

THE RULE

THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR
OF
OUR HOLY FATHER
SAINT FRANCIS



Province of The Divine Compassion
(Old Roman Catholic)

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The TOR Franciscan Province of The Divine Compassion, NAORCC

An Introduction to the Rule of The Third Order Regular of Saint Francis Of Penance

The Third Order of Saint Francis was established by our Holy Founder during the early years of his ministry in Assisi. The ancient Order of Penitents, which had existed within the Church for centuries, had become lax and unregulated. In the spirit of the day, in which the Church saw a severe decline in the fervor, devotion and practice of the Faith by vast numbers of the faithful, Saint Francis became a beacon of hope and direction for the many members of the Order of Penitents.

Inspired by the words and work of our holy Founder, the Penitents asked him to provide a Rule of Life for them to follow. Some of them were already recognized by the Church as Religious and continued as such under his direction (the early beginnings of the Third Order Regular), but as most of them could not enter the Friars Minor or the Poor Clares because of existing obligations, he gave them a simple Rule, (this was the beginning of the Third Order Secular). That Rule today is known as the First Recension of the Letter to All the Faithful. It forms, for the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscan Order (Third Order Secular) and the Third Order Regular, as well as for our own Old Roman Catholic Third Order Regular and Third Order Secular, the Prologue of our respective Rules. We are thus reminded that our origins are in the same Order and Rule, and are based upon this common foundational document.

The Third Order Regular has had several Rules given to it by the Church throughout the centuries, all of which have been based upon this elemental document. The Church has given and established the various Rules based upon the other Rules and Writings of our holy Founder.

As Old Roman Catholics, we are not strictly bound to the present Roman Catholic Rule of the Order, but, in a spirit of fraternal union and in order to ensure our claim to be true sons and daughters of Saint Francis, and to claim him as our Father and Founder, we have taken the two most recent Rules of the Roman Catholic Third Order

Regular, that of Pius XI (*Rerum Condicio*) and that of John Paul II (*Franciscanis Forma Vitae*), and blended them together with additional material taken from the *Regula Bullata* and the *Regula Non-Bullata* of the Friars Minor, the Rule of Saint Clare, as well as the various Rules of the Third Orders both Secular and Regular, with several small adjustments made to reflect our Old Roman Catholic identity, in order to form our present Rule.

This Rule, we believe, truly represents the intent, the spirit, the love and the direction of our Holy Father Saint Francis. We also believe that this Rule is in conformity with the great history of the Franciscan Order within the Old Roman Catholic Communion and Tradition.

+ Edward, TOR
Guardian and Minister

☪ THE PROLOGUE TO THE RULE ☪

EXHORTATION TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE

The Letter to All The Faithful (The First Recension)

In the Name of the Lord!

Chapter I

Concerning Those Who Do Penance.

All who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength, and love their neighbors as themselves and hate their bodies with their vices and sins, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and produce worthy fruits of penance, oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, because "the spirit of the Lord will rest upon them" and he will make "his home and dwelling among them", and they are the sons of the heavenly Father, whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are spouses, when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is united with our Lord Jesus Christ, we are brothers to him when we fulfill "the will of the Father who is in heaven". We are mothers, when we carry him in our heart and body through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to him through a holy life which must give light to others by example.

Oh, how glorious it is to have a great and holy Father in heaven! Oh how glorious it is to have such a beautiful and admirable Spouse, the Holy Paraclete. Oh, how glorious it is to have such a Brother and such a Son, loved, beloved, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable above all: Our

Lord Jesus Christ, who gave up his life for his sheep and prayed to the Father saying:

"Oh holy Father, protect them with your name whom you gave me out of the world. I entrusted to them the message you entrusted to me and they received it. They have known that in truth I came from you, they have believed that it was you who sent me. For these I pray, not for the world. Bless and consecrate them, and I consecrate myself for their sakes. I do not pray for them alone; I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word that they may be holy by being one as we are. And I desire, Father, to have them in my company where I am to see this glory of mine in your kingdom."

Chapter 2

Concerning Those Who Do Not Do Penance

But all those men and women who are not doing penance and do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and live in vices and sin and yield to evil concupiscence and to the wicked desires of the flesh, and do not observe what they have promised to the Lord, and are slaves to the world, in their bodies, by carnal desires and the anxieties and cares of this life, these are blind, because they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ; they do not have spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God who is the true wisdom of the Father. Concerning them, it is said, "Their skill was swallowed up" and "cursed are those who turn away from your commands". They see and acknowledge, they know and do bad things and knowingly destroy their own souls.

See, you who are blind, deceived by your enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, for it is pleasant to the body to commit sin and it is bitter to make it serve God because all vices and sins come out and "proceed from the heart of man" as the Lord

says in the Gospel. And you have nothing in this world and in the next, and you thought you would possess the vanities of this world for a long time. But you have been deceived, for the day and the hour will come to which you give no thought and which you do not know and of which you are ignorant. The body grows infirm, death approaches, and so it dies a bitter death, and no matter where or when or how man dies, in the guilt of sin, without penance or satisfaction, though he can make satisfaction but does not do it. The devil snatches the soul from his body with such anguish and tribulation that no one can know it except he who endures it.

And all the talents and power and "knowledge and wisdom" which they thought they had will be taken away from them, and they leave their goods to relatives and friends who take and divide them and say afterwards, "Cursed be his soul because he could have given us more, he could have acquired more than he did." The worms eat up the body and so they have lost body and soul during this short earthly life and will go into the inferno where they will suffer torture without end.

All those into whose hands this letter shall have come we ask in the charity that is God to accept kindly and with divine love the fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ quoted above. And let those who do not know how to read have them read to them. And may they keep them in their mind and carry them out, in a holy manner to the end, because they are "spirit and life". And those who will not do this will have to render "an account on the day of judgment" before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ.



THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER
REGULAR
OF THE SERAPHIC FATHER SAINT FRANCIS

CHAPTER I

The Sum and Substance of the Religious Life

1. The form of life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, chastity, and poverty. Following Jesus Christ after the example of St. Francis, let them recognize that they are called to make greater efforts in their observance of the precepts and counsels of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them deny themselves (*cf. Mt. 16.24*) as each has promised the Lord.

