes and cloaks, and stand in the middle of the same church, both those present and those in the future, who intend or will intend to request this grace; also the nuns who will gather in an orderly way in the centre of the choir; the sisters of the Rule of the Third Order of Saint Francis and the other virgins wearing humble clothes and cloaks, who will come to stand in the middle of this church, both present and future, who intend or will intend to request this grace in front of the altar consecrated to the honour of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary and all the Angels and all the Saints, kneeling down with a great and sincere contrition, with a pure confession, with a general penance and reciting the following prayer to the Virgin Mary: "Sweet Virgin Mary, we beg you (or: I beg you), since you stand before your Son and show him your bosom and breasts; and since your Son stands before the Father and shows Him the wounds on His side; may nothing of what I am begging be denied me, where so many clear signs of charity are present. Therefore we beg you (or: I beg you) to gain for us the indulgence of all our sins." Sweet Virgin

Mary, grant such a grace to those who cannot come to these altars and yet with great and sincere contrition, with a pure confession and with a general penance, and who will say: "Sweet Virgin Mary, we beg you (or: I beg you), since you stand before your Son and show him your bosom and breasts; and since your Son stands before the Father and shows Him the wounds on His side; may nothing of what I am begging be denied me, where so many clear signs of charity are present. Therefore we beg you (or: I beg you) to gain for us the indulgence of all our sins." Sweet Virgin Mary, those who say 25 *Hail Marys* as an act of thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity, to Jesus Christ and to the Virgin Mary, His Mother, and after having received the requested indulgence they will say 25 *Hail Marys* during Mass for the dead, so that their souls will be freed from the pains of purgatory, and whom we mention, together with all the dead, so that we will certainly mention them all, who live in the world and speak one of its 72 different tongues; for all these brother James used to pray: "Sweet Virgin Mary, since we are [625] certain of this indulgence, do not answer us by words, but by signs and miracles. First of all, ask for us a sign in the name of the Father, namely that I can stay for 72 hours without corporal food and drink and can still be strong enough to read, sing, stand, pray, walk and sleep." This fact did indeed occur in such a gracious and glorious manner, exactly as brother James had counted those hours, that the sisters of the Order of Saint Clare of Gnadenthal marvelled greatly, because brother James could sing in a powerful voice all the Masses during the days of the Octave of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. When master Johannes Schilling, the public notary, requested the nuns to give witness regarding the fact of the singing, they gave the following testimony that was written down and presented in this document: "I sister Anne, abbess, and I sister Adelheides, prioress, and the entire convent strongly confirm and take an oath upon the holy Gospels, that we have heard brother James *de Porta* sing in a powerful voice many Masses during the days of the Octave of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary." And sister Catherine Marscalca said in front of all the sisters, said: "The same brother James once told me, that during three days he did not take any corporal food or drink." The aforementioned master Johannes said: "Are all these facts true?" Sister Catherine of Sissach, who wrote down these words, said: "We have taken an oath on the book of the Holy Gospels and with good

faith in the name of the Sacrament, that all these facts that we have given witness to are true."

When brother James *de Porta* had doubts in his heart regarding this miracle, whether truly an event that is stronger than the course of nature in things could happen, that same moment the Virgin Mary accomplished a second miracle, in order to prove the first one. It happened that, when brother James wanted to cut a piece of wood, he cut off the first part of the second finger after his thumb down to its middle. Then brother James said: "Now I will not be able to say Mass like a priest." A marvellous thing happened! Since brother James was very troubled, that very moment the flesh and skin began to grow over the bones, in such a way that on the following day brother James could sing Mass in a glorious way to the sisters of Saint Clare of Gnadenthal. As a witness to this miracle, on that finger brother James could still see a small white stain as a sign. And I, master Johannes, have also seen this same sign.

Secondly: "Sweet Virgin Mary, in order that we may be sure regarding this indulgence, request a sign for us in the name of your Son." Since brother James greatly desired such a sign in his heart, it happened that a certain young woman called Margaret of Argentina⁴⁸ was seriously ill and was on the point of death, in such a way that she was senseless. When brother James saw this, he knelt down and prayed with tears in his eyes: "Virgin Mary, do you want to console me together with all those men and women who are sinners, if we have a great and sincere contrition, if we make a pure confession and a general penance, by begging you to stand in front of your Son and to show him your bosom and your breasts, and if your Son will stand in front of the Father and show Him the wound of His side, in such a way that He will not deny anything you ask of Him with such a great charity? Therefore pray that this young woman, who is lying down here nearly dead, will be able to stand up, wear her clothes and walk, and regain her health." A marvellous thing happened! In just a short interval that young woman stood up and wore her clothes and started to walk. The master Johannes asked this lady Margaret whether this fact was true, and she took an oath on the name of the Sacrament and said, that all that had been referred to him was entirely true. Her mother then added: "The doctor told me: 'Whatever thing your daughter asks

48 Argentina is the name given to the regions of upper Germany.

of me until tomorrow, I will give it to her;’ that means that he was absolutely certain that she would die.”

Thirdly: “Sweet Virgin Mary, in order that we may be sure of this indulgence, ask for us a sign in the name of the Holy Spirit.” When brother James desired this with all his heart, it happened [626] that sister Elisabeth *de Vislis* of the Order of Saint Clare of Gnadenthal became very ill to the point of death. While the sisters were waiting her death with lighted candles, brother James hurried to go and celebrate Mass and, when he wanted to consume the body of the Lord, he said: “Virgin Mary, is it not true that you want to console me and all sinners, both men and women, if we show true and sincere contrition, and if we make a pure confession and a general penance? Therefore I beg you, since you are standing in front of your Son and you show Him your bosom and your breasts, etc., and He will not deny anything from you, in whom such wonders of charity abound. Ask Him, therefore, that this sister Elisabeth, who is lying in this place on the point of death, may regain consciousness and be cured.” A marvellous thing to say! After Mass brother James said: “Is that sister healthy again?” One of the nuns answered: “She is sitting down, eating, laughing, and speaking with the sisters, who are greatly overjoyed.” When the master Johannes asked the nuns regarding the fact of this sister Elisabeth that was presented in a written form by her on a document, they answered: “I, sister Anne, abbess, and I, sister Adelheides, prioress, and the entire convent firmly and with good intention take an oath on the holy Gospel, and state that sister Elisabeth *de Vislis* was lying down in danger of death, in such a way that she could not see and could not speak. We were standing with lighted candles and expecting her to die any moment, while some of the nuns thought that she was already dead. This occurred before the Mass of our convent; after Mass she regained her consciousness, she could see, she began to laugh, to eat and drink and is still living in this very moment.” Master Johannes then asked: “Did all these facts happen in truth?” Sister Catherine *de Sissach*, who wrote down these words, said: “We have taken an oath on the holy Gospel with good faith and also upon the name of the Sacrament, that all these things have truly occurred.”

When brother James *de Porta* began to doubt and think about what happened after these three miracles, namely whether there were any natural causes in these three miracles – marvellous to day – the Virgin Mary made a triple miracle, in order that she may prove that all

three miracles were true. It happened that when brother James was engraving a votive representation of the Virgin Mary standing before her Son, and of the Son before the Father, the iron stylus slipped from his hand and cut three parts of the second finger after his thumb. A marvellous thing happened! While brother James was considering that he had totally lost the use of his finger, and was feeling very confused, the flesh and the skin again joined and formed a finger that was even stronger than the one he had before, and he could hardly perceive any sign of the wound. When he saw that this miracle had occurred, brother James began to say with great joy: “Virgin Mary, you have conserved these three parts of my finger in my hand, and I and all the men and women sinners, and whoever hears of such a miracle, should believe that it truly happened to the honour of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” I, the aforementioned master Johannes, have seen the sign on his finger that was healed, just as has been stated.

Then brother James said: “Sweet Virgin Mary, in order that this indulgence be known and announced in all the world, first request a sign for us in the name of the Father.” When brother James had wished all this with all his heart, brother Peter of Owgst of the Order of Saint Francis became ill and was on the point of death. When he was in agony, brother James said: “Sweet Jesus Christ, you have admonished me in my dreams that I should console the sick; if this is you will, I beg you to give this indulgence, namely that this sick man, who is lying down here on the verge of dying, would be healthy again, in order that this sign would be proclaimed.” A marvellous thing to say! This brother Peter regained consciousness, he could see, hear, speak, eat, drink, walk and lived for another 20 days after this event. – Brother John *ad Vitem*, master of novices, was interrogated by the aforementioned master Johannes regarding this brother Peter, and he gave witness in true faith in the name of the Sacrament and said: “He was senseless during extreme unction, but then he regained consciousness, he could see, hear, speak, eat, drink, walk and afterwards lived for 20 days.”

[627] Secondly: “Sweet Virgin Mary, in order that this indulgence may be proclaimed and spread in the whole world, I secondly ask you to request a sign in the name of your Son.” When brother James had wished this to occur with all his heart, it happened that sister Margaret *de Arowa* of the Order of Saint Clare of Gnadenthal

became ill and was on the point of death. When she was in agony, brother James said: "Sweet Jesus Christ, you have admonished me during my dreams, that I should console those who are sick; if this is your will, I beg you to give this indulgence, namely that this Margaret, who is lying down here on the verge of dying, would be healthy again, in order that this sign would be proclaimed." A marvellous thing to say! This sister Margaret regained consciousness, she could see, hear, speak, eat and drink and lived for another 30 days after this event. When the master Johannes asked the nuns regarding the fact of this Margaret, that was presented in a written form on a document, they answered: "I, sister Anne, abbess, and I, sister Adelheides, prioress, and the entire convent firmly and with good intention take an oath on the holy Gospel, and state that sister Margaret *de Arowa* was in agony, in such a way that she could not see and could not speak and was unconscious. This occurred before the Mass of our convent; after Mass she regained her consciousness, she could see, talk, feel, eat and drink and afterwards lived for 30 days." Master Johannes then asked: "Did all these facts happen in truth?" Sister Catherine *de Sissach*, who wrote down these words, said: "We have taken an oath on the holy Gospel with good faith and also upon the name of the Sacrament, that all these things have truly occurred."

Thirdly: "Sweet Virgin Mary, in order that this indulgence may be published and announced in the entire world, thirdly I pray that you beg that we be given a sign in the name of the Holy Spirit." When brother James wished this to be fulfilled with all his heart, it happened that Catherine, the wife of Conrad, who was a tailor, became ill. When she was in danger of death, brother James said: "Sweet Jesus Christ, you have admonished me in my dreams that I should console those who are sick; if this is your will I beg you to give this indulgence, namely that this Catherine, who is lying down here on the verge of dying, would regain consciousness and be healthy again, in order that this sign would be proclaimed." A marvellous thing to say! This Catherine regained her health and is still alive. When the aforementioned master Johannes told asked her whether this fact was true, she gave him her word of faith on the name of the Sacrament, and told him that she had healed from that illness.

Fourthly: "Sweet Virgin Mary, in order that this indulgence would be proclaimed and announced truly in all the world, request for us a sign in honour of the divine Majesty." When brother James

desired this with all his heart and with great zeal he thirsted for the salvation of all men and was feeling compassion for all those who could not come to the indulgence of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, he stayed for many days with great sadness and anguish in his heart, awaiting the sign, that this indulgence would surely be announced and proclaimed in the entire world, and that it would be gained in all places for the length of the same time in which the indulgence of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula can be acquired, namely from Vespers to Vespers. After he had spent 400 days praying in front of the cross, that he had constructed, brother James performed 140 genuflections in front of that cross, and recited one hundred and five *Miserere*, six hundred and nine *Hail Marys*, with 84 Collects of each day, that the same brother James had written down in his book of penance. Every day he also recited the seven penitential Psalms twice a day on his knees in honour of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit and all the divine Majesty of the true God. Thus, after he had completed those 400 days, it happened that, one day, brother James had to pass by the house where the tailor Conrad, together with his wife Catherine and his small son John lived. Brother James asked the father: "Is your son well in his health?" The father answered: "It has been four days that he cannot [628] pass urine and his belly is now greatly swollen. He is waiting for God to have mercy on him; do you know some Saint to whom I can make a vow?" Brother James went away from him saying: "Wait until after Compline." Brother James saw brother John *ad Vitem*, the master of novices, who was in the church praying in front of the image of the Virgin Mary with her Son Jesus Christ. Brother James said: "I want to entrust that boy to the blessed Virgin Mary." Kneeling down brother James said: "Virgin Mary, I now offer you that boy, and if he will be cured, let this be a sign that this indulgence is true and that it will be proclaimed and published in the entire world." A marvellous thing to say! That boy expelled a large stone and could pass urine. When brother James saw the boy he was greatly astonished and said: "How is it possible that such a large stone can pass through the tiny penis of a one and a half year old boy; and how is it that I can look at the child who is so happy, as if he is not sensing any pain?"

When he saw this miracle, brother James said: "Sweet Virgin Mary, your Son Jesus Christ, with the Trinity and the divine Majesty, out of great love and humility wants all men and women sinners and

who are hard-hearted in their sinful state, to be called to this indulgence and to lead them to true and sincere contrition, to pure confession, to a general penance and satisfaction, in order that they may become pure once more, as if they have been newly baptised. The examination of this miracle is a proof that this indulgence should be announced and spread far and wide in the whole world.” When brother James later began to have doubts regarding this miracle, whether it could truly happen, that is before he had offered the boy to the Virgin Mary, a marvellous thing happened! While brother James was very troubled inwardly because of this doubt, the Virgin Mary immediately accomplished a second miracle, in order to prove the first one. The mother of that boy came to brother James and showed him a stone saying: “The boy has expelled this stone for a second time, and it is smaller than the first one.” When he saw this brother James said: “Sweet Virgin Mary! God, through the prophet Ezekiel, said: *If the wicked man renounces all the sins he has committed, they will be forgotten from then on* (Ezek 18:21); that same God, through the prophet David, said: *God’s mercy embraces all his creatures* (Ps 144:9); that same God, told his vicar Saint Peter the Apostle: *Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times* (Mt 18:22), that is 90 times multiplied by 300 times, *you should forgive your brother his sin*; that same God, who said: *I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners to penance* (Mt 9:13); that same God, who said: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand* (Mt 4:17): this God wants that all the men and women who are sinners be assured regarding this indulgence that has been requested, proved, examined, confirmed, published and announced through the aforementioned signs and miracles.” When the aforementioned master Johannes requested the boy and his mother whether these two miracles truly happened, both of them made an act of faith on the name of the Sacrament, and said that it truly had taken place, and added: “Brother John *ad Vitem* told us that brother James had told him: ‘To want to offer that boy to the Virgin Mary.’” The father of that boy showed me, the aforementioned master Johannes, the boy and the stone that came out the second time. In order that all of you, and whoever reads this letter or listens to it being read to him, or whoever would come to know of the fame of these events, may be certain regarding this indulgence, let it suffice to state that it has been requested by the Virgin Mary, and it has been proved, examined, confirmed, published and announced to all men and women sinners

present and future through the aforementioned signs and miracles, with the consent and will of the divine Majesty, not only as is evident from this beautiful miracle, but also from many other miracles that occurred.

[629] *Johannes of Zovingen curate of the Curia*. The lord Conrad, a knight from Perenfels, was in danger of death and he had no more hope of staying alive. Many Christian men and many Religious, as well as many Jews were praying to God for him, and since he was always getting weaker and weaker, on a certain day the doctors said: “He will surely die.” When brother James heard these words, he immediately offered him to God and said: “I hereby make a vow and offer him to God, and if he will be healed, this would be a sign for this indulgence.” A marvellous thing to say! As soon as one of the doctors had examined him shortly afterwards, that doctor said: “He is cured.”

The lord Henry, an official of the Curia of Basel, was in danger of death. Brother James offered him to God saying: “I offer him to God and, if he will be healed, this would be a sign for the indulgence.” Marvellous to say! After this he was immediately healed. Brother James then told him: “God has admonished you, in order that you amend your ways.”

The lady Gunsa of Ramstein, who was minister of the Third Order of Saint Francis, was in danger of death. Brother James offered her to God and said: “If she will be healed, this will be a sign for this indulgence.” Marvellous to say! That very moment she arose healthy and well.

Brother Conrad of Mainz, of the Order of Saint Francis, could not walk or eat, since he was suffering from gout and was despairing of his life. So he told brother James: “Recite that Prayer for me in your Mass: ‘Lord, stretch out your right hand from heaven in order to come to the aid of our servant, since he is searching for you with all his heart. May he merit all that he is requesting from you, so that, if he will be healed, this would also be a sign for this indulgence.’” A marvellous thing to say! When brother James wanted to go to visit him for the third time, he thought that he would find him lying down in bed, but he found him walking in the refectory.

Master Johannes of Berne, a notary of the Curia of Basel, was lying down totally blind since he had contracted a serious eye sickness. He asked brother James to intercede for him to God. Brother James offered him to God, in order to acquire a sign for this indul-

gence. Marvellous to say! Master Johannes regained such perfect eyesight, that later on he was able to write many letters.

Master John of Zovingen, a notary in the Curia of Basel, could not read or write for many days because he had contracted a serious eye disease. Brother James had compassion on him, and said to the Virgin Mary: "Gain for him his health, so that this would be a sign that this indulgence is true, that it should be announced, that it should be published, and that I will willingly write down the account this miracle and this indulgence for your honour." A marvellous thing to say! Master Johannes regained his eyesight in such a perfect way, that he could afterwards read even small print, in such a way that he was astonished and he would with great joy and great devotion write down the account of this miracle.

Master Berthold was an artist, who wanted to paint for brother James the image of the Virgin Mary standing in front of her Son, and her Son standing in front of the Father. Brother James was very familiar with the length of the image of Christ and the Virgin Mary. He raised his pen from the ground, where he had been kneeling down in order to design the length and breadth of Christ and the Virgin Mary regarding their faces, necks and hearts. He handed these designs to the painter, who did not want to accept them, but wanted to paint the image according to his own will. So he immediately took the pen and began to design the length and breadth of Christ and the Virgin Mary. But he found out that not only the faces, necks and hearts, but also the entire bodies were exactly equal to those that brother James had showed him, as he had learnt them during his dreams and visions. Marvellous to say! This was a double and beautiful [630] miracle, since brother James managed to raise the bent stylus that he was using, to design the length and breadth of Christ and Mary, from the ground, and the artist began to paint according to his will, and produced exactly the same measurements that James had calculated and not more.

Another young artist, who was 13 years old, was painting for brother James the images of the Virgin Mary in front of her Son, and of the Son in front of the Father, to place them in four corners of the cloister, and he was praying together with brother James that this indulgence would be announced and published. Marvellous to say! When that boy was hurrying to the kitchen carrying black coals, in order to light those coals, while he was still on his way those black coals

lit up in such a powerful manner that the boy was terrified and went back running to brother James to tell him: "A miracle has happened; the black coals have lit up on the way in such a powerful manner, that I am terrified." That boy immediately took those burning coals and thus melted the colours and with a viscous substance he mixed the colours and with great dexterity in just one hour during the time of Vespers he painted 23 images to brother James. When he saw the miracle, brother James said: "There is no painter who can accomplish what this boy has just done." He remained very impressed by the skilfulness of that boy.

From the aforementioned miracles, therefore, it is clear that for the proof of the above mentioned indulgence, various persons have been freed from death, namely Margaret of Argentina, Elisabeth *de Vislis*, brother Peter of Owgst, Margaret *de Arowa*, Catherine, the wife of Conrad the tailor and the son of the same Catherine, Johannes junior, Conrad the knight of Perenfels, Henry the official of the Curia of Basel, the lady Gunsa of Ramstein, brother Conrad of Mainz, etc.

Up to this point the notary public of the Curia of Basel;
Johannes Schilling to the end

In the year of the Lord 1338 on the feast day of Saint Denis and companions,⁴⁹ brother James *ad Portam* was praying on his knees, so that I, master Johannes who am mentioned above, would examine these signs and miracles and write them in an authentic form on a document and stamp my seal on it. I did write one letter for him, but I did not stamp it with my seal. I took ten whole months to examine these miracles and to authenticate them, and thus brother James was very confused, but nonetheless he commended everything to God.

It similarly happened that, on the feast day of Saints Vitus, Modestus and Crescentius,⁵⁰ during the hour of Vespers a certain woman pilgrim came from the city of Rome carrying with her bread that was covered below and open above, that she had bought for one Roman *denarius*, and gave it to brother James *ad Portam*. When

49 9th October.

50 15th July.

he received it he said: “Sweet Virgin Mary, this pilgrim woman has brought me this bread which is closed underneath and open above, and which according to the Roman style looks like a triple loaf from above, is a sign, namely that the Pope and the emperor and their subjects are giving thanks for this indulgence to the Trinity, to you and to your Son Jesus Christ; according to what your Son Jesus Christ says: *Without me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5). With this bread whoever wants to find nourishment and comfort during this earthly pilgrimage, may thus be led to the eternal home, if he requests this indulgence, as has already been written.”

On the Octave of Saint Anthony, on the feast day of Saint Silverius, Pope and Martyr,⁵¹ brother Adam of England, who was master in theology, came to visit brother James *ad Portam*, who led him to a certain room and read to him these miracles. Brother Adam said: “These miracles are great and wonderful.” [631] Therefore brother James decided that the notary public should examine these miracles and stamp their account with his own seal, and present the document to the General and the General would then present it to the Supreme Pontiff in order to publish this indulgence and grace, just as it had been shown to brother James in his vision. In the meantime it happened that I, namely master Johannes, came to my lord the Abbot of *Sancta Maria Eremitarum* on the very high mountains of Basel, and I boarded a ship that was to take me to Austria; but I was compelled to return to Basel, to my own land.⁵² So brother James was greatly overjoyed and he told my sisters Agnes and Catherine: “God has sent him back, so that he would write something down for me.” They told him: “We also knew that this would happen.” Therefore on the feast day of Saint Peter *ad Vincula*, brother James *de Porta* began to pray on his knees and to plead that I, the aforementioned master Johannes, would examine these miracles and that I would write them down and stamp them with my usual seal for the sake of God, and in this way that God, whom I honour, would then give me honour in this life and in eternity. God therefore immediately inclined me to give heed to this supplication. I faithfully examined these miracles and I wrote

51 20th June.

52 Johannes the notary public would have travelled upstream on the Rhine up to Lake Constance, and by crossing the lake he would land on its eastern shore in Austria.

four letters to the honour of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and of the divine Majesty who is truly God. Then I stamped my usual seal on the document. Marvellous to say! On the feast of Saint Dominic,⁵³ and on the feast of the Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God and of the miracle of the snows, I sent the letters. That same evening God immediately honoured me with tributes of a certain protector of the Teutonic lords in Buchen, who wrote to me to go to visit him, since he wanted to receive me and invest me as a knight. Was it not a wonderful miracle that God led the woman pilgrim who came from Rome carrying bread to brother James? And also that he inspired brother Adam of England, master in theology, to advise brother James to commission this examination of the miracles? And, moreover, to bring back master Johannes known as Schilling in order to examine these miracles and to mark them with his own seal? That this happened on the feast of Saint Peter *ad Vincula* is also a sign, since on that same day starts the commemoration of the true indulgence of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. God made brother James understand that the indulgence was to be given to the whole world at all times, according to what has been written.

