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EDITORIAL

ITINERANT FRANCISCANS

The novelty of the Franciscan calling was that it was born as an itinerant way of life. It was the first time in the history of the Church that religious life assumed this particular characteristic. Monastic Orders were very much sedentary in their way of life. Francis and his brothers were mostly laymen, and they adopted the typical style of life of lay people. The 13th century was witnessing an increasing mobility of population from the countryside to the cities, as well as the construction of new arteries of communication, crossing the Alps from central Europe into Italy, for the sake of commercial business.

Accustomed, as we are, to live in a world where everyone is moving about, and where means of communication are quick and efficient, we do not realise what this change meant in the middle ages. The capability of being itinerant brought the friars in contact with the culture of the university towns, with the commercial activity in the cities, and with the increasing tension between social strata, in an age where the feudal system was crumbling in the wake of the resurgence of a new middle class.

It was this itinerant character and adaptability for mobility that rendered the mendicant orders, particularly the Franciscans and Dominicans, efficient instruments of evangelisation in Europe and beyond. The brothers were always on the move. However, it is important to understand how this itinerant way of life was developing.

We tend to think of Franciscan itineracy as the ability to move about freely, most of the time on an individual basis. This is a false idea of the itinerant character of the Franciscan life. The brothers did travel a lot, but always in pairs, if not in groups. They were expected to lodge wherever Christian charity offered hospitality, but they preferred poor hospices, leper houses and monasteries. Later on, when the Order spread in Europe, the security of a conventual atmosphere in the friary was the guarantee for the brothers in their travels. They would be welcomed in the *conventus* and participate in the life of the other brothers during their stop overs during journeys of itinerant preaching.

Nowadays we have become familiar with the notion of Franciscan itineracy. Brothers who remain stuck in one place for long years during their lives are seen as too tied up with a conventual structure, which is then presented as alien to the Franciscan founding inspiration. Many brothers do travel a lot, even for valid reasons of apostolate or study, and certainly with the permission of their ministers and guardians. However, the overall tendency is to do it alone. Very few brothers take part in fraternal experiences of evangelisation, travelling together and staying together in temporary residences. Some initiatives are

praiseworthy in the Order regarding this aspect, but they are few and rare.

To complicate matters, some brothers who feel that they cannot fit in the lives of their respective provinces, have opted to change residence and apostolate. The Franciscan Order is an international fraternity which offers various possibilities of presence and action.

A case in point is the introduction of inserted international fraternities, as well as the opportunity to offer service in the Custody of the Holy Land. This is certainly a very positive way of diversifying our Franciscan action and presence. There are, however, dangers in the system. The sense of individualism and instability which has crept in many provinces is leading brothers to seek greater autonomy elsewhere. The option to go on missionary evangelisation is praiseworthy and tempting, if it is chosen out of a sincere desire to make a new experience of Franciscan life. Alas, this is not always the case. Brothers who feel misfits in their provinces, cannot fit in others simply because they move house. Itineracy is not a question of physical, but of mental mobility. The itinerant brother is truly so when he can easily fit in a conventual setting, and collaborate in evangelising ministry with other brothers. The individualistic brother who travels alone, who plans action alone, has not understood what Franciscan itineracy is all about.

Another case in point is that itineracy forms part and parcel of Franciscan life, as long as it is not imposed. Brothers have felt estranged in their own house when they have found themselves forcibly accepting decisions coming from on high, particularly in the case of the unification of provinces, seen as a necessary remedy for our dwindling numbers. Experience has shown in the past that unification from the top is bound to fail. The events of 1897 are a case in point. But it seems that we have not learned the lesson. Unification is a success when it stems from a true sense of belonging to a brotherhood. It does not solve the problem of individualism and loneliness that are plaguing our Order and taking their toll on young brothers, who feel disoriented and abandoned by a brotherhood they so enthusiastically bound their fate with.

It is high time that our Order offers a sense of belonging and security, coupled with the praiseworthy itinerant character of Franciscan life. The impression of disorientation and *laissez-faire* in the Order is real. It will not be solved by despotic styles of government. Unfortunately, this is the trend. Only human touch can lend a hand for a brother to live as an itinerant Franciscan within the structure of a true brotherhood.

Noel Muscat ofm

100 YEARS OF THE FRANCISCAN PARISH OF SLIEMA

Noel Muscat

On 24 September 1918, one hundred years ago, Dom Maurus Caruana O.S.B., Bishop of Malta, formally decreed the erection of the Parish of the *Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor*, under the pastoral care of the Franciscan OFM Province of St. Paul. The parish was formally inaugurated on 29 September 1918. It has been the only parish left in the care of the Franciscan OFM friars in Malta.

The literature regarding the building of the *Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor* church and the establishment of the Franciscan community and parish is abundant.¹ Our aim is simply that of underlining the circumstances which led to the arrival of the Franciscan friars in Sliema and their acceptance of the parish dedicated to the Virgin Mary under a title which was popular during the late 19th century, namely that of *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore*, a title dear to Blessed Pope Pius IX. In fact, the church was meant to be a monument to honour this Pope, who remained famous for the proclamation of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of Papal Infallibility.

The founding of the Church of Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor and the coming of the Franciscan friars in Sliema

The Sliema peninsula, terminating in Tigne Point, is nowadays a forest of concrete blocks, hotels and apartments. It is one of the major touristic centres on Malta. Seen from the other side of Marsamxett Harbour, from the Valletta peninsula, the two main churches of this town are scarcely visible. The parish church of *Stella Maris* is now invisible in the midst of modern structures. It marks the historical nucleus of Sliema. It was

inaugurated on 11 August 1855, although in front of it there is an ancient small church dating from the times of the Order of St. John, today known by the name *Il-Madonna tal-Grazzja*, which was the only landmark on this peninsula before the 19th century developments.

Already in 1865 there was an initiative to bring the Franciscan friars to Sliema by building a friary for them adjacent to *Stella Maris* church. This plan, however, never materialised. The Cathedral Chapter of Malta possessed extensive properties in Sliema, known as *Bieb il-Gżira*, and when this area began to be inhabited, a portion of land was set aside for the building of another church. The initiative to build this new church fell upon the shoulders of a priest from Valletta, Dun Pawl Vella, who formed a committee of persons and petitioned the Bishop of Malta, Gaetano Pace Forno, to give permission to build a new church in Sliema. This led to tensions with the rector of *Stella Maris* church, which depended upon the Birkirkara parish, who was of the opinion that there was no need of another church in Sliema, but it was sufficient to enlarge the existing church of *Stella Maris*. In 1878 *Stella Maris* was elevated to the dignity of parish church, the first one in Sliema.

Dun Pawl Vella continued in his endeavour to request permission from the new Bishop, Carmelo Scicluna, to build a new church, which he envisaged to be a monument to Pope Pius IX on the 50th anniversary of his episcopal consecration. The church would be dedicated to *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore di Gesù*, a title held dear by Pius IX.² Bishop Scicluna gave permission by a decree issued on 14 March 1877. The church took four years to complete, and was inaugurated on 26 June 1881. A titular statue by the Maltese sculptor Gerolamo Darmanin was made in 1879 and brought over to the new church. It is the same statue which

is still venerated in what is now declared to be a Marian sanctuary, and it is crowned by decree of the present Archbishop of Malta, Charles Jude Scicluna.

At this stage and after many difficulties and sacrifices, Dun Pawl Vella decided to retire from the rectorship of the new church of *Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor*, and to entrust it to the Franciscan friars of the *Observance*, as the Friars Minor were known before the Bull of Union of Leo XIII of 4th October 1897. The committee that had overseen the building of the church was to become a Confraternity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, with its seat in the same church.

It was Fr. Anton Marija Cesal, Custos of the Maltese OFM Franciscans (1877-1883 and 1899-1902), who later on was to become the first Minister Provincial (1914-1915), who formally accepted to found a new friary in Sliema, adjacent to the church of *Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor*. The decree was issued on 12th November 1881, and the first friars arrived in Sliema officially on the following day.

The founding of the Parish of Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor

When Bishop Carmelo Scicluna entrusted the Franciscan friars with the pastoral care of the church of *Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor*, he also obliged them to accept that the church could, in the future, become a parish church. The staunch opposition to this plan by the parish priest of *Stella Maris*, Fr. Vincenzo Manchè, came to an end in 1918, when this parish priest died after having been in his post for 33 years. In the meantime Bishop Scicluna had been succeeded by Bishop Pietro Pace (1889-1914) and Dom Maurus Caruana (1915-1943). It was this latter Bishop who elevated the church of *Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor* to the rank of parish by decree on 24th September 1918. The first parish priest was Fr. Luigi Daniel Attard OFM.

The following is the English translation of the Pastoral Letter of the foundation of the parish. The Letter states that the friars arrived in Sliema to find a poorly-furnished church. This is not correct and is unjust towards the efforts of Dun Pawl Vella and the committee, who took care to provide the new church with all the necessary furnishings.

“Dom Maurus Caruana, of the Order of Saint Benedict, with the Grace of God and of the

Apostolic See Archbishop of Rhodes and Bishop of Malta, immediately subject to the same Holy See.

Venerable brothers and most dear sons and daughters,

The spiritual care of this Diocese entrusted to Our care by the Holy See obliges us with the duty to give special attention wherever particular needs call for it, as well as to provide to the faithful in such a way that they will not lack the necessary means for their spiritual well-being.

That extension of land known as Sliema, which was once an arid wasteland, but which was lately largely built up, was first a place for summer residences, but soon became a permanent town, in such a way that in 1879 the already-existing church of *Stella Maris* was erected as Parish Church. Before it was a Vice-Parish of Birkirkara, but in the present it has become one of the most extensive and populated centres of the Diocese. In order that, with the demographic progress of that territory, there should not ensue a proportional corruption of morals, in order to remedy for this evil, in 1877 another Temple was planned in order to be built and dedicated to the same Virgin Mary under the title of *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore di Gesù*. Through the cooperation of the respectable committee the sums of money necessary for the building were collected, and the church was finished within the space of four years. The late Chev. Giacomo Lazzarini, General of the Royal Malta Artillery, thought of building a Friary for the Religious, adjacent to the same Church; he contributed the nice sum of £800, with the obligation of celebrating a daily Mass in the same Church at 8 a.m. Through other contributions the Friary was finally built, in such a way that on 13 November 1881, that Church and Friary, by Decree of Our predecessor Mgr. Carmelo Conte Scicluna, were handed over to the Venerable Community of the Friars Minor of the Province of Malta. Everyone is aware of the zeal shown by these praiseworthy Religious for the decorum of the house of God, by which they furnished in the present state that Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which they received in naked stone and lacking all furnishings, as they did in the case of the adjacent Friary, which they also received in naked stone. For this reason one should not forget the memory of the Most Reverend Father Antonio Maria Cesal, who in the space of two years spent 18,594 *Scudi Maltesi* for the necessary furnishings for the cult,

besides £143 for the painting of the side altars, the work of Professor G[iuseppe]. Cali. Those Religious Friars Minor are more praiseworthy for the zeal they show in the care of souls.