2. With all in the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church who wish to serve the Lord, the Brothers and Sisters of this Order are to persevere in true faith and penance. They wish to live this evangelical conversion of life in a spirit of prayer, of poverty, and of humility. Therefore, let them abstain from all evil and persevere to the end in doing good because God the Son Himself will come again in glory and will say to all who acknowledge, adore and serve Him in sincere repentance: "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. " (*Matthew 25:34*)

3. The Brothers and Sisters, following the example of their Seraphic Father, promise obedience and reverence to the Primate of The North American Old Roman Catholic Church, and adhere to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church. In this same spirit they are also bound to obey their own Superiors canonically instituted, in all things that pertain to the general and particular aim of their own Institute. (*from the Rules of the I and II Orders, ch. I*). And wherever they are, or in

whatever situation they are in, they should diligently and fervently show reverence and honor to one another. They should also foster unity and communion with all the members of the Franciscan family.

CHAPTER II

The Novitiate and Profession

4. Those who through the Lord's inspiration come to us desiring to accept this way of life are to be received kindly. At the appropriate time, they are to be presented to the ministers of the Order who hold responsibility to admit them.

5. The ministers shall ascertain that the aspirants truly adhere to the Catholic Faith and the Church's sacramental life. If they are found to have a vocation they are to be initiated into the life of the Order. Let everything pertaining to this gospel way of life be explained to them, especially these words of the Lord: "If thou wilt be perfect (*Mt. 19:21*), go and sell all that thou hast (*cf. Lk. 18:22*) and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." And "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me " (*Mt. 16:24*).

6. The Brothers and Sisters to be received into this Third Order ought to be faithful Catholics, not suspect of heresy, firm in obedience to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, not bound in matrimony (*unless their spouse has given license and consent*), free of debts, healthy in body, prompt in spirit, ready of mind, of clean reputation, and at peace with their neighbors. And concerning all these things, before they are received, by him who has the faculty of receiving them, they are to be diligently examined (*Rule of the III Order, approved by Leo X, ch. I*), with due observance of the Canons and their own Constitutions.

7. Led by the Lord, let them begin a life of penance, conscious that all of us must be continuously and totally converted to the Lord. As a sign of their conversion and consecration to gospel life, they are to clothe themselves plainly and to live in simplicity.

8. The year of novitiate must, under the discipline of a Master, have as its purpose, to train the mind and the soul of the Novice, that they be formed by the study of the Rule and Constitutions, by pious meditations and assiduous prayer, by thoroughly learning those things which pertain to the vows and virtues, by opportune exercises to root out the seeds of vice, to curb the passions, and to acquire virtue. Moreover the Brothers and Sisters are to be diligently instructed in Christian Doctrine, with a special conference held for them at regular times.

9. With the time of probation complete, let those who are found suitable, be admitted to profession. Let them only be concerned to serve, love, adore, and honor the Lord God, as best they can, with singleheartedness and purity of intention. Within themselves, let them always make a dwelling place and home for the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, so that, with undivided hearts, they may increase in universal love by continually turning to God and to neighbor. (*John 14:23*).

CHAPTER III

The Life of Chastity

10. Let the Brothers and the Sisters keep in mind how great a dignity the Lord God has given them, because He created them and formed them in the image of His beloved Son according to the flesh and in His own likeness according to the Spirit. (*Col. 1:16*) Since they are created through Christ and in Christ, they have chosen this form of life which is founded on

the words and deeds of our Redeemer.

11. Professing chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, they are to care for the things of the Lord and they have nothing else to do except to follow the will of the Lord and to please Him. (*1 Cor 7:32*) In all of their works the love of God and all people should shine forth.

12. They are to remember that they have been called by a special gift of grace to manifest in their lives that wonderful mystery by which the Church is joined to Christ her spouse. (*cf. Eph. 5:23-6*)

13. Let the Brothers and the Sisters keep the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, ever before their eyes. Let them do this according to the exhortation of St. Francis who held Holy Mary, Lady and Queen, in highest veneration. Let them also remember that the immaculate Virgin Mary, whose example they are to follow, called herself the handmaid of the Lord.

CHAPTER IV

The Life of Poverty

14. All the Brothers and Sisters zealously follow the poverty and humility of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Though rich beyond measure (*Cor. 8:9*), He emptied Himself for our sake (*Phil. 2:7*) and with the holy virgin, His mother Mary, He chose poverty in this world. Let them be mindful that they should have only those goods of this world which, as the Apostle says, "And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content" (*1 Tim. 6:8*). Let them particularly beware of money. And let them be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed, and the destitute.

15. The truly poor in spirit, following the example of the Lord, live in this world as pilgrims and strangers (*Mt. 10.27:29*). They neither appropriate nor defend anything as their own. So excellent is this most high poverty that it makes us heirs and rulers of the kingdom of heaven. It makes us materially poor, but rich in virtue (*Jn. 2:5*). Let this poverty alone be our portion because it leads to the land of the living (*cf. Ps 141:6*). Clinging completely to it let us, for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ, never want anything else under heaven.

CHAPTER V

The Life of Obedience

16. Following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ who made His own will one with the Father's, the Brothers and Sisters are to remember that, for God, they should give up their own wills. Therefore, in every kind of Chapter they have let them "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (*Matthew 6.33*) and exhort one another to observe this rule which all have professed more exactly, as well as how they might more faithfully follow in the footprints of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them neither dominate nor seek power over one another but let them willingly serve and obey each other with that genuine love which comes from each one's heart (*cf. Gal. 5:15*). This is the true and holy obedience of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

17. They are always to have one of their number as Minister and servant of the Order whom they are strictly obliged to obey in all that they have promised the Lord to observe, and which is not contrary to conscience or this rule.

18. Those who are Ministers and servants of the others should visit, admonish and encourage them with humility and love. Should there be Brothers or Sisters anywhere who know and acknowledge that they cannot observe the rule according to its

spirit, it is their right and duty to have recourse to their Ministers. The Ministers are to receive them with such love, kindness, and sympathy that the Brothers or Sisters can speak and act towards them just as an employer would with a worker. This is how it should be. The Ministers are to be servants of all.

19. No one is to appropriate any office or ministry whatsoever as if it were a personal right; rather each should willingly relinquish it when the time comes.