This indulgence has been requested by the Virgin Mary for all men and women sinners present and future until the end of the world. Brother James also understood that the fact that these letters were written and signed and sealed on the feast of the Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God of the miracle of the snows is truly a sign. As a witness to all this I, master Johannes, known as Schilling, have consigned four letters that bear my own seal. I have been requested to do so through the grace of God which operates in me, since I am called John, and this name is interpreted as referring to the one *in whom God's grace dwells*;⁵⁴ this grace of God therefore operates in me, and that is why my surname is Schilling, that is faithful to the number of 12 *denarii*, namely the 12 articles of the faith; the grace of God comforts me, confirms me and perfects me, and that is why I am called solid, that is, firm and persevering in faith. Brother James has asked me to accomplish this task, and his name means

53 4th August. The feast of the Virgin Mary of the Snows (dedication of St. Mary Major) is celebrated on 5th August.

54 Cfr. St. Bonaventure, *Commentarius in Evangelium Lucae*, 6,36, in *Sancti Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, Vol. 7, 143. Same source for subsequent meanings of Biblical names.

supplanter; in fact the grace of God supplants vices and makes a person holy with a great and sincere contrition, with a pure confession, with [632] a general penance and satisfaction, and it leads to the door of justice, of which the prophet Daniel says: *Open the gates of virtue to me, I will come in and give thanks to the Lord* (Ps 117:19); and of which the Lord says: *I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture* (Jn 10:9); regarding the Saviour this is what Luke states in chapter twenty-two: *I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father conferred one on me: you will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom* (Lk 22:29-30). Therefore, *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand* (Mt 4:17), namely through this indulgence that the Virgin Mary has requested for us, just as also Saint Francis had requested from her the Indulgence of the Portiuncula, as is evident in the following letter.⁵⁵

In the name of the Holy Trinity, of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of blessed Francis, I, Michael Bernarducci, formerly of Spoleto and now a citizen and inhabitant of the city of Assisi, presently devoted to the Order of blessed Francis, went one day to the place of the Portiuncula. There I found brother Bernard of Quintavalle, brother Leo, brother Peter Catanio, brother Masseo of Marignano, brother Angelo of Rieti, brother Philip Longo from the coast of San Savino, and brother William, talking among themselves. When I approached them I saw that they were speaking secretly, so out of embarrassment I wanted to withdraw, but when they called to me I approached them. Now, this conversation was taking place in the garden where the cell of Saint Francis is. One of them, brother Peter Catanio, turned to me and began to speak thus: "Listen, Michael, to what happened these last few days. Brother Bernard, the companion of Saint Francis, told me this, showing me the place in the cell where it happened, which was this year in the month of January just past, when the great rains

55 The following document is taken from the *Speculum vitae Beati Francisci*. The document was written by Michele Bernarduccio of Spoleto. Cfr. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1277, n. 19. The English translation is taken directly from FAED III, 810-812 in the section "Miscellaneous Franciscan Sources." The Portiuncula Indulgence is well documented in late documents, particularly in the *Diploma* of Teobaldo, bishop of Assisi (10th August 1310) and in the *Tractatus de Indulgentia S. Mariae de Portiuncula* of brother Francesco Bartholi (c.1334).

and snow poured down. – One night around midnight Satan came to blessed Francis as he was at prayer next to his cell and said to him: 'Francis, what are you doing? Do you want to die before your time? Why are you doing such things? Don't you know that sleep is the principal nourishment of the body? You are so young, so for you sleep and rest are especially necessary. One time I say to you that you are young, and so another time you can do penance for your sins. Why then do you punish yourself so in vigils and prayers?' Then blessed Francis took off his tunic and undershorts and left the hut and passed through the large and dense hedge and entered the wildest and thorn-infested woods that belong to Philip Nurbi, adjoining the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. When blessed Francis was in the middle of the woods, his flesh all stained and bloodied from the thorns, he said: 'It is better for me to acknowledge the passion of my Lord Jesus Christ than to give in to the seduction of the deceiver.' Then suddenly there was a great light in the midst of the forest and in that time of frost rose blossoms appeared right there where blessed Francis was. And a countless host of angels suddenly appeared both in the woods and in the said church next to the woods, and behold they cried with one voice: 'Blessed Francis, [633] hurry to the Saviour and his Mother who await you in the church.' There then appeared to him a straight path as if of decorated silk going up to the church, and blessed Francis took from the rose patch twelve red roses and twelve white roses and entered the church. He proceeded to the altar and placed on it the roses he had brought with him in joined hands. There he saw Jesus Christ standing with his Mother at his right with a great multitude of angels. Then Francis found himself dressed in a very beautiful garment before the Saviour and his Mother, and his Saviour said to him: 'Francis, ask whatever you will for the enlightenment of the nations and the consolation of souls, to the honour and reverence of God, for you have been designated a light to the nations and a repair of the earthly church, that is the Church militant.' Francis, however, lay is if enraptured in the presence of the Saviour and his Mother. Then recovering his senses, he spoke up: Our holy Father, I, a sinner, beg you to do me this favour, that you grant an indulgence of all their sins, on one day only, to all who come to this place and enter this church with contrition and confession of their sins, and who have graciously accepted the penance and satisfaction imposed. And I beseech the Virgin Mary your Mother, the advocate of sinners, that she intercede in

this regard, for I am unworthy.’ Then the Virgin Mary, queen of heaven, in response to his prayers, begged her Son Jesus Christ saying: ‘Most High God, I beg you to grant what your servant requests.’ And the Saviour replied: ‘This is indeed a great thing you have requested, Francis, but you are worthy of even greater, and you shall have a great reward. So I grant your request and prayer. Just name the day when it should happen.’ Blessed Francis responded: ‘Most Holy Father, you who arrange heaven and earth, please, you arrange the day with your Mother.’ So the Saviour decreed that from the first Vespers of the first day of August to Vespers of the second day of the same month, whoever comes on that day, having repented and confessed the sins of which they were aware, all the sins they have committed from their baptism up to that day they entered this church would be forgiven. Then blessed Francis added: ‘Most Holy Father, how will this be known and believed by people?’ The Lord Jesus Christ replied: ‘Francis, this will be done through my grace; you, however, should go to my Vicar whom I have placed over nations and over kingdoms, and he should make it known as he sees fit.’ Then Francis said: ‘And how will your Vicar believe me? Perhaps he will not believe a sinner.’ The Saviour replied: ‘Francis, take with you three of your companions who have heard this, and some of the white and red roses you gathered up in the woods in the month of January. Take with you whatever number seems to you most fitting.’ Now all these things were heard by brother Peter Catanio, brother Rufino Scifi, brother Bernard of Quintavalle, brother Masseo of Marignano, and their companions who were in their dwellings, that is, in their cells outside the church in the garden where the cell of blessed Francis is. Then blessed Francis took three white and three red roses in the presence of the Saviour and Mary His Mother. Finally the grandest song of the angels was sung: *Te Deum laudamus*, etc.

The following morning blessed Francis put on his tunic once again and went to his three companions. He called them and said: ‘Prepare yourselves to come with me to Rome.’ He imposed silence upon them regarding what they had heard, namely to brother Peter Catanio, brother Bernard of Quintavalle, and brother Angelo of Rieti. They alone went to Rome with him and entered in front of the Supreme Pontiff the lord Honorius, who was the successor of Innocent, Vicar of Christ, and to whom blessed Francis recounted all the events mentioned above, and showed him as witnesses [634] the six

aforementioned roses. The same Honorius saw the roses that were still fresh and had bright colours and were emitting a sweet fragrance and he said: ‘This is a wonderful fact and it is more a divine than a human work; therefore, we know that their testimony is true.’ Then he said: ‘We shall speak with our Brothers in the consistory about this secret and we shall take a decision regarding these facts.’ Then he commanded his household to take care of Francis and of his companions. He also commanded blessed Francis to return to his presence early the following morning. When Francis stood before the Pope on the following morning, he said to the Pope: ‘O worthy Vicar of Christ, please accomplish my desire regarding these things, which is in agreement with the heavenly will of the King and His Mother, to whose title this church is dedicated.’ The Pope answered: ‘Brother Francis, assert and explain what is the will of the heavenly King and His Mother, so that you and your brothers will not say things differently.’ Blessed Francis answered and said: ‘The will of God and His divine promise states that, whoever from the Vespers of the *Calends* of August until the Vespers of the second day enters the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, will have all his sins forgiven from the day of his baptism, namely all the sins he can remember and for which he shows contrition and that he confesses to a priest having a mandate to hear his confession, and finally accepts in a gracious way to make penance and satisfaction.’ The Pope answered and said: ‘Brother Francis, what you are asking is a great thing, but after the heavenly King upon the insistent request of His Mother will give heed to your prayers, we shall write to the bishops of Assisi, Spoleto, Perugia, Todi, Foligno, Nocera and Gubbio, that they may come to the Portiuncula in order to announce this aforementioned indulgence, when it is pleasing to you.’ Thus blessed Francis and his companions received the letters and returned in order to present them to the aforementioned Bishops. Blessed Francis acquired the consent of all these Bishops that they would gather on the *Calends* of August in that aforementioned church, and thus it was done.

Francis ordered that a wooden pulpit be constructed, upon which the aforementioned Bishops went up together with blessed Francis.⁵⁶ When a great crowd of people had gathered in that place,

⁵⁶ This event is still represented in a famous fresco by Tiberio di Assisi, *Saint Francis proclaims the Portiuncula Indulgence* (1516) in the Cappella delle

around nine in the morning of that same day, the Bishops freely gave permission to blessed Francis to preach first; in fact the papal letter had said that those same Bishops had to follow the will of blessed Francis. So blessed Francis stood up and began to preach in such a sweet and strong manner, that the people present thought that they were seeing an Angel and not a man. When he finished preaching, he announced the aforementioned indulgence, and told them that it was a perpetual indulgence, that is, an indulgence given every year on that particular day. When the Bishops heard him saying this they were angry and said: "If the lord Pope has commanded us to follow the will of Francis, this was certainly not his opinion, namely, that we should follow such a will in things that are not convenient and not appropriate. Therefore we renounce to approve the indulgence in this way." The bishop of Assisi stood up and wanted to say that the indulgence should be given for 10 years, but he said exactly the same words that blessed Francis had said and could not say anything different. The same occurred in the case of the other Bishops; indeed each one of them wanted to correct the declaration of the preceding Bishop, but they could not say anything different from what Francis had already said. There were many witnesses to this fact, people coming from Assisi, from Bologna, from Foligno, and from Spoleto. The aforementioned seven Bishops were present when blessed Francis preached and announced the indulgence. Thanks be to God."

This indulgence that blessed Francis announced, and that the Virgin Mary requested from her Son Jesus Christ for the same blessed Francis, together with this present indulgence, that the Virgin Mary has approved and confirmed, that is true, and that has been proved by the aforementioned signs and miracles, that the same [635] Virgin Mary requested from her Son Jesus Christ and from the Trinity and from the divine Majesty for the faithful, both living and death, that is for all those who are baptised, this indulgence then, is an indulgence that is given at all times to the entire world. It was brother James who requested with this intention such an indulgence from the Virgin Mary, and thus no man will be able to excuse himself in the last

Rose near the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels. The fresco gives a clear idea of the exterior decoration of the Portiuncula Chapel in the 16th century, as well as of the choir of the friars and other adjacent buildings. The friars began to build the actual Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels, designed by Galeazzo Alessi, on 25th March 1569.

judgment, when her Son Jesus Christ will say to his elect: *Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherited the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Mt 25:34). That is why he preaches and announces his Gospel to us and says: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand* (Mt 4:17). And the Virgin Mary has announced for us this indulgence and renewed it through signs and miracles, so that we hasten, since this is the time of mercy for both living and dead regarding this indulgence, as is evident about from the signs and miracles we have recounted. But regarding those who die, namely those who departed from this life in the three Orders of Saint Francis, we read the following words:

A certain devout friar of the Order of Saint Francis was reading the fact regarding blessed Francis, when the Seraph told him some holy words that he did not want to reveal to anybody for as long as he lived. That friar began to reflect on what those holy words could have been, and began to pray God and Saint Francis to kindly reveal to him what those seraphic words were. He prayed for this grace daily for eight years. One day after lunch he went with the friars to the church in order to give praise and thanks to God. After the prayers of praise he remained alone in the church and with tears began to reflect once more and to beg fervently to obtain that revelation. He prayed for a long time and his desire was greater than usual, thirsty as he was to know the meaning of those words. He continued to persist in prayer as if he were drunk in his spirit. That moment a brother came over, called him and told him that the Guardian had ordered him to accompany him since he had to go out. When he heard this order, in order to obey like a son the command of his Prelate, he interrupted his prayer and went out to accompany that brother. However you will now see how much he merited through this prompt act of obedience! In fact, as soon as he went out of the door with his companion, they met two brothers who were coming from a far away region. From their outward appearance they could see that one of them was young and the other one was an elderly and thin man. Since this friar saw that the two brothers were both soaked with the rain since it was winter, he felt a great compassion on them and moved by his usual charity he told his brother: "Most dear brother, the errand that we have to make can wait for some time, since as you see these friars who are coming as our guests are in need of a great service on our part, in order to make them feel comfortable. So I beg you to permit me to go and wash the

feet of the elder brother, while you also come with me and wash the feet of the young brother, and after that we can proceed on our errand.” When the companion heard this request, they both entered the hermitage once more. While the devout friar began to wash the mud-stained feet of the elder brother, as soon as he had removed the mud from the feet, the sacred stigmata appeared on them. When the friar saw this, he began to embrace them and hold both feet tightly and with a loud voice he said: “O, you are Christ or Saint Francis.” When the friars of that hermitage, who were eight in all, heard him exclaiming in such a loud voice, they fearfully came over from the fire where they were huddling together because of the cold, in order to see those stigmata. They all saw them and began to touch them and since they were afraid and were full of admiration for such a novelty, that elderly friar who was a foreigner told them: “Most dear brothers, do not have any doubt but listen to me for a short while. I am Francis, who according to God’s will have founded three Orders. This brother, who is now holding my feet, has been praying me daily for eight years in the church after your prayers of praise, which you recite in that same place, to kindly reveal to him the secret words that the Seraph had told me, and that I had not revealed to any man, for as long as I lived, according to the divine will and command. Now I have been truly sent to him, and in front of all of you I will reveal to him what [636] he has requested in prayer. Dear brother, you should know that, when I was staying on Mount La Verna, and was filled with love for the passion of Christ, I was completely absorbed in the contemplation of the Son of God and I received His stigmata. After having been stamped with these stigmata He told me: ‘Do you know what I have done to you? I have signed you with my stigmata, so that you will become my standard-bearer. On the day of my *transitus* I went down to the limbo and through the merits and virtues of these stigmata I drew out from that place all the souls I could find. In the same way you will conform yourself to me in death, just as you are conforming yourself to me in life, and I will grant you the grace to go to purgatory during the year of your death and through the virtue and efficacy of these stigmata you will draw all the souls of the members of your three Orders, namely the Minors, the Sisters and the continents, whom you will find in that place and lead them to the glory of paradise. I never uttered these words for as long as I lived, so that I would not be guilty of vainglory or presumption.’” When Francis had said these words he disappeared.

Brother James Blancus, who was lector in Rome, used to preach that he had heard this account from one of those eight friars, for the praise and glory and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his most holy imitator our most blessed Father Francis, who will lead us to the Most High. Let it be therefore known:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We, brother John of Santo Amarino, Prior, as well as brother John from the Order of the Knights of Saint John of the hospital of Jerusalem, of the town of Basel, declare in front of the inspectors or those who listen to our account in all the world, that in the year of the Lord 1360 on the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, the illustrious lady, Agnes of Tiersein, countess of Palatine, in the chapel of Saint Vincent, begged us on her knees that we should examine and authenticate the above mentioned signs and miracles. We have therefore paid heed to the devout supplications of this aforementioned lady Agnes and we have favourably agreed to examine and investigate these signs and miracles in this way. We have individually requested the following persons mentioned below regarding the signs and miracles already mentioned, and they have taken an oath on their faith in the name of the Sacrament and by touching the most holy book of the Gospels, and they have affirmed that they obtained these favours and miracles, as is described underneath. Together with all the masters of sacred theology and all the rest of those who show zeal for the faith we humbly request on our knees that, whatever is known in an orderly way regarding such miracles should be exposed and announced publicly, and that we be kindly permitted to do so as you consider it best for the praise, glory and honour of the name of Jesus Christ, of the glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother, and of all the choirs of Angels and of the Church triumphant, for the exaltation of the faith, for the salvation of souls, for the usefulness and salvific edification of the faithful and of the entire Church militant. In the public document dealing with these evident signs we place our own seals.

Another public document of the notary of the Curia of Basel

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In perpetual and everlasting memory. I, Johannes of Zovingen, official notary of the Curia of Basel, would like to publish in front of

the inspectors and all those who listen in the whole world, the letters of public contract of master Johannes known as Schilling, and the letters of brother John *de sancto Amarino*, Prior and lawyer, of the Order of Saint John of the hospital of Jerusalem in the town of Basel, and the letters of brother John *ad Equum*, officer of the same Order, all of them evidently signed and sealed. The sign of the public contract contains the image of a lily and the name of the notary, namely Johannes Schilling [637] printed on the seal. The seal of the Prior is a lamb with a standard. The seal of brother John *ad Equum* contains a horse with saddle and bridle. I have transcribed these letters exactly as I have found them. In order not to be ungrateful I have to state that, since I am nearly blind, nevertheless I could see clearly in the light, as is evident in the aforementioned miracles. Therefore to the praise and glory and honour of the holy Trinity and of the Virgin Mary I have written these miracles to the Prelates, so that they would faithfully commend me to their subjects and will make me participate in all the good works of their own subjects. In the public document dealing with this witness I, the aforementioned Johannes, have stamped my seal that contains the image of Veronica, namely the cross with the face of Christ.

Another document

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. I, brother John (of Ravensburg), Minister Provincial of the friars Minor of upper Germany, publish this present document in front of the inspectors and of all those who listen in all the world, and attest that brother James *de Porta*, as a true son of obedience, presented to me the miracles of the glorious Virgin Mary as I had commanded him to do, so that I would faithfully examine them, and have them signed and sealed by master Johannes known as Schilling in a public contract, as well as by brother John *de sancto Amarino*, a lawyer and Prior of the Order of Saint John of the hospital of Jerusalem in the town of Basel, and by brother John, known as *ad Equum*, officer of the same Order, to whom I presented the document with humility and devotion. As a witness to these things I have stamped the seal of my office in the year of the Lord 1346.

Regarding a marvellous vocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the fifth chapter of Job: *Eliphaz of Teman spoke to blessed Job and said: Grief does not grow out of the earth, nor sorrow spring from the ground. It is man who breeds trouble for himself as surely as eagles fly to the height. If I were as you are, I should appeal to God, and lay my case before him. His works are great, past all reckoning, marvels, beyond all counting* (Job 5:6-9). Therefore, for the praise of God, who marvellously creates countless beings, we declare to all the inspectors and to all those who would like to listen in the whole world, that the God of wonders in the year of the Lord 1339, on the feast day of Saint Silverius Pope and Martyr,⁵⁷ led brother Adam of England, master of theology, to Basel, in order to be an expert in the examination of the aforementioned miracles.

During the same year God has wonderfully led master Johannes known as Schilling, a public notary, from the high mountains *Eremitarum* in Basel, in order to examine these miracles and to sign them and stamp them with his usual seal.

In the year of the Lord 1340, on the feast day of Saint Mark, Abbot⁵⁸ God has led brother John *de sancto Amarino*, a priest, preacher and confessor, as well as lawyer, to Basel, Prior of the lord knights of the Saint John of the hospital in the town of Basel, and brother John *ad Equum*, a priest, preacher, confessor and officer of the same Order, in order to examine these miracles and to stamp them with their own seals.

[638] In that same year after the feast of Saint Benedict,⁵⁹ God wonderfully sent brother Richard, bishop of Sant'Angelo de' Lombardi e Bisaccia to Basel, in order to examine brother John *ad Vitem*, master of novices, who was present during the examination of those same miracles.

In the same year, on the feast of the holy seven Brothers, God wonderfully lead brother John of Rodington,⁶⁰ master of sacred theol-

57 20th June.

58 15th January.

59 After 21st March, feast of Saint Benedict, Abbot.

60 The seven brothers, martyrs (2 Maccabees 7:1-42) celebrated on 10th July. John of Rodington came from Lincoln and was a friar at Stanford. He stud-

ogy, to Basel, in order to read the account of these miracles as they had been examined, signed and sealed, and in order to give his advice that the great Prelates should present them to the Supreme Pontiff in order to request this grace, that is useful and necessary to the same Prelates and their subjects.

In the same year on the feast day of Saints Simon and Jude, God wonderfully led master John *de Redivalis* to Basel, in order to examine brother John *ad Vitem* regarding what he had asserted, namely that all those persons who had been examined had taken an oath on the name of the Sacrament and said that those miracles truly occurred as they have been documented. Brother James had not sent for these persons to come over, but God had marvellously led them from various remote regions in order to give true witness regarding those miracles.

A letter of the countess to the Bishop

To the reverend Father and lord in Christ N. Thanks be to God. To the Bishop of Lausanne, her most gracious lord, Agnes, countess of Thürstein, born at Weissenburg, renders her homage with free will and with a desire to be pleasing to him in everything.

I instantly beg and exhort your Reverend Paternity regarding certain letters that you are aware of and that regard serious and secret matters. May you receive these letters that I have directed to you benignly and favourably, so that you may be worthy of divine retribution and of my perpetual service and respect. In these letters you will find a complete account of these secret matters and of my request and of the witness I render to these facts, since I trust in your rectitude. May you increase in prosperity on this earth and in merits in heaven, so that I will perpetually repay you and unite myself most devoutly to you. May your Paternity stay in good health for a long time.

Letter of John ad Equum to brother James ad Portam

Dem erven gistilichen man und minen sunderlichen vrynde bruder Iacobo zem tor sant Franciscus Ordens enbueete ich bruder

ied philosophy and theology in Oxford and then in Paris, and then returned to England where he became minister provincial. Cfr. L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1350, n. 17.

Iohannes zem rosse sant Iohannes Ordens mi pater noster un alles guot. Lieber mien vrynt, ir sunt wissen, das ich [639] mangel gang han gegangen ze uwen kloster; ze Avion ie ze gwest, kam ich ze uwen vater den generale Geraldo un seite ime van uw persone unde van den eiden, die ich verhorde. Do sprach er: ich gelobe wol dis, er ein guot bruder si, aber di wil er lebet, so wil ich sin sach dem baste (Papste) nit zoigen.

Given at Avignon in the year of the Lord 1341, on the feast day of Urban, Pope and Martyr.⁶¹

Letter of the abbess to lady Agnes queen of Hungary, daughter of Albert king of the Romans

Der edelen erwirdigen vrowen der kunigin von Ungerem enbieten wir die Eptissin un aller der Convent gemeinlich des klostere ze Gnadental ze basel sancte Clare ordenes unser gebet un alles des wir guttes gethuon, also wir schuldig tin. Gnedige frowe, wir bitten uech gnediglich, das ir bruder Iacob zem tor etwas guttes wellent tuon, die wile er gast ist ze kunigesvelt, wan er ist ein armer bruoder un ein usgenomen heiliger bruoder, das wir wol beteuden hon an im, wan er ist wol XX iar oder mer unser bichtern gessellen gesin; wir befehlen uech in das getrue herze unsers herren Iesu Christi. Datum.