All this is not enough. Since that place is fairly large, and the number of faithful has greatly increased, in order that we prohibit the multiplication of ravenous wolves among the sheep, we deem that the vigilance of one pastor is not enough, even though he might certainly be vigilant. We need to multiply the Pastors who take care of the flock. For this reason We have definitely decided to effect the plan that was desired for many years, namely that of dividing the Parish of Sliema, by cutting off that portion that is indicated with precision in the Plans existing in Our Curia, while at the same time keeping in full effect the Decree of 7 July 1913, by which Our Predecessor assigned the Church of the *Madonna della Misericordia* as a Vice-Parish within the same limits, rights and duties, by which it is now to be considered as an auxiliary church of this new Parish.

For this reason, having heard the advice of the Chapter of Our Cathedral, after having obtained the consensus of the Minister General of the Friars Minor, and after having received the respective Rescripts of the Sacred Congregation of Religious and of the Council, with Our Authority as Ordinary we erect the Church of *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore di Gesù* to the rank of a true Parish Church according to the Sacred Canons and Customs of Our Diocese, and we entrust its care to the Venerable Community of the Friars Minor of this Province of Saint Paul existent in this Diocese.

For the government of this new Parish of *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore* we elect and appoint for a period of three years as Parish Priest, with all the honours, rights and obligations inherent to the office of Parish Priest, the Most Reverend Father Luigi Attard, *Lector Jubilatus*, ex-Provincial and presently Guardian of the Friars Minor, who has been presented to us by the Most Reverend Father Emmanuele Formosa, Provincial of the same Order. To this Parish Priest, nominated by Us, we order that all the faithful living in the prescribed parochial territory are to render obedience, respect, and to be subjects and the tributes they are in duty bound to offer.

We nurture trust that all the subjects of this new Parish, through the new and effective spiritual care, will augment their devotion towards the Most Holy Virgin as Our Lady, so that She may

obtain from the Sacred Heart of Jesus abundant graces for all, Pastors and flock. We equally hope that all the parishioners, according to their means, will be generous in their almsgiving, not only for the progress of the Parish Church but also for the living expenses of the Parish Priest and His fellow Religious, who are his cooperators in the Sacred Ministry, since they are sons of the Seraphic Patriarch of the Poor, and therefore they do not have any other means of sustenance except for the charity of the faithful, and especially of those faithful entrusted to their spiritual care.

Given in our Archiepiscopal Palace in the City of Valletta, on 24 September 1918.

+ MAURUS, O.S.B.

Archbishop, Bishop of Malta.”³

The celebrations of the foundation of the Parish

The historical account of the celebrations that took place on 29th September 1918, to mark the foundation of the Parish of *Il-Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor* in Sliema, is preserved in a Manuscript of Fr. Ġorġ Scerri (1884-1942), the first historian of the Maltese Franciscan Province. This is the English translation of the entry regarding this notable event:

“Erection of the Parish. The ecclesiastical authorities of Malta respected the death of the Parish Priest of Stella Maris, and preferred to wait before accomplishing their duty. The well-known and praiseworthy Parish Priest Dun Vincenzo Manchè passed from this life to the other life on 7 March 1918 at 67 years of age, of which he had spent 33 years in this Parish. His Excellency Mgr. Dom Mauro Caruana O.S.B. published the erection of this new Parish in a Pastoral Letter bearing the date 24 September 1918.

The erection of this new Parish was celebrated on Sunday 29 September 1918, which was the XIX Sunday after Pentecost and the first of October. On the morning of that memorable day, at 6 a.m. His Excellency the diocesan Bishop celebrated Mass and after the Gospel gave a beautiful speech for the occasion, which he concluded by praising the new Parish Priest, Fr. Luigi Attard, *Lector Jubilatus* and Synodal Examiner. The Decree of this erection was read out in the church at 8 a.m. legal hour.

After lunch, at 3.15 p.m. legal hour, Vespers

were chanted, followed by the sermon delivered by the new Parish Priest. Finally the *Te Deum* was sung, accompanied by music. After this function the Banda Cittadina *La Vallette* went around the Parish playing marches, and then it performed a musical programme in the square of the church. There was great concourse of people for the celebrations.⁷⁴

The pastoral presence and work of the Franciscan friars in the Sliema parish has been going on for these last one hundred years. Particularly worthy of mention are the years of the Second World War, when the Parish Church was hit by enemy action on 30 October 1942 and Fr. Ġorġ Scerri, the first historian of the Province, who was parish priest, died while he was intent in carrying out his duties in the confessional.

NOTES

1 G. AQUILINA, *Il-Frangiskani Maltin* (Ta' Ġiezu) 1482c-1965c (sal-Koncilju Vatikan II), Malta 2011, 371-378; 392-395; W. ZAMMIT, *Tas-Sliema fl-imġhoddi*, Malta 1981; *Tas-Sliema fis-seklu XIX*, Malta 2000; *Tas-Sliema fl-Ewwel Nofs tas-Seklu XX*, Malta 2006; G. AQUILINA - Ġ. VELLA - W. ZAMMIT, *Tifkiriet ta' Ġrajjet Ewlenin f'Tas-Sliema*, Malta 2006; *Il-Frangiskani f'Tas-*

Sliema. Ġrajjet il-Parroċċa Madonna tas-Sacro Cuor, Sena Centenarja 2018, Malta 2018. This latest commemorative publication reprints the scientific study done by G. AQUILINA in *Il-Frangiskani Maltin*, see above.

2 The title of *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore* was given to the church facing Piazza Navona in Rome, also known as *San Giacomo degli Spagnoli*, which was renovated by Pope Leo XIII in the late 19th century. The devotion to *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* goes back to 1857. It was born in Bourges, France, where a young priest, Jules Chevalier (1824-1907) founded the "Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart." He willed that in his Congregation the Virgin Mary would be honoured under the title of *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*. The earliest representation of this Marian title depicts the Virgin Mary Immaculate with the Child Jesus at her feet, indicating His Sacred Heart with the left hand and His Mother with the right. It was Pope Pius IX who changed this image in 1874 in that of the Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus in her arms, and indicating His Heart, while Jesus points at His Mother. The Congregation is present in many countries, as well as in the church of *Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore* in Piazza Navona, Rome.

3 DOM MAURUS CARUANA OSB, *Decreto No. 8*, in *La Diocesi III* (1919) 80-81. Copy at the Provincial OFM Archives, Valletta.

4 Ġ. SCERRI OFM, *Le Chiese e i Conventi dei Frati Minori di Malta*, Ms. Provincial OFM Archives, Valletta, 323.

THE LITURGICAL PRAYER OF THE EARLY FRANCISCAN COMMUNITY

Kasper Mariusz Kaprón ofm

Extracts from paper, in Miscellanea Francescana 113 (2013) 441-463

Ahyto, bishop of Basle (†836) wrote these words regarding the recitation of the Divine Office: “The following books are necessary for the priests in order to recite (the Office), namely the sacramentary, lectionary, antiphonal, *baptiserium*, calendar, penitential canon, psalter, homilies for the cycle of the Lord’s feast days and adapted for the single feasts” (PL 105, 763). Four centuries later, Matthew de Paris, presenting the way of life of the friars minor, wrote in his Chronicle: “On the same day the friars who are called Minors [...] living according to the Gospel [...] wearing ropes round their waists, grey tunics and patched habits, with a hood [...] continually carry their books, namely their library [Bible and breviary] in the bags that they carry hanging down from their necks” (MATTEO PARISIENSIS, *Historia Anglorum*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores XXVIII*, Hannover 1888, 397). At the same time, even the *Ordo clericorum* adopted the use of the Breviaries, as is shown in a decree of the council of Trier in 1227: “We also strictly command that all priests should have their own breviary, in which they can read their hours while travelling” (A. MANSI, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Collectio XXIII*, Venice 1780, 33).

During the space of four centuries a process of fusion of various liturgical books took place. These books were requested for the recitation of the Divine Office. Thus, the Breviary was formed as the only book for the canonical Office. In various publications the role of the friars minor in this process has been often exaggerated: Saint Francis and his brothers only adopted as their own the reform of Innocent III and used the necessary liturgical books. The brothers who adopted the *Breviarium* of the Curia did not introduce in it any notable modification in what regarded the text, and much less in the case of the structure and composition of the Hours. However, the role of

the Minors in this field was significant. To them we have to attribute the fact that the *ordo romanae curiae* was extended to all the Latin Church, thus creating a liturgical uniformity that was then strengthened by the dispositions of the council of Trent.

In order to analyse this phenomenon, which determined the extinction of many customs and local liturgical autonomies and affirmed the Roman centralisation, it is helpful to remind of some of the most important passages of this liturgy, departing from the internal structure of the minoritic *fraternitas* and from the religious experience of the saint of Assisi.

The development of the liturgical prayer in Franciscan history: from the Adoramus te to the Breviarium secundum consuetudinem fratrum minorum

If we want to analyse the development of liturgical prayer in the beginnings of the minoritic Order, we need to depart from the text of the Testament in which Francis looks back, and records his spiritual experience, expressing himself in these words: “And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I would pray with simplicity in this way and say: ‘We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the whole world and we bless You because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world’” (*Test 5: FAED I, 124-125*). The beginning of the religious experience of Francis, when he probably did not yet have any companions, is marked by the antiphon or responsory in use for the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross on 3 May.