CHAPTER VI

The Love Of God and Neighbor

20. The obstacles to sanctity having been removed by the three sacred vows, let the Brothers and Sisters strive together to fulfill the Divine Law, which depends wholly upon the love of God and neighbor. Charity is the soul of all virtues and the bond of perfection. To mortify vices, to advance in grace, to pursue the sum of all virtues, there is nothing better, nothing more effective than charity.

21. A great sign of and assistance for the love of Christ is the frequent, and even daily approach to the Most Holy Eucharist, which is at the same time both a Sacred Banquet and the Memorial of His Passion. Let the religious souls also take care to frequently visit and devoutly venerate the Lord Jesus, abiding with us under this wonderful Mystery: for This is the greatest Sacrament in the Church and an inexhaustible fountain of all good and blessings.

22. However the proof of the love of God is the exercise of charity towards our neighbor; for that reason, in the true disciple of Christ, charity towards others should appear above all. Let all conversation be guarded, orderly, useful, honest and proper; that charity may abound in deed, it is must first

abound in the heart.

CHAPTER VII

The Divine Office, Prayer and Fasting

23. Everywhere and in each place, and in every season and each day, the Brothers and Sisters are to have a true and humble faith. From the depths of their inner life let them love, honor, adore, serve, praise, bless and glorify our most high and eternal God who is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. With all that they are, let them adore Him because "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (*Lk. 18:1*): this is what the Father desires. In this same spirit let them also celebrate the Divine Office in union with the whole Church.

24. The Brothers and Sisters whom the Lord has called to the life of contemplation (*Mt. 6:31*) with a daily renewed joy, should manifest their special dedication to God and celebrate the Father's love for the world. It was He who created and redeemed us, and by His mercy alone shall save us.

25. The Brothers and Sisters are to praise the Lord, the King of heaven and earth, (*cf. Mt. 11:25*) with all His creatures and to give Him thanks because, by His own holy will and through His only Son, with the Holy Ghost, He has created all things spiritual and material and made us in His own image and likeness.

26. Since the Brothers and Sisters are to be totally conformed to the Gospel, they should reflect and keep in their hearts the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Word of the Father as well as the Words of the Holy Ghost which are spirit and life (*Jn. 6:63*).

27. Let the Brothers and Sisters, according to their own Constitutions, worthily, attentively and devoutly perform the

Divine Office. Let those who are unable to perform the Divine Office say twelve Paters, Aves and Gloria Patris for Morning Prayer (*Matins and Lauds*), and five for each of the other remaining canonical hours.

28. Let them participate in the sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ and receive His Body and Blood with great humility and reverence remembering the words of the Lord: "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life. (*John. 6:54*) " Moreover, they are to show the greatest possible reverence and honor for the most Sacred Name, written words and most holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things in heaven and on earth have been brought to peace and reconciliation with Almighty God (*Col.1:20*).

29. Moreover every day, unless legitimately impeded, they ought to hear Mass, and to take care to have a pious priest approved by the Ordinary of the place, to proclaim and expound the Word of God to them on certain days and to instruct them in penance and in virtue. (*Rule of the III Order. op. cit., cap. IV*)

30. Whenever they commit sin the brothers and sisters, without delay, are to do penance interiorly by sincere sorrow and exteriorly by confessing their sins to a priest. They should also do worthy deeds that manifest their repentance.

31. They ought also every day to consider within themselves and before God, what they have done, said and thought, and to examine their conscience; to humbly seek pardon concerning their own faults and to offer and commend to God their firm purpose of amendment.

32. Let all take care to nurture and foster daily, by means of frequent meditation on the Passion Christ, the fervor of their devotion, and thus let them follow and imitate their Seraphic

Father, so that they may also be able to exclaim with St. Paul: "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" (*Gal. 2:20*)

33. They should fast and always strive to be simple and humble, especially before God. They should desire nothing else but our Savior who offered himself in his own Blood as a sacrifice on the altar of the Cross for our sins, giving us example so that we might follow in his footsteps.

34. Besides the abstinences and fasts to which all the faithful are obliged, let the Brothers and Sisters observe those which are prescribed in their own Constitutions, especially the vigils of the Solemnities of the Most Holy Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of their Seraphic Father Francis.

CHAPTER VIII

The Interior and Exterior Manner of Conduct

35. Since the Brothers and Sisters of this Order are called *of Penance*, let them bear each day the cross of mortification, as truly befits penitents.

36. It is proper that above all else, they abstain from all that is superfluous, as much in their clothing as in all other things. And according to the wholesome counsel of Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, having put aside the other vain ornaments of this world, they ought not carry any corporal ornament, except their own religious habit (*Rule op. cit., ch. VI*). They are bound also to observe the cloister according to their own Constitutions.

37. They ought also to be sparing in words and speech, which are rarely multiplied without sin. Let the conduct of the Brothers and Sisters be such that they may edify all in word and example and remain mindful that the Lord has said: "*Let*

your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven." (Mt. 5:16). Let them announce peace to all, using a humble and devout greeting: and let them always bear peace about, not only upon their lips, but also in their heart. (Rule op. cit, ch. VI).

CHAPTER IX

The Care of the Infirm

38. If any Brother or Sister has fallen ill or into infirmity, let no one refuse their services; but it will be the duty of the Superiors to arrange and provide for the proper care of the patient. Let the others, not assigned to such services, not hesitate to visit the patient, and to comfort them with consoling words. Let all with a glad spirit be responsible for, and tender the offices of charity not only to the infirm, but also to the aged, the indigent or to those otherwise needy in another manner, as befits the children of the Seraphic Father.

39. Let the Superiors be bound to admonish the infirm brother or sister as regards accepting the penance of infirmity, concerning the true conversion to God that must be made, and also propose to them the nearness of death and the breadth of the Divine Judgment and at the same time the Divine Mercy (*Rule op. cit., ch. VII*).

40. After any Brother or Sister has passed from this life, the Superiors shall take care that the obsequies be celebrated with great piety (*Rule op. cit., ch. IX*). Moreover, on behalf of the soul of each departed, let them faithfully perform the prescribed suffrages.

CHAPTER X

The Nature and Manner of Work

41. Let the Brothers and Sisters, who have dedicated themselves to the service of God, by the inspiration and assistance of the grace of the Holy Ghost, flee idleness, and apply themselves faithfully and devoutly to the divine praises, and to the various works of religion or charity (*cf. Reg. II Ord., cap. VII*).