From the ordinations of a Minister

In the absence of confessors in Gnadenthal brother James *ad Portam* heard the confessions of the sisters with the authority of his Minister. In the absence of both it was brother Johannes Weninger, Vice-guardian of Basel who heard the confessions of the sisters. The companions who enter in the place of these, if they are absent, are brothers James of Senheim, brother Theobald and brother John the cook. In the absence of all these brothers or if they are sick the father Guardian can, in cases of necessity, assign confessors and companions.

61 25th May. This letter and the following have been left in mediaeval German by the Quaracchi editors.

The obedience of brother James

To his most dear brother in Christ, brother James *ad Portam*, brother Johannes, Minister and servant of the friars Minor of upper Germany wishes everlasting health and peace in the Lord. Since it seems useful for you to transfer to the Holy Land, where you will continue to live according to the form and grace of our life, you can obtain such permission from the reverend father in Christ brother Fortanarius, Minister General of our Order. I commit to your charity all those who are present and I hope that you will be made to participate in God's grace because of your obedience, your exile and your labours. The present letters of obedience of the above-mentioned father General that you should show together with this letter are to be for you a witness of your obedience and of the grace that has been conceded to you beforehand. I commend you faithfully in the Lord to the Guardians and their Vicars or other friars, whom you will visit when you pass by their friaries. Keep well in the Lord and pray for me. Given in Basel in the year of the Lord 1344 in the Octave of the Epiphany.⁶²

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life (Jn 3:16). – The end.

2

Cismontane Provinces enlisted in the year of the Lord 1493

[640] Regarding the family and friaries of the friars of the Cismontane Observance and how they multiplied through the work of Saint John of Capistrano. The list was compiled in the 7th chapter of the legend of the holy father edited by brother Christopher of Varese, who accompanied him in the same journey:

The Province of Tuscia has 38 convents and 660 friars.
The Province of Saint Francis has 37 convents and 550 friars.
The Province of the Marches has 32 convents and 450 friars.

62 13th January.

The Province of Rome has 25 convents and 380 friars.
The Province of Bologna has 25 convents and 650 friars.
The Province of Saint Anthony has 28 convents and 650 friars.
The Province of Genoa has 46 convents and 1000 friars.
The Province of Milan has 25 convents and 770 friars.
The Province of Terra di Lavoro has 38 convents and 550 friars.
The Province of Calabria has 25 convents and 300 friars.
The Province of Saint Bernardine has 20 convents and 300 friars.
The Province of Sant'Angelo has 18 convents and 170 friars.
The Province of Hungary has 77 convents and 2000 friars and it has new convents added to the Province of Milan in the general chapter of the year of the Lord 1498.
The Province of Apulia has 26 convents and 340 friars.
The Province of Sicily has 27 convents and 340 friars.
The Province of Corsica has 16 convents and 150 friars.
The Province of Dalmatia has 18 convents and 230 friars.
The Province of Ragusa has 9 convents and 130 friars.
The Province of Basilicata has 12 convents and 80 friars.
The Province of Candia (Crete) has 7 convents and 50 friars.
The Province of Brescia has 18 convents and 300 friars.
The Province of Poland has 22 convents and 700 friars.
The Province of Bohemia has 27 convents and 650 friars.
The Province of Austria has 17 convents and 350 friars.
The Province of Bosnia has 24 convents and 270 friars.
The Province of Sardinia has 6 convents and 50 friars.
The Province of the Holy Land has 3 convents and 50 friars.
The convents under the Turk are 6 with 110 friars.

The total number of convents of this family is 550, and the friars are 10000, and this in the year of the Lord 1493.

3

Regarding the names of the first 12 friars Minor,
who were perfect imitators of Christ
and of the founder of the Order

These are the names of the 12 first perfect imitators of Christ and literal observers of evangelical perfection. On them, as upon

most solid and privileged living stones the Lord Jesus Christ founded the entire Order, except for the case of one of them, who is said to have become a traitor, just as there was a traitor among the 12 Apostles, and who finished his days by undergoing the same death as Judas. The first among them was the most blessed brother and Father Francis, leader and founder of the Order of friars Minor and the first Minister. Two years after his conversion brother Bernard of Quintavalle followed him; the third one was brother Peter; the fourth brother Giles; the fifth brother Sabbatino; the sixth brother Morico; the seventh brother John of Capella; the eighth brother Philip Longo, first visitator of the poor Ladies; the ninth brother [641] John of San Costanzo; the tenth brother Barbaro; the eleventh brother Berard *de Vida*; the twelfth brother Angelo Tancredi.

Francis spread his prayers far and wide, so that he would make steady progress, and a heavenly herald commanded him to rejoice; he told him: I announce to you four graces that will be given to you: Your order will remain for ever. No brother whose will is perverse will be able to remain in the Order for long; the enemies of the Order will have their days reduced to half; the friends of the Order will live and will conclude their lives in holiness. Thus the heart of the lover was transformed into the beloved. On his outer members the power of love appeared, since in Francis Christ showed outwardly and inwardly that the saint crucified his soul and mind in order to know Him

Document regarding the stigmata of blessed Francis⁶³

In the year of the Lord 1282, on the 5th day of the *Nones* of October,⁶⁴ I brother Philip, Minister of Tuscia, wanted to execute the orders given to me by the venerable father, brother Bonagratia, Minister General of the Order of friars Minor, during the general chapter celebrated at Strasbourg during that same year, namely to investigate diligently regarding the day and the hour in which the sacred stigmata were impressed on the body of Saint Francis. In order to listen to the account of what actually happened, I called to my presence a certain lay brother, who is a man of unique piety and of a most proven life of virtue, and I commanded him to reveal to me the whole truth regarding all these things.

He, therefore, answered me with a humble spirit and a pure intention, that brother John of Castiglione, Custos of Arezzo, had asked him with many insistent prayers to intercede in front of Saint Francis, [642] in order to reveal to him the day and the hour in which the sacred stigmata were impressed on the body of blessed Francis. Wanting to obey instantly and with docility to his requests, in the

⁶³ *Chronicle of 24 Ministers General*, 374: "In the year of the Lord 1282 this General celebrated the general chapter in Strasbourg, in the Province of northern Germany. He commanded brother Philip, Minister of Tuscany, to inquire diligently, if he could find by any means, the exact day and time when the stigmata of Jesus Christ were impressed upon the body of Saint Francis. A certain lay brother, who was a most perfect man in all virtues, had many revelations, in which Saint Francis appeared to him and told him that it was on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, early in the morning, that the Saint felt a great pain, and cried out aloud when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in the image of a Seraph, and miraculously impressed first his hands, then his feet, and thirdly his side with those wounds." Cfr. Bartholomew of Pisa, *Liber de conformitate*, lib. III, fructus III, in *Analecta Franciscana* IV, 207); Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1282, n. 1. Regarding brother Philip of Perugia, professor of theology and Minister Provincial of Tuscia, cfr. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad an. 1277, n. 1 and 1279, n. 9, where this document is mentioned. The Authors of the *Acta Sanctorum*, Vol. II, Octobris, 860ff, mention that they had analysed an authentic exemplar of this document, in the archives of the Sacro Convento of Assisi. Another two copies of the document are found in the Vatican Library (cod. Vat. Lat. N. 9380, fol. 50 and n. 7650, fol. 59), transcribed by Conrad Eubel, who forwarded the document to the Quaracchi editors.

⁶⁴ 3rd October.

aforementioned year 1281, in the month of May, having received my special permission, he went to the hermitage of La Verna and entered the cell built in that place where it is said that the apparition had occurred. He devoted himself to prayer and on a certain night, when it was nearly dawn on a Friday morning, he was pleading that God would reveal this through some other person. When he had spent more than half the night in prayer, behold that a great light appeared around him. He was rather astonished at this, but he marked himself with the sign of the cross and invoked the name of the Lord, and continued to persist in prayer with all his spiritual strength. After some time had elapsed a certain light, that was more radiant and clear than the former light had been, appeared in that cell, in such a way that it completely filled with radiance that same cell and all that was in it. That friar began to feel more astonished when he saw that light, and again he marked himself with the sign of the cross and called upon the name of the Lord and of the blessed Mary and of blessed Francis with even greater attention and continued to persist in his prayers with even greater spiritual strength. And behold that, after a short while, such a radiant light descended from God that the entire cell began to glow with a golden radiance. When that friar saw this he was astonished beyond any limit and began to invoke the name of the blessed Virgin.

While he was reverently kneeling down, he bent down to the ground because of that great clarity of light. That same moment that brother felt a great consolation and regained his strength, and rose up on his knees. When he looked at the entrance of the cell, behold there was the blessed Father Francis who was standing in front of him and who was saying to him in Latin: "My son, what are you doing here?" When he heard that voice he drew out of his silence the affection of his heart and revealed his great desire to receive that revelation. So the blessed Father spoke to him with words that he could understand and told him: "What are you praying God that He would reveal to you?" That brother answered him and said: "Father, I was praying God, [643] that He would kindly reveal to me the day and the hour in which the sacred stigmata were impressed on your body." Then the holy Father told him: "God wills that you would know this, and therefore I will tell you. I am your holy father Francis and you know me very well." Then showing him the stigmata on his hands, feet and side, he added: "Now the time has arrived when God wills this secret

to be revealed, since the friars have been ignorant of it up till now. Indeed, the one who appeared to me was not an Angel, but it was the Lord Jesus Christ under the semblance of a Seraph. Just as He has received these sacred wounds on His body when He was nailed to the cross, so He has impressed these same signs on my body with His own hands." The holy Father then continued to describe the way that the apparition had occurred: "It was some time before the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross that an Angel came to me and told me on the part of God, that I had to show great patience and to prepare myself to accept what God wanted to accomplish in me. I answered that I was ready to do so and to accept to suffer whatever God was willing to inflict upon me. Early in the morning of the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross I went out of my cell and full of a vehement impulse of the spirit I hurried to a certain place where I was accustomed to pray. And behold I saw a young man who seemed to be crucified and who had the appearance of a Seraph with six wings descending with great velocity from heaven. When I saw the vision I fell down on my knees and began to pray earnestly in this same place. That vision was generating compassion within me, since I felt that I had to suffer the same passion in my body. During the appearance of the Crucified this whole mountain was shining and filling the air with a golden radiance.

When He had descended and was standing before me, he began to ask me to give him alms. So I answered: 'Lord, you know that I have nothing that I can give you, since I have relinquished everything. However, I can offer you my body and my soul.' He continued to insist that He receive alms from me, and He said: 'Search in your bosom and see whether you can find something there.' When I placed my hand in my bosom I was astonished to find a golden ball and I took it out and offered it to him. He still insisted that I would give Him alms. I continued to excuse myself with similar words as before. But when He exhorted me to place my hand again in my bosom I found another golden ball that weighed more than the first one and was more valuable, and therefore I offered it to Him with great marvel on my part. He asked me for alms for a third time, and continued to insist, while I was excusing myself. Driven by the same admonition, I placed my hand for the third time in my bosom and I found a golden ball that exceeded the other two in its value and weight, and I offered it to Him in the same way. When He had received these gifts, he said to me: 'Don't

you know what these golden balls signify? They signify the institution and the grades of the three Orders that you have diligently founded.'

[644] After this the same Lord touched my body with His hands and He impressed the stigmata first on my hands, then on my feet and on my side, while I sensed a most vehement pain and began to cry out aloud. Then He told me some secret words that I have never revealed to any man up to this day. Now truly the time has arrived that they should be revealed, since the Order and the brothers greatly need such a revelation. After this Christ disappeared from my gaze and I found myself signed in this way. You, therefore, should go and confidently recount all these words to your Minister, since this is the work of God and not of men." Up till here the words of blessed Francis. In the meantime, the aforementioned brother, who revealed these words, departed with the following salutation: "My son, go in the name of the Lord." And thus he was received in heaven with a great multitude of splendid young men.

A witness to what has been stated above. When it was day-break a certain brother, by the name of Conrad, who was also a man of great and unique holiness and who had been engaged in prayer in the adjoining cell, went to search for that brother, since he greatly desired to speak to him. He found him around the ninth hour, and he asked him why he had been calling upon someone that night, and what kind of dialogue he had experienced. So that brother told him that he had seen that great light, and the words that he had perceived and heard during that colloquy.

Yet another witness. On the following night, while that aforementioned friar was praying, with solicitude and anxiety, since he did not know whether he was worthy of such a special favour, he saw a certain young man dressed in white robes who proceeded from the altar and came close to him and said: "Are you doubting regarding the things that blessed Francis has told you? Don't you remember how many benefits he conferred upon you when you were in the world and when you entered the Order? Therefore do not nurture any doubts." When he was still reflecting upon the special benefits regarding which he had been reminded, an Angel descended and added these words: "Do not have any doubts, but be sure that it was God's will that these things be revealed to you." Having said these words he disappeared.

Yet another witness. On another occasion, which was the year of the Lord 1282, on the day following the Exaltation of the Holy

Cross, it happened that that privileged brother was in his cell after the night prayers, and as he was sitting down, it happened that he became drowsy and wanted to fall asleep. While he was sleeping in that position, he felt that someone was tugging at his clothes and waking him up. But since he saw nobody, nor did he hear any voice, he fell asleep once again. And behold that same person was pulling at his clothes and waking him up and telling him: "Why are you feeling so sad in your sleep? Why don't you wake up?" He immediately sat up fearfully on his bed and marked himself with the sign of the cross. He could not see anyone, but he heard a voice telling him: "Do not be afraid, but be sure." That brother then asked: "Who are you?" The voice answered: "I am the God's messenger, so do not be afraid and do not call out. The things that God has showed you in the hermitage of La Verna regarding the impression of the stigmata of blessed Francis should be revealed since God wants to make them known. So why are you hiding them? Reveal them, therefore, since God wills that they would be announced soon." That same moment the brother stood up in his cell and began to weep, since he did not know how he could carry out that command because of the weakness [645] of his conscience, since it was afraid. Therefore, while he was still occupied with those thoughts and that feeling of sadness, the voice told him: "Why are you so hesitant and are afraid of the things that the Lord has revealed to you completely, and that you had requested in so many ways? Therefore it is important that you reveal them, otherwise you would not be pleasing to God and you will be instantly judged." These words filled that brother with a certain degree of comfort.

Yet another witness. On the third night he was praying in the church. He was directing his prayers to the most blessed Virgin so that she would direct his will in order to accomplish what had been asked of him and to remove all doubts from him. While he was persevering in his prayers during the small hours of the night, for three times he saw approaching a splendid light in between moments of darkness, in such a way that the radiance exceeded in splendour the former radiance he had seen. That light was shining so much and leaving such a long tail of radiance that the whole church became not only resplendent with light but it seemed to glow with a golden brightness. When that friar looked towards the choir, he saw four Angels in the four corners who were wearing white vestments and carrying lighted candles, and they were going in procession towards the cen-

tre of the choir, where the most blessed Virgin was coming holding her Son in her arms. When that brother beheld the vision, he could not stand on his feet, but first he went down on his knees, and then he bowed down to the ground. When those Angels together with the Virgin arrived close to that brother, one of the Angels touched him and filled him with comfort and told him to stand up: "Do not be afraid and do not say anything." Then the blessed Virgin, who was wearing golden robes with the most sweet-smelling roses woven into them, and whose fragrance was filling all that place, told him: "You should know with certainty that the will of my Son is that you spread the information about the words you heard regarding the stigmata of blessed Francis, for which you prayed me to request surely from my Son. Therefore do not be afraid and do not delay to reveal this information. If, on the other hand, you neglect to do so and continue to hide this secret, you should know that my Son would not be pleased and you would incur a serious penance on judgment day." Having said these words she disappeared.

From that moment that brother tried with all his might to snatch the opportunity to reveal to me, his Minister, all this information regarding these events as they occurred one after another. So he recounted to me everything regarding this vision; and it is a true vision, just as it has been documented in writing. He experienced these visions when he was awake, and not during sleep, except for the vision he had in his sleep as has been recounted above, and as his companion in truth testifies according to what he saw and heard. The brother took an oath upon the holy Gospels and signed this document in Florence in my own cell, in the presence of brother Rainerio of Siena, Custos of Florence, of brothers John of Castroveteri, James of Mugello, lector in the convent of Florence, John of Castiglione Aretino, Bono de Curliano from the district of La Verna and Bernardino de Colle. As a sign of the truth and solidity of this testimony I hereby apply to this document the seal of my office.

5

Regarding the mysteries revealed to blessed Francis

[646] [1] Just as I have won over hell during the moment of my death, so you will empty purgatory in the moment of your death. [2] Your Order will never end, but will continue to exist until judgment day;

ment day; it will go through tribulations, but it will not be destroyed; and no one who is in the Order with an evil will, shall wear the habit for long. [3] No persecutor or adversary of the Order will live for long. [4] Those who are devoted to the Order or are its friends, even though they might lead a perverse life, in the end will find mercy. The Angel of the Lord revealed these four mysteries to blessed Francis and blessed Francis revealed them to brother Rufino and brother Rufino to brother Leo and brother Leo to brother Peter of Tewkesbury⁶⁵ and the same Peter recounted them during the provincial chapter. Brother Philip, Minister of Tuscia, transmitted the account of the vision of the impression of the sacred stigmata on the body of blessed Francis to the General Minister, through a special messenger, who was sent specifically for this particular case. He marked the document with his own seal, as I heard from eyewitnesses and nearly all the other brothers. The aforementioned General Minister wrote again to the aforementioned provincial Minister, in order to take care to publish a more accurate account of these same facts after conducting an interrogation, in order, I believe, to send the document to the Roman Curia, so that the Supreme Pontiff would be attracted by this revelation to institute and canonize the unique feast of the impression of the sacred stigmata.⁶⁶

6

Regarding the vision of brother John of Parma

The vision that John of Parma, of the Order of friars Minor, had regarding the future state of the Church, some time before the

65 Peter of Tewkesbury became provincial of England in 1254, succeeding William of Nottingham. He remained provincial until 1258.

66 Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronica XXIV Generalium*, 528, states that the feast of the impression of the stigmata of St. Francis was instituted during the Chapter of Cahors in 1337 by the Minister General Gerard Eudes: *In eodem autem capitulo fuit institutum, ut fieret festum de sacris beati Francisci stigmatibus per Ordinem universum* ("In that same Chapter it was decided that the Feast of the Sacred Stigmata of Blessed Francis would be celebrated throughout the entire Order"). The first official mention of the feast is that of the General Chapter of Assisi in 1340. Cfr. Ferdinand Delorme, "Actus et Constitutiones Capituli Generalis Assisiensis (1340)", *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 6 (1913) 255. Regarding the whole story of the problem regarding the stigmata of St. Francis, cfr. André Vauchez, "The Stigmata of Saint Francis and Its Medieval Detractors", *Greyfriars Review* 13 (1999) 61-89.

election of the lord Pope Boniface VIII. However, I state that he died during the time of Pope Nicholas IV, and therefore, etc.⁶⁷

In one of his sermons, in which he exhorted his listeners to prayer, fasting, almsgiving and other works of penance and mercy, he announced that they should pray that God would withdraw his anger from us and desist from sending us imminent tribulations and permitting the evils about which we shall speak further down.

He therefore said, that after the prayer of matins he continued to recite the words of the Psalm: *God, the pagans have invaded your heritage* (Ps 78), and he began to weep upon the destruction of Acre where many Christians had been massacred.⁶⁸ That was when he had the following vision. Therefore he said these words:

[647] When I was earnestly praying and weeping for a long time, a certain venerable man appeared to me. I did not know him. He was dressed in pontifical robes and was holding a cross in his hands. When I saw him I was afraid and began to tremble in such a way that I seemed to be in a trance and I could not speak. He told me: "Do not weep and do not plead in prayer because of the massacre of the Christians accomplished by the Saracens. Indeed, it was because of their sins that the just judgment of God has been declared. However you are to listen to what I shall tell you regarding the tribulations and the bad times that are to come while you are still alive on the Christians and on the Roman Church from the part of the infidels. In fact, through the judgment of the almighty God these infidels will arise and will take vengeance upon the Christian peoples who are apostates and who remain in the lands beyond the sea. The infidels will devastate and subdue the Armenians, men and women, of whatever condition they are, and they will kill them without mercy. They will take as prisoners for their own use many Religious and others who are apostates, young men and young women. They will destroy many parts of the Orient, they will throw outside the bodies of the

67 John of Parma died in 1289, during the pontificate of Nicholas IV (1288-1292). It cannot be denied that, according to what Salimbene states in his *Chronicle*, together with Hugh of Digne John of Parma was also to be remembered among the *maximos asseclas Ioachim abbatis* ("the greatest disciples of abbot Joachim"). However there is no certainty that this vision can be attributed to John of Parma.

68 Acre, the last Crusader stronghold on the Mediterranean coast of the Holy Land, was destroyed and its Christians massacred on 18th May 1291.

dead, will turn the churches into market places of animal hides and stables and throw their rubbish around the altars as an act of mockery to Christ. The Christians will undergo many hardships, they will be afraid of the inhabitants of those lands, and many of them will escape or be captured. The infidels will take into their hands many Christian ships and cross the seas with them and they will occupy many ports and lay hold of the arms depots on the coasts and they will destroy them. Many regions of Italy will be destroyed and there will be many civil wars, because of the sins of its people that are so great that the cry of their accusation has reached the highest heavens. They will suffer especially because of the wickedness of their sins and because of the evil of usury, with which they have killed the entire world. Because of them many will be excommunicated, many will be made irregular, many places will fall under interdict, and many benefices will be acquired with malice, since people will receive favours from other people who fall under a sentence of suspension of excommunication. In Italy there will be all kinds of falsehood, robberies, heresies, disobedience and impurity. In such a way all these evils and many more will fall upon Italy and they will keep many enslaved under their power. Rome will be turned upside down with civil strife. Some of the Roman Cardinals will procure God's just judgment upon Pope Nicholas III, a man of great pride, who believes that he possesses the See of Peter and his reign because he inherited it through blood relations. He would want to be head over all these dominions and restore Rome, but since he will not be able to do so, he will create Cardinals from his own household. Among them there will be a serpent, that with its savage fingernails and tail will try to draw everybody to the earth and to oppress them like a bear that tears at the skin in order to make fun of them and deceive them. But one who is born of a bear and a cow, and who is still sleeping in his own dirt, will place under his feet the serpent and its most impure, fetid and defective offspring. It will draw down the column to the ground, and it will not raise it or sustain it for a very long time.