This liturgical antiphon of adoration to the

cross, enriched by the recitation of the *Our Father*, was to become the centre of the life of prayer of the first community gathered around Francis. Thomas of Celano, in the biography of the saint, describes that moment of the arrival of the first companions, underlining also the passage where the prayer of Francis became also the prayer of his followers: “The brothers at that time begged him to teach them how to pray, because, walking in simplicity of spirit, up to that time they did not know the Church’s office. Francis told them: ‘When you pray, say *Our Father* and *We adore you, O Christ...*’” (1C 45: FAED I, 222). Already through this testimony we note the pre-announcing of what was soon to happen: the daily recitation of the Divine Office. We are therefore at that moment of the development of the fraternity in which the brothers, according to the description of Bonaventure, “did not yet have liturgical books from which to chant the canonical hours” (LMj 4,3: FAED II, 551).

The first indications that liturgical prayer became a frequent practice of the friars can be gathered from the episode of the two brothers who travelled to Florence around the years 1208-1209. After having spent the night sleeping in the porch of a house, “the brothers got up for matins and went to the nearest church” (AP 20: FAED II, 44). The first brothers, therefore, during their continual missionary journeys, willingly stopped in the churches in order to join in the celebration of the Office. It is important also to note, regarding this initial period, that the same recitation of the *Our Father* assumed a more elaborate form and was carried out in a clearly-defined way: “They were on fire with the Holy Spirit and with prayerful voices sang the *Our Father* in the melody of the Spirit. They did this at all hours and not simply those assigned, since earthly concerns and the nagging anxiety of cares troubled them little” (1C 47: FAED I, 224).

A determining point in the institutional development of the *fraternitas* is linked with two important facts, which occurred around 1215: the journey of the brothers to Rome to ask for the approval of their way of life and the entry of some priests in the community. In Rome the Pope did not only “approve the rule,” but “he gave them a mandate to preach penance, and had small tonsures given to all the lay brothers, who were accompanying the servant of God, so that they could freely preach the word of God” (LMj

3,10: FAED II, 548-549). As Pietro Messa states, it happened that in Rome went a group of laymen who wanted to live “according to the form of the holy Gospel”, but in Assisi returned a group of clerics with the permission to preach (P. MESSA, *Le fonti patristiche negli scritti di Francesco d’Assisi*, Assisi 1999, 178).

This fact was further strengthened with the entry of the clerics Sylvester (2C 109) and Leo (1C 102), which introduced the use of the recitation of the Office, as the same Francis states when he reminds us of that period: “We clerical [brothers] said the Office as other clerics did; the lay brothers said the *Our Father...*” (*Test* 18: FAED I, 125). It is during this time that we must place the establishment of the brothers in the Portiuncula, where the young community had found its stable religious centre of action, which permitted them to recite the Office: “Seeing that the Lord willed to increase the number of brothers, blessed Francis told them: ‘My dearest brothers [...] it seems good and religious to me to obtain from the bishop, or the canons of San Rufino, or from the abbot of the monastery of Saint Benedict, some church where the brothers can say their hours [...] since we do not have a church where the brothers can say their hours’” (MP [Sabatier] 55: FAED III, 297).

Within this context we also find the first structural witness regarding the use of books necessary for the recitation of the liturgical hours. In front of the request for alms on the part of a woman “at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula,” the brothers justified themselves in this way: “‘We do not have anything in the house that we can give her, especially since she wants such alms as would provide for her corporal needs. In the church we only have one New Testament for reading the lessons at matins.’ At that time, the brothers did not have breviaries and not many psalters” (AC 93: FAED II, 196).

This development was definitely codified in the Franciscan rule. It is important to underline, however, that already before the confirmation of the Rule in 1223, the brothers used to sing solemnly the Divine Office, and this is witnessed in the Chronicle of Jordan of Giano (1262): “In the year of the Lord 1222 brother Caesar, together with all the brothers, both clerics and lay, who accompanied him [...] in Wörms [...] celebrated the divine office with great solemnity” (*Analecta Franciscana* I, 10)

Entering into the codification that occurred with

the Rule of the Order of friars Minor, we need first of all to note that there are two editions with some significant variations regarding the recitation of the Office (S.J.P. VAN DIJK, *The Liturgical Legislation of the Franciscan Rules*, in *Franciscan Studies* 12 (1952) 176-195, 241-262). In the first case, the so-called *Regula non Bullata*, written in 1221, Francis explicitly prescribed the recitation of the Office and imposed to the friars the obligation to follow the custom of the clerics: "Let the clerical brothers recite the Office [...] according to the custom of clerics" (ER 3,4: FAED I, 65). In other words, the brothers were not obliged to pray the long choral Office practiced in the cathedrals and great monasteries, but the abridged form, which had been practiced by clerics for a long time, in order to respond to the increasing pastoral needs called for by the ever-growing number of rural parishes, where the majority of clerics lived isolated and far from the cathedral churches, or for the needs of travelling clerics (*breviaria, itineraria, breviaria portatilia*).

According to what was prescribed by this Rule, published in 1221 but reflecting the situation of 1215-1220, we understand how the friars followed the liturgical customs of the local churches, which varied greatly from region to region and from diocese to diocese.

The situation changed with the second Rule, which was approved by a pontifical *bullo*, *Solet annuere* of Pope Honorius III, on 29 November 1223. In it the phrase "clerical brothers recite the Office [...] according to the custom of the clerics" was radically changed in: "Let the clerical [brothers] recite the Divine Office according to the rite of the holy Roman Church" (LR 3,1: FAED I, 101), with the opportune exception for the psalter: the Roman psalter was substituted by the universally known Gallican psalter ("excepting the psalter, for which reason they may have breviaries").

Many studies have been written regarding this disposition. Some see in this detail the explicit will of Francis, *vir catholicus et totus apostolicus*, to bind his fraternity closely to the Pope of Rome, in total submission and obedience (E. CLOP, *Saint François et la Liturgie de la Chapelle papale*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 19 (1926) 760-761; F. RAMPAZZO, *Lineamenti di liturgia francescana*, in *Laurentianum* 40 (1999) 502-503). Others note, in this text of the Rule, the precise influence of the curia (cardinal Hugolino), trying to change the Franciscan spirit and prepare

the clericalization of the Order (O. SCHMUCKI, *Preghiera liturgica secondo l'esempio e l'insegnamento di san Francesco d'Assisi*, Roma 1980, 6-7). Finally, some scholars present the hypothesis that, by adopting the breviary of the papal court, Francis took part in the movement against the proper liturgies of the particular churches, and thus became a valid instrument in the application of the reform of Innocent III, matured under Honorius III, and thus, with the spreading of the curial breviary, he would have, at least partially, contributed to concretise the programme of unification of the Church (F. DE LUCERNE, *S. François d'Assise et le Bréviaire Romaine*, in *Études Franciscaines* 5 (1901) 490).

According to the opinions of Van Dijk and G. ABATE [*Il primitivo Breviario francescano 1224-1227*, Roma 1960, 15-19], who are the experts in this issue, that change and choice of the Rule occurred as a result of a normal and natural unfolding of events, namely as a result of considerations of a purely pragmatic nature. Van Dijk states: "The Order of Friars Minor, born and bred in Assisi where the canons of the cathedral followed the court Office, naturally adopted the Liturgy of the Holy Roman Church in its Rules of 1221 and 1223" (VAN DIJK, *The Authentic Missal of the Papal Chapel*, in *Scriptorium* 14 (1960) 259-260). In an initial period, in fact, when the brothers were few in number, it was held to be sufficient to prescribe that they should recite the Office common to all clerics, both for the fact that this did not present any relevant difficulty as well as because of the initial ideal of poverty, the brothers rejected all forms of proper possessions, including books, and prayed the Office "according to the custom of those ecclesiastics or clerics among which they found themselves" (A. CLARENUS, *Expositio Regulae*, Quaracchi 1912, 82). Even so, the *Earlier Rule* had given permission in the words: "They may have only the books necessary to fulfil their office" (ER 3,7: FAED I, 65). But after a decade, when the Franciscan Order was spreading far and wide across Europe, the inconvenience of having different kinds of breviaries became a tedious problem, especially when the friars were continually travelling on their apostolic journeys and during the triennial assemblies of the General Chapters (ABATE, 17-18). It is highly probable that, precisely the event of the famous General Chapter of 1221, celebrated in Assisi and to which 5000 brothers participated, pushed Saint Francis

to change the primitive precept of the Office, so that his Order could arrive at the unity of liturgical prayer.

It was then that, maybe under the influence of the bishop of Assisi, Guido II, the friars introduced the breviaries (*capellares*) of the Papal Curia, reformed by Innocent III. In fact, Guido and the Chapter of the Cathedral of Assisi, had already introduced the Office of the Curia. Prescribing the recitation of the Office, according to the custom of the clerics of the Roman Church, Francis was only adopting the local liturgy of Assisi (T. DESBONNETS, *Dalla intuizione alla istituzione. I francescani*, Milano 1986, 120-121).

The collection of books that found their origin in the prescription of the *Later Rule* (commonly called as the books of the Rule), and which have come down to us, is formed of 27 different codices, 3 missals, 13 breviaries, 1 antiphonal, 9 rituals, and 1 *Ordo Gratorum*. They are presented in detail and described by VAN DIJK, *Some Manuscripts of the Earliest Franciscan Liturgy*, in *Franciscan Studies* 14 (1954) 225-264; 16 (1956) 60-101. Regarding the distribution of these books in the various provinces we find the testimony of the Chronicle of Jordan of Giano, who under the date *Anno Domini 1230*, writes: "In that same general chapter the breviaries and antiphonals according to the custom of the Order were distributed" (*Analecta Franciscana* I, 17).

The books that Innocent had wanted to promote, as a result of the concrete needs of his own curia, were not capable of satisfying fully the brothers, whose form of life could not be compared to those of the *clerici capellares* (the Papal chaplains of the curia). This ordering, in spite of the first modifications, the corrections and adaptations in order to make it more practical for a simple environment, did not succeed in satisfying the needs of the new institution. "When they edited the typical exemplar of the primitive minoritic breviary, the editors scrupulously transcribed the Ordinary. They adapted it, but with reverent conservatism and very superficially [...] As soon as the edition entered in the vast field of the Order, which was devoid of any liturgical tradition, the brothers could not succeed in interpreting the new rubrics, which were unknown, badly presented, and often were not clear and insufficient for the knowledge both of the same liturgy, as well as of its relations with other environments" (VAN DIJK, *Il carattere della correzione liturgica di*

Fra Aimone da Faversham OFM (1243-1244), in *Edizioni Liturgiche* 59 (1945) 184-185).