42. As poor people, the Brothers and Sisters to whom the Lord has given the grace of serving or working with their hands, should do so faithfully and conscientiously. Let them avoid that idleness which is the enemy of the soul. But they should not be so busy that the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, which all earthly goods should foster, is extinguished.

43. In exchange for their service or work, they may accept anything necessary for their own temporal needs and for that of their Brothers or Sisters. Let them accept it humbly as is expected of those who are servants of God and seekers of most holy poverty. Whatever they may have over and above their needs, they are to give to the poor. And let them never want to be over others. Instead they should be servants and subjects to every human creature for the Lord's sake (*1 Pet. 2:13*).

44. For this reason let the Brothers and Sisters fulfill their duties for the sake of God; and whatever the Superiors ask of them, to the best of their ability, let them perform it devoutly and faithfully, as has been said. Let them not object to the more humble tasks, which must be done as requested, but rather let them perform these as willingly as the others, following in the footsteps of their Seraphic Father.

45. Let all things be done in charity, and let the holy love of God so animate the spirits of the Brothers and Sisters in fulfilling their works, that it happens that they work only for

His honor and glory: let them fulfill the admonition of Saint Paul, the Apostle: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God". (1 Cor 10:31).

CHAPTER XI

The Preachers and Teachers

46. Let none of the Brothers or Sisters preach or teach contrary to the form and arrangement of the Church nor unless it has been permitted by their Minister. And the Minister should take care, not to grant this permission to anyone indiscriminately. However let all the Brothers and Sisters preach and teach by their works and their actions.

47. Let no minister, preacher or teacher appropriate unto himself or herself the ministry of the Order, or the office of preaching or teaching, but let them set it aside without protest whenever they are so instructed or requested.

CHAPTER XII

The Missions

48. Let those Brothers and Sisters who, by divine inspiration, desire to offer themselves for missionary work, seek permission from their Ministers Provincial. Indeed let the Ministers grant their permission to no one, except those whom they consider to be fit for this work.

CHAPTER XIII

The Election of Ministers and the Chapter

49. Let all the Brothers and Sisters be bound to always have one of their own Friars as Minister General and servant of the whole Order and let them be bound firmly to obey him.

50. When the Minister General dies, let the election of a successor be made by the Ministers Provincial and the Delegates in the General Chapter (*at Pentecost*), which the Ministers Provincial are always bound to convene at once, wherever it had been determined by the Minister General; and they shall do this once every three years or at a longer or shorter interval, as had been decided by the aforesaid Minister General.

51. And if at any time it appears to the whole body of the Ministers Provincial and the Delegates, that the aforesaid Minister General is not qualified or capable for the service of and the general welfare of the Order, then the aforesaid Brothers and Sisters, to whom the election is entrusted, are bound in the Name of the Lord to elect another as their Minister General.

52. After the General Chapter (*at Pentecost*), the Ministers Provincial and the Custodes may convoke a Chapter of their Brothers and Sisters in their own territories once in the same year, if they wish and if it seems expedient to them.

CHAPTER XIV

The Canonical Bishop-Protector and the Episcopal Visitor

53. The Brothers and Sisters, through their Ministers and by virtue of their Vow of Obedience, must request from the Primate, one of the Bishops of The North American Old Roman Catholic Church, to be appointed as the Bishop-Protector of this Order.

54. The Brothers and Sisters are also to elect as their Episcopal Visitor, the Bishop of the Diocese in which their Mother House is so located, unless this same Bishop directs or permits the election of some other Bishop in his place, so that

always subject and prostrate at the feet of the same Holy Church, stable in the Catholic Faith (*cf. Col 1:23*) we may observe, what we have firmly promised: the poverty and humility and the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XV

The Obligation of the Rule.

55. Let the Brothers and Sisters always be mindful that they should desire one thing alone, namely, the Spirit of God at work within them. Always obedient to the church and firmly established in the Catholic faith, let them live according to the poverty, the humility and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ which they have solemnly promised to observe.

56. Each and every thing contained in the present Rule is a counsel to help the wayfarer and to save souls more easily from vice, and none are obligatory under pain of sin, mortal or venial, except where one was obliged to them by human or divine law. (*Rule op. cit., cap. X*).

57. The Brothers and Sisters are, however, obliged to perform the penances imposed on them by their Superiors, when required to do so. They are also obliged to keep the essential three vows: Poverty, in accord with the terms of their Constitutions; Chastity, by binding themselves to observe celibacy and in addition, by a new title, that is of this very vow, to abstain from whatever act, both external, as well as internal, which may be opposed to chastity; Obedience, by assuming the obligation of obeying the mandate of a legitimate Superior according to the norms of their Constitutions. (*cf. Rule op. cit., ch. X*).

58. Let all, both Brothers and Sisters, undertake and arrange their life according to the prescription of the religious state which they have professed and let them first of all faithfully

observe those things which pertain to the perfection of their own vows. Let them especially do those greatest things, which induce them to follow the charity and poverty of their Seraphic Father: for it greatly befits the child to reproduce in itself, both the image and the virtues of its own Parent.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE HOLY RULE
By Our Holy Father Saint Francis

In the Name of the Lord! I beg all the Brothers (*and Sisters*), that they in addition learn the tenor and sense of these things which have been written in this life for the salvation of our souls and that they frequently recall these to memory. And I entreat God, that He, who is Omnipotent, Triune and One, bless all those who teach, learn, retain, remember and put these things into practice, as often as they return to and do those things which have been written here for the salvation of our souls, and kissing their feet, to love deeply, guard and cherish these things. And on the part of Almighty God and the *Canonical Authorities of the Church* and by obedience, I Friar Francis, firmly command and decree, that concerning these things, which have been written in this life, no one is to diminish or add in writing anything to what is above (*cf. Dt 4:2; 12:32*) nor are the Brothers (*and Sisters*) to have another rule.

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

THE TESTAMENT OF OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

Thus did the Lord grant to me, Friar Francis, to begin to do penance: that when I was exceedingly in sins, to see the lepers seemed a bitter thing to me And the Lord Himself led me among them and I worked mercy with them. And when I was fleeing from them, because that seemed to me a bitter thing, it was changed for me into sweetness of soul and body; and afterwards I stayed for a little while and then I went forth from the world.