Woe to you, Rome, since because of your dogs you will be humbled and prostrated on the ground. The short period of time of peace for Rome will be a false peace and not a true one. The kingdom of Apulia will suffer many tribulations and will undergo anguish. The kingdom of France will become weak in its power because of the oppression of the churches and of its subjects and of the poor people,

and because of extortions, excommunications, and other evils that the king accomplishes. And since he would want to extend his dominion in other kingdoms after having listened to bad counsels, many of his neighbours will make war with him and will fight against him, and other islands of the sea will prepare to wage war. Hungary, Poland and some other provinces in Germany will be depopulated through the actions of infidel peoples, since a king of the Tartars will conspire with some other infidel kings, who are close to those regions. With great power and innumerable multitudes they will come and will hardly spare anyone, and will consider princes as dogs. But at long last a certain prince, who will come to the help of the princes of Germany and France, will win over them. However many churches will be destroyed, the clergy will be held in contempt, many Christian kingdoms will recede from obedience to the Roman Church, [648] and many Religious and Prelates in the entire world will be killed because of the great malice of the Romans. Nobody will dare among them ...⁶⁹ given by the Pope; some other Cardinals will be captured and others will be killed. Thus they will hold on so much to their glory and pride, that is so great, that they would not only want to be similar to God, but they would want to be considered as gods themselves and will want men to worship them as if they were gods. Thus the Lord will throw them down into the abyss and He will snatch from them all their marks of dignity and honour, and they will not be called Cardinals, but Roman priests and deacons. And hardly will anybody be found who would want to be a Cardinal or a Pope, since their name will be held in contempt by every nation, since in them there dwells all falsehood, there is no truth, everything they do is hypocritical, and whatever they utter with their mouths they do not believe in their hearts. Their avarice is so great, that they are never satisfied. Among them there is venal injustice and they do not do anything for anybody if they are not paid with money. They assist those who pay them most, they omit all justice, they sell spiritual things and Episcopal benefices, absolutions and other ecclesiastical things, and through the blood of Christ, that they sell, they make their nephews grow rich.

Since the time of the unhappy Nicholas III, only some were made Prelates because of the evil of simony. The Lord has therefore taken from them their gold and silver and instead of gold He has given them wood, and instead of silver He has given them belts, and instead

69 There are missing words in the Latin original and the document is corrupt and deficient.

of precious stones He has given them glass, and instead of horses they have sticks for walking. In fact many nations and kings will gather against them and will despoil them and leave them naked because they will hardly leave any clothes for them to wear. Their nephews will be scattered all over, their castles will be destroyed, and their fame will be deleted from memory. The jurisdictions of Prelates will be taken away by their subjects and by the princes and their material possessions transferred to other places, since they did not care about spiritual things; a cleric would hardly dare to show his tonsure. The people will rise up against their princes in many places, and they will kill some of them and some others will have to flee, and there will be tribulations in the entire world.”

When he had told me this, I answered him full of fear: “Lord, why does the Lord want to cancel the faith and to destroy the Church of Peter? Indeed, if the Pope and the leaders of the churches will perish and the infidels will triumph, then the faith will be lost.” He told me: “The infidels will triumph for a certain period of time, but at the end they will be conquered by the Franks and by the Germans and their emperors, and they will escape, and the Roman Church will be restored to its former dignity. Its leaders will then be upright and just men, and they will not be avaricious, and the good Prelates will again return to receive the obedience of all and holiness will be renewed. Churches will be built once again and good times will come, until the son of perdition will arrive.

Before these tribulations there will be many Popes, among whom one will be an offspring of the French, and he will be noble and learned. He will make peace in Christianity and he will be loved by men. He will make many Cardinals from among the Romans, the ones of the region of Campania, Italians and from those beyond the mountains from diverse regions, and he will live for four years and during the fifth year of his pontificate he will die when he will not yet have been sixty years old.

After this a Roman Pope will be elected from the family of the bull and the bear, who will lead the Church in peace and will exalt the bears⁷⁰ and will make Cardinals out of his own relatives. He will be taken from the Religion and will live for six years. After him another

70 The bear might refer to the famous Orsini family, which was one of the most celebrated princely families in Medieval Italy and Renaissance Rome, and which gave the Church three Popes, among whom Celestine III (1191-1198) and Nicholas III (1277-1280).

Roman will be elected Pope, who will govern under many evils and tribulations. In the city of Rome a lot of blood will be shed, and there will be many acts of simony and many other falsities. And tribulations will again begin in the world and Churches will be erected. He will live for four years and will die on the fifth year. After him other Popes from diverse regions will be elected, who will be few and not worthy of any praise; many of them will be [649] considered as naught. These things will start in 1300 and during your own life.” Having said this he disappeared.

Brother John of Parma, from the Order of Minors, who had once been the sixth General Minister after blessed Francis, had this vision. I have found the account of this vision in the library of the lord consuls of the famous city of Nuremberg. I have also found it amended and included with the books of the Abbot Joachim on the revelations of Cyril of Mount Carmel, present together with me as an assistant the beloved father brother James *de Brunna*, preacher in *tochonia* [?], in the year of the Lord 1506, on Saturday 20th June.

7

Letter of Maximilian I to Pope Julius II

Maximilian, king of the Romans, etc. wishes the best of health to his most holy father Julius the second, Supreme Pontiff.

We have heard that Your Holiness will convene a congregation or a most general chapter of all the friars Minor of the most holy Francis, both Conventuals and Reformed, on the coming feast of Pentecost in Rome.⁷¹ Although we approve the sacred plans of Your Holiness,

⁷¹ Giles (Egidio) Delfini, elected Minister General in 1500 during the Chapter of Terni, had a hard time to keep the Order united during the final phase of its history before definite separation by Leo X in 1517. The events to which this letter refers are those concerning the *capitulum generalissimum* of 1506. The following account, taken from Heribert Holzapfel, *Manuale Historiae Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, Fribourg 1909, illustrates the historic background. The English translation can be found in <http://www.i-tau.org/> in the section “Franciscan Studies”:

“Delfini began his activity in Italy but could accomplish little here because the Observants opposed the projected union and the Conventuals gave no thought to reform. He then went to France where, with the help of the king, he reformed many monasteries. At that time the princes on the whole did much

for the reform of monasteries, especially the emperor Maximilian in Germany and Belgium. At times they proceeded too violently, as they demanded of the Conventuals reform and subjection to the vicar provincials, otherwise they would be banished. Innumerable complaints of this secular interference came to Rome. Wherever the Pope commissioned the Bishops of those places to investigate, the result was usually very favorable to the Observants because the princes of the Church were as ill-disposed towards the Conventuals as were the secular princes. The constantly repeated commands not to accept any houses of the opposite party were entirely useless in face of actual conditions. Still this kind of reform only meant a weakening of the internal strength of the Observance.

From France the General went to Spain where the archbishop Ximenes, with the help of Queen Isabella, had already taken the reform vigorously in hand. He strove either by kindness or by force to make the Conventuals of the four Mendicant Orders true Observants and to expel those who refused. In this he encountered many obstacles, partly from the laity who feared that their Mass foundations would not be taken care of, partly from the friars themselves who protected themselves against his reform by papal Briefs. But Ximenes never let himself be deterred by such tactics from what he recognized to be necessary. Under Alexander VI, Briefs could be obtained for everything – so much so that in 1497 the Vicars General of the Observants were forced to obtain a Brief by virtue of which they could declare all the Briefs of their subjects to be null and void if they were prejudicial to the discipline of the Order. Ximenes did the same thing and finally he succeeded in reforming the four Mendicant Orders almost completely; in this reformation, sad to say, the Franciscan Conventuals played the most sorry role. Many of them who did not wish to adapt the reform were put on a ship by order of the king and sent to the Pope. Others wandered to Africa and embraced Islam. The Orders owed much to the reform activity of the incomparable Ximenes. The Franciscan Order in Spain especially would never have attained its later importance if her great son had not restored the discipline of the Order there. His method of acting did not, it must be confessed, please the General of the Order. Delfini even lent ear to the calumniators of the archbishop and sought to prejudice the queen against him. The General in his instance was the victim of his credulity, and seems to have seen into this himself quite soon. Otherwise the queen, who thought the world and all of Ximenes, would hardly have been so kindly disposed towards the General as to do him the favor of requesting the Pope to convoke a *Capitulum Generalissimum*. At this Chapter the long desired union was to be effected with an Observant as the new General.

Having returned to France from Spain, Delfini held a General Chapter at Troyes in 1503. The Observants of both obediences were invited. The reformed friars even constituted the majority. The General asked, first of all the union of the various reformed groups; that is, the family of the Observants, like the other reformed friars, should place itself under the General even though the latter friars in many cases did not renounce their claim to yearly incomes,

Again, if many non-reformed friars receive a few reformed friars in their monasteries, we are always afraid that the majority will eventually triumph over the few, and while a few friars would like to convert many, they themselves will be led astray by the majority, especially if they will be obliged to renounce to their privileges and place their necks under the yoke of the Minister General's obedience. Therefore we beg Your Holiness to take mature and useful counsel, so that you will provide norms in such a way that no harm will come to the holy observance. In fact, as long as these brothers persevere in their honest way of life, we shall never abandon them and we shall strongly rejoice in their presence, as well as they themselves rejoice, since we truly know that they are also dear to Your Holiness. It is certain that our most holy religion will choose to gain abundant fruit in the future, if among these friars some will be formed in the knowledge of the Ara-

but merely had them administered by Syndics. To persuade the Observants to unite, the General gave them all possible guarantees: the Observants shall again be permitted to return to their Vicars if their new superiors should not fulfill their duty; the Conventuals who transfer to the Observants could be advanced to offices only after seven years, lest ambition prompt the transfer. The Observants present asked for time to consider because they could not definitely decide without consulting their confreres and without the vicar generals.

Delfini continued his efforts in France. The great house of studies at Paris was reformed, and the Province of Francia received as its provincial the Coletan, Boniface of Ceva, who distinguished himself both by his zeal for reform and by his very bitter opposition to the Observants of the family.

When Alexander VI died, the General won the new Pope, Julius II, who himself had lived among the Conventuals for a time, over to his plan to effect the union of all the branches in the Order. This was to take place at a general chapter to be held in Rome in 1506. At the Chapter, however, Delfini saw to his sorrow that both parties opposed the union which he desired. This needs no further explanation after what has already been said.

Many of the Conventuals who would not hear of the reform, circulated false accusations against Delfini at this Chapter. Because of these accusations, the General resigned and withdrew to the convent of the Observants in Naples where he died soon after. It was now left up to the Observants to decide whether or not they should take part in the new election with an active and passive voice. They declined because they did not have a majority and they considered the union harmful. Thereupon Raynald Graziani of Cotignola was elected by the Conventuals and the reformed friars subject to them. He was a pronounced opponent of the family of the Observants and considered their exemption worse than all the dispensations of the Conventuals."

bic and Syrian languages, so that when God will lead us to wield our sword, through their salutary [650] doctrine and through their honest ways of life they will evangelise the Mohammedans and destroy their perfidious religion, and the promised land will be subjected once again to the faith and to the Roman empire, it will be enlightened by the faith and we would be made worthy of imploring God's clemency in a most sure way. Indeed, we hope that very soon we shall be able to come in the presence of Your Holiness and speak to you in person. In the meantime we commend you, the Vicar of our Saviour, in many ways to the care of our Lord. Farewell.

Given at Vienna, etc.

8

Regarding the city of Acre

Ludolph, rector of the parochial church in Suchem, wrote a treatise to the reverend lord Baldwin of Steenvoorde, bishop of the Church of Paderborn, in the book he composed about the Holy Land and the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its state; in fact this Ludolph had been there in the year of the Lord 1336. In the same treatise,⁷² in chapter 58, he said and wrote the following information regarding the glorious city of Acre:

Near Tyre, one day's journey distant on the coast, lies the glorious city of Acre, from which all pilgrims commonly have to pass, and which is just a three days' journey distant from Jerusalem. I will say a few words regarding this city, before I go on to the next leg of my journey. However I think that it is better for me to weep over its present state than to say anything else regarding it. Those whose hearts do not melt upon seeing the ruin of such a great city and its destruction, have hearts of stone!

Acre is a glorious city built on the seashore, as I have already stated. It was built of dressed stones and it was exceptionally armed with the highest and strongest towers that were placed just a stone's throw away one from the other. The only gate of the town was placed

⁷² Ludolph de Suchem, *De Itinere Terrae Sanctae Liber*, Nach alten handschriften berichtet. Herausgegeben von Dr. Ferdinand Deycks, Stuttgart 1851, 39-47.

between two towers. Its walls were so wide that a chariot rider could meet another one coming from the opposite direction and the two would comfortably pass one by the other, as is evident to this present day. On the landward side the city was defended by most special fortifications and by the most profound ditches, and was endowed with many ravelins and other defence structures. The open spaces of the city were spotlessly clean, and all the houses had their walls of equal height and are built of stones cut in different sizes, they had glass windows and were decorated with marvellous paintings. The entire city and its palaces were not built simply out of necessity for dwellings for its inhabitants, but they were built for the comfort and pleasure of men, with stained-glass windows and other decorations, in such a way that both inside and out the buildings were decorated with whatever is special and unique in style. The squares of the city were covered with silk and other beautiful fabrics in order to provide shade from the sun's rays. In the corners of every square there stood a very strong tower, that had an iron gate and that was protected by iron chains. All nobles around the entire city lived in very strong castles and palaces. In the centre of the town the mechanics and merchants lived in special palaces, grouped according to their respective trades. All the inhabitants of the city, just like the Romans, were noble and behaved and considered one another as lords, as in fact they were.

The first among the inhabitants of the city were the king of Jerusalem and the members of his household, many of who were nobles. There were princes from Galilee and from Antioch, the captain of the king of France, the duke of Caesarea, the lord of Tyre, the lord of Tiberias, the lord of Sayette, the count [651] of Tripoli, the count of Jaffa, the lord of Beirut and the lord of Ibelin, the lord of Poysan, the lord of Arsuf and the lord of Vans, and the nobles of Blansgarde. All these princes, dukes, counts and barons, placed golden crowns upon their heads, and they lived in royal style and were like kings with their knights, clients, mercenaries, soldiers, all adorned marvellously with their uniforms. Each one of them would be adorned with the most special, unique and elegant way he could afford. Each day they would organise swordfights and games and tournaments, they would go hunting and indulge in all kinds of training that pertains to the art of knighthood. Each one of them enjoyed freedom and immunity for his palace or castle. Among them there also dwelt the master and the brother knights of the Temple, in order to defend the Catholic faith against the Saracens, with their armed knights, as well as the master

and brothers of Saint John of Jerusalem, with their armed knights. All these dwelt in Acre and they had the headquarters of their Orders in the town. In Acre there also dwelt the richest among the merchants under heaven, who came from all nations under heaven and who gathered in this town. In fact there were the Pisans and the Genoese and the Lombards, but because of their mutual cursed hatred and discord the city was destroyed. They also behaved as if they were lords. In the same town dwelt people from all nations under the heavens. Indeed, in that town, from the rising to the setting of the sun everybody went about his business and was occupied in every trade that can be found in this world. In this way the nobles and princes and inhabitants of the town worked wonders and accomplished great projects. It would take me too long to describe the deeds of the nobles of Acre and their great wealth and ornaments, and no man could express these things very well. This therefore is the glorious city of Acre, that used to be called Ptolemais in ancient times, and in which Jonathan, brother of Judas Maccabee, was deceived and captured by Trypho and then killed, as is narrated in chapter 12 of the book of Maccabees (cfr. 1Mac 12:39-53). Similarly this is the city of Acre, in which the pagan statue of Baalzebub stood, when Ahaziah king of Israel had fallen from the balcony of his upper room in Samaria, and he sent his servants and said to them: "Go and consult Baalzebub the god of the inhabitants of Accaron and ask whether I shall recover from my illness," as we read in the first chapter of the Fourth Book of Kings (2Kings 1:2). To this glorious city of Acre the noble princes from the progeny of Vans of India arrived roughly in the year of the Lord 1200 and remained there and built in that place a most beautiful castle that they decorated with many rare and wonderful and special golden diadems and most precious stones. Their king is said to have been Melchior, king of Arabia and Nubia, who came to offer gold to the Lord, as is narrated with more detail in the history of the three kings, namely in chapter ten of the history of the city of Acre. This gold was then taken over by the Templars.

Regarding the loss of the city of Acre

After having narrated the facts regarding the nobility of Acre and its ornaments, now I have to narrate the facts regarding its de-

struction and ruin and explain the reason of its loss in a short and abridged manner, as I have truly heard the story from truthful witnesses, who remembered the facts. I will do so openly and without hiding any of the events. As I have already stated, while the inhabitants of Acre were doing so many wonderful achievements and increasing them, all of a sudden the instinct of the devil prompted the greatest and most hateful discord among the Guelphs and Ghibellines. This strife occurred among all Christians of both parties who were living in Acre, and who had come from Lombardy, and especially between the Pisans and the Genoese, since they were very powerful inhabitants in Acre. [652] They made a pact with the Saracens, so that they could more effectively wage civil war in the town because of the cursed discord that there was between them. When Pope Urban IV⁷³ heard this, he felt sad for the turn of events in the Holy Land and sent twelve thousand mercenaries in order to aid the Holy Land and the Christians living therein. They crossed the sea and came to Acre, but there they did no good, since day and night they were always in the taverns and in illicit places, they would capture and rob the merchants and pilgrims publicly in the streets, and they broke all agreements and accomplished many evil things. When he heard about these events, Al-Ashraf Khalil, Sultan of Babylon, who was a most wise man and very strong in arms, became resolutely convinced that the inhabitants of Acre hated one another and that there was the maximum disagreement between them. So he convoked his council to parliament in Babylon and inquired whether the truce had often been violated by the other side. When the council assured him of this, he gathered an immense army and arrived in front of the city of Acre, in which nobody wanted to resist from continuing fighting one against another. He burnt all the land out of the town and ordered it to be ploughed, and he destroyed all the vineyards and trees and all cultivations of vegetables and fruit in that very fertile region. When he heard this, the master of the Templars, who was a most prudent and strenuous man, became very afraid that the city would be destroyed because of the civil strife going on inside it. So he convoked the council of the knights and sent a delegation to the Sultan to ask for terms of peace, since he was a special friend of the Sultan. He also asked him whether he could amend for the truce that was repeatedly violated.

73 Urban IV was Pope from 1261 to 1264.

The Sultan, out of love and a sense of honour, accepted to concede an amendment to the violation of the truce, asking for the payment of a sum of Venetian money. Thus the master of the Templars went back full of joy and convoked the entire population in the church of the holy Cross where he entered and made a sermon, explaining how the Sultan had listened to his requests, and how the Sultan would accept any man who would go to pay an amendment fine with Venetian money in order to make up for the violation of the truce. In this way they would have peace and the situation would improve. He tried to convince everybody regarding this, telling them that a great harm could befall the city because of the discord of its inhabitants, as in fact happened. When the people heard these words they began to shout that he was a traitor of the city and that he merited death. When the Master heard these words he went out. He could hardly be shielded from the threats of the people. Thus he sent his answer to the Sultan. When the Sultan heard these words, and knew that because of the inner strife of the town the people there were bent on resisting him and he had no other option, he pitched his tents and prepared 60 war machines and many other weapons of war and for 40 days and 40 nights, without any interruption, he began to besiege the town with canon fire, missiles and earthworks.

I heard from a certain very noble knight, who was upon a tower, that when he wanted to throw a lance in the direction of the Saracens, that lance broke in pieces with the impact of the arrows that hit it before he had even thrown it from his hand. During that time there were in the army of the Sultan six hundred thousand armed men, who were divided into three shifts of armies. Thus one hundred thousand men were always besieging the town. When they were tired, another one hundred thousand men took their places, while two hundred thousand stood before the gates of the city and attacked them, and the other two hundred thousand waited in order to replace them. Thus the gates of the town were never closed and there was no hour of the day in which there was no battle raging between the Templars and the other brother knights against the Saracens. The Saracens, however, seemed to grow to innumerable numbers, in such a way that when one hundred thousand were killed, another two hundred thousand took their place. In spite of all this, the inhabitants of the town would not have lost the town, if they encouraged and helped one another faithfully. In fact, when they were fighting hard battles outside the

city walls, a part of the army spontaneously killed another section and then fled. Inside the town one part of the army did not want to defend a palace or a square, but permitted the enemy to freely occupy castles, palaces and squares, since it regarded its own castle or palace as being so strong that it did not care about the other castle or palace. In this way, in the midst of all this discord, the masters and brother knights [653] of the Orders, as you have heard, could only defend themselves, and continued to fight against the Saracens without any break, until they were nearly entirely killed. In fact, the masters and brothers of the convent of the Teutonic knights with their companions and families all remained dead in just one occasion. While all these events were going on, with infinite battles and many knights killed on both sides, the consummation of the sins of the city was approaching. The city was conquered and destroyed on the fortieth day of its siege, in the year of the Lord 1282, on 22nd May. On that day the flower, head and ornament of all the city of the east, namely the glorious city of Acre, was captured.⁷⁴

When all the inhabitants of Tyre, Jaffa, Sidon and Ashkelon, together with those of the other towns and villages, heard the news that Acre had been captured, they left everything behind them and fled to Cyprus. Therefore the Saracens captured Acre, and they entered the city through a breach in the walls close to the castle of the king of Jerusalem. The inhabitants in the town, upon seeing the Saracens among them, did not want to defend one another, but each one tried to defend his own castle or palace. The Saracens had besieged and waged war on the city from outside and inside for a long time, and had to use the worst means to destroy it, since the town, as you have heard, was very strongly defended. In fact, in the history of the defeat of Acre we read that, on account of the sins of the inhabitants, four elements were fighting against the city together with the Saracens. Indeed, first of all the weather became so cloudy and turbulent and it was so dark, that a castle, palace or square would easily be besieged and would end up in flames; but the inhabitants would have helped one another and freely defend one another, if they could have agreed

74 Al-Ashraf Khalil captured Acre on 18th May 1291. The date given in this account is not correct. For a complete account of the siege and capture of Acre, cfr. Girolamo Golubovich OFM, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese*, Tomo I (1215-1300), Collegio S. Bonaventura, Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi 1906, 350-353.

that it was convenient to do so. The fire waged war against the city, since it consumed it. The earth also waged war against the city, since it drank and absorbed the blood of its citizens. Since it was the month of May, during which the sea is very calm, the junior navy officers in Acre could clearly see that, because of the sins of the inhabitants, the city would be lost. They thought that the enemy would not be able to see them because of the dark and cloudy skies, and therefore they immediately escaped to their ships in order to navigate towards Cyprus. But that very moment a storm blew up, and they could not approach the ships with their boats, and since many tried to reach the ships at all costs they all drowned. Nevertheless more than one hundred thousand inhabitants managed to escape to Cyprus.

I heard from a very noble lord, who happened to be there, as well as from other trustworthy men, that more than five hundred most noble ladies and damsels, all daughters of kings and princes, seeing that the city was on the verge of being captured, gathered on the seashore. They were carrying all their jewels and golden ornaments and precious stones of incalculable value on their breasts in order to be able to carry them with them to another land or to a secure island. A certain sailor carried all of them in his ship together with all their material wealth and led them unharmed to Cyprus and then went back. Nobody knows to this day who he was and where he was coming from and where he remained. But many other noble ladies and damsels drowned or were killed. It will take us very long to narrate and explain the intensity of sorrow and weeping in the city. Therefore, while the Saracens were in the city, they were running from one castle to the other, from one palace to the other, from one square to the other, and they were killing all the inhabitants of the city. So many persons on both sides were killed, that one could go over the dead bodies as if he was crossing a bridge.