In the 1230's the curial liturgy underwent many corrections. I so-called Franciscan *Quatuor Magistri* (Four Masters) record three corrections, the last of which was approved by Gregory IX with the *Pio vestro collegio* of 7 June 1241 (*Expositio quatuor Magistrorum super Regulam Fratrum Minorum (1241-42)*, Roma 1950, 138). At the same time, the Pope exonerated the brothers from the obligation to repeat their own Office if they participated in the celebration of another Office different from theirs. Three modifications or corrections of the liturgical books, in not more than ten years, are a clear sign of the lack of clarity and satisfaction.

It was therefore indispensable, for the need of the Franciscan liturgy, to make new and substantial modifications to the papal liturgy, such as was the case of the abolition of some rubrics and the changing of others. This happened with the liturgical correction of the curial Ordinary realised by the fourth general of the Order, brother Haymo of Faversham, and can be summarised in three points:

1. The definite separation of the rubrics of the Breviary from those of the Missal. Haymo eliminated in the curial *Ordo* all that did not pertain to the Office. With the help of the missal he composed two other independent Ordinaries: one for the Office - *Ordo Breviarii* - and the other one for the Mass - *Ordo Missalis*.

2. The radical correction of the structure and of the style of the rubrics. Haymo abandoned the direct style: *dicimus, facimus, celebramus*, etc., and the subjunctive: *dicatur, fiat, debeat*, etc., in order to substitute them, with some exceptions, with the impersonal style in the indicative: *fit, dicitur, agitur, celebrator, debet*, etc. Thus he was always logical and clear in his terminology: he never uses the term *lectio* instead of *capitulum*; he never speaks about *matutinae laudes*, but always about *laudes*, and one never reads the plural *vigiliae* instead of *matutinum* or *matutinae*, while the singular *vigilia* is used in the modern sense.

3. He codified an evolution of about twenty years, which verified itself in favour of the Franciscan characteristic of the same liturgy.

In the succeeding years to the work realised by Haymo of Faversham, we assist at a true and proper diffusion of the Roman-Franciscan Breviary even outside the confines of the Seraphic Order,

especially in the great universities like Bologna, Paris, Oxford. One can say that such a fact marks a crucial point of an evolution which, initially, regarded only the *fraternitas* of the Minors, but which now detached itself from its origins and was planted elsewhere. In the *Regula non Bullata* (*Earlier Rule*) Francis affirms that the clerical brothers were to recite the Office *secundum consuetudinem clericorum*. The definitive Rule, instead, codified that the Office of the Friars Minor should take as a norm the order of the Church of Rome, and concretely, of the Roman curia (*secundum ordinem sanctae romanae ecclesiae*). After the confirmation of the Rule of 1223, the point of reference changes: it is not the Roman Curia any longer, but the Rule itself. In the *Testament*, in fact, Francis affirms that all the brothers were to say the Office *secundum regulam* (according to the Rule), and the fact that “some might have been found who are not reciting the Office according to the Rule and want to change it in some way,” implied that “they are not Catholics” (*Test* 30-31: FAED I,126). A similar affirmation is also found in *The Letter to the Entire Order* 44 (FAED I, 120). This norm *secundum regulam* was to become, in a short time, also the point of reference for Clare of Assisi and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, who had to “were to celebrate the Divine Office according to the custom of the friars Minor” (*RegCl* 3,1: CAED 112).

The new ordering became widespread also in Rome where Pope Nicholas III (1277-80), according the witness of Rudolfo da Rivo, decided to adopt the Franciscan style in the liturgy of the churches of the City: “Pope Nicholas the third, from the nation of the Romans and the family of Orsini, who began his ministry in the year of the Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-seven, and who built the palace at Saint Peter’s, ordered that fifty antiphonals, graduals, missals and other ancient books of the Office be removed from the churches of the City, and that all the other churches of the City were to make use of the books and breviaries of the Friars Minor, whose Rule he also confirmed. Thus, nowadays in Rome, all the books are new and Franciscan” (RADULPHUS DE RIVO, *De canonum observantia. Propositio XXII*, in L.C. MOHLBERG (ed.), *Radulph De Rivo: der letzte Vertreter der altrömischen Liturgie*, vol. II, Münster in West. 1915, 128). Certainly, one can speak about a certain exaggeration in the presentation of the facts on the part of the

Chronicler, since it is known that in Rome not all the churches, at the time of Nicholas III, adopted the Franciscan Breviary.

Nevertheless, one notes a progressive expansion of liturgical books which were inspired by the reform of Haymo. Benedict XII (1334-42), who resided in Avignon, imposed them upon the entire diocese of Avignon, while Gregory XI (1370-78), after his return to Rome, imposed them at the Basilica of the Lateran. One can therefore state that, within the span of a century, we can observe the passage of the recitation of the Office *secundum ordinem sanctae romanae ecclesiae* within the minoritic Order, to that of the Office *ordinis minorum fratrum secundum consuetudinem sanctae Romanae ecclesiae*, to that *secundum regulam*, to that *secundum consuetudinem Fratrum Minorum*, to arrive finally to see the Roman Church celebrating the Office *secundum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*.

In noticing these passages, one should keep in mind that the books, substantially, remained the same. As Van Dijk repeats in his work, Haymo “did not correct the liturgical books by producing another breviary and missal” (S.J.P. VAN DIJK - J.H. WALKER, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Liturgy of the Papal Court and the Franciscan Order in the Thirteenth Century*, Westminster - London 1960, 302). The changings of the social structures, of the development of the great universities and of the pastoral commitment in the rural parishes, led to the point where the liturgy reduced itself to a nearly private affair, and thus the adoption of the books of the reform of Haymo happened in a nearly spontaneous way, since they were more manageable. These books were in fact already in use everywhere, and they constituted, with the necessary finishing touches, the basis for the Breviary and the Missal of the Tridentine reform imposed by Saint Pious V, respectively in 1568 and 1570, in all the Latin Church, and which were to remain substantially without variations up till the liturgical reform sanctioned by Vatican Council II.

Franciscan Liturgical legislation. Franciscan music

In *The Letter to the Entire Order*, written probably in 1220, Francis indicated to the brothers the way in which they were to celebrate the

liturgy: “The clerics say the Office with devotion before God not concentrating on the melody of the voice but on the harmony of the mind, that the voice may be in harmony with the mind, the mind truly in harmony with God. [Let them do this] that they may be able to please God by their purity of heart and not just charm the ears of people by their sweetness of voice” (LOrd 40-42: FAED I, 119-120). The spirit of the liturgical life, which Francis indicated to the first community, is therefore that of the entire Christian tradition and finds its foundations both in the writings of Saint Augustine and in the Rule of Saint Benedict, where the holy founder of western monasticism wrote: “so that our hearts will be in harmony with our voices” (*Rule of St. Benedict* 19,7).

Linked with the texts of the Fathers of the Church to which we have referred, it is not possible to see in the words of Francis the invitation to the vocal recitation of the hours and the total abandonment of liturgical chant. The theory of P. Batiffol in his *Histoire du Bréviaire Romain*, where he affirms: “We should remark that the Friars Minor did not sing the Office, but recited it” (P. BATIFFOL, *Histoire du Bréviaire Romain*, Paris 1911, 243, note 1), is clearly in contrast with all the documentation that refers to the liturgical practice of the Franciscan communities of the 13th century, as B. Belluco shows (B.J. BELLUCO, *De divini officii celebratione iuxta Regulam et legislationem Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, in *Antonianum* 34 (1959) 299-320. According to his study, the expression of the Rule to follow the order of the Holy Roman Church, “in the 13th century did not refer only to the text of the divine office, but also to the customs of the Roman Church, in which the liturgical chant in the ordering of the office was an essential part” (BELLUCO, 303-304).

The liturgical books - which are the direct witnesses of the liturgical customs - and all the other contemporary documents, confirm that in the primitive minoritic fraternity the Office together with the daily conventual Mass were celebrated with chant (cfr. THOMAS OF ECCLESTON, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, 5, in *Analecta Franciscana* I, 227, where he states that, even though the brothers would only be three or four, or at most six in number, they would sing the Office in a solemn tone).

The presence of musical notation in the breviaries *secundum usum curiae romanae* can give such a guarantee. There exists, however, a

particular book, with precise norms and rubrics regarding the way to celebrate the Divine Office in the Franciscan family in the second half of the 13th century. This is the *Cerimoniale* or *Ordinationes Divini Officii*, a work that is attributed to Haymo, even though it was left in an embryonic form (VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinals by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents (1243-1307)*, vol. I, Leiden 1963, 95-109, 209; vol. II, 333-358; *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, 312-321). The most ancient copies of these Franciscan *Ordinationes* are found in two manuscripts: ms. 338 Bibl. Com. Assisi - a miscellaneous document, written probably in Assisi for the Sacro Convento, shortly after 1263; and ms. Vat. Reg. lat. 429 written in France during the last years of the 13th century and in use by the community of friars of Pontoise, near Paris.

The first official reference to the *Ordinationes* goes back to 1263, when the chapter of Paris obliged the friars to maintain the norms contained therein. The text is quite certainly anterior to the General Chapter of Metz of 1254, but posterior to 1245, because of the presence of the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The *Cerimoniale* is divided into two parts (*Incipiunt Ordinationes Divini Officii* and *De Officio Missarum*), and gives some rules relative to singing. They are a true celebrative and normative codex, which by that time was very developed; we are speaking about hardly thirty years from the moment in which the Rule uniformed the liturgical Ordinations of the friars. We are in front of a well-structured liturgical life.

Contemporary to the *Ordinationes*, towards 1254, under the generalate of John of Parma, the norms *Pro scribendis libris choralibus* were defined (B. BUGHETTI, *Statutum saec. XIII pro scribendis libris choralibus cum notis quadratis ad usum Fratrum Minorum*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 21 (1928) 406-412; VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, II, 359-362). These norms show, in a very clear way, the importance that the Order, from the very beginning, gave to liturgical chant. The statutes mark a fundamental passage towards the full unification of the writing and musical notation in liturgical books, within the Order which by now was spread all over Europe.