And the Lord granted me such faith in churches that thus I would pray simply and say: We adore Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, and for all Thy churches, which are in the whole world, we also bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Afterwards the Lord granted me and grants so much faith in priests, who live according to the form of the Holy *Catholic* Church, on account of their state in life, that if they would stir up a persecution against me, I want to have recourse to them. Even if I would have as much wisdom, as Solomon had, and would come upon the little poor priests of this age, in the parishes, where they linger, I do not wish to preach beyond their will. And they and all other clerics I want to fear, love, and honor, as my lords. And I do not want to consider sin in them, because I discern in them the Son of God, and they are my lords. And I do that on account of this, because I see nothing corporally in this age of the Most High Son of God Himself, except His Most Holy Body and Most Holy Blood, which they receive and which they alone minister to others. And these Most Holy Mysteries I want above all things to honor, to venerate and to be placed in precious places. Wherever I will have found written the Most Holy Names and His words in unlawful places, I want to gather them together and I beg, that they are gathered together and placed together

in an honorable place. And all theologians and those, who minister the most sacred divine words, we ought to honor and venerate, as those who minister to us spirit and life (*cf. Jn 6:64*).

And after the Lord gave me some friars, no one showed me, what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me, that I ought to live according the form of the Holy Gospel. And I had it written in a few words and simply and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me. And those who were coming to receive life, used to give "all that they possibly had" (*Tob 1,3*) to the poor; and they used to be content with one tunic, patched inside and out, with a cord and breeches. And we did not use to want to have more. We clerics used to say the Office along with the other clergy, the lay brothers used to say the Pater Noster; and we used to remain quite freely in the churches. And we used to be simple and subject to all.

And I used to work with my hands, and I want to work; and all the other brothers I firmly want, that they work at their job, because this pertains to honesty. Those who do not know how, let them learn, not for the sake of the desire to receive a price for work, but for the sake of the example it gives and to repel idleness. And when the price for the work would not be given to us, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, by asking for alms door to door. The Lord revealed to me a greeting that we are to say: "The Lord grant you peace!"

Let all the friars beware of themselves, so that they receive almost none of the churches, the poor tiny dwellings and all the buildings, which are constructed on their behalf, unless they would be, such as befits holy poverty, which we have promised in the Rule, always boarding there as exiles and pilgrims (*cf. 1 Pet 2:11*). I firmly command all the friars by obedience, that wherever they are, they do not dare to seek any letter in the Roman Curia, by means of themselves nor by an interposed person, nor on behalf of a church nor on behalf of another place nor under the appearance of preaching nor on

behalf of a persecution of their bodies; but wherever they have not been received, let them flee into another land to do penance with the blessing of God.

And I firmly want to obey the Minister General of this Order and any guardian, whom it will have pleased him to give me. And I want to be so captive in his hands, that I would not be able to go or do beyond obedience and his will, because he is my lord.

And although I am simple and infirm, nevertheless I want to always have a cleric, who will perform the Office for me, as it is contained in the Rule. And all the other friars are bound to likewise obey their guardians and perform the Office according to the Rule. And those, who would be found, that do not perform the Office according to the Rule, and want to vary it in another manner, or are not Catholics, let all the friars, wherever they are, be bound by obedience, that wherever they have found any of these, they ought to present them before the nearest custos of that place, where they found him. And let the custos be firmly bound by obedience to guard him strongly, just like a man in chains day and night, so that he cannot be snatched from their hands, until he in person presents him into the hands of his minister. And let the minister be firmly bound by obedience to send him by means of such friars that day and night guard him as a man in chains, until they present him before the lord of Ostia, who is the lord, protector and corrector of the whole Order.

And let the friars not say: "This is another Rule," because this is a remembrance, an admonition, an exhortation and my testament, which I, tiny Friar

Francis, make for you, my blest friars, for the sake of this, that we might observe the Rule, which we have promised the Lord, in a more Catholic way.

And let the Minister General and all the other ministers and custodes be bound by obedience, not to add to these words nor take away. And let them have this writing with them always, next to the Rule. And in all the chapters that are convened, when they read the Rule, let them also read these words. And all my friars, cleric and lay, I firmly command by obedience, to not place glosses upon the Rule, not even by saying in these words: "Thus they intend to be understood." But as the Lord granted me simply and purely to dictate and write the Rule and these words, so you should understand them simply and without gloss and observe them with holy work until the end.

THE BLESSING OF OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

Let whosoever has observed these things, be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High, the heavenly Father, and on earth let them be filled with the blessing of His Beloved Son, together with the Most Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and with all the Virtues of Heaven and all the Saints. And I, Friar Francis, your poor little one and servant, as much as I am able, confirm for you within and without, this most holy blessing, which may you have with all the Virtues of Heaven and all the Saints now and forevermore. Amen.

THE EXHORTATION OF OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

O most beloved brethren and eternally blessed children, hear me, hear the voice of your Father. We have promised great things, still greater things are promised unto us. Let us keep the former and strive for the latter. Pleasure is short, punishment is everlasting. Suffering is slight, glory is infinite. Many are called, few are chosen; but retribution awaits all. Amen.

**THE MALEDICTION OF OUR HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS**

By Thee, O Most Holy Father, and by the whole court of heaven, and by me, poor little one, may they be cursed, who by their bad example, confound and destroy what Thou hast built up and dost not cease to build up by the saintly Friars (*and Sisters*) of this Order.



THE PRINCIPLES
*(A Concise Statement of the Principles of
Franciscan Life)*

Arranged for Daily Meditation



Historical Note

The Principles are in large measure derived from the documents of the Christa Seva Sangha, a Franciscan brotherhood established in 1922 in Poona, India.

They were revised in 1930 for the Brotherhood of the Love of Christ, a Franciscan brotherhood in St Ives, Huntingdonshire, England and again in 1937 when the Brotherhood of Saint Francis of Assisi of Hillfield, Dorset, England amalgamated with them to form the Society of Saint Francis.

In 1967, The Order of Saint Francis, at Mount Sinai, Long Island, New York, USA, united with the Society of Saint Francis and *The Principles* were adopted as a part of the Rule of the Brothers of the First Order. The Community of Saint Francis, a sisterhood founded in 1905 in England, became a part of the Society of Saint Francis in 1964 and adopted *The Principles* as a part of its Rule.

The Principles, as they have been slightly modified and adapted to our specific circumstances in The North American Old Roman Catholic Church, are here added as a further explanation of our Way of Life, as a supplemental guide and for meditation upon our Vocation. While they do not form any official part of our Rule, they are for us, an official commentary on the Franciscan Life for religious.

THE OBJECT OF THE ORDER

Day One

Jesus the Master speaks, I tell you most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves their life loses it; anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; wherever I am, my servant will be there too. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor (John 12.24-26).

The Master sets before us in the example of his own sacrifice the secret of fruit-bearing. He surrenders himself to death, and lo! He becomes the source of new life to myriads. Lifted up from the earth in sacrifice, he draws unto him all those multitudes of which the Greeks, Whose coming kindled his vision (John 12. 20-21), are the foretaste and prophecy. The life that is cherished perishes; the life that is renounced is eternal.

Day Two

This law of renunciation and sacrifice, which is the law of the Master's own life and fruit-bearing, he lays also upon his servants, bidding us follow him in the same path. To those who thus follow he promises the ineffable reward of union with himself and acceptance by the Father.

The object, therefore, of this Order, is to build up a body which, accepting Christ as Lord and Master, will seek to follow him in the way of renunciation and sacrifice as an act of witness and for the loving service of his brothers and sisters in the world.

THE THREE CONDITIONS OF LIFE

Day Three

God has at all times called certain of his children to embrace a state of celibacy for the kingdom of heaven's sake, that they may be free to give themselves without distraction to his service. Recognizing this, we set before ourselves the aim of building up a Community which shall be completely dedicated to God alone both in body and spirit. We, in response to God's call, after a sufficient period of probation, voluntarily dedicate ourselves to a life of devotion to our Lord under the conditions of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Day Four

It is not without reason that the three conditions of poverty, chastity and obedience have ever been embraced by those desiring to live the life of religious detachment; for they stand for the ideal of perfect renunciation of the world, the flesh and the devil, which are the three great enemies of the spiritual life.

POVERTY

Day Five

The Master willingly embraced a life of poverty in this world. *He was rich, yet for your sake he became poor* (2 Cor 8. 9). He chose a stable for his birthplace, and for his upbringing the house of a village carpenter. Even that home he left in early manhood, and became a wayfarer, *with nowhere to lay his head* (Matt 8.20).

Us also he calls to poverty. *Whoever serves me must follow me* (John 12.26). *None of you can be disciples of mine without parting with all your possessions* (Luke 14.33).

Therefore, we seek to be poor in spirit. We desire to escape from the love of the world and the things that are in the world and rather, like our Father, Founder and patron Saint Francis,

to be in love with poverty. We covet only the unsearchable riches of Christ. We recognize, indeed, that while some of our members may be called to a literal following of Saint Francis in a life of actual penury and extreme simplicity, for most of us so high an ideal will not be possible.

Day Six

We desire to possess nothing which cannot be shared by those around us and such things as will help satisfy our needs. We receive no pay and own no personal possessions. We live as a family having all things in common. We receive for our use the simple necessities of life. Yet what we receive we regard not as our own but rather as lent to us for a season.

Nor must we, while excluding the snare of the world from our individual lives, allow it to return in the corporate Community, where it may work a wider and more fatal destruction. It would be small gain were we to surrender our personal possessions only to live in luxury through the abundance of the common stock. Therefore the Community must *turn away from excess* (James 1.21). The buildings we erect and the style and manner of life which we permit must be the simplest that are consistent with good health and efficient work. If there is money beyond what such simple needs require, let it be spent in works of mercy and service, or else be used for the house of God, which it is right and seemly with proper moderation to adorn, or for the purchase of books which are necessary to the work of study.

Day Seven

In all things, let us exhibit the simplicity of true Franciscans, who, caring little for the world, where we are but strangers and pilgrims, have our hearts set on that spiritual home where our treasure lies.

CHASTITY

Day Eight

We are bound, like all Christians, to resist and by God's grace to conquer the temptations of the flesh, and to live lives of purity and self-control. We must ever strive through faithful self-discipline and prayer to be chaste both in mind and body.

Furthermore, that we may *wait upon the Lord without distraction* (1 Cor 7.35) and give ourselves wholly to his work, being wedded only to Christ, our true spouse, we embrace of our own will the vocation of celibacy. We do this not because we believe that the unmarried state is in itself higher than the married, but because we believe that for us the unmarried state is that in which God wishes us to serve him. Therefore we look to God with confidence to give us the grace needed for this life which, if we should undertake it contrary to his will, would be to us a state of greater rather than less distraction than that of marriage.

Day Nine

In thus accepting the state of chastity, we must ever be on our guard against the temptation to self-centeredness, coldness or a lack of sympathy with the interests of others. Our espousal to Christ must not weaken or mar our human affections. Rather must our union with him enable us to love more richly with his love all with whom we are brought in contact.

OBEDIENCE

Day Ten

The Master, who, coming into the world not to do his own will but the will of the Him that sent him, *in obedience accepted even death, death on a cross* (Phil. 2.8), says to those who follow him, *Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls* (Matt 11. 9). We desire, therefore, to surrender our wills

to the will of God in the spirit of perfect obedience, that being delivered from self-will and pride we may find true freedom and peace, and be ready instruments which God can use for His purpose.

Day Eleven

By voluntarily accepting the Rule as binding upon us, we pledge ourselves to abide by this Rule and to obey the decisions of the Chapter, by which the common mind of the Community is expressed and interpreted. It is the work of the Ministers to administer the Rule, and to see that the decisions of the Chapter are observed. Their directions, therefore, unless they order something contrary to the Rule or in itself sinful, must be promptly and cheerfully carried out. In their absence obedience is due to their Assistants. Those put in charge of a department of work are also to be obeyed in that department. But none of us may, on any authority, act contrary to the guiding of our own consciences. The Ministers are, like the other members, under obedience to the Rule and Chapter, and are bound to exercise their authority, not in a spirit of partiality or pride or selfishness, but with equal consideration and love and with humble prayer for the divine wisdom.