Thus, when the entire city had been captured, all those who were still alive in the city and who remained fled to the castle of the Templars. The Saracens immediately surrounded it; indeed the Christians continued to defend it strongly for two months. The most noble and best fighters in the army of the Sultan gathered in that place, but they [654] were all killed. In the meantime the city from inside was burning, but the towers of the city were still holding fast and in their castle the Templars defended and blocked the exit gates to the Saracens who were in the city, as before they had blocked the entrance,

until they killed all the Saracens who were in the city with the sword or with fire. When all the noble Saracens saw the others dead and that they could not go out of the city, they opened a breach in the fortifications and thus they escaped. The rest of the Templars who had remained in the castle, when they saw that they could not bring about their downfall, dug beneath the tower of the castle and thus made it fall down upon the Saracens and they were all indifferently killed. When the other Saracens, who were outside the city, saw that they were all going to die, they cunningly offered a truce to the Templars and the Christians, namely to give up the castle, and be able to take all their belongings with them, so that the castle would be destroyed, but that the Saracens would make a pact with them to allow them to rebuild the town. The Templars and Christians believed in the sincerity of the truce and they gave up their castle and came out and down from the towers. When the Saracens gained possession of the castle and of the towers of the city, they massacred all the Christians of the city without any distinction, and carried off the captives to Babylon. Thus Acre remained deserted and empty until the present day. In Acre and in other places close by one hundred and six thousand men were intercepted and captured and more than three hundred thousand were massacred during the siege of Acre, as is evident to this present day. The Saracens attacked the city for 40 days, until they destroyed it and for another 50 days they besieged the castle of the Templars for a period of two months. Therefore when the glorious city of Acre was lost, all the Orientals wept over its destruction with the Canticles of the Lamentations, according to their custom of weeping over the tombs of the dead, mentioning the beauty, magnificence and nobility of Acre to this present day. All the noble ladies and all the common Christians in the entire region of the Orient dressed in black, and have been in sadness and lamentation to this present day. After the siege the Saracens, in order to avoid that the Christians might retake the fortifications, towers, castles and palaces that had been taken away from them, for many years worked hard to destroy them and level them to the ground, in such a way that in no other place on earth has man ever managed to bring about such a feat in such a short space of time. However all the churches, and some fortifications and towers and other beautiful castles and palaces have remained intact and whole, in such a way that, if it pleases God, they can easily be retaken and restored to their pristine state. The Saracens, therefore, placed

mercenaries to guard the gates and the city of Acre, and to look for their nourishment among the bamboo canes and the birds. In fact there are so many partridges and pigeons in Acre that no other city can compare with it for the number of winged creatures that inhabit it. These same mercenaries of the Saracens show a special affection for the Germanic peoples, and they immediately make friends with them both in their facial expressions and in their gestures, and with them they drink wine, even though it is prohibited for them to do so in their religion. From what we have said we can conclude how that aforementioned glorious city was lost because of the discords between its inhabitants, and thus all the glory of the Holy Land, namely the king and princes and the great lords transferred to Cyprus, as you have heard. – This information has been documented by Ludolph, rector of the parish church of Suchem, in the year of the Lord 1350 for the lord Baldwin, bishop of Paderborn, etc.

9

[From the book of Paul Waltheri regarding the Holy Land]

Brother Paul Waltheri of the Order of Minor, also wrote a book regarding the places of the Holy Land. He wrote the book years back upon the request of the lord John of Rissenberg, who was chamberlain of the most illustrious prince and the most excellent king of the Romans Maximilian.

[655] Brother Paul was for a time Commissary for the holy places and for the friars of Jerusalem around the year of the Lord 1480 and he lived there for three years. During his pilgrimages he visited the city of Damascus and wrote the following words: Outside the city of Damascus there is a place in a valley, where today one finds the church of Saint Mary *de Sardina*. In that place Noah constructed the ark upon the command of God. Then I journeyed in the direction of the great sea and on that seashore there is the city of Beirut, which is a very glorious city with a large population, and it is also a seaport. In this city there are many merchants coming from diverse Christian regions of the world, and outside the city one finds a church of the Christians called the church of the Saviour. Beside this church there is a convent of the friars Minor of the Observance and there six to

eight friars normally dwell, who celebrate the offices for the Christian Catholics and for the merchants in the same church. In that place one can gain a plenary indulgence. In that place a praiseworthy miracle regarding the body of Christ has occurred, through the holiness of the friars living there. In fact it is written that in the year of the Lord 1455 there was a certain Saracen, whose house was built adjoining the church of the blessed Mary and was close to the convent of the brothers. A certain person of high rank informed him that there was a great treasure hidden underground in his house. So he began to dig secretly, helped only by his own wife. After he had dug a hole that was 15 feet deep, God permitted that fire came out of the depths and burned both of them and they died. When the other Saracens saw what happened, and realised that their bodies were lifeless, they were very afraid to go down into the pit and take out the dead man and his wife. So the Saracens obliged the friars Minor to go and take out the corpses of those infidels. The friars armed themselves with confession and received the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and after having marked themselves with the sign of the cross and sprinkled holy water over themselves, they trusted in the Lord and entered into the pit, just like the three young men in the burning furnace. Through the grace of God they were preserved intact and extracted the dead bodies. When a certain Saracen saw this he despised God's grace and with great presumption said: "Why can't I enter the pit securely just like these friars did and come out of it unharmed, in order to find the treasure?" But as soon as he had placed his foot in the pit, all of a sudden the flames came out of the pit and burned the foot of that infidel, in such a way that for all the days of his life no medicaments could cure him. He lived until the year of the Lord 1473. But even though he saw that evident miracle he did not convert to the salvation of the faith, but died as an infidel and thus descended in the eternal flames of fire of hell. When they saw this all the Saracen inhabitants of the city of Beirut began to show certain devotion in favour of the brothers. But they did not merit of receiving the grace of conversion and were not worthy of it. Outside the city of Beirut, about two miles distant, is the place where Saint George killed the dragon⁷⁵ and freed the daughter of the

Golfe de Saint-Georges, or Saint George's Bay, is located on the northern coast of the city of Beirut near Dbayeh, and is believed to be the one of the traditional places where Saint George slew the dragon.

king of that city, and afterwards converted the people to the faith in Christ. In that place one can obtain an indulgence of seven years.

10

[Letter of the nobles of Moravia to Pope Alexander]

After kissing your blessed feet we dutifully offer our humble act of submission. Most holy father, we welcome the friars of Saint Bernardine, by others known as the Observants, and who the friars Conventuals accuse in front of the Apostolic See, stating that the aforementioned friars, with a spirit of vanity, pride and out of fear of the rulers of this world, from whom they want to receive favours, try to convince the same rulers with arguments against the Conventual brothers, telling them that the same friars want to make a petition with great zeal and hard work [656] in order to move them and evict them out of their hermitages and convents. They also accuse the same friars of Saint Bernardine because they are not subject to the superior and master, and that if they are not obliged to fall under his obedience, the Conventual friars would defect from their Order and threaten to join the sect of Mohammed. Most holy Father, we feel a great sorrow that these things are happening in our times, namely that not only are there heretics among us, but also that the same friars, who come from one and the same source, not only disagree among themselves, but also accuse and persecute one another. These things do not favour in any way the interests of Christianity, but rather they are a great evil that threatens it. Particularly in our regions there are so many heretics, and every day people are forced to listen to such perverse men who dare speak out and these same people are destined, if they want, to believe anything they hear. To this we have to add other things, namely that the innocence, the holiness of life, the good actions of these same friars become resplendent among the others, just as those other friars are wont to lead a more disagreeable way of life, not according to what their profession asks of them, in such a way that they seem to become subjects of the other heretics and confirm their actions, since these heretics never desist from tearing apart the Roman faith of other persons. From this one concludes that the rapacious wolves enslave the innocent and meekest sheep, and those

whose life is most innocent and without blemish can find themselves being mixed up and being tarnished by the contagion of the way of life of the Conventuals. In order to avoid such things, we beg your Holiness who occupies the role of the Vicar of the almighty God, to be willing to provide instructions that no one should be allowed to offer any attention and listen to those who are working for the confusion of such an Order, and in this way scandals can be avoided. Indeed, we can affirm this, namely, that in our province the brothers of Saint Bernardine lead a most morally wholesome and innocent way of life, and give a good example to many and through their preaching of the Catholic faith they draw many back to join the Church. Therefore, prostrated in front of your most holy feet, we humbly beg that Your Holiness would kindly give due consideration and esteem to these brothers of Saint Bernardine as well as to the other Christian faithful, who with their most holy life – since they are fighting for the cause of Christ – daily correct those who look to them, and provoke them to amend their lives and to show greater devotion. We ask you to keep the aforementioned brothers in the state in which they now live, and to defend them from those who persecute them. Your Holiness should not fear that, because of this, the Order of the friars Conventuals would defect and pass on to the sect of Mohammed, as has been suggested. If they were such as they would like to be seen and held by others, and therefore not only in words, but also through their exemplary life and good works appear outwardly for what they should be, in the same way as the friars of Saint Bernardine are doing, nobody among the Christian faithful would persecute them or hate them in any way, but would rather favour them and show them benevolence. We would therefore like to express to Your Holiness our faith and sense of obedience to the Holy See, so that Your Holiness would not be ignorant of what is happening here among us, and thus would give your assent to the petitions of the Conventuals. Given on the 24th day of April 1498.

John of Lomnycz, Captain,

Ladislao of Bozkowicz, supreme chamberlain and the rest of the barons and noble marquises of Moravia, who are obedient to the Roman Church.

To the most Holy Father and lord in Christ, the lord Alexander, who merits the title of Supreme Pontiff of the most holy Church of Rome, and our most observant lord.

11

[Regarding facts contained in the book of brother Paul Waltheri]

Brother Paul Waltheri of the Order of Minors of the Observance in the aforementioned book, in part 10, speaks about the acts of the inhabitants in Jerusalem: first about the Latin Christians; second about the Jews; third about the Greeks and their errors; fourth about the Syrians and their errors; fifth about the Jacobites who live in Jerusalem and in the Orient and their errors; sixth about the Nestorians and [657] their errors; seventh about the Armenians and their errors; eighth about the Georgians and their errors; ninth about the Abyssinians or the Indians who live in Jerusalem and their errors; tenth about the Maronites and the errors to which they once held on fast; but now they have converted and have become Catholics.

12

Regarding the Maronites converted in the Holy Land

The men who inhabit Mount Lebanon in the province of Phoenicia not far from the town of Byblos are numerous, and they are experts and swift in the use of bows and arrows, and they are known as Maronites. They do not dwell permanently in Jerusalem, but every now and then during the year they come out of devotion in order to celebrate the great feasts. They take their name from one of their masters, called Maroun,⁷⁶ who asserted that there is only one will and one action in Christ. The first author of these errors was a certain bishop of Antioch, called Macarius. He, together with his companions, was condemned during the sixth synod of Constantinople,⁷⁷ to

76 St. Maroun was a Syriac monk who lived in the 4th-5th centuries (martyred in 423 in Kefar-Nabo, in Syria), who retired to the mountain of Ol-Yambos in the Taurus range near Antioch to live a solitary life. His tomb is venerated in Apamea, close to Aleppo. He is considered as the founder of the Maronite Church, since his disciple, Abraham of Cyrrus, evangelized modern-day Lebanon after the monks fled to Mount Lebon in order to escape persecutions.

77 The 3rd Council of Constantinople, which was the sixth general council, was held in the year 680-681 and it decreed heretical the doctrine that Christ had one will (*moné thélesis*).

which 150 Bishops and Prelates gathered. He was considered to be a heretic and was bound with the yoke of anathema and was separated from the Church of the faithful. Just as in a pure man one thing is the rational will, and another thing is sensuality, so in Christ one thing was His human will, according to which He wanted to eat and drink and asked that the chalice of the passion be taken away from him; but another thing was his Divinity, which was one and the same with the will of the Father. Christ manifested these two wills in an open way, when He said: *Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it* (Mt 26:39). Who, in fact, does not know that the acts of eating and drinking and other similar necessities, that were to be found in Christ as a man, were actions of His humanity, and do not pertain to His unchangeable Divinity? In fact He raised the dead to life and after his death He regained His soul, and these actions did not pertain to His humanity, but rather to the power of His Divinity. From this it is evident that one thing is the action of the Divinity and another thing the action of humanity. Similarly regarding the human will the Apostle Paul writes to the Romans in order to instruct us openly and he says: *I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate* (Rm 7:15). Behold the battle that exists between the rational will and the will of sensuality! He also says: *I know of nothing good living in me, although the will to do what is good is in me* (Rm 7:18). *The spirit is willing* according to the rational will, *but the flesh is weak* (Mt 26:41) according to the will of sensuality. According to another text it was another who put Peter's belt around him and led him, although he did not want to do so (cfr. Jn 21:18), but Peter afterwards freely turned back to Rome and wanted to be crucified out of his own rational will. Saint Paul expresses these two wills as if they were a double law that creates an inner turmoil in the human person. Thus he says: *I can see [658] that my body follows a different law that battles against the law which my reason dictates. This is what makes me a prisoner of that law of sin which lives inside my body* (Rm 7:23). The aforementioned Maroun therefore was imprudently blinded by a diabolic illusion and led many of his disciples into error. These disciples are called Maronites. For nearly five hundred years ago they were separated from the fold of the faithful of the holy Church and celebrated their own Sacraments. Afterwards, however, they returned with a conversion of their heart and in the presence of

the venerable Father Aymeric, Patriarch of Antioch,⁷⁸ they confessed the Catholic faith and denied their errors and from that moment they have followed the traditions of the Church of Rome. After a period of time this people again began to waver and did not want to follow in a perfect way the laws of the Catholic Church, nor abandon its errors, until the year of the Lord 1472. Now it has been 13 years since they returned to the Catholic faith, that is, until the year of the Lord 1486.

13
Brother Gripho

There was a certain man who was a devout friar called Gripho.⁷⁹ He came from the southern regions of Germany and was a member of the Order of the Observants of the blessed Father Francis. With two companions he confidently entered the province of the Maronites and began to preach and to teach the people how to hold on fast to their obedience to the Church of Rome and how to embrace the way of truth and of salvation of the Christian religion. With the cooperation of God's grace, all the people, both clerics and commoners, abandoned all their errors, and converted in a perfect way and returned to the bosom of the mother Church of Rome. In fact, all the other Prelates of the east, except for the Latins alone, do not wear pontifical rings and mitres, and do not carry the pastoral staff in their hands and do not make use of bells, but they call their people to gather to church with the sound of a hammer or a stick hitting a wooden plank. As a sign of their obedience these aforementioned Maronites began to observe the Latin customs and rites, especially in the celebration of the divine offices and in the administration of the Sacraments. Thus their Patriarch was present in the general council of the Lateran under the venerable Pope Innocent III that was celebrated solemnly in the city of Rome. There the aforementioned Pope Innocent graciously conceded

⁷⁸ In 1182, during the Crusader domination of the Holy Land, the Maronites were united with the Church of Rome. Aymeric was the crusader Latin Patriarch of Antioch.

⁷⁹ The Franciscan chronicler Mark of Lisbon states that brother Gripho brought back the Maronites from heresy around the year 1450.

all the privileges to the aforementioned Prelates of the Maronites, and kindly received them to obedience and confirmed all their petitions. They then joyfully returned to their own homeland and became worthy to serve the Lord. The Maronites do not have their own language or alphabet, but some of them speak the language of the Greeks, while others that of the Saracens, and they use the alphabet of the nations in which they are when writing any document regarding civil affairs, but in the celebration of the divine offices and in the reading of the Scriptures they make use of Latin letters. May the Lord conserve them and us in His grace. Amen.

14

Regarding the foundation and origins of a new Order,
namely the Order of Mary Magdalen of the converted women,
who are called penitents by the people,
founded by William, bishop of Paris.

The excellent man and doctor, the master William bishop of Paris, came from the nation of Auvergne, and was a most profound doctor and wrote many books, namely [659] the treatise on good and evil; the book about faith and laws; he also edited an *Opus magnum* that is a unique treatise on the universe, with six parts treating, the first three, about the corporal universe, and the rest about the incorporeal or spiritual elements in the widest sense. He also composed a treatise on the praise of patience and a group of sermons that he had declaimed for the sake of the exhortation of the public, and many other books and treatises on various arguments, that are so numerous and complete that many doctors who are eminent in wisdom and many learned men judge them to be in the first place. Therefore while this man of such elevated intelligence and profound speculation was also conspicuous for his unique and holy way of life, before he was elevated to the bishopric of Paris he publicly lectured theology with great fruit. One of his great friends received a letter from a certain Bishop in which it was commanded that a prebend, namely a payment for cathedral clergy, that was vacant in his church should be conferred to some good man, and this friend offered it to him. He immediately answered: "My friend you do not have the permission to confer the

prebend except to a good man, and you cannot go against the scope of the one who commanded you, and therefore you should not offer the prebend to me, since I am not a good man." In this way he was even more glorified. O unique man who should be highly praised for being a rarity in meriting your scarlet robes.

The beginning of the Order

During that same time William brought abundant fruit with his preaching of the Word and drew back from sin a multitude of women among the common people, and placed them in a new convent in Paris that he founded for the daughters of God in the year of the Lord 1225. Through their example this Order then began to spread in other towns. These women lived in community according to the rule of the Order of Saint Augustine and were called *penitents* by the people. When exactly two years had passed, that is in the year of the Lord 1227, after the lord Bartholomew of Paris had died, the aforementioned William was elevated in a most worthy manner to the pontifical chair. As a bishop for a long time he rendered his service with abundant fruit, and he made use of his tongue and of his pen to carry out the office of doctor in a most devout manner. A certain Carthusian brother of Cologne, in the *Fasciculum Temporum* states that William of Paris founded this Augustinian Order, that is also known by the name of *Mendicants*, and that the aforementioned William or Wilhelm gave to these women the rule of Saint Augustine, so that they would live an ordered and religious life. The lord Pope Gregory the ninth was overjoyed at the conversion of these women and moved by piety he abundantly showered indulgences to all those Christian faithful who would help them with their alms in their needs. From that moment they received *nuntii* and mendicant servants to procure their sustenance, and thus they were known as Mendicants under the rule of Saint Augustine. The fact that these women from the common people were converted to do penance is evident from the following letters written for them, that are so many and that have been edited for the first time many years after their conversion.

W. deacon and C. cantor of Saint Peter of Mainz, protectors and judges of the Order of Saint Mary Magdalen in Germany, founded

by the Apostolic See, wish from the bottom of their hearts to all the rectors of the churches and to the other Christian faithful who read this present writing an abundance of salvation and mercy.

We believe that the Christian faithful have received the news regarding how the lord Pope has been overjoyed to learn of the conversion of those women, who for a long time had been stuck in the profound mire, that is [660] in their sordid sins, and who had decided to make penance for their past evils. In order to sustain them in their lives he prepared for them many special privileges and indulgences. In this way, through their penance and led by many indulgences the faithful were aroused to return to the rudiments of the faith and with greater effect to accomplish works of charity, especially by sustaining them in their corporal necessities, since they could not do this by their own means. Therefore, when the lord Pope wanted to take care like a father of this new plantation that was still tender and that was producing fruits of maturity in Christ, he has instituted us as protectors and judges of the aforementioned Order. We greatly desire to accomplish this command as is befitting, and we therefore beg all of you and exhort you with the authority given to us by the lord Pope, in whose name we exercise our office, in order that sins may be forgiven, and we insist upon you, who are constituted in the person of Jesus Christ to preside over the holy Church for the conversion of sinners, to rejoice with us who are sending to you nuncios from the penitent sisters of the aforementioned Order in Nuremberg. We ask you to receive them benignly when they leave us to come to you and to beg for alms among your subjects, since they are sacrificing themselves for the sake of a work of charity and are more closely indicated for this holy work. You are also to publish the indulgence of 40 days that the lord Pope has mercifully conceded to all Christian faithful who offer alms for this sake. You should know that this indulgence, and many others, can be acquired, namely on the first Sunday of every month for 40 days, during the Easter week, on the feast of the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary 40 days, on the feast of Saint Mary Magdalen 40 days, on the feast of the Assumption of the blessed Virgin 40 days, on the Dedication 100 days. These indulgences have been conceded with kindness by the Apostolic See to the same benefactors and to increase the privileges of the Order, in the council of Mainz where they were publicly announced. Therefore, the venerable lord Cardinal Otho, Legate of the Apostolic See, conceded an indulgence of 40 days

to the same benefactors. These indulgences have been confirmed by the lord Pope. Since these same authentic documents cannot be carried to every single place, as a witness of their authenticity we have stamped this present document with our seal, which is affixed to it. We concede with our authority the privilege of communion with the prayers of this Order as well as the indulgences of the Holy See to all those Christian faithful who are benefactors; this we do as a sign of recognition of these and other good actions that they accomplish with the Lord's approval, in order to acquire eternal mercy in heaven. Given in Mainz in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1241, on the 16th day of the *Calends* of October.⁸⁰

During that same year Pope Gregory the ninth died, on the 15th year of his pontificate. That same year the lord Godfrey, Cardinal and bishop of Sabina and Milan, was elected Pope and changing his name began to be called Celestine the fourth. However he only remained Pope for 17 days, since he died and left the Apostolic See vacant because of ambitions and discords for 22 months and 14 days. In the year of the Lord 1243 the lord Cardinal Sinibald of Genoa was elected Pope and chose the name Innocent the fourth.⁸¹ During his times the following letter was sent in favour of the aforementioned sisters of the Order of Saint Mary Magdalen in Nuremberg.

Stephen dean, R. cantor and G. custodian of the church of Saint Peter of Mainz, judges and protectors of the Order of Saint Mary Magdalen in Germany, founded by the Apostolic See, to all the churches and to the rest of the rectors of the Christian faithful sent this present writing wishing them health in Christ.

[661] It is a great merit before God to give alms, and we believe that every wise and discreet person is aware of this. Therefore, since the poor sisters of the Order, namely of Saint Mary Magdalen in Nuremberg, do not have the means to sustain themselves, in order that they may continue to serve the Lord according to the profession of their Order without suffering lack of means, especially since among

80 16th September.

81 On 22nd August, 1241, Pope Gregory IX died. The political situation with Frederick II and the incapacity to elect a new Pope, was critical. Goffredo Castiglioni was finally elected as Pope Celestine IV on 25th October, 1241, but he died 10th November, 1241. The Papal See remained vacant until 25th June 1243, when Sinibald Fieschi was elected Pope and took the name Innocent IV (25th June, 1243 – 7th December, 1254).

the other Orders this Order has been born as a new plant, we beg all of you who receive this letter by admonishing you and exhorting you in the Lord, with the authority of the lord Pope, in whose name we act, and assuring you of the remission of all your sins, if you kindly welcome the nuncios of these poor sisters, who will come to you asking for alms, and you will take care to help them, so that for this and all good things that God will inspire you to do, you will arrive at eternal joy. These are therefore the indulgences that the lord Pope Gregory of holy memory declared for all those who will help the aforementioned Order: all those who will give alms to the aforementioned poor sisters and will help them charitably, will daily, for 40 days, receive an indulgence; in the solemnities of the Annunciation and of the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary and in the feast of Saint Mary Magdalen, on which feast another 20 days will be added to the aforementioned 40; in the Dedications and in their anniversaries they will receive one hundred days in which all their sins will be forgiven if they do penance, and if they confide in the prayers of the aforementioned sisters to help them to be forgiven. They will also gain the indulgence on the first Sunday of each month for 40 days; they will also gain it in the Octave of Easter if they visit the aforementioned places and give alms for the use of the poor sisters in that same place so that they can be forgiven for one whole year after doing penance. Besides we also declare that the venerable father Otho, Cardinal Legate of the Apostolic See in the regions of Germany, gives 40 days of indulgence to all the benefactors of the sisters. The lord Pope Gregory of holy memory has confirmed this indulgence. Above all, the venerable father and lord of the entire Church, Pope Innocent has taken care to publish an indulgence of 40 days for all those who give alms to the aforementioned Order. As a witness to this declaration we are marking this document with our own seal. Therefore with the aforementioned authority with which we are endowed, under the pain of suspension and excommunication we strictly forbid that anybody would dare to ridicule these indulgences or to harm the nuncios or presume to impede them in their mission. Whoever does this will not be taking care of his own salvation and will act out of contempt towards Jesus Christ. Whoever presumes to insult this command of the lord Pope and our command with audacity, should now that he shall appear in front of us in six weeks' time from the moment he receives the citation to present himself in the convent of Saint Peter of Mainz in order to answer to the

accusation. Given at Mainz in the year of the Lord 1253, on the 5th day of the *Idus* of September.⁸²

Another letter of the same form given in the following year, that is in 1254

Berthold, dean, R. cantor, G. custodian of the church of Saint Peter of Mainz, the judges and protectors of the Order of Saint Mary Magdalen, etc., according to the preceding letter, from the word up till the words: "in front of us in the convent of Saint Peter of Mainz in order to answer to the legitimate accusation." Given at Mainz in the year of the Lord 1254.