As one can note from the example of ms. 694 of the Biblioteca Comunale of Assisi, the musical notation of the first Franciscan chant books was

that typical of central Italy, the so-called neumatic scripture. This can be explained from the fact that the first brothers adopted the liturgical customs of Assisi and Umbria. Such a system of musical writing, defined around 1000 by Guido d'Arezzo (997-1050) was gradually substituted, towards the end of the 12th century, by the squarish notation. Born probably in England and developed further in France, the squarish notation was unknown in Italy until the first half of the 13th century. With the dispositions of John of Parma, the new system of musical notation substituted in a definitive way the ancient neumatic notation of transition.

The Statutes of John of Parma had a notable influence in the spreading the unification of the liturgical books, especially in view of the international character of the Franciscan Order. One should note, however, that both legislative texts, namely the *Ordinationes Divini Offici* and the *Statutum pro scribentis libris choralibus*, found their equivalents in analogous texts of other Orders. The text of the Franciscan *Ordinationes* is very similar to that of the Augustinians, and both depend upon a ceremonial of the papal court. The *Pro scribendis libris choralibus* are linked with the statutes inserted in the Prologue to the chant books of the Dominicans, after the reform decided by Humbert de Romans, General of the Friars Preachers (1256).

The author of the *Liber Conformitatum*, brother Bartholomew of Pisa, who wrote around the year 1385, inserted some details regarding the work of Julian of Speyer: "in this place [Paris] there lies brother Julian the theologian, who composed the legend of blessed Francis and the responsories: he also composed the chants, as well as the hymns and all that pertained to [the feast of] blessed Francis. He was also the head master of chant in the court of the King of France: in the Order he was a most holy and devout friar" (BARTHOLOMEW OF PISA, *De Conformitate, Liber I*, in *Analecta Franciscana* IV, 544).

Julian was a master of chant in the court of the king of France (probably under Philippe II, 1180-1223 and Louis VIII, 1223). In this environment he lived not as a simple cantor, but as a *praecantor*, or *magister cantus*.

After entering the Order around 1223, Julian occupied for many years the office of *cantor Parisiensis*, cantor in the Franciscan friary of Paris (*Chronica XXIV Generalium*, in *Analecta Franciscana* III, 381), as well as *corrector mensae*,

correcting the friars in their pronunciation, accents, tonalities, in the refectory and choir (*Chronica Fratris Nicolai Glassberger*, in *Analecta Franciscana* II, 91).

Tradition is unanimous in attributing to Julian of Speyer the composition, both *in littera* as well as *in cantu*, of the *Rhythmic Offices (historiae)* of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony, "in a noble style and with a beautiful melody" as Jordan of Giano refers in 1261 (*Chronica*, 53, in *Analecta Franciscana* I, 16). Both works have been objects of specialised studies (GIULIANO DA SPIRA, *Vita e Ufficio Ritmico di San Francesco d'Assisi*, Vicenza 1980; *Ufficio Ritmico e Vita Seconda*, Padova 1985).

We do not possess clear details regarding the date of the death of Julian of Speyer or how old he was when he died. The sources limit themselves to note that Julian died while he was preparing to compose another rhythmic office, in honour of Saint Dominic, canonised by Gregory IX in 1234 (JULIAN OF SPEYER, *The Life of Saint Francis: FAED I*, 362-420. For the *Divine Office of Saint Francis: FAED I*, 327-360).

Franciscan Liturgy. The new offices with a Franciscan origin

Haymo of Faversham, in his work of correction, took note of the twenty years of evolution in favour of the Franciscan character of the same liturgy. Concerning this theme of the reform of Haymo, one can say that his work practically consisted in two groups of changes: the additions and the abolitions of some feasts, particularly in the Sanctoral. In relation to what has been stated, we note the introduction of new liturgical offices, which then passed into the liturgy of the western Church.

Both the additions and abolitions effected by Haymo were the simple consequence of Franciscan history prior to his generalate. After the preparation and distribution of the books of the Rule, until the corrections effected by Haymo, there was the canonisation of Saint Francis (1228) and, two years later, the translation of his bodily remains. In 1232 Saint Anthony of Padua was canonised; in 1234 Saint Dominic was canonised, and so was Saint Elizabeth in 1235. Their feasts were introduced in the Church, and since they had a typically Franciscan characteristic, they merited

a place in the new Ordinaries.

In the first celebration of the *Nativitas S. Francisci confessoris* (4 October), that is in 1228, the liturgical texts were taken from the Common of a Confessor not a Bishop. There is, however, a possibility that some proper texts were already composed for the occasion. Thomas of Celano, while describing the canonisation of Saint Francis (16 July 1228) in his *Life of Saint Francis*, writes: "At this announcement, the reverend cardinals join the pope in singing the *Te Deum laudamus* in a loud voice. And there rises the cry of many peoples praising God, the earth echoes the booming sound, the air is filled with jubilation, and the ground is soaked with tears. They sing new songs and the servants of God rejoice in the melody of the Spirit" (1C 126: FAED I, 295-296). It is highly probable that, when Celano speaks about "new songs", he is referring to those texts written by Pope Gregory IX, who presided over the canonisation, and those composed by Sir Rainerio (Cardinal Rainerio Capocci), present in the celebration. To Gregory IX are attributed the hymn *Proles de coelo prodiit*, the responsory *De paupertatis horreo*, the antiphons *Sancte Francisce, propere* and *Plange turba paupercula*. To the Cistercian Cardinal Capocci of Viterbo are attributed the hymn *Plange turba paupercula* and the antiphon *Caelorum candor splenduit*.

These texts were included by Julian of Speyer in the *Rhythmic Office of Saint Francis*, where he inserted also some texts written by Cardinal Thomas of Capua (the hymns *In coelesti collegio* and *Decus morum, dux Minorum*; the responsory *Carnis spicam*; the antiphon *Salve, sancte pater*). Julian concluded his *Office* between 1231 and 1232, and therefore the texts included in it had not been written in 1228. So it is not impossible to propose that the 1228 celebration of the glorious transitus of Saint Francis contained some proper texts (J. CABBELL - F. CASOLINI, *Liturgia di S. Francesco d'Assisi*, Arezzo 1963, XVI-XVII).

Julian's *Office* became immediately official. It is already found in the *corpus* of the Antiphonal of the Capitular Basilica of Saint Rufino in Assisi - ms. 5 (ff. 217r - 220v), dated towards the beginning of the 1230s, and in the Vatican Breviary of the Rule lat. 8737 (ff. 250r - 256v), dated towards the mid-13th century and maybe also before (L. LEMMENS, *Testimonia minora saeculi XIII de S. P. Francisco*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 1 (1908) 257). Thomas of Eccleston states that, in

1235 he was present in Assisi for the feast of Saint Francis, and there was also Pope Gregory. When the Pope proceeded to go and preach, the friars began to sing: *Hunc Sanctus praelegerat* ("This man the saint had selected" - 3rd antiphon of the First Vespers), and the Pope smiled (ECCLESTON XV, in *Analecta Franciscana* I, 251).

Regarding the readings there was also need for a liturgical legend. The *Matutinum* of solemn feasts was formed of three nocturns with three readings each, with a total of nine readings on the life of the saint. Since the celebration took a whole octave, there was need for corresponding readings every day. Thus was born the *Legenda ad usum chori* of Thomas of Celano (*De Fr. Thomae Celanensis Legenda ad usum chori*, in *Analecta Franciscana* X, 119-126, 720-723), which can be considered the archetype of the Franciscan liturgical legends. There were also other legends, which ended up creating confusion, so that Bonaventure ordered that his *Legenda minor* was to be adopted as the official liturgical legend. Scholars have enumerated 9 legends used in the *Office* and present in codices of the 13th century: (1) *Vita Prima* by Celano (1229) found in some Breviaries (*Breviary-Missal of St. Clare*); (2) *Legenda* by Julian of Speyer (1232-35) found in monastic offices; (3) *Legenda* of the cod. Vatican lat. 8737 (before 1249), composed from Celano and Julian of Speyer, in the *Franciscan choral breviary according to the Rule*; (4) *Vita* of the Legend of Chartres, compiled from Celano and Julian of Speyer; (5) *Legenda ad usum chori* by Celano; (6) *Legenda dominicana* (1254-56), extracted from the legend by the notary John; (7) *Legenda choralis Umbra*, compiled from Celano and Julian of Speyer (1253-58); (8) *Legenda minor* by Saint Bonaventure (1263-66), the official text of the Minors; (9) *Vita* or *Legenda aurea* by Giacomo da Varese (1270-80), conserved in the *Breviario monastico di Montecassino*. The *Legenda minor* by Saint Bonaventure consists of seven chapters, the first one of which was read both on 4 and on 11 October, while the others were read during the other days of the octave. Each chapter consists of nine lessons, one for each of the three readings of the three nocturns. Therefore, it contains a total of 63 lessons.

In relation to the principal feast of Saint Francis, the feast of the Translation (25 May) had few special characteristics. The *Ordo Breviari* of Haymo specifies that: "In the translation of Saint Francis the office is the same one as on his

feast, except for the lessons that regard the same translation” (VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, II, 140).

“Saint Anthony made his entry into the official liturgy of the Order in the same shy manner as St. Francis. A new church and friary in his honour were built at Padua immediately after his canonisation (1232), but the *Regula* books used there did not even contain his name” (VAN DIJK - WALKER, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, 382). In the *Ordo Breviari* the *Rhythmic Office of Saint Anthony* entered some years after the death of Haymo, when John of Parma, with his letter of 27 March 1249 addressed to the Franciscan superiors of Tuscany, insisted on the observance of the Ordinary of Haymo, except for the final antiphons of the Virgin and the Office of Saint Anthony “until a better office is composed for his feast” (VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, I, 161-163). The General Chapter of Metz (1254), presided by the same John of Parma, prescribed for the entire minoritic community, in no. 10, to punctually observe the letter that the general had written five years earlier to the brothers of Tuscany, and in no. 27 it adds: “On the feast of Saint Anthony his legend is read and his office is sung” (VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, II, 416).