Day Twelve

The obligation of particular obedience within the Community we gladly accept, not as something different from the obedience which we owe to God, but rather as part of that obedience. We are confident that if God has called us to a life under Rule we will, in fulfilling the obligations of that life, be most truly obeying him and that, whatever limitations or humiliations our obedience may involve, will, if cheerfully accepted, be a means by which pride is vanquished and a more perfect consecration achieved.

When working away from the Community, we should put

ourselves under the discipline of the parish or society in which we are staying.

THE THREE WAYS OF SERVICE

Day Thirteen

We seek to serve our Master by the life of devotion, by sacred study and by works. In the life of the Community as a whole all these three ways must find full and balanced expression. It is not, indeed to be expected that we will all devote ourselves equally to each of these three tasks. It is right that our several employments should vary according to the particular ability which God has given us, as that some of us should, with the approval of the Minister, give ourselves in large measure to prayer and contemplation, others of us to the pursuit of learning and the writing of books and others of us mainly to the ministry of active service. Yet must room be found in the lives of us all for at least some measure of each of these three employments.

PRAYER

Day Fourteen

Praise and prayer constitute the atmosphere in which we must strive to live. We must endeavor to maintain a constant recollection of the presence of God and of the unseen world. An ever-deepening devotion to Christ is the hidden source of all our strength and joy. He is for us the One all-lovely and adorable, God incarnate, crucified and risen, whose love is the inspiration of service and the reward of sacrifice.

Day Fifteen

That our union with our Lord and Master may be ever renewed and strengthened, we unite in offering daily before God the Memorial of his death and passion, and feeding often upon his Sacrificial Life. The Holy Eucharist is the center

around which our life revolves. It is above all the heart of our prayer life. The time of Morning Prayer is the preparation of mind and spirit for entrance within the sanctuary. The meditation is the opportunity for quiet tryst with him who, through the sacrament, is present inwardly, and for feeding on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. Services of intercession and thanksgiving are times when we who have been thus joined with God in communion and meditation may plead with God in sure reliance on his promise: *if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask whatever you will and you shall receive it* (John 15.7), and also thank him for continuous experience of its fulfillment. Evening Prayer is the renewed offering of praise and prayer to the same Lord at the end of the day's work. Compline is the Master's blessing of protection and peace and, in its closing silence, the hearts of us all are together steeped afresh in the peace of that inward uncreated light which, as the shadows of life deepen, abides unchanged.

Day Sixteen

We must strive ever to remember how essential is the work of prayer to every department of our lives. Without the constant renewal of divine grace the spirit flags, the will is weakened, the conscience grows dull, the mind loses its freshness and even the bodily vigor is impaired. We must, therefore, always be on our guard against the constant temptation to let other work encroach upon the hours of prayer, remembering that if we seek in this way to increase the bulk of our activity it can only be at the cost of its true quality and value. We must be regular and punctual in our attendance at corporate prayer. We must also bear in mind that it is of little value to be present at the common devotions in a formal or careless spirit. We must seek to make of each office an offering of true devotion from the heart. The reverent, ordered and earnest offering of the corporate worship is the very heart of our Community life.

Day Seventeen

So too we must guard with jealous watchfulness the times of private prayer. We must remember that corporate worship is not a substitute for the communion of the individual soul with God, and we must strive to go forward to ever fuller enjoyment of such communion until we are living in so constant a remembrance of God's presence that we do indeed *pray continually* (1 Thess 5.17).

Day Eighteen

It is to assist such an attitude and practice of recollection that the rules of silence have been laid down, and we will welcome and use such silence regarding it not as the imposition of an artificial restraint, nor merely as an external rule to be observed by refraining from speech, but as an opportunity for growing in the sense of the Divine Presence. We will welcome in a like spirit the retreats and days of quiet which the Community's Rule provides as times when, in withdrawal from all external distractions, the life of the spirit may be renewed and deepened.

In these and suchlike ways, we will seek to keep ever fresh and living our devotion to Christ our Lord; and when, through human frailty, we fail in our high endeavor we will yet return again to Christ with humble contrition and earnest purpose of amendment; and we will hold in special esteem that Sacrament of Penance and absolution whereby we are cleansed from sin and renewed in the life of grace.

STUDY

Day Nineteen

The true knowledge is the knowledge of God. The highest wisdom is that holy wisdom whereby the soul is made one with God. The first place, therefore, in our work of study will always be given to the study and practice of the way of the

soul's ascent to God and the devotional study of the scriptures as one of the chief aids to that end. We will study also the teaching of the Christian saints concerning the spiritual life.

It is the hope of the Community that some of its houses may be not only homes of prayer but also homes of learning. It is out of this recognition of the value and importance of study that some of the hours each day are set apart for this purpose under the Rule; and it is mainly for the uninterrupted securing of these hours that the rule of the lesser silence is laid down whenever possible.

WORKS

Day Twenty

Jesus the Master took on himself the form of a servant. *He did not come to be served but to serve* (Mark 10.45). He went about doing good, healing the sick, preaching good tidings to the poor, binding up the broken-hearted. Those of us who would claim to be his servants and follow him must be diligent in ministry to others.

The active works by which we seek to serve our Master begin within the house and garden. The sweeping, dusting and other menial offices, as well as certain forms of manual work, are apportioned among us so that we all may contribute our share to the work of the household and the cost of our own living. All of us must be capable of engaging in some form of manual work. All of us must consider the interests of the Community in its work for God and study strict economy. We will do our own work as far as possible. Saint Francis said that the idle member *has no place in the Community*

Day Twenty One

Outside the special works of service to the Community, there are many opportunities of ministry, particularly to the

uncared-for, the sick, the suffering and the needy. The Community sets before it, as the special program of service which it would like to be able to carry out, those acts of mercy the doing of which even to the humblest the Master declares that he will accept as done unto himself. By helping in the relief of poverty we may give Christ food and drink. By hospitality to the stranger we may take him in. By relieving the homeless and naked we may clothe him. By caring for the sick we may relieve him. By visiting the prisoner we may cheer him. We do not, indeed, expect ever to have at our disposal many funds for the administration of charitable relief, but we will gladly lend ourselves in the work of such relief and co-operate with others who are doing it. In all such work, we will seek to serve all irrespective of creed, offering our services not as a bribe but as a reflection of the love of Christ Himself.