In that same year in the feast of Saint Lucy the lord Pope Innocent IV died at Naples in the 12th year of his pontificate. And in that same year the lord Cardinal Raynaldus, Protector of the Order of friars Minor and of Saint Clare was elected to the papacy and chose the name Alexander IV. During his time, namely the 4th year of his pontificate, in 1258, the following letter was published.

[662] N. dean of Saint Peter and N. dean of Saint Stephen in Mainz, protectors and judges of the Order of Saint Mary Magdalen, appointed by the lord Pope to this office, to all the rectors of the churches and to the other Christian faithful wish you with this present writing all health in Christ Jesus.

We believe that all Christian faithful have received the news that the lord Pope is overjoyed at the conversion of the penitent sisters and that he has strengthened their Order with many privileges and indulgence, in such a way that the faithful people will be encouraged and led by this indulgence to show their spontaneous piety and to make acts of sacrifice through charity, so that they will help with their generosity these sisters, who are not capable of sustaining themselves in this miserable life. This indulgence has been proclaimed in the following way, namely that there is a daily indulgence for 40 days that the lord Pope mercifully grants to all their benefactors. The special indulgences are the following: In the Annunciation of the blessed Mary, 20 days; during the Easter week; also in the feast of Saint Mary Magdalen, 20 days; also in the feast of the Assumption of the blessed

82 9th September.

Virgin 20 days; also in the Dedication one hundred days; also in the first Sunday of each month 40 days in favour of buying property, as it has been decided during the council of Mainz. Besides, the lord Otho, Legate of the Apostolic See concedes 40 days of indulgence, that have been confirmed by the Pope; the same does brother Hugh, Cardinal Legate of the Apostolic See, who concedes 40 days; and above all the reverend father in Christ the lord Pope Alexander, who has taken care to confer an indulgence of 40 days to all their benefactors. This indulgence has been confirmed by the same lord Pope Alexander together with all the other aforementioned indulgences. Therefore, with the authority of the Pope, with which we are invested, we exhort all of you in the Lord so that you will bind yourselves to the remission of all your sins, in such a way that, as God inspires you and for the sake of the lord Pope, you will show reverence to the nuncios who will come to visit you in order to beg alms for the penitent sisters of the aforementioned Order in Nuremberg, and you will also take care to promote in a dignified manner their work of charity. We also urgently ask the clerics, who are the vicars of Jesus Christ in the holy Church, to exhort their people to show compassion towards these poor sisters of Christ, by publicly announcing these aforementioned indulgences. Since we cannot comfortably send a copy of this authentic document to every single place, as a witness to this present writing we stamp it with our own seal. Given at Mainz in the year of the Lord 1258, on the 13th day of the *Calends* of May.⁸³

From these aforementioned letters it is evident that the penitent sisters, who were converted and founded by William, bishop of Paris, in the beginning of their founding were poor and mendicants. Through the nuncios assigned to their service, until they could build a college or a church where they could live the regular life, they thus had to live in the convents and churches of other women of the same Order until the Council of Lyon celebrated by Pope Gregory X in the year of the Lord 1274, in which all the other Mendicant Religious were abolished, except for the Minors and the Preachers. Before that Council the aforementioned sisters of the Order of Mary Magdalen under the rule of Saint Augustine, in many places where they possessed convents, lived as good religious; for this reason they soon acquired churches and monasteries, as in the case of Nuremberg and Ratisbon.

83 19th April.

During this time of the Council of Lyon the lord Berthold, bishop of Bamberg, in his diocese in the town of Nuremberg in the year of the Lord 1274, upon the request of Conrad, proprietor of a wine-cellar and Mark, a mayor, as well as upon the request of the university of the town of Nuremberg, consecrated the church of the same sisters [663] dedicated in honour of Saint Mary Magdalen, so that the church's title agreed with the name of the Order, that is, the Order of Mary Magdalen, as is evident in the official letter of the aforementioned lord bishop. The following are the contents of this letter.

Berthold, for the grace of God bishop of Bamberg, to every single person and to all persons who receive this letter, wishes them health and every true wellbeing.

Our pastoral office asks of us that we take care to come to the aid of pious persons, and especially of the requests of the women religious, in order to increase our devotion in the Lord. Thus it came to be that, out of devotion for the beloved in Christ, the Prioress and the sisters of the convent of Nuns of Saint Mary Magdalen in Nuremberg, situated outside the city gates, and upon the request of our servant Conrad, proprietor of a wine-cellar and Mark, a mayor, as well as of all the citizens of the same town, on the Monday following the feast of the Nativity of the most glorious Virgin Mary, we have consecrated the choir and the altar of the monastery of these same ladies, in honour or reverence towards the reverend patroness Saint Mary Magdalen. We bring to mind the clemency of Saints Peter and Paul and of the other Apostles, and with their authority and ours we concede to all those who come truly repentant on the day of the consecration of the choir 40 days indulgence for the venial sins they committed during this year; we also similarly concede on each month for the space of this year a 40 days indulgence for the venial sins they committed during this year; also another indulgence of 40 days for the venial sins committed during the year on the anniversary of the consecration of this same church. For the occasion of the consecration of the altar we concede a daily indulgence of 40 days for the venial sins committed during the year and we mercifully relax the penance of the same sins through this perpetual indulgence. We exhort and admonish with all due care in the Lord that, out of great devotion towards these ladies whom we love above all others, and in order to help them in their want as we have heard and seen, every single one of you and all of you take care to generously and freely offer them alms. As a witness of the

authenticity of this present document and to make it stronger in its application we hereby stamp it with our own seal. Given and implemented in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1274, on the 16th day of the *Calends* of September.⁸⁴

This consecration of the church and choir was celebrated, as we have said, during the celebration of the Council of Lyon. During that same Council, as we have also stated before, it was decreed that the Apostolic See would not give permission to the establishment of new Religious Orders, particularly Mendicant Orders, except for the Preachers and the Minors, that the Church approved once more in that Council, because of their evident usefulness to the entire Church. Regarding the other Mendicant Orders it was decreed that they would be allowed to exist until further notice. To this day those persons of these Orders, to which the aforementioned constitution was extended and applied, could request the general to concede for them permission to transfer to the other approved Orders, in such a way however, that no Order could totally transfer to another any convent or hermitage the same places without having received a special permission, as is decreed in the chapter: The diversity of Religious Orders, *regarding the convents*, book VI.⁸⁵ Later on Boniface VIII decreed that the Order of the Augustinian Hermits and the Order of the Carmelites could continue existing in their solid state, as they had been doing before. Confer John [Andrew] in Gloss c. pre-annexed regarding the verb *solido*. Regarding the Order of Mary Magdalen present in those convents where there were no cloistered colleges nor churches, but only the convent, [it was decreed] that it was legitimate to state that these places did not fall under the aforementioned prohibition [664] and that the sisters wanted to call themselves Order of Mary Magdalen, but many of them took their leave from the same convents and departed and returned to their vomit. For this reason many honest men and other Religious, as well as noble secular people, even those among the illustrious social classes, who before had offered them their assistance with zeal and were even willing to offer their own daughters to God, to live with them in conversion and penance, and who minis-

84 17th August.

85 Cfr. *Liber sextus Decretalium Domini Bonifacii Papae VIII, suae integritati una cum Clementinis et Extravagantibus earumque Glossis restitutus*, Venetiis 1595, 381.

tered to the same sisters in the Lord with many other generous gifts, when they saw them unstable and not useful to the Church any longer, they began to withhold their alms from them, and they were especially not generous with the nuncios since they were devoting themselves to a useless service, when they were asking the faithful to devoutly offer alms with abundance to these nuns. Therefore during the Council of Lyon it was decreed and published in the Decretals concerning Religious, particularly by the Bishops, that those many and diverse monasteries of Religious and those Orders that had their rules approved by indulgence of the Apostolic See, were now to be incorporated, and especially those Religious Orders that were founded after the Lateran Council, as was this Order of Mary Magdalen.

In this way a meeting of princes was celebrated under Rudolph, king of the Romans, in the town of Nuremberg in the diocese of Bamberg on the fourth year following the Council of Lyon, namely in the year of the Lord 1278, in the chapel or church of the ladies of religious women of the Order of Mary Magdalen, founded in Nuremberg, who are called penitents by the people, and who do not belong to any of the approved Religious Orders mentioned above, especially to the ones falling under the title of penitents of Saint Augustine. Therefore the Prioress together with all the sisters of her convent desired to incorporate themselves with the approved rule of the Order of Saint Clare. In order to obtain this permission with ease, they sent to the Curia, that is, to the most holy lord Pope Nicholas the third, a petition together with a request by the illustrious prince lord Rudolph, king of the Romans, as well as by lady Anne, queen and consort of the same king. The most holy Pope listened to their petition and sent to the lord Berthold, the aforementioned bishop of Bamberg, and with the consent of the council of the friars Minor and their Minister Provincial the permission to incorporate the sisters in the Order of Saint Clare, as is contained in the privilege and mandate of the aforementioned lord Pope, as is evident, word by word, from the following document.

Nicholas, servant of the servants of God, to the venerable brother N., bishop of Bamberg, wishes you health and apostolic benediction.

The beloved daughters in Christ, of the Province and convent of the monastery in Nuremberg, who are called penitents by the people, in the diocese of Bamberg, have presented their petition to our presence, expressing their wish that the same institute of the Order

of Saint Augustine be now transferred to the Order of Saint Clare and that in the nuns would now serve the Lord perpetually in the observances of the Order of Saint Clare by living in enclosure. For this reason, on their part they humbly petitioned us that the place in which the aforementioned monastery is situated, having enough resources at this point in time, so that it is convenient that the Abbess and the whole convent of the nuns would remain in stable way living in that same place, since they can comfortably sustain themselves and follow the observances of the Order of Saint Clare, we have decided to favourably acquiesce to their wishes and to proceed to incorporate them in the aforementioned Order of Saint Clare. We are also sending to you in the spirit of brotherhood this present apostolic document, our beloved son in Christ king Rudolph and our beloved daughter in Christ Anne, illustrious monarchs of the Romans, in order to answer your plea in favour of the same Prioress and convent, so that the beloved sons the Minister and Provincial chapter of the Order of friars Minor in the Province of Germany, on the occasion when they celebrate this same chapter, this same Minister and the other discreets of the Province with the counsel of the friars will [665] diligently inquire regarding that place and the single conditions and circumstances. If your examination will not lead to other prejudgments and you consider that it would be pleasing to God, you are to make sure that you will apply to that same place and to the whole complex of its buildings all that pertains to the aforementioned observances that are expressed in the same rule of the Order of Saint Clare.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ It is probable that the following expression has to be added to the document: "The Prioress and sisters of this convent are hereby incorporated into the Order of Saint Clare." According to Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, ad. an. 1278, n. 39, the letter is dated on the 3rd day of the *Nones* of July (5th July), and the aforementioned Bishop executed its orders that very moment through the lord Emichonem, dean of the Church of Bamberg, and brother Albert, ex-Provincial and Custos of Bavaria, and brother Andrew, lector in Bamberg, who were his representative vicars in this case. Cfr. *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol I, 299, and Vol. II, 91.

APPENDIX III

[LEGEND OR LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS
WRITTEN BY BROTHER BERNARD OF BESSE]

Beginning of the Book of Praises of Saint Francis

[666] In Italy, brother Thomas, a man of exquisite eloquence, at the command of Pope Gregory IX, wrote a life of Saint Francis ...⁸⁷

⁸⁷ The translation of the *Liber de Laudibus Sancti Francisci*, written in 1280 by Bernard of Besse, secretary of St. Bonaventure, has been published in *Francis of Assisi. The Prophet*, Early Documents, Volume III, 31-74. Thus we refer our readers to this translation with the relevant introduction and footnotes.

In the Appendix of the *Chronicle of 24 Ministers General*, page 665, we find the following introductory note by the Quaracchi editors: "The following appendix presents the work of brother Bernard of Besse, secretary of Saint Bonaventure, that has been unedited up till now, as it is found in the codex (sign. I. VI. 33, previously MXXVIII) of the library of the University of Turin. Except for this codex, as far as we know, there exists one other codex, namely, the codex of Paris in the National Library (collectio S. Ioannis a Pratis) cod. 12707 (previously 1059) membran., that was written and finished on 18th August 1508, on whose fol. 1 we read: Beginning of the Chronicle of the life of blessed Francis etc. *Quasi sol oriens mundo* (chapter I). This codex contains only the first two chapters, after which there follows the *Speculum vitae*. The Codex of Turin was transcribed in two copies, one of which was diligently and accurately done in 1896 by the late Father Léon Patrem, member of the Province of Saint Louis in Francis, who also added the variations of the Paris Codex (that was transcribed by the Reverend Father Minister Provincial of the Province of Saint Louis through the Reverend Father Raphael de Aureliaco, Procurator of the Order, who generously forwarded it to us and to whom we are immensely grateful). The other copy is to be found in the library and archives of the convent of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (in Italian "Santissima Annunziata") of Parma, and it was transcribed in the year 1887. The work was accurately composed by the lord Giuseppe Vernazza, librarian, and was transmitted on the 5th day of the *Calends* of April (28th March) 1781 by Father Ireneo Affò ..."

APPENDIX IV

CHRONICLE OF THE XIV OR XV GENERAL MINISTERS
OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR
OR
«CATALOGUS GONSALVINUS»
OF THE GENERAL MINISTERS
OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR⁸⁸

Beginning of the Catalogue of the General Ministers
of the Order of friars Minor⁸⁹

- 88 The name *Catalogus Gonsalvinus* was given by the Quaracchi editors. The *Chronicon XIV vel XV Generalium* is so called, since it refers to the ministers general of the Order from St. Francis (who can be included, hence the number 15, or not included, hence the number 14) to Gonsalvus of Valboa, who died in 1313. The manuscripts that transmit the *Chronicon* include those of University of Turin (A), of the Royal Library of Berlin (B), and of the Biblioteca Laurentiana in Florence (F) (once in the convent of Santa Croce), as well as the *Speculum vitae*.
- 89 The author of the *Chronicle of the XIV or XV Ministers General of the Order of friars Minor* is also Bernard of Besse. The Chronicle was finished until the year 1297, when king Louis IX of France was canonised, but since it also includes the minister general Gonsalvus of Valboa (1304-1313), it covers a longer period of time, maybe until 1305. Little is known about brother Bernard of Besse, except that he was born in Besse, in south-western France, was a member of the Custody of Cahors in the Province of Aquitaine, that he was secretary to Saint Bonaventure, and that he is the author of the *Liber de Laudibus Sancti Francisci* (1280) and of the *Chronicon XIV vel XV Ministrorum Generalium Ordinis fratrum Minorum* (1297-1305), and maybe also of the *Speculum disciplinae* and the *Epistola ad Quendam Novitium Insolentem et Instabilem*, usually attributed to the pen of Saint Bonaventure. In the *Chronica XXIV Ministrorum Generalium*, in *Analecta Franciscana* III, 377, Arnald of Sarrant writes: "Brother Bernard of Besse from the Province of Aquitaine, listed the Generals of the Order in his chronicle on the Ministers General, up to the time of this General. He also published some devotional books. One was about the purpose of the Rule. This was written to silence the envious, and to instruct the brothers to live according to the Rule at the time when brother Bonaventure was General Minister. Another of his books, intended to instruct the novices, is called *The Mirror of Discipline*. – He also wrote a third work containing three principal parts: a life of Saint Francis with many miracles; chronicles of the General Ministers; and thirdly some miracles and divine testimony in approbation of the three Orders of Saint Francis, namely the Minors, the Penitents and the Poor Ladies." Since the period covered by

[693] After the death of the holy Father Francis the following were his successors as ministers general, namely:

[694] [1] Brother *John*, whose surname was *Parenti*,⁹⁰ a holy, just and spiritual man, truly carried out in a spiritual way the office of government. Among other things, when he was provincial in Soria, in the kingdom of Castile in Spain, he convoked a chapter. Since there was a great drought he went with constancy and great confidence to the people who were in danger, and immediately prayed for the grace of abundant rain, and thus it came out to be as he had requested in prayer, and as the friars then referred. – When he worked hard for peace in the case of the Romans, who did not want to reconcile themselves with the Pontiff and did not permit him to return to the City of Rome, he was constrained to predict that they would certainly end up in great danger. In fact the river immediately overflowed its banks and flooded the city of Rome in a terrible way, in such a way that the Romans were terrified and asked the man of God to help them make peace, according to what he had promised them in his prophecy.

The same General transferred with great honour the body of blessed Francis to the place in which it is now buried.⁹¹

He presided over a general chapter in which he commanded that the body of the Lord should be kept securely closed in a silver or ivory pyx or urn, since nothing else in heaven or on earth is worthy of receiving similar veneration. In fact the custom had been to suspend the pyx over the altar; it would happen that sometimes, in front of the people present, it either happened that there was no rope with which to hang the pyx, or else, the rope would break or come loose, and the pyx would fall down with danger and scandal for the people.

[695] He commanded that no brother could be called master or lord, but that all should commonly be called brothers. He also

this Chronicle corresponds to the same period of the *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General* we refer the readers to the notes regarding each Minister General that has been considered in this work.

90 John Parenti was minister general from 29th May 1227 to 29th May 1232. During his generalate the friars asked Pope Gregory IX for the first official papal interpretation of the *Regola bullata* of 1223. The Pope answered with the Bulla *Quo elongati* of 28th September 1230.

91 The transfer of the relics of St. Francis from the church of San Giorgio to the new basilica built by Gregory IX with the initiative of brother Elias took place on 25th May 1230, on the occasion of the chapter of Pentecost.

commanded that the apostate brother should not be received back, if he had fallen suspect to having denied the faith or had fallen publicly in the sin of fornication, or if he was prone to fight and argue and violate in a contumacious way the statutes of the Order, and after having been tolerated, admonished and corrected.

The same general commanded that no novice (who was a priest) could hear the confessions of seculars or Religious, and that no professed friar could do likewise without permission of his Provincial Minister.

[2] He was succeeded by brother *Elias*, who had also before held the post of Minister for some time.⁹² He was a famous in human wisdom, in such a way that a person in Italy with his same ability could hardly be found.

He sent his visitators to conduct visitations in a very strict way in all the Provinces, from the head to the members. As General Minister he instituted and deposed the Provincial Ministers, without waiting for a general chapter; in this way he would absolve a Ministers Provincial, Custos or Custos Guardian as he deemed fit, and he would provide for another one to assume the office.

He induced the Provinces to collect funds on the occasion of the building of the basilica of Saint Francis that he was taking care to conduct in a most sumptuous manner. When a general chapter had been convoked in Rome, he was absolved from the office of minister general. The lord Pope Gregory IX, of holy memory, presided over this chapter, and he accepted to put an end to the term of the Minister and to confirm his successor after the election that was held in his presence.⁹³

When Elias had been absolved from minister general a discord broke out between the Supreme Pontiff and the Roman emperor, namely Frederick. Elias had been a great friend of both, but now he passed over to the part of the emperor. This action aroused the scandal of the entire Order, [696] and thus it came to happen that the

92 Elias had been vicar of St. Francis after the death of Peter Cattani (10th March 1221) and remained in that post until the chapter of Pentecost of 29th May 1227, when Giovanni Parenti was elected minister general. Elias was subsequently elected minister general during the chapter of Rieti on 29th May 1232.

93 Elias was absolved from the office of minister general during the Pentecost chapter in May 1239. He died at Cortona on 22nd April 1253 and was buried in the church of San Francesco that he had built in that city.

prophecy of Saint Francis regarding the future tribulation of the Order became true. Elias expiated his actions with many tears, so that the grace of the holy Father would not be let down in his successor.

[3] His successor was brother *Albert of Pisa*, a unique and good man, who remained in the office of minister only for a short while and then departed from this life to go to the Lord. Then the aforementioned lord Pope Gregory IX, in order not to leave the Order without a Minister, after having waited for a long time, resolutely convoked a general chapter in his presence on the feast of All Saints.⁹⁴

[4] During this chapter the lord Pope assisted personally and received the votes of the electors. Brother *Haymo the Englishman*, a man worthy of great reverence, a mirror of complete honesty and a great theologian, was elected Minister General and was confirmed in office by the same Supreme Pontiff.

This general made diligent corrections to the Divine Office and completed a new set of rubrics with the will and consent of the lord Pope Innocent IV, who declared and confirmed this privilege.⁹⁵

He also ordered and wanted that the general chapter would limit his own power and that of the Ministers Provincials and Custodes.

Upon his own mandate two great, radiant and famous masters in theology, science and religious life, namely brother Alexander (of Hales) and brother Jean de la Rochelle, were then like two great and radiant lights, who together with other discreet and learned friars edited a highly useful document that is a commentary on the Rule.⁹⁶

Under this minister general a general chapter of Definitors was held at Montpellier.⁹⁷ But afterwards the general chapter ordered otherwise regarding such an initiative.

94 Albert of Pisa died on 23rd January 1239 and Pope Gregory IX convoked the general chapter at Anagni on 1st November 1239, in which Haymo of Faverham was elected minister general.

95 During the chapter of Bologna in 1242 Haymo published a new liturgical Ordinal for use by the priests of the Order. It simplified the rubrics of the Missal and of the Divine Office.

96 The *Expositio quatuor magistrorum super Regulam fratrum Minorum*, was the work of famous Franciscan masters of the University of Paris, namely Alexander of Hales, Jean de la Rochelle, Robert de La Bassé, Eudes Rigaud and Goeffroy de Brie, custos of Paris.

97 The Chapter of Definitors at Montpellier was held in 1241.

[697] In his memory the following epitaph was placed in the church of the friars in Anagni:

Here lies Haymo, the splendour and ornament of the Minors,
When this brother was alive he was a father who governed this
Order,
He was a famous lector and a General Minister of his Order.⁹⁸

[5] After him came the venerable and old man brother *Crescentius*,⁹⁹ a just man who, while in office, was full of zeal towards the discipline in the Order. He asked the brothers to inquire and collect many accounts regarding the miracles of blessed Francis as well as about the lives of the first brothers, and he composed a document regarding this under the form of a dialogue. Some of these accounts have been preserved, while others have gone lost through negligence.¹⁰⁰

However he did not govern the Order for three years. In fact he was absolved from the office and was going to be chosen as bishop of Assisi; however the lord Pope Innocent IV offered that Episcopal see to brother Nicholas, of the same Order, who was his confessor and friend. Brother *Crescentius* humbly accepted this in silence.¹⁰¹

98 Haymo died in Anagni on an uncertain date between 25th December 1243 and May 1244, assisted by Pope Innocent IV. The Latin epitaph reads as follows: *Hic iacet Anglorum decus et décor Haymo Minorum, / Vivendo frater hosque regendo pater, / Eximius lector, Generalis in Ordine Rector.*

99 *Crescentius* of Jesi, provincial minister of the Marches of Ancona, was elected minister general during the Pentecost chapter held on 22nd May 1244, although the actual date of his election fluctuates between this date and 17th June of the same year. Other historians place the chapter of 1244 on 4th October in Genoa.

100 R. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 251: “*Crescentius* was also interested in hagiography. He was anxious to preserve a record of miracles and holy living for the edification of his own and future generations. He commissioned a slim volume celebrating the lives and miracles of some of the saintly brethren the Order counted among its sons, and was responsible for Celano’s *Second Life*. With the approval of the General Chapter he appealed to all those brethren who knew anything redounding to the glory of St. Francis to send in their reminiscences to Assisi – an appeal which prompted Thomas of Celano to compose a new biography.”

101 R. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 255: “(*Crescentius*) omitted to summon the General Chapter, which was one of his statutory duties, and Innocent IV, impatient with his deficiencies and lack of co-operation, convoked

[6] His successor was brother *John of Parma*, a man of learning and unique in his religiosity, and a great friend of poverty and humility. He was lecturing the Sentences in the *Studium* of Paris when he was elected to the generalate.¹⁰²

He prohibited the friars to sing or to read those parts in the Ordinary of the Roman Church that were not included in the dispositions of the Rule, or that had not been approved by the general chapter, except for some antiphons of the blessed Virgin that were to be sung after Compline.¹⁰³

He received letters from Manuel, patriarch of Constantinople, and from John, emperor of the Greeks, regarding the general council of the whole Church. As we have heard, the Apostolic See had destined solemn Legates and sent them, under the leadership of this Minister, to the Greeks with many great gifts. But during the way they were stopped from going further and were robbed and forced to return back. Even though they were then sent another time, they were not able to accomplish their mission because of the danger that a similar mishap would impede them once again.

one at Lyons for July 1247. Once again *Crescentius* chose to stay away and was released from office [...] His behaviour is curious. Though seemingly too old to travel to Lyons in 1245 he had not been too old to take on the government of the Order the year before: perhaps he had an antipathy to Innocent IV; or to Lyons. His public life was by no means over. No sooner had the Franciscans deposed him than the cathedral Chapter of Assisi elected him their bishop [...] Innocent IV refused to confirm the election and gave the see to another Friar Minor, brother Nicholas, his confessor. The clergy and people of Assisi would not at first accept his nominee and clamoured for *Crescentius*, but were forced to comply. *Crescentius* however had not retired. In 1252 he became bishop of Jesi, and he governed and quarrelled with his diocese until his death ten years later.”

102 John Buralli of Parma was elected during the general chapter convoked by Innocent IV at Lyon on 13th July 1247.

103 R. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, 262: “At the Chapter of Metz (1254) he issues a letter, to be distributed through all the provinces, ordering the brothers to conform strictly to the rubric of the Ordinals of the missal and breviary ‘as corrected by my predecessor brother Haymo of holy memory, confirmed by the Apostolic See and approved by General Chapter.’ Among other details he forbade the singing of any hymns, sequences or responses not contained in the Ordinal, with the exception of some antiphons of the Virgin, which might be sung after Compline; regulated the manner in which the *Te Deum* and *Credo* were to be sung; and laid down that the priest celebrating Mass was to put the host on his left and the chalice on his right.”

[698] Under this minister general, William of Saint Amour, a doctor of theology in Paris, not being wise in prudence, promulgated a defamatory treatise against the state of life of Religious, stating that Religious cannot hear confessions of the faithful without special license from the parish priest, even though they had the mandate of the Supreme Pontiff or of the Ordinary. Afterwards the friars were strong in defending the truth about their own state, and presented their own treatise as a defence in front of the lord Pope Alexander IV, who took counsel from his brothers (the Cardinals) and condemned to the punishment of anathema those who held on to those writings and did not destroy them. Afterwards, in front of the most pious king of France, who is now enlisted with the Saints in their catalogue as Saint Louis,¹⁰⁴ a great crowd was convoked in Paris, and the treatise was solemnly thrown into the flames to be burned. The aforementioned William was expelled from the entire kingdom of France. – In fact this William had been the cause of a great persecution against the Order. He was a spiteful spokesman of the clergy and Prelates of the Church in Paris, saying that he wanted to defend them against the Order, and because of him many friars had to undergo suffering from slanderous condemnations. At the end, however, his malice and astuteness became evident and he had to accept his fate in confusion.

This Minister convoked a general chapter in Rome, in the presence of the lord Pope Alexander IV, who when he was still bishop of Ostia had been governing the Order (as Cardinal Protector), and who did not want to renounce this office once he was elected Pope, but retained it and reserved it for himself. During this chapter John obtained from the Pope his own absolution from office of minister general, citing his own incapability even though the friars insistently begged him to remain.¹⁰⁵ – During this chapter the aforementioned lord Pope not only honoured the friars with his presence, but he showed in abundance upon them the sweetness of his blessings, since he absolved from their sins all the friars who were present or absent. In

¹⁰⁴ St. Louis IX, King of France, was canonised by Pope Boniface VIII in 1297. This reference is an indication that the *Chronicle of the XIV or XV Ministers General* was written after this date.

¹⁰⁵ The author is referring to the general chapter of Aracoeli in Rome (2nd February 1257), when John of Parma was asked to resign from office by Pope Alexander IV, because he was suspected of nurturing sympathies towards the Joachist tendencies of the Spirituals in the Order.

order that nobody might imprudently extend his hand to acquire what had not been conceded in that absolution, the Pope ratified and confirmed it with the fullness of his powers.

This brother John, after he had been absolved from office, was deceived in following the doctrine of the Abbot Joachim regarding the designation of the end of times. Therefore he was constrained to deny these theories in front of the lord John Caietani, [699] who governed the Order as Protector, and who was Cardinal deacon of San Niccolò in Carcere Trulliano, and in front of brother Bonaventure, who succeeded him in the office of minister general.¹⁰⁶

During the time of the lord Pope Nicholas IV, who at that time was still taking care of the Order as minister general with the mandate of the Pope, with the consent of the same Pope, John obtained permission to go to the regions of the infidels, since he desired to spread the seed of Christian faith and the truth of the Gospel among them. But when he left with some companions and arrived at Camerino, which is a town in the Marches of Ancona, he became sick and died; many miracles and wonders happened in that place in the presence of all, and his fame spread far and wide.¹⁰⁷

[7] The seventh successor to blessed Francis was the most famous father brother *Bonaventure of Bagnoregio*. He entered the Order when he still young, and he was so strong in an honest and pure life that the great master Alexander, when he spoke regarding Bonaventure, used to say that it seemed that in him Adam had not

¹⁰⁶ Bonaventure was obliged to lead a trial against John of Parma, who was accused of Joachimism. The canonical trial took place at Città della Pieve in Umbria, and was presided over by St. Bonaventure, the General Minister, and Cardinal Giovanni Gaetano Orsini, Protector of the Order. John of Parma had by now retired in solitude at the hermitage of Greccio. Fortunately for John, he was acquitted from the accusation of heresy, through the powerful intervention of Cardinal Ottobuono Fieschi, Innocent IV's nephew, who would later become Pope Hadrian V (11th July – 18th August, 1276).

¹⁰⁷ After the trial John retired again to Greccio, where he lived in total seclusion for thirty years. In 1285 he received the visit of the famous Spiritual friar Ubertino da Casale. During the same year Pope Nicholas IV, who had been a General Minister of the Order, by the name of Girolamo of Ascoli Piceno, gave John permission to leave his cell at Greccio and to go as a missionary to Greece, in order to continue working for the union between the Latin and the Greek Orthodox Churches, as a result of the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. John, however, was a frail old man of 80 by then. He travelled only as far as Camerino, in the Marches of Ancona, where he died on 19th March, 1289.

sinned. – He seemed to progress with a marvellous ability in the radiance of knowledge and particularly the Holy Scriptures. He was continually growing in the grace of devotion, in such a way that he continually dedicated all his spiritual and affective energy to revert all the truths that his intellect learned into the form of prayer and divine praises. He was so capable that, in the seventh year after his entry into the Order he lectured the Sentences in Paris and in the tenth year received the magisterial chair and in the 12th or 13th year he was elevated to the supreme government of the Order. He governed the Order for eighteen years and died as a Cardinal during the general council of Lyon, when he was 53 years old and was bishop of Albano. – All his writings echo his subtle intellect and his affective fervour and transmit them to all those who inquire in the divine sciences with freedom more than delving into the vain veneration of Aristotelian philosophy.

Before becoming Minister, when he was holding the chair of master in Paris, he defended the evangelical truth with the most clear disputations and determinations. When he was General Minister he also confuted in a subtle way a most wicked treatise, that is believed to have been written by master Gerard of Abbeville, through an Apology (in defence of the mendicants). In truth this Gerard was so cursed that the divine anger struck him and he ended his days paralysed and covered with leprosy, and thus left an example [700] to all, in order that everybody would know that Jesus is the defender of his poor ones. – But sometimes He also extends His clemency and calls back the persecutors to Himself.

We have heard that a certain Abbot who, with all his might, tried to persecute the friars Minor, had a vision in which he was taken to judgment and then converted in this way. He saw the good and the bad who were convoked to judgment, while he together with a certain Bishop who was his brother in the episcopate, together with other two collaborators were assigned to the left hand side together with the wicked. At that moment two friars Minor from the right hand side came close to him and pulled him violently to their own side. When it was morning that Abbot was terrified and went to the friars and narrated to them his vision, and then became a friar Minor. The two collaborators, who on that very day wanted to divide among themselves something that belonged to the Abbot, started to fight and finished up wounding and then killing one another. When the Abbot asked the

Bishop what he thought about that vision, the Bishop answered that he did not care about dreams.

In the first chapter that Bonaventure held at Narbonne, he ordered and formed the Constitutions of the Order. – Afterwards he also composed the life of Saint Francis.

The lord Pope Clement IV wanted to promote this Minister, namely brother Bonaventure, to the prestigious archbishopric of York, but in the presence of the Pope, he humbly and constantly begged to be left in his position in Paris where he was, and the same lord Pope accepted his pious plea and told him the following words: *Remain in your resolve to the end and continue to live and speak in that office and grow old in the work that has been assigned to you.*

During that time, brother Jerome, who succeeded Bonaventure in the government of the Order, was sent as Legate to the Greeks and then returned solemnly with the Greek nuncios during the time when the council was convoked in Lyon. During this council Pope Gregory IX celebrated Mass, and the same Greeks took part in it, they recited the Symbol of faith and sang the article concerning the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and gave to the other faithful the kiss of peace. They recognised and confessed the primacy of the Church of Rome. However, after some time, during the pontificate of the lord Pope Martin, this agreement of mutual peace was annulled because of the enemies of such a peace who perturbed and persuaded them to destroy the whole process.

[701] The aforementioned lord Pope Gregory X compelled Bonaventure to accept the bishopric of Albano and the dignity of Cardinal. With his presence and wisdom in that Council, it was evident that God chose and prepared him to defend the Order against many and great adversaries.

[8] Bonaventure was elevated to the dignity of Cardinal during the time of the chapter that gathered at the same time of the general council at Lyon in the year 1274. The aforementioned brother Jerome, who was absent, since he had not yet returned from his legation, was elected General Minister.¹⁰⁸ – This Jerome slowly climbed

¹⁰⁸ Clement IV had died (29th November, 1268), and a long interregnum ensued, with an inconclusive conclave. It was only on 1st September, 1271 that a new Pope was elected, Gregory X. The pope wanted to prepare a new ecumenical Council in Lyon, with the aim of bringing about the union between the Eastern and Western Churches. He sent as his ambassador to the Eastern emperor

up the ladder of the hierarchy and was elevated to the summit of the supreme pontificate. Before he had been a lector of great learning and in the Order he was made Minister Provincial in Slavonia, then he was Legate of the Roman Church to the Greeks, next he became Minister General, afterwards he became Cardinal priest with the title of Santa Potenziana, then bishop of Palestrina, and finally Supreme Pontiff.

During the time of this Minister General the lord Vicedominus from Piacenza,¹⁰⁹ who was a Cardinal bishop, namely of Palestrina, when he saw that the end of his life was approaching, with great devotion he asked to be vested and accepted the habit of the Order of blessed Francis and thus died as a Cardinal bishop and friar Minor and was buried in the church of the friars in Viterbo. During his illness he gave a great example of humility and admonished the confessor to examine him and ask him the same questions that he would ask a simple laymen regarding his sins. He said: "We prelates should be examined even more diligently." – In that same place is buried the lord Pope Hadrian, who nurtured a great affection towards the friars and wanted to be buried in their church.

[9] When the lord Pope Nicholas III had elevated Jerome to the rank of cardinal, brother *Bonagratia* was elected General Minister. The same [702] Cardinal presided over the chapter in Assisi, until brother Bonagratia could arrive. When the same Minister had arrived at the chapter and after the chapter had been concluded, the most holy Father, namely the aforementioned lord Pope Nicholas III, requested the General to send some Provincial Ministers and other discreet friars from the chapter to the same lord Pope. The Pope was in his summer residence in Soriano. He decided to leave aside all his

Michael Paleologus, the future General Minister Jerome of Ascoli Piceno, who also became Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292).

109 Guglielmo Visconti from Piacenza (Guillelmus Vicedominus de Vicedominis) (ca. 1210/1215-1276) was a nephew of Pope Gregory X. In 1241 he became provost of Barjols, canon of the cathedral chapter of Clermont in 1241 and then canon of the cathedral chapter of Narbonne. He was sent as ambassador to the count of Provence and elected archbishop of Aix on 22nd July 1257. On 3rd June 1273 he became Cardinal bishop of Palestrina and participated in the Second Council of Lyon (1274). He then received the title of San Marcello *in commendam* on 7th June 1275. Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals he participated in the conclaves of 1276 that elected Popes Innocent V and Hadrian V, but died in the third conclave on 6th September 1276, wearing the Franciscan habit. He was buried in the church of San Francesco in Viterbo.

other preoccupations and commitments, and with the same General and the other friars present, and with the expert help of the venerable lords and fathers, the lord Cardinal Jerome of Palestrina and brother Bentevenga, bishop of Albano, the Pope began editing for many days a most deliberate Decretal regarding the Rule of the friars Minor, which begins with the words: *Exiit qui seminat*.¹¹⁰ Through the services of most erudite men, who later on became Cardinals, namely the lord Peter, vice-chancellor, the lord Count of Milan, collaborator at the palace, the lord Angelo, a most famous lawyer, and the lord Benedict, proto-notary at the Curia, who later on became Cardinal and even Pope,¹¹¹ with the most exact diligence and after many days of discussions and clarifications, first in front of the Cardinals who were in Viterbo, then in front of the entire Curia, and finally through the aforementioned lord Benedict, who dictated the document, the Pope solemnly promulgated it. The lord Pope Boniface then incorporated the document in his sixth collection of Decretals and thus rendered it authentic in front of the whole world.

During the time of this Minister, the aforementioned Pope Nicholas III departed from this life and went to the Lord. When he had been still a boy, his father, who was a member of the third Order, had offered him to Saint Francis. The Saint had prophesied to his father that the boy would not wear the habit of the friars, but would be a defender of his Order and become also the lord of the entire world. When he knew this, the same lord wanted to reveal this truth after the facts had occurred, and he became a *servant of the word* according to the sentences of the Wise man.

[10] This General died at Avignon and was succeeded by brother *Arlotto* of Prato, who was elected in the general chapter of Milan. In that chapter, upon the insistence of Guillaume Fauger who presided over the chapter, it was decided that there should be a Vicar, who [703] would rule the Order when the post of minister general became vacant. – This same brother Arlotto, who was master in theology, remained for one year as minister general, and then was joined to the other holy fathers and was buried in Paris. After his death, according to the form outlined above, as decided in the chapter of Milan, the aforementioned brother Guillaume was constituted as Vicar

110 The Decretal *Exiit qui seminat* was published on 14th August 1279.

111 Benedetto Caietani, who became Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303).

General of the Order.¹¹² He presented as a condition for the election the rank of bachelor and lecturer of theology, and wanted to snatch this election from another candidate, who according to the laws of the time, was competent to be chosen and in this way made himself graceful through the downfall of another, and also admitted lay officials in the convent at Paris.

In truth afterwards, namely during the time of brother Matthew who succeeded brother Arlotto in the office of minister general,

¹¹² Guillaume Fauget (Holzapfel calls him *Petrus de Falgario*) entered the Franciscan order in Toulouse and studied at the Franciscan *Studium Generale* of Paris. He finished his studies around 1270 and became *magister regens* at Paris in 1280-1282. He was Minister Provincial of Aquitaine and vicar general in 1283-1285 and again in 1286-1287. In 1287 he became lector at the papal curia, a post he held until 1291. He was then consecrated bishop of Viviers until 1296. He visited Louis of Toulouse (Anjou) during the latter's hostage in Spain. In 1296 he brought king Philip IV the bulla *Ineffabilis Amoris* of Boniface VIII. Aside from his Sentences commentary and his sermons, he is also known for his 13 *Quaestiones Disputatae*.

Heribert Holzapfel, *Manuale Historiae Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, Fribourg 1909: "If the generalate were vacated by death or by the promotion of the general, a vicar general was to assume the government of the Order. The Order knew no vicar general at all before 1285. In the two cases where the Pope promoted the general to the cardinalate, the one promoted was obliged to continue ruling until the next general Chapter. In the case of the general's death, there was simply an *interregnum*. The Constitutions of 1260 prescribe: If the general died before the feast of St. Michael, the provincial of the place where he died must immediately convoke a General Chapter for the following year. But if he died after this feast, the provincial must indeed inform the Order of the death, but the General Chapter takes place only a year later, unless it would ordinarily have been held in the following year. For the Order thought that it could live during the intervening time without any supreme head, since thus far the case had never occurred. But when Bonagratia died October 3, 1283, and the General Chapter according to this ruling first convened in May 1285, the defect in the constitution was very manifest. At this General Chapter, therefore, a remedy was sought by the appointment of a vicar general, and was to be elected by the provincial of the place where the general died and the two neighbouring provincials. Obedience is to be shown to the vicar general by the whole Order; he does not however carry the seal of the Order, but a vicariate seal, and he cannot exercise the full powers of a general. The new arrangement was put to the test in the very next year. But since the vicar general who was elected proved himself unfit, the Pope in 1288 annulled the decision of the Chapter and reserved the appointment of a vicar general to the Apostolic See or to the cardinal protector. The succeeding vicar generals consequently were all appointed by the Pope; the Pontiff likewise quite specifically defined their powers." (English translation in <http://www.i-tau.org>).

the Roman Curia decided that the general chapter could not give any more jurisdiction to the Vicar. For this reason the supreme Pontiff, the lord Nicholas IV, decreed a special privilege, namely that the Order could not and should not have a Vicar General. – By means of the same privilege of the Pope it was declared that all the Custodes of one Province who went to the general chapter in order to elect the General, could only have the faculty of one active voice. With regards to this, they wanted to introduce a different practice in the chapter of Montpellier, although for all the preceding periods of time that custom was kept, namely that all the Custodes of one Province should exercise only one voice for that same Province.

[11] Brother Arlotto was succeeded by brother *Matthew of Aquasparta*, who was elected during the chapter of Montpellier. He condemned the publication of a certain treatise regarding the declaration on the Rule upon the command given by brother Nicholas, who had been Minister of France; the minister general issued a penalty to him together with others who approved this treatise contained in the declaration.

The lord Pope Nicholas IV elevated this general to the rank of Cardinal priest with the title of San Lorenzo in Damaso; nevertheless he continued to govern the Order according to the command of the Pope, just like the other Ministers General had done before him, until the election of his successor. After this he became bishop of Porto.

[12] His successor was brother *Raymond Godefroy*, elected during the chapter of Rieti, at which the aforementioned lord Pope Nicholas IV was present, together with the Cardinal Protector of the Order, in the year of the Lord 1289. The Pope personally heard and received the votes of the electors. – In this chapter Charles, heir to the kingdom of Sicily, together with his consort, were crowned by the Pope in the convent of the friars.

[704] This brother Raymond, while holding the general chapter at Paris in the year of the Lord 1292, upon the request of the king of France, acquired the magisterial chair in the Faculty of theology. – The lord Pope Boniface VIII in the year of the Lord 1295 offered him the episcopate of Padua and absolved him from the office of minister general. But since he did not want to accept this episcopate, he was simply absolved from the office of minister general.

[13] His successor was brother *John of Murrovalle*, master in Paris, who was elected in Anagni in the presence of the lord Pope

Boniface in the year of the Lord 1296. – In 1300 brother Gentilis, who was master at the Curia, became a Cardinal.

The same Pope made this Minister Cardinal and bishop of Porto in the year of the Lord 1302.

[14] His successor in office of minister was brother *Gonsalvus* from the Province of Saint James, master of theology¹¹³ in Paris, who

113 (1) The Florence manuscript continues: “elected during the chapter celebrated in Assisi in the year of the Lord 1304. Under his leadership a great and long discussion regarding the state of the Order was held in the Papal Curia, since a serious accusation was levelled against the general and the Order in front of the Pope, regarding some friars who had been tolerated by brother Raymond, who had been his successor. Indeed God helped his cause, since the same brother Raymond died in a horrible way before the end of the case, and many others who were his followers similarly met the same fate and died. Thus the lord Pope Clement V concluded this case in favour of the Order and for the Order’s own honour.

After these events, the same General Minister died at Paris, on the ninth year of his ministry, while he was preparing himself to go and celebrate the general chapter of Barcelona.

His successor was brother *Alexander* of the Province of Genoa, who was a famous master. He was elected in the general chapter at Barcelona in the year 1313. In the second year of his ministry he then died in Christ at Rome on the day following the feast of St. Francis.

His successor was *Michael of Cesena*, from the Province of Bologna. He was master in theology, and was elected during the general chapter held at Naples on Pentecost in the year of the Lord 1316.”

(2) The Berlin manuscript continues thus: “During his ministry (that is, in 1305), Pope Clement V was elected. He had been archbishop of Bordeaux. After the death of Matteo Rossi (Orsini), who was Protector of the Order, the Pope upon the request of the Ministers and the other Provincials gave the Order a new Protector in the person of the lord John (of Murrovalle), bishop of Porto.

During the time of this Minister, in the year of the Lord 1310 a discussion concerning the observance of the Rule was held at the Papal Curia at Avignon, in which brother Ubertino da Casale was proposing contrary views, together with the favour of some others, including brother Raymond Godefroy, who had been General Minister. In the same year in month of April, during the consistory in front of the Pope, brother Ubertino criticised and defamed the Order and defended brother Alexander. The lord Pope then obliged the same brother Ubertino and his accomplices not to endanger the Order because of their former excessive views and because they had made recourse to the Pope. Thus occasionally many and grave scandals arose in the Order. The aforementioned Raymond, through divine intervention, during that same year, when he left for a period of rest to a certain place out of the convent of the friars, became seriously ill and died in the space of five days.

In the year of the Lord 1312 on the day following the Ascension, during a secret consistory the conclusion of a case was held, and was solemnly promulgated as a decision on the following day in a public consistory. It regarded the way of living of some brothers, who were accused of conducting a community life that was lawless, that they wore habits that were shorter and poorer, that the legitimacy of the declarations on the Rule were to be the sole responsibility of the Prelates of the Order and not of other friars, whoever they might have been. This declaration was approved in the Council of Vienne, and those friars who had demanded immunity from these observances, were upon the command of the Supreme Pontiff, made to return to the unity and obedience of the Order. The aforementioned Ubertino was afraid to return to obedience, but entered a monastic Order. Many others who were his accomplices, and who came from diverse parts of the Order, left their own fold and under the banner of their excessive zeal they brought many scandals to the Order. The Supreme Pontiff admonished and constrained them under pain of excommunication, but they continued to remain steadfast in their hard-heartedness and did not want to come back, but remained in their obstinacy and apostasy as rebels and schismatics.

The above-mentioned Minister, after the conclusion of the general council, when he arrived at Paris he became very ill in that same place and died in the Lord in the year 1313. – In that same year, in the Curia in Avignon, the Protector of the Order, namely brother John, bishop of Porto, died.

The successor of brother Gonsalvus was brother *Alexander of Alessandria*, from Lombardy, a master of theology in Paris. He was elected when he was Minister of Genoa, during the chapter celebrated in Barcelona. In the place of the chapter and in the presence of the Supreme Pontiff together with the other Ministers Provincial designated, he requested and acquired the lord Arnald of Pelagrua as Cardinal Protector of the Order.

During the times of this Minister the lord Pope Clement died in the Lord. – The same General Minister remained for a year and a half in his ministry, and then he died in Rome and was buried in Aracoeli.

His successor was brother *Michael of Cesena*, master of theology in Paris. He was elected in the chapter celebrated in Naples in the year of the Lord 1313. That same year Pope John XII (sic! instead of XXII) was elected. During his time a heated discussion ensued regarding the issue of poverty between the same Pope and General Minister. There was a great division in the Order and a dangerous schism between the Supreme Pontiff and the lord Louis of Bavaria, who had been elected emperor. In fact the same Louis of Bavaria chose an antipope in Rome; because of this deed and other impious deeds the Bavarian was deprived of his empire and was excommunicated by the same Pope. The same brother Michael was deprived of his office and died and was buried in the church of the friary of Munich in the Province of Bavaria.

His successor was brother *Gerard* from the Province of Aquitaine, master of theology in Paris, who was elected during the general chapter of Paris in the year of the Lord 1329.

He sent many friars to the various regions of the world: in Corsica, Bosnia and

in many other nations, he sent Vicars among the fathers and other qualified friars to eradicate the heresy of the Paulicians and the Manicheans. During his time the darnel grew after it had sprung forth during the time of his predecessor with the uniform opinion of Pope John XXII who was contrary to the deformed opinion of poverty of the General brother Michael. Regarding the issue of poverty many treatises had been compiled, which found the aforementioned friars in agreement with the words expressed in the declarations of the lord Nicholas III (sic!).

He governed the Order for nearly 13 years; then Pope Clement VI made him Patriarch of Antioch and archbishop of Saint Agatha (i.e. in Catania), and there he died in the peace of Christ.

He was succeeded by *Fortanerus Vassalli* from the Province of Aquitaine, master in theology in Paris, elected during the chapter celebrated at Cahors in the year of the Lord 1343. He governed the Order for nearly six years; afterwards by decree of the lord Pope Clement VI he was elevated to the patriarchate of Grado and became administrator of the Church of Ravenna; and then the lord Pope Innocent VI made him Cardinal and he was buried in the church of the friars Minor in Padua.

His successor was brother *William Farinier* from the Province of Aquitaine, a master in theology, who was elected while he was Minister of the same Province, in the chapter celebrated in Verona in the year of the Lord 1348. He governed the Order for nearly eleven years. Afterwards he was made Cardinal by the lord Pope Innocent VI, and he continued governing the Order as a Cardinal until the celebration of the next chapter.

He was then succeeded by brother *John Bouchier* from the Province of Aquitaine, master in theology, who was elected in the chapter celebrated in Barcelona in the year of the Lord 1357. He remained in the office of his ministry for nearly one year; but when he was visiting the Province of Burgundy he departed from this life and went to the Lord.

He was succeeded by brother *Mark*, a master of theology in Paris and Minister Provincial of Rome, who was elected in the chapter celebrated in Genoa in the year of the Lord 1359. He occupied the office of minister for nearly seven years. The lord Pope Urban VI elevated him to the cardinalate, when he was Legate in Italy.

His successor was brother *Thomas*, Minister of Bologna and master in theology, who was elected in the chapter celebrated in the Sacro Convento in Assisi in the year of the Lord 1366. He was defamed in the Roman Curia by the bishop of Narni, who was a friar Minor and the Minister of the Province of Saint Francis, and by some others. He was suspended from office nearly for one year and a half by the lord Pope Urban VI, who was at the time residing in Rome. He was later rehabilitated in the church of Saint Peter by three Cardinals in the presence of the aforementioned Religious and other clerics and noble laymen. More than one hundred persons among them took an oath as witnesses of his innocence, and he was restored to his office with honour according to the counsel of all the Cardinals.

The successor of the Minister Thomas was brother *Leonard de Bitonto* (Gif-

foni) elected in the chapter of Toulouse in the year 1373, in which Gregory XI established that the Protector of the Order could intervene in just three occasions in the affairs of the Order: firstly, if the Community of the brothers would deviate from obedience to the Pope or to the Roman Church; secondly, if the Order would waver in faith and not observe the Rule; thirdly, if any friar would accept [or request] a promotion without asking for permission from the Protector, he would be punished.

The successor to Leonard was master *Louis (Donatus) of Venice*, elected as General during the chapter of Ungarn in Hungary, celebrated in the year of the Lord 1380 during the time of king Louis and his daughter Elisabeth.

He was succeeded in the generalate by brother *Martin (Sangiorgio da Riparolo) of Genoa*, elected during the chapter of Padua in the year 1384, when Urban was Pope in Italy and another (Clement VII) was Pope in Avignon because of the schism in the Church at the time.

The successor of Martin was brother *Henry (Alfieri)* of the Province of Genoa, elected in the chapter of Florence in 1387, and as Anthony of Florence states in his History, since the Popes were two, so were the Minister Generals.

His successor was master *Anthony (Angelo) of Piretus* (Greek) in the chapter of Argentina in the year of the Lord 1405. – Note with attention that, according to what Antonino of Florence states in his *Historiae*, in the year of the Lord 1378 there was a most detestable schism, namely there were two Popes, one of whom resided in Rome, namely Urban, and the other in Avignon, namely Clement, and they ruled over divided regions. Indeed the French together with the Spaniards and the English promised obedience to Clement and they had their own General Minister, whereas the Italians with the Germans and Hungarians obeyed Urban and they also had another General. But when the schism ended, since it lasted from the year of the Lord 1378 to the Council of Constance, the Church was reunited under one Pope, namely Martin V, and one General Minister was appointed, namely brother *Anthony of Massa*, who was deprived of his generalate in Assisi.

In the general chapter Anthony was succeeded by master *Anthony Rusconi*, and there was a great discord during that chapter, since there were friars who wanted to elect a certain brother Albert from the family of the Observance; but according to the will of Pope Eugene the Observants were given their own Vicar General.

His successor in the generalate was master *Angelo (Serpetri) of Perugia*, elected in the chapter of Perugia in the year of the Lord 1453.

He was succeeded by master *James (Bussolini) of Mozzanica* (Milan), in the year of the Lord 1455.

His successor was master *Francis of Savona* elected during the chapter of Perugia in the year of the Lord 1464. In the year 1471 he was elected Pope and chose the name Sixtus IV. He died in the year 1484.

He was succeeded by master *Zanetto of Udine*, in the chapter of Venice celebrated in the year 1469 during the time of Pope Paul. The aforementioned Sixtus IV, after having ended his mandate as general, was elected Cardinal before then being elected Pope.

was elected when he was Minister of Castile, in the chapter celebrated in Assisi in the year of the Lord 1304.

[705] During the time of this Minister, since the Apostolic See remained vacant, after Pope Boniface and after Pope Benedict from the Order of Preachers, who remained alive for only a short time later [706], Pope Clement V was elected. He had before been archbishop of Bordeaux. For his coronation he called the Cardinals to Lyon, since they were in Perugia. He summoned the king [707] of France and many others of the same kingdom, as well as princes and barons from the kingdom of England. During the day of his coronation, however, that was celebrated in the church of Saint Justus above Lyon, he was threatened and admonished by divine judgment, since the great and ancient wall that closed off the choir of the canons, all of a sudden collapsed in front of the same Pope who was wearing the crown of his transient glory, and killed many great and important persons. The same Pope remained unharmed, but he took off the crown from his head and a large and very precious ruby that was placed at the top of the crown, that rendered that crown very visible and beautiful to behold, detached itself and fell off, but was found later on.

The next in the line of succession was master *Francis Samson of Brescia* in the chapter of Urbino in the year of the Lord 1475, during the celebration of the Jubilee year. He governed the Order for many years (that is, 25 years).

His successor was master *Egidio Delfini of Amelia*, who had been Minister Provincial of Assisi and procurator of the Order in Rome. He was elected in the general chapter of Teramo in the year of the Lord 1500, and to this very day he praiseworthy works in the vineyard to the Lord of Hosts, since he wants to follow the footsteps of Francis together with his friars (in the year 1506 he renounced the post of minister general during the chapter celebrated in Rome)."

Our note: As is evident from a list of ministers general in the 14th and 15th centuries, this list is not complete and there are some names which are missing.

APPENDIX V

Beginning of the Catalogue of Cardinals, who were Protectors of the Order¹¹⁴

[708] To the venerable father in Christ, brother Gonsalvus, General Minister of the Order of friars Minor, brother Philip of Perugia, an old man with whatever remains of his earthly existence expresses with affection his filial reverence.

The reverend father in Christ, brother Alexius, Minister of the Province of Bologna, has taken care to explain to me that it was your will that your paternity would command him to inform to write a document in which I would show whether I know anything regarding the way that the Order should request a Cardinal from the lord Pope, as the Rule commands the Ministers to do, and namely to indicate whether this old custom of our ancestors is still to be maintained. Therefore I willingly comply with your orders especially since if I recall anything in my memory that I consider to be worthy of being remembered, even though you might not consider it so important, this work might help to provide some information and to increase devotion.

I would like to begin by stating that the reason that led Saint Francis to command his friars to request a lord Cardinal from the Pope was triple. Firstly some elderly friars have told me that, since it would have been difficult for the friars to make recourse to the Apostolic See in the case of any reason of necessity, because of their lowly state, and moreover it would not be easy for them to gain access to the Pope, Saint Francis wanted that a Cardinal would be given to the Order, who would act in the name of the lord Pope whenever the friars have occasion to make recourse to him. – Another reason is that the

114 The catalogue, under the form of a letter, is the work of brother Philip of Perugia, who wrote it around the year 1306 upon the command of Gonsalvus of Valboa, Minister General. The historical period it covers is that of four Cardinal Protectors of the Order, namely: Hugolinus (later Pope Gregory IX), Cardinal Protector from 1220 to 1227; Raynaldus (later Pope Alexander IV), Cardinal Protector from 1227 to 1261; John Caetani Orsini (later Pope Nicholas III), Cardinal Protector from 1263 to 1279; and Matthew Rossi Orsini, Cardinal Protector from 1279 to 1306.

lord John Caetani, [709] before he became Pope, told me that he understood his role in this way when he was entrusted with taking care of the Order. We spoke together regarding the poverty of the Order that renders the friars radically free from any dominion or legal rights over temporal property. Then he said: "Saint Francis did a most prudent thing, since he wanted the Order to have a head to govern it, who would be able to administer temporal things, in all that is convenient for their use by the Order." This reason is confirmed by that chapter in the declaration on the Rule, that states: "The ownership of books" etc., where it speaks about the procurator that is instituted by the Cardinal.¹¹⁵ – The third reason is that contained in the Rule: "so that being always submissive and subject" etc.

The Order, therefore, until the time of the lord Pope Clement V, had only four Cardinals (Protectors). The first one was the lord *Hugolinus* bishop of Ostia, who afterwards became Pope Gregory IX; I do not know whether the friars ever requested anything from him or whether he ever gave them any concession. I have heard from elderly friars that, when he together with our Father Saint Francis were ordering and writing the Rule of the Sisters of the Order of San Damiano, who are now known by the name of Order of Saint Clare, they wrote this Rule on the pattern of the Rule of the friars Minor. Partly because of the harshness of this Rule and partly out of compassion, the Cardinal himself shed many tears while writing it. When he later on became Pope, he showed so much devotion and love towards this Order, that one of the brothers who were members of the papal household told me that the Pope called brother Benedict of Florence, with

¹¹⁵ The Quaracchi editors, in the footnote in page 709 of the *Chronicle*, state that this declaration refers to the Bulla *Quo elongati* (1230). However, this Bulla is not so explicit in the matter. The true source of this statement seems to refer to the Constitution *Exiit qui seminat* of Pope Nicholas III (1279) in article 22: "It is recognised that the ownership of books and other movables used by the Order and the brothers pertains in a particular way to the Church whenever the ownership is not retained by anyone else. Now, sometimes it is convenient or advantageous that such books and movables be sold or exchanged [...] On the other hand, if articles of the kind are to be sold for a price, since by their *Rule* the brothers are prohibited from accepting money personally or through anyone else, we ordain and command that such proceeds be accepted and expended on something the brothers are permitted to use, through the services of a procurator deputized by said Holy See or by the Cardinal charged by the same Holy See with the government of the said Order" (FAED III, 755-756).

the order to bring him a habit of the friars, since it was a custom that the Supreme Pontiffs washed the feet of poor people, so that he would accomplish this act dressed in the habit of the friars. Since the friars were accustomed to help the Pope in this act of charity, some of the poor people, who normally used to receive this act of reverence, since they did not recognise the Pope, rejected his service and called the other friars while telling the Pope: "Brother, go away since you do not know how to do this work very well; permit this other brother to do it, since he knows how to do it better than you." I have also heard that the Pope would sometimes go to some holy places in the City dressed with the habit of the friars and accompanied by them, in order that he could go and come back from his visit without being recognised.

The same Pope, when he was elevated to the papacy, gave the Order the lord *Raynaldus*, whom he also nominated bishop of Ostia as his successor. I do not know whether he had any other nomination or whether any other service was asked of him. When he later on became Pope, he chose the name [710] Alexander IV. Although the friars requested him to give them a Cardinal Protector, he did not accept, saying that he did not want the friars to have a Cardinal for as long as he lived, but that he wanted to keep to himself the office of direct Protector of the Order. The way in which he carried out this office is proved by facts. In fact, there were some who were detractors of the miracle of the sacred stigmata of our holy Father. The aforementioned Pope Gregory had sent letters to the whole world in which he declared the certitude of the known fact. Alexander sent letters in the region of Lombardy in which he threatened the detractors with a serious sentence of punishment.¹¹⁶ He also condemned the doctrine and treatise written by William of Saint Amour regarding the state of the mendicants, since the same William edited this work against the poor mendicants. The treatise was publicly thrown into the flames in the garden of the lord king of France in Paris, with the king himself, namely Saint Louis, being present.

When this Pope died his immediate successor was the lord Pope Urban IV, who came from Troyes. After the celebration of the

¹¹⁶ Pope Alexander IV published the declaration *Benigna operatio* on 29th October 1255 to prove the truthfulness of the event of the stigmatization of St. Francis. English text in FAED II, 779-781. Cfr. André Vauchez, "The Stigmata of St. Francis and its Medieval Detractors," *Greyfriars Review* 13 (1999) 61-89.

general chapter of Pisa, in the year of the Lord 1263 when brother Bonaventure, who was then General Minister, together with the other Ministers requested and obtained the services of the lord *John Caietani*, Cardinal deacon of San Niccolò in Carcere Trulliano, although, as I have understood, the same Pope wanted to give to the Order his own nephew the lord Acherus. Since, however, the friars did not want to accept this nomination, he gave them the lord John Caietani as a father to the Order, since he was united with a special devotion to it. Now the father of the same Cardinal, namely the lord Matthew Rossi, was a member of the third Order. I have sometimes heard this same lord John even when he became Pope glorify him publicly in various conversations. When he was appointed as Protector of the Order, it happened that the friars were afraid that the Nuns of the Order of San Damiano would insist that the Order should take care to minister to them. Therefore the friars petitioned the Cardinal to beg the aforementioned lord Urban absolve them, namely the friars themselves and the Order as well, from the service to the nuns, requesting him to publish a declaration that stated that the Order was not bound to guarantee such a service. Therefore the Pope gave the Nuns another Cardinal, namely the lord Stephen, bishop of Palestrina. But since this Cardinal wanted to impose upon the friars, with his own authority, the obligation and to recall them to the service of the Nuns, it happened that the aforementioned lord John was entrusted with the protectorate of both Orders (of friars Minor and Sisters of Saint Clare), just like his predecessors, and according to what had just been stipulated in the Rule according to the Bulla of the lord Urban.¹¹⁷ When he was elected to the papacy, just like the other Cardinal Protectors before him, during the first general chapter that was celebrated after his election, and in which brother Bonagratia was elected as General Minister in Assisi, the same Pope admonished the Minister and all the other members of the chapter to take care and come to a decision regarding

¹¹⁷ Urban IV, Rule of 1263 included in the Bulla *Beata Clara*, c. 24: "We have decided to entrust entirely the care and government of the monasteries of your Order, as well as of the persons who live in them, that is, the chaplains, serving sisters and dependents, to our beloved son John, Cardinal deacon of San Nicola in Carcere Trulliano, who is the governor, protector and corrector of the Order of friars Minor, declaring that, henceforth you fall under his obedience, care and government, as well as of the other cardinals who in the future will be appointed by the Apostolic See to the government, protection and correction of the same Order of friars. You are obliged to strictly obey these cardinals."

how to provide to the best of their ability the service of governance that the Order was bound to request from the Apostolic See. For this reason the same General Minister with the Ministers and some other discreets discussed the matter in the presence of the Pope. Although unworthy, I happened to be one of that group, and at that time I was entrusted with the service of the friars of Tuscia. The Ministers themselves, who were present in order to represent all the other Ministers, requested a Cardinal Protector just as the Rule stipulates. The same father, namely the Supreme Pontiff, after having asked each one of them to express his secret vote, appointed the lord *Matthew* [711] and commended to him the care of the Order as the object of his utmost love. I will touch upon the way in which the Pope commissioned this service, since I believe that the same lord Pope truly showed his love towards the Order to the utmost in such an appointment.

Therefore, when the same lord Matthew, who was Cardinal deacon of Santa Maria in Portico, was entrusted with this office in the presence of the General and Provincial Ministers who had assembled, the lord Pope turned towards the Cardinal with these words of exhortation: "We shall now direct our words to you. If we would want to enlist the favours we have showered upon you, we can see that they are great, useful and numerous. However we have never given you a pledge of eternal life as close as this favour, which we are now entrusting in your care. In fact we are giving you a favour that will introduce you in paradise, namely the prayers and merits of all the holy friars of this Order; we are giving you the best that we possess; we are giving you our heart's desire, indeed, the apples of our eyes." The Supreme Pontiff uttered these words with so much love and tenderness going out of his heart, that he was shedding abundant tears from his eyes, and he was gasping for breath in his breast since he was sobbing. I am a witness to this fact that I am narrating, and I can state that he was becoming so short of breath that he could hardly speak, and his manly maturity could not refrain him from crying in a high pitched voice. Thus it happened that all those who were present began to shed abundant tears, and they were crying aloud and they could not refrain from weeping for a long period of time. In the meantime, after they had calmed down, the Pontiff resumed his speech and said: "We cannot wait longer to execute this office, since the nature of things would suffer from our delay." Then he extended his hand and the Cardinal took the Pope's hand and kissed his ring. The Pope then

said: "I entrust you with the care of the Order of friars Minor." Then he referred to the words that are declared in the Rule, namely, "to be Protector, governor and corrector of this fraternity." Then he added: "The Order does not need your governance, since it abounds in so many wise and prudent persons, who are quite capable of governing themselves. Neither is it necessary to insist in your correction, since there are many friars who are well-prepared in the art of government and are appointed as prelates, in such a way that the Order is not lacking any correction: in fact they have the Guardians; and if these are not up to standard, the friars can make recourse to the Custodes, and the Custodes to the Ministers, and above everyone there is the Minister General and at the top the general chapter. Thus, it is not probable that they will ever need to go beyond their superiors and make recourse to your correction. There is one thing, however, in which they would need your protection; they are lacking in means and poor and they have many persons who often importune them, in such a way that, since they cannot get rid of them, they need your strong arm as Protector. This is the greatest need they would ever have of your assistance." I believe that he concluded his speech with these words, or some other similar expressions.

From that day onwards the Pope thus interpreted the intention of the Rule, namely that roughly for two months he placed the care of the Order above all his other business, much to the admiration of the entire Curia, since there was no other initiative that is known to have been taken into consideration by him except for this task to which he applied all his energies.¹¹⁸ [712] Regarding the lord Matthew you do not need my testimony. Instead, regarding the other four Cardinals I can more or less give information. Indeed, I remember that I saw the lord Gregory in Perugia, not as Cardinal, but when he was Pope, since I was still a young boy. After he died my father wanted me to be present at the funeral Mass celebrated in Perugia, even though the Pope was not buried there. I also saw the lord Alexander when he was still a Cardinal. With his mandate and grace, when he was Pope, I matured during four years of studies in the *Studium* in Paris. As I have already explained, when the lord John Caietani, who became

¹¹⁸ This is a reference to the work undertaken by Pope Nicholas III during the summer months of 1279 to produce the Constitution *Exiit qui seminat* (14th August 1279).

Pope Nicholas III, was still Protector of the Order, he received me as a member of his household and obliged me to his obedience. On that occasion I also became familiar with the lord Matthew and this friendship has endured to this very day.

In this information, as I have already stated, I have written facts so that maybe I would present them as they have been intended by the ones who requested them. From what I have said I hope that it is evident that the fact that Order requested a Cardinal and received his services indicates the particular attention given towards it, since in this way the Order itself has been embraced dearly and has received many sweet acts of affection. These facts then cannot be perceived by anyone else, except by those who have experienced the evident effects of such touching charity. Therefore I have written down all that I could still recall in my memory, and this I have done in all conscience. In order to confirm it and strengthen it further I have requested by Custos and Guardian to stamp this present letter with the seal of their office. May the clemency of our Saviour conserve your Paternity. Amen.

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