The *Office of Saint Anthony*, contrary to that of Saint Francis, which is a work of various authors, is entirely the work of Julian of Speyer.

Regarding the liturgical legend, the *Legenda Assidua* by Thomas of Pavia is adopted. This is the most ancient among the biographies of Saint Anthony, and was written on the occasion of the canonisation of the saint in 1232 (R. CESSI, *Agiografia Antoniana: la composizione della Legenda Assidua*, Venezia 1932).

On the feast of Saint Dominic, confessor (5 August) the Ordinals of Haymo prescribe the celebration of the Office from the Common, except for the prayer *Deus qui ecclesiam tuam* and the lessons of the legend *Beatus Dominicus praedicatorum dux*, written by Pietro Ferraro between 1235-1241 (VAN DIJK, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, II, 153).

Another feast introduced in the Ordinals of Haymo was that of Saint Elizabeth (19 November).

It took the place of Saint Pontianus, according to a rubric common in the *Ordo Breviari* and in the *Ordo Missalis*. For the Office the proper prayer *Tuorum cordia fidelium* was recited. Haymo does not indicate any legend, although already towards 1236-39 a life had been composed.

To all these feasts, all with Franciscan origins, another one was added, which reflects the personal story of Haymo, who had been *Magister* in the University of Paris and apostolic legate in Constantinople. In 1023-54 a great veneration towards the oriental Saint Catherine of Alexandria was born in France. With the development of the universities, her cult spread everywhere. The patron saint of philosophers became the protector of the students, and the University of Paris inserted her in its coat of arms. Brother Haymo, who had worked in the Universities of Paris, Oxford, Tours, Bologna and Padua, knew more than any other the developments of the general *studia*, and proposed her feast to his Order, presenting her as protector of scholastic studies (VAN DIJK - WALTER, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, 387-389). The Office proposed by Haymo included the Prayer *Deus qui dedisti legem* and the reading *Regnante Maxentio Cesare filio Maximiani Augusti*.

The Ordinals of Haymo do not make any reference to Saint Clare, for the simple reason that she was canonised in 1255. One has to keep in mind, however, that already on the day of her death, Pope Innocent IV ordered to recite the Office of the Common of the Virgins in her honour. The Office of Saint Clare came later, maybe around 1292. Some of the parts of the Office had been composed by Cardinal Rinaldo de Segni, who became Pope Alexander IV, and who canonised Saint Clare.

Another group of changes introduced by Haymo, in the general approval of the calendar her proposed, included the abolition of two dedications of a local character, that of the Basilica of the Lateran (9 November) and that of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul (18 November). Instead the *Ordo Breviarii* of Haymo presents the ancient commemoration of Saint Theodorus on this last date. The dedications of the the Roman Basilicas were re-introduced in the liturgical statutes of the General Chapter of Genoa in 1302.

"LET THEM SERVE AND OBEY ONE ANOTHER VOLUNTARILY." THE FOUNDING INSPIRATION OF OUR BROTHERHOOD

Noel Muscat ofm

It is high time we, as Friars Minor, face facts. The majority of the brothers in our Order are fed up with years of insistence upon the notion of "fraternity", with the incessant publication of letters and documents, with the staggering amount of ongoing formation literature to read and discuss, with the discovery of the need to "re-found" our Order. The brothers are sick and tired of seminars, meetings, congresses, journeys of our "ministers and servants" to "get the feel" of the Order, vague and open-ended clichés about our preferential options in favour of the poor, inculturation, inserted fraternities. Many brothers are feeling that the Order is aging and dwindling in numbers, that it is going through a crisis of unprecedented proportions. They feel helpless in front of the inertia and unwillingness to openly come to terms with the true ailments of our brotherhood, which suffers from a blurred view of what our founding inspiration is all about.

I suppose that, whoever reads this introductory paragraph, might well decide to ignore the rest as a pessimistic and fatalistic analysis, lacking any sense of hope and trust in a brighter future or appreciation for so many good initiatives going on at present. Maybe he would be right. Maybe we have an innate ability to rekindle the embers still glowing in the ashes and of moving on in spite of so many difficulties. Our Order has always had prophetic voices who instilled a sense of enthusiasm for the brothers. Such voices are well-known, but maybe they have been largely misunderstood. They were great minds and men of action, who provoked an enthusiastic response when they spoke out, but who found very few followers when it was a question of calling a spade

a spade and going down to hard talk and difficult choices. Some of them might even have occupied important offices of government in the Order, but they soon became aware that their ideas were unpopular not only among the rank and file of the brothers, but especially among their confreres in the delicate office of the *ministerium fratrum*.

It could be that we have taken a wrong direction. Why? Simply because we have always pointed out at our Franciscan life as a sublime ideal lived by one of the most eccentric men of all times, who was largely misunderstood and side-lined during his own life by his own brothers. Francis of Assisi recited Psalm 142 on his deathbed. At a certain point the Psalm says: "Look on my right and see - there is no one who recognises me. All refuge is denied me, no one cares whether I live or die" (Ps 142:4). I have often wondered why Saint Francis chose this particular Psalm as his last prayer. Certainly, because it speaks of Christ's sufferings on the cross, but also because he felt that it was speaking about him. The presentation of the dying Francis surrounded by loving and caring brothers is the result of the biographers' account of the event, and could very well be true, at least in the case of the few faithful disciples of the saint. The overall picture must have been quite different.

Where have we taken the wrong turning? I personally think that we have looked at our founder and saw in him the emblematic figure of an unapproachable ideal of holiness and Gospel perfection, forgetting the intense human suffering he endured to come to terms with such an ideal. It is as if we want to see Francis as a genius of the inspiration to the life of the Gospel and as the inventor of "fraternity" and consequently to reach

out to this goal without remembering that our steps are faltering and our vision is blurred. It is not by aiming high that we can come to grips with the founding inspiration of our brotherhood. It is rather by painfully coming to terms with who we are, that we can discover our inner potential to live up to our way of life in such a way as to merit the title of “brothers”.

My aim, therefore, is to start from the basis of life’s journey, namely from its human frailty and the sincere search for meaning. I believe that this is what Francis did in the first place. With the help of the *Earlier Rule* (1221), which is a wonderful inspirational document, I hope to be able to show how it is possible to arrive at the point of not talking about the artificial notions of “brotherhood” and “fraternity”, but of feeling that we are truly brothers deep down in our founding inspiration. In this way, my pessimistic view of current Franciscan life might show itself as a realistic possibility to approach our challenge to be alive and to stay afloat without necessarily having to rely upon complicated organs of government and fraternal bureaucracy that are stifling us.

The case of the *Earlier Rule* is fundamental in the concept of building up a family of brothers. The reason is simple. This document, known in Latin as the *Regula non bullata*, never received the *placet* of the Holy See as the corner-stone document of Franciscan life. It never meant to be such. Indeed, it was never conceived to be a document. It is true that somebody wrote it down on a parchment. It is true that Brother Caesar of Speyer embellished it with Scripture texts, and that it was approved by the brothers gathered in Chapter in 1221. But we all know that it took long years of trials and challenges to come up with such an inspirational document. It only took Francis and his close collaborators (Cardinal Hugolino, Peter Cattanio, Bonizo of Bologna, the canon lawyer) some months to come up with the *Regula bullata* of 1223, which was confirmed by the Holy See with a Papal *bull*. That was a true document, a legal, binding document, which we all profess as our way of life. Indeed, I do not intend to minimise in any way its inspirational value, at least as Francis intended it to be in the opening and concluding verses. But it was not meant to be a description of a life’s journey, but rather a legal approval of a new way of life in the Church. Its effects have been wonderful in all respects. Great saints and mystics have professed the *Regula bullata*,

and countless interpretations were given by the Church and the Order throughout our complicated history of general constitutions. Yet, whenever the brothers took it literally as a document obliging them to unwavering fidelity to an ideal, trouble broke out. The same document that was to open the brothers to the life of the Gospel enslaved them in ideologies that had very little to do with what Francis might have wished.

It was Francis’ inner anguish and searching for meaning that led him and the brothers to describe their way of life in the *Earlier Rule*. Indeed, this document is more descriptive than legalistic, it is more inspirational than juridical. That is why I consider it as an important departure point in order to be able to describe our current style of Franciscan life and come to terms with our Gospel ideals. It is not the other way round. Many of our recent and less recent efforts, praiseworthy though they may be, have aimed at pinpointing the ideal as the inspiration of what we should strive to attain, but they have largely forgotten to describe who we are in the first place. If we have a blurred vision of our own identity as persons who are called to share a challenging way of life, we will be unable to come to terms with the need to accomplish this together. The end result is that, with all good intentions, we become monads in what we artificially call a “fraternity” and a “way of life according to the Holy Gospel.”

I suppose that an experiential approach to our founding inspiration calls for a sustained effort at sincerity and openness to which, honestly, we are not accustomed. A look at the way we conduct our provincial and house chapters is self-revealing. We are stuck at the organisational style typical of an entrepreneur. Our projects take precedence over our persons. Our dreams suffocate our sufferings. Our utopia wipes out our reality. It is only when we discover the human tenderness of loving our frailty in search for a *Deus humanatus*, as Bonaventure would have it, that we are on the right track of being able to move on.

“Through the charity of the Spirit, let them serve and obey one another voluntarily” (ER 5,13: FAED I, 67-68)

We have chosen this particular verse of the

Earlier Rule in order to speak about the founding inspiration of our brotherhood. One might ask: why not choose the Gospel texts which Francis consulted in the Missal of the church of San Niccolò *ad pedem plateam*, and which are probably conserved in the same *Earlier Rule*, chapters 1 and 14? It is a fact that these Gospel texts provided Francis with the inspirational foundation of the way of life he wanted to live, and which he presented to Pope Innocent III in 1209. Yet, these texts originally concerned him personally, and maybe the first brothers, like Bernard of Quintavalle. Only later on did they take the importance they assumed in 1209, when they became the basis for the *forma vitae* of the primitive Franciscan fraternity.