Day Twenty Two

The chiefest of all forms of service that we can offer must ever be the effort to show others in his beauty and power the Christ who is the inspiration and joy of our lives. We will seek to do this, not in a spirit of aggression, nor with contempt for the beliefs of others, but rather because, knowing in our own experience the power of Christ to save from sin and to give newness of life, we must needs seek to share our own supreme treasure. Out of the fullness, therefore, of devoted love we would seek to give our beloved Master to all.

We must remember that, in this task of showing Christ to others, the witness of life is more eloquent than that of words. Therefore, as Franciscans, we must seek rather to be living lives through which Christ can manifest himself than to preach much in public. Nevertheless, there will be some amongst us called more particularly to the ministry of the Word, and all of us must be ready at all times to give an answer for the faith that is in us, and particularly to guide all who are sincerely

seeking after truth. We must also be ready by instruction and prayer and spiritual direction to strengthen the faith of Christians and lead them forward in the spiritual life.

Day Twenty Three

We must be glad at all times to relieve those who come to us for help or counsel. We must never give the impression that we have no time for such ministry. Rather must we be ready to lay aside all other work, including even the work of prayer, where such service is immediately required, confident that such a negligence will surely be well-pleasing to the Servant of all.

THE THREE NOTES OF THE ORDER

Day Twenty Four

The three notes which must ever in special degree mark our lives are humility, love and joy. If these prevail within us the object of the Community will be fulfilled and its work fruitful. If they are lacking, it will be unprofitable and barren.

HUMILITY

Day Twenty Five

We will strive to keep ever before us the example of Christ who *emptied himself, taking the form of a servant* (Phil 2.7) and who, on the last night of his life, in the guise of a *slave washed his disciples' feet* (John 13. 4-5). We will ever seek after his pattern *to clothe ourselves with humility towards one another* (1 Pet 5.5).

Humility is the recognition of the truth about God and ourselves, the recognition of our own insufficiency and dependence, seeing that we have nothing which we have not received. It is the mother of all Christian virtues. As Saint Bernard of Clairvaux has said, *no spiritual house can stand for*

a moment save on the foundation of humility. It is the first condition of a happy life within the family. Thus we must remember that those of us who are always confident that we are right and eager to impose our opinion on others will be unhappy as chafing under the discipline of subordination and correction, and will also make the life of the family unhappy by marring that distinctive atmosphere of harmony and order which depends on each of us doing our allotted task with cheerfulness. The glad acceptance of the rule of obedience, and the loyal fulfillment of orders that are distasteful or difficult, will be one sure means of growing in this grace.

Day Twenty Six

We must refrain from all contemptuous thoughts one of another and, not seeking for pre-eminence, must *esteem others better than ourselves* (Phil 2.3). The faults that we see in others must be subjects for prayer rather than criticism, and we must be more diligent *to cast out the beam from our own eye than the speck from another's* (Matt 7.5). We must be ready, not only gladly *to accept the lowest place when bidden* (Luke 14. 10) but rather, of our own accord, take it. Nevertheless, if entrusted with a work of which we feel incapable or unworthy, we must not shrink from accepting it on the plea of humility but attempt it confidently through *the power that is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor 12.9).

In our relations also with those outside, we must strive to show our Master's humility. We must welcome gladly all opportunities of humble service that come to us and never desire pre-eminence or praise. In particular, we must resist the temptation to consider ourselves superior to others because we are dedicated to a life of religion, realizing how much greater often are the sacrifices and difficulties of those engaged in the ordinary professions of life and how much more nobly they face them.

LOVE

Day Twenty Seven

The Master says, *By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples* (John 13.35). Love is thus the distinguishing feature of all true Disciples of Christ. It must be specially an outstanding note in our lives, as we seek to be specially consecrated to Christ as his servants. *God is love* (1 John 4.8) and, for those whose lives are *hidden with Christ in God* (Col 3.3), love will be the very atmosphere which surrounds all that they do.

This love we must show towards all to whom we are united by natural ties of relationship or friendship. We will love them not less but more as our love for Christ grows deeper.

We will love with a special affection those to whom we are united within the family of the Community, praying for each individually and seeking to grow in love each. We must be on our guard against all that injures this love: the bitter thought, the hasty retort, the angry gesture; and never fail to ask forgiveness of any against whom we have sinned. We must seek to love equally with others those with whom we have least natural affinity. For this love of one another is not simply the welling up of natural affection but a supernatural love which God gives us through our common union with Christ. As such it bears testimony to its divine origin. Our Lord intended the unity of those who believe in him to be a special witness to the world of his divine mission. The Community must show the spectacle of a Christian family whose members, even though of varied race and education and character, are bound into a living fellowship by this supernatural love.

Lastly, in all our relationships with those, whether Christians or not, with whom our work brings us in contact we will, as Franciscans, seek to show forth this same supernatural Christ-like love; and, remembering that love is measured by sacrifice,

we will seek gladly to spend whatever gifts we may possess of body, mind and spirit in the service of those to whom God calls us to minister.

JOY

Day Twenty Eight

Rejoicing in the Lord always (Phil. 4.4), we must show forth in our lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. We must remember that we follow the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was the friend of publicans and sinners, who sat at the tables alike of the rich and the poor. We will, therefore, put aside all gloom and moroseness, all undue aloofness from the common interests of people and delight in laughter and good fellowship. We will rejoice in God's world and all its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean. We will mingle freely with all kinds of people, seeking to banish sorrow and to bring good cheer into other lives. We will carry with us an inner secret of happiness and peace which all will feel, if they may not know its source.

Day Twenty Nine

This joy, likewise, is a divine gift and comes only from union with God in Christ. As such it can abide even in days of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment and an inward serenity and confidence in sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can be *content, for Christ's sake, with weakness, contempt, persecution, hardship and frustration*; for when they are weak, then they are strong (2 Cor 12.10).

Day Thirty

These three notes of humility, love and joy, which should mark our lives are all supernatural graces which can be won

only from the Divine Bounty. They can never be attained through our own unaided exertions. They are miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. But it is the purpose of Christ our Master to work miracles through his servants and, if we will but be emptied of self and utterly surrendered to him, we will become chosen vessels of his Spirit and effective instruments of his mighty working, *who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive* (Eph 3.20).