The concrete brotherhood of the friars Minor was a group of brothers who were, humanly speaking, fragile in their quest for evangelical perfection. The fact that the verses we have chosen form part of chapter 5, which is entitled: *The correction of the brothers at fault*, is illuminating. This chapter can be taken as a sincere and true picture of the brotherhood, made up of persons who, at a certain point of their life journey, do commit mistakes and who are in need of correction. To portray the primitive Franciscan fraternity in an idealistic and utopic light, as if it were a faithful reproduction of the early Christian community of Jerusalem described in Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35, results in the wrong notion of what true brotherhood is all about. Indeed, the same thing can be said regarding the case of the first Christians in Acts, who loved one another but also quarrelled and disagreed, and who were in need of correction. There is no ideal human agglomeration and no authentic experience of human co-existence without the reality of division, sin and infidelity.

This fact immediately opens the way to a sincere picture of the brotherhood as an experience of the need for mercy and forgiveness, as an experience of sinfulness and repentance, of mutual acceptance. That is why Francis starts off this verse with the expression “through the charity of the Spirit.” This is a direct reference to Galatians 5:13, where the apostle speaks about the fruits of the life of the Spirit: “After all, brothers, you were called to be free; do not use your freedom as an opening for self-indulgence, but be servants to one another in love.” According to the same Galatians 5:22-23 the first fruit of the Spirit is love: “On the other hand the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness,

gentleness and self-control; no law can touch such things as these.”

Therefore, the foundational value of the life of the brotherhood is charity, seen as the eminent gift of the Holy Spirit. Charity is not a virtue that is the end product of the brotherhood. It is the other way round. Charity lies at the roots of the brotherhood. It is the *condition sine qua non* of a group of brothers who can truly live and act as such. Charity does not imply a brotherhood that is free from sin or divisions, in which peace and harmony reign supreme. That kind of charity does not belong to this earth. Charity is the power of the Holy Spirit acting in each and every one of the brothers, making them capable of mutual acceptance and forgiveness. Indeed, charity is the only condition for the formation of a group of brothers.

From this it seems clear that Francis never envisaged a fraternity of brothers that could be modelled upon the model of Gospel perfection, without due regard to the need of it being an experience of sincere and mutual love in the midst of human frailty. In order to explain this reality, Francis makes use of the category of mutual and voluntary obedience, within the context of this chapter dealing with the correction of the brothers who offend God and one another. His words are addressed to a sinful fraternity, or rather, to a group of brothers who sin, not only in the intimacy of their conscience, but above all by offending one another and the Spirit of God that dwells in them.

Chapter 5 of the *Earlier Rule*, which speaks about the correction of the brothers at fault, follows chapter 4, entitled “The Ministers and the other Brothers and how they are related.” There exists an indissoluble bond between the two. Indeed, the first verse of chapter 5 is still addressed to the “minister and servant” of the brothers.

The mutual relationship between ministers and the other brothers is built upon the golden rule of the Gospel: *Do to others what you would have them do to you* (Mt 7:12). This positive attitude towards the brothers is further clarified by Francis, when he quotes the Rule of Saint Benedict, which states: “Do not do to another what you would not have done to you.” (ER 4,4-5: FAED I, 66). This seemingly negative approach to the same axiom is, in fact, a way of underlining its importance. Charity is a gift of the Spirit, which is perceived as a divine presence in the brother. That is why, in front of the sacredness of the person of the brother, whoever he may be, the golden rule is that of

cherishing and respecting him more than oneself, for the simple reason that he is the concrete sign of God's charity infused in the human person through the presence of the Spirit.

Respect for the brother's integrity is a sign of an adoration of God with a pure heart and a clean mind. If we are called to embark upon a fraternal journey of Gospel perfection, respect for our humanity is the first step we should take. Indeed, the golden rule of the Gospel is simply the basic condition for mutual human relations between persons, irrespective of their faith. It is as if Francis is stating that, even before being Christians and brothers in Christ, we are human persons, and the structure of our brotherhood must have rock bottom foundations upon this solid virtue of charity, namely, loving the other person as I want to be loved myself, respecting the other as I want to be respected in my dignity, integrity, privacy. This includes respect for the fact that a human person errs and commits faults. Even in this case, as we shall see, the brothers are bound to exercise charity and mutual respect.

The sacredness of the brother implies a loving care for his soul. This duty falls squarely upon the shoulders of the ministers and servants according to ER 4,6, to the point that Francis admonishes them: "because the care of the brothers' souls has been entrusted to them, if anything is lost on account of their fault or bad example, they will have to render an account before the Lord Jesus Christ on the day of judgment."

In other words, there exists a mutual responsibility for the spiritual well-being of the brothers. In the case of the ministers and servants such a responsibility is clearly evident, because of the office they are called to exercise. However, it would be a mistake to place the entire burden of such a care upon these brothers and forget that each and every brother is ultimately responsible for the spiritual welfare of his brother. That is why, as we shall see, Francis would speak about mutual obedience and about voluntary obedience and service to the brothers. Charity among the brothers generates this genuine kind of obedience, built upon the holy virtue of the fear of God, fear of God's presence in the brother, to the point of respecting the fact that God is still present in the brother who is at fault, and that sin in no way diminishes the dignity and respect that a brother merits.

Seen in this light mutual charity appears in

its most clear form. It is not a question of doing away with disciplinary structures for brotherly correction. Francis does speak about these as well. It is rather a question of believing that these structures can only be of service to the brother if he feels loved and accepted as a brother who has sinned and offended God and the brethren. It is only when we are aware that our fraternities are in need of this attitude, that we arrive at the conclusion that we all need to feel that God loves us as sinners in our lack of faithfulness to what we have promised. That is when true brotherhood begins to exist.

Mutual and voluntary obedience

The notion of obedience in the Order has always been associated with the mutual relationship between ministers and the other brothers. It is a hierarchic obedience. Indeed, the very concept of obedience implies a willingness to respect the will of someone who is "superior" on the part of somebody who is "subject" to him or her. Such an approach to obedience cannot be denied in any human institution.

However, Francis widens the notion of obedience to include the mutual relationship between brothers. Not only are the ministers responsible for the spiritual welfare of the brothers, but it is the brothers themselves who are mutually responsible for each other's salvation. In order to do so, Francis speaks about mutual and voluntary obedience.

"Let no brother do or say anything evil to another; on the contrary, through the charity of the Spirit, let them serve and obey one another voluntarily. This is the true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ." (ER 5,13-15: FAED I, 67-68).

As we have already seen, the basis for charity lies in the golden rule. The first condition for a true community of brothers is that they do not do anything evil to one another. Such an affirmation seems obvious enough, but it cannot be taken at face value. From experience of human frailty, it results that the worst evil that can destroy true brotherhood is that of doing evil, namely, of becoming instruments of Satan. In biblical terms, it can be seen as enslavement to the "father of lies", since evil tries to create a false impression of the brother's integrity and dignity. It aims at

despoiling him, of making him look naked and ashamed that others are looking at him with disgust and irreverence.

Francis provides a remedy. He states that it is not enough to protect a brother's integrity and dignity by not doing evil to him. The secret of true brotherhood lies in the ability to become obedient servants on a mutual basis. There is a kind of obedience that can be described as a "horizontal obedience". It can be understood spiritually as an obedience to God's presence living in the brother. That is why this kind of obedience should be expressed as a service of love to the brother. And it should be so voluntarily. No kind of forceful effort to bear up patiently with one's brother is a sign of voluntary service and obedience to the same brother.

Maybe Francis is thinking about Jesus' obedience as described by John 13:1: "Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his in the world, loved them to the end."

The fact that Jesus expressed his love for his disciples by humbling himself and washing their feet like a slave is the noblest expression of the sovereign freedom of his voluntary act of obedience to the Father, an obedience that led him to accept death, and death on a cross. In other words, an obedience which is the result of a voluntary choice, is the only genuine kind of obedience. True obedience cannot be servile. It cannot depend upon a human ability to bear up patiently with a person, or to accept passively to carry out that person's desires. Obedience, when it is the fruit of charity, is sovereign and free.

In the brotherhood, obedience becomes possible only if this premise is adhered to. It is only when the brothers understand that they

cannot make it alone, that they need one another, that they are called to serve one another, that true obedience is born. It is an obedience that is freely accepted and expressed in the full knowledge of the human limitations to which we are all prone. It is an obedience that is rendered possible by the fact that one acts out of faith in God who humbled himself and stooped down to our human frailty to experience its burden in everything, except sin. That is why Francis speaks about obedience as an action that binds the brother at all times, except for the occasion of sin, when he is freed from what otherwise would become a parody of obedience, a diabolical presentation of obedience as servile slavery to the "father of lies."

In front of the duty of obeying God present in the brother (minister or otherwise), one must depart from faith and trust that are attributes of God's own way of dealing with us as human beings. In the fraternity we are together as brothers because we have individually been called by Christ to embrace this way of life. In our individual calling we are aware that Christ had to shower upon us a great degree of trust, although he knew beforehand that we would be unfaithful and unresponsive to him.

The founding inspiration of our brotherhood finds its roots in the Gospel, within the context of the mutual service of love of the brothers in their concrete situation as human beings. Kindness, compassion, forgiveness, mutual care, are all hallmarks of a genuine Franciscan fraternity. They are qualities that pre-date Francis' discovery of the Gospel way of life, because they were already present in his human sensibility before his so-called "conversion." That is why they led him gradually to Christ. This is the way in which we can build genuine fraternity without the danger of aiming for the clouds and forgetting to place our feet on the *humus*, the humble ground, of our fragile humanity.

BEFORE CELEBRATING 800 YEARS SINCE THE COMING OF SAINT FRANCIS IN THE EAST

Preparations are underway in the Custody of the Holy Land to commemorate the 800 years since the arrival of Saint Francis of Assisi to the shores of Palestine and on to Damietta, in the Nile delta of Egypt, in the summer of 1219. This visit of the saint occurred during the significant events of the Fifth Crusade, which had been planned by Pope Innocent III ever since April 1213, with the decree *Quia maior*, and which had been further encouraged during the celebration of the Fourth Lateran Council in November 1215.

During the course of 2019 we shall certainly be seeing the publication of various studies regarding the arrival of Francis of Assisi in Acre and then in Damietta. There already exists abundant literature regarding this episode. (For a good scientific description read A. FORTINI, *Francis of Assisi*, Translated by H. Moak, Crossroad, New York 1981, 395-439).

It is important, at this point, to understand the background of the events that occurred in 1219. The papacy of Innocent III (1198-1216) was marked by significant moments that prompted the Pope to announce the new crusade. The Fourth Crusade had seen a tragedy in the attack upon Zadar and that on Constantinople, where the Venetians ravaged Santa Sophia and embittered relations with the Greek Orthodox Church ever since 1204. The crusader army never made it to Jerusalem, which had been lost to the Latins ever since Saladin took the Holy City in 1187 and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had to retreat to some strongholds along the Palestinian coast, with Acre as its capital. The Albigensian crusade (1209-1229) in Languedoc, southern France also proved disastrous, since it was a bitter fight against heresy, but within the

same confines of Christianity, and did not succeed in eradicating the Cathars. Another failed and unfortunate attempt was the so-called Childrens' Crusade of 1212, which ended in the capture and carrying off into slavery of defenceless persons who thought they could march upon Jerusalem overnight.

Francis of Assisi was certainly aware of these events during his lifetime. Not only was he saddened by the loss of Jerusalem to the Saracens in 1187, when he was still a young boy, but he was brought up in the culture of chivalry with the aim of becoming a knight and going on a crusade to regain Jerusalem. This is what he attempted to do in 1204, when he joined forces with Walter of Brienne with the aim of going to Apulia and hence to Jerusalem. His dream ended in failure after just a days' journey to Spoleto.

Even though Francis soon understood that he was not called to go on a crusade in a military expedition, we cannot help seeing how his crusading spirit did not wane, even though he lived it with a new spirit. In 1212 he decided to go to the east, but the ship he boarded got caught in a storm in the Adriatic and he ended up in Zadar, in Dalmatia, where the gothic Franciscan church still commemorates the saint's arrival on the opposite end of the Adriatic. Sometime after this, around 1213-1214, Francis tried to go to Spain, with the intention of embarking upon a crusading evangelising mission to the Saracens, but has to return to Italy because of an illness. It was in 1219 that he finally succeeded in going to the east, at the time when the Fifth Crusade was besieging Damietta.

These details are important to make us

understand the reason that prompted Francis to go to the east in 1219. The general chapter of Pentecost, held at the Portiuncula in 1217, had sent the brothers to mission lands beyond the Alps, into Spain, France, Germany, Hungary and Outremer, or “the lands beyond the sea”, namely the region of the eastern Mediterranean. We know that Brother Giles (Egidio) had already embarked upon a personal pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1215, and he was probably the first Franciscan to set foot there. In 1217 a group of brothers went to live in Acre and founded the province of Syria. They were led by Brother Elias of Cortona, who founded the first Franciscan friary in the Latin capital of Acre.

These well-known and well-documented facts have already been the object of celebrations and commemorations in the Holy Land Custody. What is important, however, is to understand the historical context in which these Franciscan initiatives occurred. That is why it is useful to read the decree *Quia maior* of Pope Innocent III, since it provides the initial spark of fervour that would inflame Francis himself and prompt him to plan a visit to the east, with an aim of missionary zeal not of a military but of a spiritual kind. It is a mistake to downplay such fervour and to present Francis simply as a peace-broker between the Crusades and the Saracens. This has unfortunately been the tendency of some historians and pacifists, who interpret Saint Francis’ actions with our contemporary mentality of inter-religious dialogue, which in itself is going through a profound crisis, since it is often one-sided, as we very well know.

The contents of *Quia maior* might shock us today, or maybe even scandalise us, but nevertheless they remain important as a landmark to understand the crusading spirit of the 13th century, of which Francis of Assisi was a participant in his own right. Here are some extracts from the decree of Pope Innocent III:

“Because at this time there is a more compelling urgency than there has ever been before to help the Holy Land in her great need and because we hope that the aid sent to her and will be greater than that which has ever reached her before, listen when, again taking up the old cry, we cry to you. We cry on behalf of him who when dying cried with a loud voice on the cross, becoming obedient to God the father unto the death of the cross, crying out so that he might snatch us from the crucifixion of eternal death. He also cries out with his own voice and

says, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,’ as if to say, to put it more plainly, ‘If anyone wishes to follow me to the crown, let him also follow me to the battle, which is now proposed as a test for all men.’ For it was entirely in the power of almighty God, if he had so wished, to prevent that land from being handed over into hostile hands. [...] Oh, how much good has already come from this cause! How many men, converted to penance, have delivered themselves up to the service of the Crucified One in order to liberate the Holy Land and have won a crown of glory as if they had suffered the agony of martyrdom, men who perhaps might have died in their wicked ways, ensnared in carnal pleasures and worldly enticements! [...] For how can a man be said to love his neighbour as himself, in obedience to God’s command, when, knowing that his brothers, who are Christians in faith and in name, are held in the hands of the perfidious Saracens in dire imprisonment and are weighed down by the yoke of most heavy slavery, he does not do something effective to liberate them? [...] Or perhaps you do not know that many thousands of Christians are being held in slavery and imprisonment in their hands, tortured by countless torments?

The Christian peoples, in fact, held almost all the Saracen provinces up to the time of Blessed Gregory; but since then a son of perdition has arisen, the false prophet Muhammad, who has seduced many men from the truth by worldly enticements and the pleasures of the flesh. Although his treachery has prevailed up to the present day, we nevertheless put our trust in the Lord who has already given us a sign that good is to come, that the end of this beast is approaching, whose ‘number’, according to the Revelation of St. John, will end in 666 years, of which already nearly 600 have passed. And in addition to the former great and grave injuries which the treacherous Saracens have inflicted on our Redeemer, on account of our offences, the same perfidious Saracens have recently built a fortified stronghold to confound the Christian name on Mount Tabor, where Christ revealed to his disciples a vision of his future glory; by means of this fortress they think they will easily occupy the city of Acre, which is very near them, and then invade the rest of that land without any obstructive resistance, since it is almost entirely devoid of forces or supplies.

So rouse yourselves, most beloved sons,

transforming your quarrels and rivalries, brother against brother, into associations of peace and affection; gird yourselves for the service of the Crucified One, not hesitating to risk your possessions and your persons for him who laid down his life and shed his blood for you, equally certain and sure that if you are truly penitent you will achieve eternal rest as a profit from this temporal labour. For we, trusting in the mercy of almighty God and the authority of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, by that power of binding and loosing that God as conferred on us, although unworthy, grant to all those submitting to this labour personally or at their own expense full forgiveness of their sins, of which they make truthful oral confession with contrite hearts, and as the reward of the just we promise them a greater share of eternal salvation. To those who do not personally campaign but at least send out suitable men at their own expense according to their means and station in life and similarly to those who go personally although at another's expense we concede full forgiveness of their sins. We also wish and concede that all those who donate a fitting proportion of their goods to the aid of that land should share in the remission of sins, according to the amount of their aid and the depth of their devotion. [...]

But so that the aid to the Holy Land may be given more easily if it is shared by many, we beg each and every one of you through the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one only true, the one eternal God – and we speak as Vicar of Christ for Christ – for an adequate number of fighting men with expenses for three years, to be provided by archbishops and bishops, abbots and priors and chapters, whether of cathedrals or other conventual churches, and all clergy, and also cities, villages and castles, according to their own means. And if there are not enough fighting men for this in any particular company, several groups must be joined together. For we certainly hope that manpower will not be insufficient if the means are not lacking. We ask the same thing from those kings and princes,

count, barons and other magnates, who themselves perhaps are not going personally to the service of the Crucified one. We also demand naval help from maritime cities. [...]

And because corsairs and pirates hinder exceedingly aid to the Holy Land by capturing and despoiling those traveling to and from her, we bind them and their principal aiders and abettors with the bond of excommunication, forbidding, under threat of unending anathema, anyone knowingly to communicate with them in any contract of sale or purchase and enjoining the rulers of their cities and districts to call them back and curb them from committing this iniquity. Otherwise we will take pains to show ecclesiastical severity towards their persons and their lands, since such people are turned against the Christian name no less than are the Saracens, and because to them unwilling to confound the wicked is nothing less than to foster them, and a man who openly fails to challenge a malefactor does not escape the suspicion of being in some secret league with him. We renew, moreover, the sentence of excommunication promulgated at the Lateran Council against those who carry weapons, iron and wood, for building galleys to the Saracens and who captain the Saracens' pirate vessels, and if these people are captured we judge that they are to be punished by the confiscation of their goods and are to become the slaves of their captors. We order sentence of this kind to be read out publicly each Sunday and feast-day in all maritime cities.”

The appeal to regain the Holy Land for Christianity was the true reason that compelled Francis to embark along his journey to the east in 1219. He was doing nothing more than obeying the wish of a Pope who was by now dead, but whose strong words of encouragement prompted kings and princes alike to take the cross and go beyond the sea. Their strategies were certainly flawed and ended up in a tragic failure, but this did not stop Francis from going with them, certainly with more sincere and honest intentions.

Have we anything to give to our mother?

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Another time while he was staying at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, a poor old woman who had two sons in religion, came to the place seeking some alms of blessed Francis because that year she did not have enough to live. Blessed Francis said to Brother Peter of Catanio, who was the provincial minister at the time: “Have we anything to give our mother?” For he used to say that the mother of any brother was his own and that of all the brothers in the religion. Brother Peter told him: “We do not have anything in the house that we can give her, especially since she wants such alms as would provide for her corporal needs. In the church we only have one New Testament for reading the lessons at matins.” At that time, the brothers did not have breviaries and not many psalters. Blessed Francis responded: “Give our mother the New Testament, so she can sell it for her needs. I firmly believe that the Lord and the Blessed Virgin, His Mother, will be pleased more by giving it to her than if you read in it.” For it can be said and written about blessed Francis, what was said and written about Job: “Mercy grew up with me and it came out with me from my mother’s womb” (Job 31:18). For us who were with him, it would take a long time to write and recount not only what we learned from others about his charity and piety toward the poor, but also what we saw with our own eyes.

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Abbreviations

Writings of St. Francis

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

Sources for the Life of St. Francis

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

Sources for the Life of St. Clare

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

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Cover picture:

*Missal consulted by St. Francis in the Church of San Niccolò, Assisi (1172-1228)
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore*