

The First “Capuchin” Commentary on the Rule of Saint Francis.

“Il primo commento «cappuccino» della Regola di S. Francesco” in COSTANZO CARGNONI, *I Frati Cappuccini*, Edizioni Frate Indovino, Perugia, 1988, vol.I, pp.585-719, translated by Br. PATRICK COLBOURNE ofm cap, 2009. The paragraph numbering follows that used by Cargnoni.

Many of the brothers of the Observance who were zealous concerning the observance of the Rule attempted reform by setting up houses of recollection, which were authorised in Italy by Quiñones in 1526 and by Pope Clement V in 1532 by the Bull In suprema, thus they were strongly opposed to the Capuchin break-away movement that split the unity of the order.

In spite of the fact that they had been authorised these small houses of recollection did not have the support of the superiors and so many of those who wanted reform passed over to the Capuchins. This included important persons such as: Bernardino d’Asti, Francesco da Jesi, Eusebio d’Ancona, Bernardino Ochino, John of Fano etc.

Among the Capuchins John of Fano in particular immediately felt the need to make up for his former opposition, not only by word of mouth and preaching but also with the pen, and, in the hermitage of Scandriglia, rewrote his Dialogue of Salvation “bringing it closer – according to Paolo Vitelleschi da Foligno – to the mind of Saint Francis the legislator by means of more solid arguments, cleansing it of spitefulness and demonstrating that his change of habit was not motivated by fickleness or sinister reasons, but (and these are his own words) undertaken with well considered consultation over a long period of time, and especially, because he did not consider that he could satisfy his conscience, nor be sure of his salvation because of what he had said “against such a holy reform that was willed by God.” (MHOC VII, 372).

Thus in the Dialogue he defends the fundamental principles of the Capuchin reform and reviews the twelve chapters of the Rule, using the same literary device of a conversation carried on between a Scrupulous Brother (the pupil) and an expert Mature Brother (the master). It is one of the basic texts of the Capuchin reform, the source, to some extent, of the 1536 Constitutions, and the best background against which to contextualise them.

Thus John of Fano is the first known commentator on the Rule who follows the spirit of the Capuchin reform and it is difficult to exaggerate his influence, even though the amended Dialogue was never published, but circulated among the brothers in many manuscripts. It was edited only in the third decade of this century by Father Bernardino da Lapedona.

In this work it is possible to understand (leaving aside the mystery of the human heart) the basic motivation that drove the author to enter the Capuchins: namely, the search for the will and intention of Saint Francis. In commenting on the words of the Rule he wanted to bind himself to the literal meaning of the text as faithfully as was possible following the whole proposal and design for living envisaged by Saint Francis very closely; as Father Optatus van Asseldonk carefully explains: “He came over to the

Capuchins to discover the complete and perfect 'intent' of Francis concerning the observance of the Rule. He says that he really found it, because the Rule was observed among them simply and without comment, to the letter, as the founder and his companions lived it. When he refers to searching for the intention of Francis, he recalls chiefly the Testament of Francis, but also the witness of his early companions, of Leo, of those whom we call the Three Companions (more accurately today "Those who were with him"), of Hugh of Digne, John Pecham, Bartholomew of Pisa and his Book of Conformities, Alvarus Pelagius, Peter John Olivi, Ubertino da Casale, Angelo Clareno, Saint Bonaventure and others. All of this material was usually gathered from the well-known anthologies of the day, the Speculum Minorum seu Firmamentum trium Ordinum (Venice 1513 etc.) and the Book of Conformities".

If the friar minor observant was satisfied with the observance of the Later Rule with only Papal declarations (according to C. Urbanelli), with the observance of the Testament not being obligatory (as Pili himself thought when he was opposed to the Capuchin reform), to the Capuchins this was mutilated, limited, watered-down legalism. The real friar minor should strive with all his strength towards imitation of and "conformity" to Saint Francis. This specifically involved observing the Rule "spiritually" and allowed for a break away, division, separation. In fact obedience should serve the observance of the Rule and not vice versa: an argument that would also come from the controversial pen of Victoria Colonna.

But at the deepest level as Optatus van Asseldonk accurately observed, "such observance according to the 'spirit' implied the most perfect union with the Spirit of Christ, just as Francis had wanted: 'the spirit of the Lord and its holy activity', the spirit of prayer and devotion in close union with Christ crucified, a spirit of universal charity carried out and preserved in radical poverty, in humility and being lesser, in obedience to God, to the Church and to all men" out of love. These ideas stand in perfect logical sequence to the Art of Union (Cf. Part III, section I) and in their meticulous and concrete application allow us to glimpse a way of life, a method of piety, that will characterise the Capuchin reform for many centuries.

The Dialogue of Salvation between a Scrupulous Brother and a Mature Brother Regarding the Rule of the Friars Minor and Declarations Concerning It, with Many Necessary Additions, Newly Composed and Reprinted.

1. [Letter of Dedication]

John of Fano wished that his amended Dialogue be printed and so he dedicated it to Bernardino d'Asti, who had recently been elected Vicar General of the Capuchins in the Chapter at S. Eufemia in Rome in 1535-1536. The letter sets out the reasons for his retraction.

499. Brother John of Fano, a member of the hermit Order of Friars Minor,¹ to the Reverend Father Brother Bernardino d'Asti Vicar General of the said Congregation due reverence, *greetings* etc.

Reverend Father, perusing holy and divine Scripture I find that the infinite God's clemency never abandons human nature without healing it so that it may achieve eternal beatitude, and this demonstrates that human nature was created to achieve this goal. Certainly the most kind Lord sees that human nature is always prone to evil and sin,² however from time to time He provides the appropriate means through which sin may be avoided, virtue pursued, and in the end, it may happily fulfil its purpose.

He therefore ordained the natural law. When this proved to be imperfect He laid down written law through which in many ways He restricted the human propensity so that it would not fall into sin as easily³, so that at the very least it might follow the will of its Lord out of hope or fear.

In the fullness of time,⁴ He sent His sweet Son to teach and preach the law of love persuading human souls to more easily return to divine worship. Then when fervour had died down again,⁵ he sent religious Orders practising various observances, so that tepid wills might be led back to their original practices. Finally he sent our seraphic father Saint Francis,⁶ who fought against this human propensity, which had been encouraged and supported by the devil, the world and the flesh, with the weapon of the Cross. Although his Order continued in great perfection for some time, it was not immune from relaxations, in such a way that it was necessary to restore and reform it many times, as happened at the time of Saint Bonaventure and Saint Bernadine and others.⁷

500 Once more let us give eternal thanks to our Lord God who deigned to inspire those good fathers who organised this holy reform which was pleasing to God⁸ within which

¹ This was the name of the reform in the first ten years of its history, that is, during the period of Ludovico da Fossombrone and the Albacina Ordinances.

² Cf. Es 32,22: Gen 8, 21.

³ "Prolabere" from the Latin "prolabi", that is "to fall".

⁴ Cf. Gal 4, 4 – Note the traditional threefold division of the history of salvation: the period of the natural law, the period of the written or positive law and the final period, of the law of the Gospel and love.

⁵ Cf. Matt 24, 12.

⁶ Thus Saint Francis appears in the history of salvation making an entrance that displays both celebration and theology at the same time, which echoes some expressions found in A. Clarenò (cf. for example, in Letter 63 in Lydia von Auw, *Angeli Clarenò opera. I: Epistole* Roma 1980, 296, 298: "novissime locutus est nobis in filio suo seraphico Francisco ... Hoc signum crucis, Franciscus dominus in ecclesia apparuit ... Ecce iam venit plenitudo temporis, in quo misit Dominus noster Christus filium Franciscum in ecclesiis...") and certain Bonaventurian trends, for example, in the Prologue to the *Major Legend* (FA:ED, II, pp. 525-529).

⁷ Here the author traces an interpretation of the history of the Franciscan Order referring to the arguments of the Spirituales and the reform of the Zocolanti with Paoluccio Trinci, later developed by Saint Bernadine and the Observants. The words "and others" refer to other Franciscan reforms, such as the movement of hermits in Portugal and Aragon, the Villacreziani, the movement of Filippo Berbegal, of Giovanni de la Puebla, the Clarenò, the Amadeiti and other groups.

⁸ That is the Capuchins. One can hear the ardour of the neophyte in these fervent words: John had been a member of the Capuchins for two years.

anyone who wishes can observe his profession perfectly and be saved without any impediment.

Although in the beginning I was greatly opposed to this in word and deed, I now confess my ignorance, which followed the usual customs of the 'community',⁹ in the eyes of which such restrictions were always deemed to be exorbitant.¹⁰ I did not know the will of God and the great harvest that would follow it. Now that it has pleased His divine Majesty to enlighten me and let me see the truth like He did for Paul I give him eternal thanks once again, *quia de tenebris vocavit me in admirabile lumen suum*.¹¹

When I wore the other habit I briefly summarised the declarations on the Rule, and therein greatly undermined this holy Congregation,¹² which scandalised some while giving others the audacity not to care about seeking further reformation, with my words persuading them that they were safe as they were. Therefore to address both of these effects as well as to satisfy my conscience I put on this holy habit and rewrote the *Dialogue* using the same style, omitting many superfluous things, adding many necessary things, and amending many things that had been poorly expressed. I depicted the same "Scrupulous" brother conversing with a "Mature" brother who marvelled at how the former had changed his mind and his habit.¹³

I beg, Your Reverence, to be pleased to see that this is printed.¹⁴ Farewell.

The Dialogue which was written in the vernacular, was meant to be a help for simple and illiterate brothers in observing the Rule more perfectly along the strict lines of the reform, to understand it in its "true meaning" according to the experience and the knowledge of the Saints, the learned and the declarations of the popes and the doctors of the Order. This is stated in the Prologue.

⁹ Friars Minor of the Observance.

¹⁰ This fact can be documented. Suffice it to consider the intransigence of the Observants towards other local reform movements in Spain, with the dramatic abolition of the Conventuals from the territory with harmful political consequences if they did not enter the Observants.

¹¹ He is applying to himself what Saint Peter said to the early Christians in 1 Pt 2, 9 feeling that he was converted by God to the Capuchin reform as Saint Paul had been from Judaism to Christianity.

¹² Pili composed the first *Dialogue of Salvation*, which was printed at Ancona in 1527 during his second term as Provincial of the Observants of the Marches (1525-1527).

¹³ In comparison to the first *Dialogue* this second, amended edition is almost twice as long. A significant example of this is that in the first *Dialogue* where poverty is dealt with and where the text comments on the phrase from the Rule "living without anything of their own" the matter is dealt with in a page and a few words, in the second *Dialogue*, instead, it takes up nearly 19 pages. Here the "Scrupulous" brother represents a religious from the ranks of the Observants who wishes to see reform, while the "Mature" brother is John of Fano himself who sets out the motives for his decision to reform and undertakes a discrete push for recruits.

¹⁴ Instead, as we know, this was never printed. Paolo of Foligno explains the reasons in his chronicle: "I often tried to have this published in print but the Order did not want it in order to avoid the ostentation of praise which would come to it, to avoid contending with others which would unavoidably follow the discussion it raised and because the Congregation had no need of such gratification, as the disputes had now died down and it enjoyed the highest reputation before the world and because the first *Dialogue* was held in little or no regard by intellectuals." (*MHOC* VII, 373).

Prologue

501. 2. *Jesus Maria.*¹⁵ The most clement and kind God created the rational soul to bestow eternal life on it and as an illustration of this He placed¹⁶ mankind in an earthly paradise. To show plainly that He had done this, and that He wished to confer holiness on mankind, He gave them all the necessary means to easily achieve this end, among which recently there are religious Orders¹⁷ and especially the Friars Minor, in which a person is invited to perform all the works that lead to perfection and his final objective with all ease.

If then, as well as providing such practical and uncomplicated means, the most holy Lord has very graciously chosen a person for such distinction, why would someone who has professed this Rule not strive to diligently perform well? Therefore he must engage all his effort and strength in applying what he has promised in the Rule knowing how important this is, otherwise he will not be able to observe it, since the will is unable to deliberate over what is unknown, and, consequently, cannot achieve the set purpose.¹⁸

Thus a person who really wishes to achieve a given end effectively not only seeks the means but also strives to remove the impediments, among which ignorance, the mother of all error, is included.¹⁹ This does not exclude those who profess the Rule since if they do not know they should strive to find out so that they do not fall through having their eyes closed and perish with their eyes open [23v] as the Rule is short and thus unclear in many places.

502. There are some, who, either through ignorance or neglect, show little judgement,²⁰ or think that they know everything, but show quite the opposite in their observance of the Rule. Certainly at times those who know little presume more and those who are less inclined to look ahead lack insight. One who is wise fears and turns away from evil. The fool presumes and falls.²¹ He who goes ahead imprudently does not act with simplicity since he thinks that he has discovered the right path but in the end is led to miserable death.²² There is no doubt that just as being afraid of falling where there is no fault is characteristic of a fearful mind, as Gregory says,²³ so too to have no fear where there is fault (according to the opinion of the Saints and of the Church) is characteristic of a

¹⁵ An ejaculation that was dear to John of Fano, as can be seen in the last part of his little book *Arte de la unione*. (cf. part III, section I).

¹⁶ That is placed human beings.

¹⁷ Religioni = religious Orders.

¹⁸ Cf. Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, bk. 22, ch 22 (PL 41, 784, n. 1).

¹⁹ Here the author cites the chapter on *Ignorance*, dist. 38, from *Decretum Gratiani*, prima pars cap. *Ignorantia*, can. 1, dist. 38: cf. *CIC I*, 141: *Ignorantia mater cunctorum errorum maxime in sacerdotibus Die vitanda est*.

²⁰ The text reads "discorreno". However, the first *Dialogue* reads "discernano" which makes more sense.

²¹ Cf. Pr 14, 16.

²² Cf. Pr 16, 25; 14, 16. This passage is translated completely from Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 91, 10-21; see also *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 32vb.

²³ Saint Gregory the Great, *In I Regum expositiones*, 1. 5, cap. 2, n. 10 (PL 79, 332). He translates the meaning of the passage: "ut timendo mens agat, ne quod timet pertimescat".

temerarious mind and is blind to what are regarded as being grave and serious matters and obvious major and minor transgressions even when the danger of damnation is quite evident. This is a consequence of either habit, when someone is brought up on these defects or when because of his personal sensual comforts his emotions have become inordinate not being attentive to pleasing our Lord Jesus Christ, nor seeking His things, but one's own,²⁴ when these things distort the judgement of reason, since judgement usually follows emotion, or because they do not have the fear of God either through ignorance or keeping bad company.

503 Because of this a good brother who desired to serve his Creator [24r] faithfully and to inviolably observe the Rule that he had professed and in the end to save his soul and also was afraid that dangerous times had arrived together with the wiles of his adversaries the devils, and also seeing that within the Order many followed different paths, some being too broad and dangerous, some too scrupulous and narrow, and wishing to set his mind at rest,²⁵ once again sought out an experienced, upright and mature father and sought advice regarding the above matters from the many and solid document that he possessed. In the course of a most useful conversation between them he composed a work entitled: *The Dialogue of salvation between a Scrupulous Brother and a Mature Brother*, following the saying of the Apostle to the Romans: *Rationabile obsequium vestrum*;²⁶ and this took place in 1527.

After some time when this *Scrupulous Brother* observed that the *Mature Brother*, who had formerly lived with the highly respected "family",²⁷ which he regarded as most safe, had changed his opinion and entered the reform of the Capuchins, where there was clearly true observance of the Rule, he came back to him and demanded to know the reason for the change and so he rewrote the same *Dialogue* once again, leaving some things out which were not very necessary, adding others according to the real interpretation of the Rule as our saintly fathers, who were famous for holiness and for enlightened teaching [24v], and the Supreme Pontiffs had decreed that it be understood and observed. They did this out of great zeal for their salvation, to the benefit of all, to remedy relaxations and to merit the blessing of God. Blessed Francis asked the Lord to bless those who meditate on and discuss the Rule and search for its true meaning and strive to observe it.²⁸

504. Following the sequence of the chapters of the Rule, the *Dialogue* contains a short summary of all the Papal declarations on the Rule as well as those of the doctors of the Order.²⁹ It is written in the mother tongue, the vernacular, so that the simple and

²⁴ Phil. 2, 21; cf. 1 Cor 13, 5.

²⁵ Satisfarse = resolving many doubts and questions to settle a desire and a need for inner clarity.

²⁶ Rom 12, 1 (Vulgate) = your reasonable service (Douay-Rheims and King James).

²⁷ In his first *Dialogo* John of Fano praised the Observants, known as the "family", before its separation from the Conventuals, when it was placed under obedience to Paoluccio Trinci da Foligno.

²⁸ Cf. 2 C 208; 2MP 76 (FA:ED II, pp. 380-381; III p.323).

²⁹ Thus it is a kind of seraphic manual and the first "Capuchin" commentary or exposition of the Franciscan Rule, still keeping in the mind the comments of F. Elizondo, *Regola francescana presso I primi cappuccini* in *IF* 53 (1978) 636 nota 52.

uneducated brothers can understand it better. It is short so that it may be read more often and committed to memory easily.³⁰ One will also find here those things which the other *Dialogue* referred back to the book of *Privilegi* as well as things which have been added which are of great value and importance. In many places and with regard to many points one will also find expressions of Saint Francis' wishes and intentions marked with an indication in the margin: *Nota*.³¹

Deo gratias. Amen. [25r]

In the Name of the Lord here begins the Rule and Life of the Friars Minor

Chapter I

3. [*Whether the environment of the Franciscan Rule is safe for salvation*]

505 *Scrupulous Brother.* – Even though in the previous *Dialogue* I was educated about the things that are necessary for the salvation of the brothers, I ask that for my greater satisfaction you tell me whether living by this Rule and profession is safe and whether those who observe it can be certain about their personal salvation.

Mature Brother. – My son, as I told you on the previous occasion hold fast to the conviction that this way of life and the Rule are every safe and whoever observes it will undoubtedly be saved. The reason is that this Rule was not discovered in a human manner, but revealed by God, taken from the Gospel and based on it. Although every word is not taken from the Gospel literally they take their meaning from the Gospel. Consider any one of them and you will see that this is the case. This is the meaning of the vision of the bread crumbs as we shall see later.³² In the *Book of Conformities* (under *Franciscus legislator*)³³ you will see that the Lord said many times to Blessed Francis that He had composed this Rule and not Francis and that it contained nothing belonging to him but it was all from Christ. He said this in the presence of Brother Elias and the ministers who opposed him [26r]. The Lord wished to dictate both the first and second edition of the Rule and so it is more holy and right in as much as Jesus Christ the saint of saints and the highest wisdom composed it, reformed it and dictated it.³⁴

³⁰ An unmistakable characteristic of early Capuchin literature is that it was written to be lived.

³¹ This is characteristic of the *Dialogue*.

³² Cf. below note 79.

³³ Cf. 2MP 1 (FA:ED, III, pp. 253-254); *Htrb.* II, 12; For an English translation see *Angelo Clarenò: A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*, Translated by David Burr and E. Randolph Daniel, Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, New York 2005. (Burr and Daniel) p. 58; (Subsequently referred to as Burr and Daniel); see also *Conf.* IV, 372s, 428s.

³⁴ In the portable booklets of the Rule that were given to the professed brothers the event which took place at Fonte Colombo and the recourse which Saint Francis had to Pope Honorius for approval of the Rule were reported very elaborately. The text which was headed "The Rule of the Friars Minor was instituted and commanded by Christ" was copied and translated from the anthology *Speculum Minorum* etc. and it was usually accompanied by an illustration of Francis on the mountain receiving the scroll containing the Rule from the hands of Christ while some brothers knelt in prayer at the foot of the mountain. One could read among other things: "No one should thus regard it as suspect or false, or that it cannot lead a person to

Pope Honorius confirmed this when he said in the presence of Blessed Francis, Brother Leo and Brother Bonzio: "Blessed is he who, through divine grace, faithfully and devotedly observes this Rule since everything that is written in it is perfect, Catholic and holy."³⁵ This is confirmed in *Exiit, de verborum significatione: haec est apud Deum et Patrem* etc. Saint Bonaventure says: "It is a great consolation to those who profess this Rule that they profess what the Lord said to the apostles when he commissioned them to preach".

506 Since Christ is the mirror and example of all the virtues which lead to perfection and Paradise as He says; "Whoever follows me does not walk in the dark"³⁶ and "If you wish to be perfect go sell all that you have and give it to the poor, and follow me"³⁷ as can be seen clearly this Rule teaches the following of Christ and so is all the more perfect. At the beginning of the Rule it says: "The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, to observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ".³⁸ John Pecham says: "It was the intention of Blessed Francis to commit evangelical holiness to his sons, that is the life of Christ and His apostles, in as much [26v] as human frailty would permit" because His life is perfectly described in the Gospel. So it says: and to observe the holy gospel", as if to say "O you who for love of Him who died for our salvation have separated your hearts from love of the world and of yourselves, and taken up your cross as apostolic and humble men, come, so that your life and Rule may be the observance of the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, imitating his life as it is described in the Gospel."³⁹

507. Thus Blessed Francis gave praise that the eternal Father had assigned this Order to the Son of God in these last times and that He wanted it to be more modelled on Him than those which had gone before and that Christ had revealed that it should be known as the Order of Friars Minor to fulfil the words of Christ in chapter 25 of the Gospel according to Matthew: "What you do to one of the least of my children, you do to me",⁴⁰ as Saint Bonaventure says.⁴¹ The Pisan says that the Lord intended that these words be applied literally to the Friars Minor.⁴²

perfection, since Christ who is the summit of all perfection composed and dictated it" (cf. *Regola e Testamento del nostro Serafico Padre S. Francesco*, Venezia 1957, f. 62r-64v).

³⁵ This fact is narrated by A. Clarenò: cf. *HTrb.* 62; (Burr and Daniel p. 59) *Expositio Regulae*, 204s.

³⁶ Jn. 8, 12.

³⁷ Mt. 19, 21.

³⁸ In the text the author for this text refers to Saint Bonaventure. *Expositio super regulam fratrum Minorum* cap. I (*Op. omnia* VIII, 393, n. 3).

³⁹ "Fuit igitur intentio (sicut credo) beati Francisci filiis suis evangelium indicere sanctitatem, vitam scilicet Christi et apostolorum, ut patitur humana infirmitas" (*Declaratio super regulam fratrum Minorum domini Ioannis de Pechano*, c. 1, in *Spec. Minorum*, Venetiis 1513, pars III, f. 72va). – "Comettere" that is offer. The phrase following "as if to say" is copied from *L'amore evangelico* (cf. above n. 462).

⁴⁰ Mt 25, 40-54.

⁴¹ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio* cit. (*Op. omnia* VIII, 393 n. 2). – In the Franciscan sources cf. *AC* 101; *2MP*, 26 (*FA:ED.*, II, p. 205; III, p. 276).

⁴² *Conf.* IV, 381, 25s; 428, 1s: *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 56rb: "ut dicit beatus Franciscus Christus ad litteram intellexit de fratribus istius ordinis".

Because of this the Rule is based on the authority and approval of the Supreme Pontiffs and of Holy Mother Church (as is stated at the beginning and end of the Rule), for whom it is lawful to approve, confirm, comment and declare Rules that exist within the church [...].⁴³

4. [*How many Rules did Saint Francis Write?*]

508. *Scrupulous Brother.* – Did our Father Saint Francis write more than one Rule?

Mature Brother. – At different times he wrote three. The first [27v] was in about the third year of his conversion,⁴⁴ and it contained twenty-four chapters. It was approved by Innocent III without a Bull which Pope Honorius in the foreword to our Rule. He wrote the second about [27v] the eleventh year of his conversion.⁴⁵ It was approved by the said Pope with a Bull and, as the *Book of Conformities* states. It was concealed or destroyed by Brother Elias.⁴⁶ He wrote the third about the twelfth year of his conversion,⁴⁷ nullifying many things and abbreviating others. It was approved by Pope Honorius as appears in the foreword.⁴⁸

5. [*Whether the way of life of the Observants is safe and according to the mind of Saint Francis.*]

509. *Scrupulous Brother.* – [...] I would like to know whether the way of life followed by our brothers known as the Observants (among whom I am presently living) follows the mind of Saint Francis and can be followed safely according to the conscience of the brothers.

Mature Brother. - What makes you have doubts?

Scrupulous Brother. – The four things which you already mentioned to me before.⁴⁹ The more I saw the novel way of life and continual change the more I began to have doubts, especially when following your explanation I saw that you had left the “family” and gone to the Capuchin reform.⁵⁰ Firstly, there are the distortions and interpretations of the Rule, which are completely prohibited by Saint Francis who wanted

⁴³ John of Fano here adds many quotations taken from Canon Law, which are from the Decretals of Gregory IX, Clement V and Boniface VIII. Note the balance in his attitude towards the Church which is very different from the “spiritualist” exasperation attributed to him by some.

⁴⁴ That is between 1290 and 1210 and according to the author this would be the *Earlier Rule*. In fact at that time this would have been the “Propositum vitae”.

⁴⁵ In 1221.

⁴⁶ *Conf.* IV, 372, n. 2; *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 53rb.

⁴⁷ In 1223 and it has a Bull, *Solet annuere* dated 29 November.

⁴⁸ Cf. LMj 4, 11; 2MP 1.(FA:ED, II, pp. 557-558; III, p. 253). For a more precise and updated look at the development of the Franciscan Rule see the critical study and bibliography by O. Schmucki, *Gli scritti legislative di san Francesco*, in *Approccio storico-critico alle fonti francescane*, a cura di G. Cardaropoli e M. Conti, Roma 1979, 73-98.

⁴⁹ The four reasons put forward in the first *Dialogue* to demonstrate the truth of the Observance are rebutted here to demonstrate the opposite that is the validity of the Capuchin reform. See the first *Dialogue*.

⁵⁰ This took place in 1534.

the Rule to be understood and lived to the letter without correspondence or privilege being asked from the Roman Court.⁵¹ Secondly, undue recourse to spiritual friends and procurators, and the quick⁵² and indiscrete acceptance [28r] of money for Masses, services rendered, sales, quests and other things, as often happens, and many other procedures that are completely forbidden by the Rule and by Saint Francis; annual rents and the like. Thirdly, the general relaxation in the way of life concerning the Rule and, in divine matters, relaxed observance of the main vows, in buildings, vestments, food and clothing, excess hoarding of the necessities of life, in the regulations of the Order, in conduct inside and outside the Order, etc. Fourthly, there is such a variety of reforms and changes of habits which has been going for a long time within the Order. It is a sure thing that if one had wanted to observe the Rule where this was going on so many splits and factions would have made it impossible,⁵³ and this makes me very fearful.

Many statements and declarations were made concerning these things in the other *Dialogue* and they appeared to me to establish satisfaction and peace, but I now find myself in greater doubt and fear than ever because of the above mentioned things especially your transfer.

510 *Mature Brother* – Your doubts are justified and not without basis and so I will deal with what I can rightly understand in them. There is no doubt that because of a corrupt condition and tendency towards human weakness it is difficult to find a person or situation that is completely [28v] irreprehensible or immune from all fault. Nor can one also deny that among those who profess evangelical perfection that there are some who are imperfect.⁵⁴ But listen to me I beg of you: on the former occasion when we were discussing these matters (if you remember well) I told you that the way of life within the Observant family, according to the way it was lived by the most saintly reforming fathers, namely John Capistran, Saint Bernadine and others, was good and safe and those who followed this were assured of their salvation. This was always my intention in the other *Dialogue* (as was quite clear there), namely to commend the regulated and dutiful way of life of the above mentioned holy men and not the many special cases, which have occurred especially in recent times, although some have twisted my statements as being applicable in to all cases including those in recent times in order to hide relaxations, but they will not be excused before the judgement seat of God.⁵⁵

Scrupulous Brother. – Nonetheless, Father, your words fill me with greater doubt and fear for indeed in the other *Dialogue* your most compelling intent was very clearly evident.⁵⁶ Those who attach a different and false meaning to your intentions in order to satisfy their weaknesses make a serious error. However, your transfer, way of life and

⁵¹ This is an obvious reference to the *Testament* of Saint Francis.

⁵² “percepit” = “precipitose, sconsiderate”.

⁵³ When John of Fano wrote this *Dialogue* there were at least a dozen reforms and groups within the Franciscan Order.

⁵⁴ This is a realistic and moderate judgement.

⁵⁵ We see in these words impatience and bitterness of heart for the criticisms received from his former Observant brothers following his decision to transfer to the Capuchins.

⁵⁶ The author’s honesty in writing and publishing the first *Dialogue* is apparent but the value of his witness in favour of the Capuchins is even clearer.

wearing of the garb of reform force me to ask you to instruct me clearly [29r] what I should do to be saved.

511. *Mature Brother* – I agree, but I first want to clear up the four above mentioned doubts for you and in the clarifying the fourth once again respond to your request. To the first regarding declarations and glosses,⁵⁷ I reply that I firmly hold that the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs and of the doctors of the Order regarding the Rule are to be accepted and observed with all reverence, since in no way do they take away from the purity of the Rule. What is more it would be a damnable error to hold the opposite. If the Church were to err in matters concerning good conduct it would be shameful because error in behaviour brings about evil as Augustine of Ancona says⁵⁸ in *De potestate papae*, since it will either become an occasion of sin, or prevent the brothers from practising the perfection of the Rule as they have promised, and then the Church would not always be holy, which it is very improper to say.

When you say that Saint Francis prohibited glosses on the Rule, I say that he did not take away the authority of the Supreme Pontiffs to solve doubts regarding the Rule that might arise over time. That is why he submitted the Rule to the Apostolic See. If it were otherwise there would be no Rule or observance without the authority and approval of the Apostolic See. Augustine says this when speaking of the Gospel in *Contra fundamentum Manichei*: "I would not believe in the Gospel, [29v] if I did not believe that it had been approved by the holy Church" [...].⁵⁹

512. However we should⁶⁰ believe that Saint Francis prohibited the glosses which are made by imperfect and weak people against the solid meaning of the Rule and against the precepts,⁶¹ and glosses that do not clarify the Rule, but change it or obscure it and relax the way of life. After the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs come those of the doctors of the Order who have a greater understanding and more perfect observance of the Rule and these are to be adhered to and observed.

Note that among all the declarations two are outstanding both because of their standing in law and for their conformity to the Rule, that is the one by Nicholas III, *Exiit. De verborum significatione*, n. 6 and the one by Clement V, *Exivi de Paradiso*. These have always been held in high regard among the good and zealous brothers to whom Bartolo refers in his *Minorica*.⁶²

⁵⁷ Cf. *Testament* FA:ED, I, p. 127.

⁵⁸ Trinfo A. d'Ancona (+ 1328), an Augustinian theologian and philosopher, wrote many works, among which the main one was the *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica*, which was reprinted frequently. It is to this that John of Fano is referring.

⁵⁹ Saint Augustine, *Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant "fundamenti"*, cap 5 (*PL* 42, 176).

⁶⁰ "dovemo" is dialect for "dobbiamo".

⁶¹ There were nine precepts of the Rule, to which were added twelve equivalent precepts and seven which were equally valid as precepts. Altogether there were twenty-eight precepts.

⁶² Concerning these two Bulls see the studies by F. Elizondo, *Bulla "Exiit qui seminat" Nicholai III in Laurent 4* (1963) 59-119; *Pontificae interpretationis Regulae franciscanae usque ad an. 1517*, *ibid.* 1 (1960) 324-358; *De evangelii et Regulae franciscanae obligatione usque as bullam "Exivi de paradiso" Clementis V (6 mai 1312)*, *ibid.* 2 (1961) 226-260. – For the *minorica* by Bartolo see the *Quattuor libri*

6. [The intention of Saint Francis regarding the interpretation of the Rule]

513. *Scrupulous Brother* – What do you think was Saint Francis' intention with respect to the interpretation of the Rule?

Mature Brother – Note well that Saint Francis said in his *Testament* that he wanted the Rule to be understood simply and observed in the same way. He says that the Lord revealed it to him.⁶³ Although with good intentions the Pope⁶⁴ said that we were not bound to observe the *Testament* we must still hold it in the highest respect and observe it where possible, as Alvarus says, since that is where our Father sets out his intentions. It is credible that he wrote the *Testament* and the Rule through the same divine inspiration at the end of his life when he was perfect in virtue. This is what Alvarus says.⁶⁵ Whoever does not esteem the *Testament* and is not careful to observe it as far as possible shows little love for such a Father and little regard for his legacy and blessing. Therefore at their General Chapter the Capuchins decreed that the *Testament* be observed.⁶⁶

The Lord said the same thing when Brother Elias and other brothers were present who did not want to accept [30v] the Rule.⁶⁷ This is so because the whole observance of the Rule consists in knowing God and His beloved Son, in loving Him and carrying Him in our hearts and imitating His life. Indeed the Rule says that we should observe the holy Gospel since the life of Christ is described perfectly in the Gospel which the brother should keep before his eyes and be found to be obedient, poor and chaste simply out of the love he has for God and sinners.

This Rule, then, imposes observing the Gospel, that is placing our Lord Jesus Christ and His life before the mind's eyes, and striving to know and love Him and always desiring His presence and imitating His life in perfect obedience, poverty and chastity, in as much as human frailty will allow. This is the real meaning of the words: *The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this to observe the holy Gospel*, etc. Whoever looks for any other meaning neither understands the Rule properly nor observes it.⁶⁸

Minoricarum super regulam, written by the great Franciscan jurist Bartolo di Sassoferrato (+ 1357): cf. Spec. Minorum, Venetiis 1513, pars III, f. 187r – 201v.

⁶³ *Testament* 31 and 49 (FA:ED, I, pp. 125 and 127).

⁶⁴ Gregory IX in the Bull *Quo elongati* (28 September 1230). See FA:ED I, p. 571.

⁶⁵ Cf. A. Pelagius, *De planctu eccl.* II, c. 66, f. 166v. However the concept comes from Algelo Clarenio who put it on the lips of John of Parma. See *HTrb.* 112-114; (Burr and Daniel pp. 111- 113) and it was taken up again and repeated in the *Const. 1536*, n. 6.

⁶⁶ John of Fano is referring to the General Chapter which was held at Roma-S. Eufemia in 1535-36 not to the Chapter at Albacina in 1529. Therefore this *Dialogue* was composed or better concluded following the sessions of the Chapter in Rome, thus after 1536. The reference here is specifically to n 6 of the *Constitutions*: "We decree that everyone observe the Testament of our father Saint Francis".

⁶⁷ A reference to the event at Fonte Colombo. See above note 33.

⁶⁸ These and the following reflections make up one of the most beautiful and inspiring pages of the whole of the *Dialogue*, as copied from *L'amore evangelico* (n. 467).

514. Although many declarations have been written, the Rule has never been observed by those not gifted by God with special love for Christ, who have been invited and inflamed to love Him and imitate Him. As we have said this is what observing the Rule means. Therefore as the Gospel law is a law of love and grace and of the manifestation of the Son of God, who became man and died for sinners, thus this Rule is a Rule of love and contains within itself the Spirit of Christ and His grace and so whoever wishes to understand it must necessarily have the Spirit of Christ in him, which is nothing else but an ardent desire to know, love, imitate, embrace and carry Him in our heart.

Since the Gospel, which is the law of love, cannot enter our heart except by means of love, because no act of love can be performed except out of love, as was evident in the Saints of the early Church and the martyrs, all of whom were gospel people because they observed the whole Gospel out of love, so that they were afraid of neither torture nor death, so our Rule, being a Rule of love, cannot be really understood in our hearts except through love. Therefore those who only look for the letter are motivated by fear alone, since they are afraid of punishment, confusion or damnation in the next life and are inspired only sometimes by hope. These act like the Jews, who, since they only followed the letter of the law out of hope and fear never reached a perfect understanding of the law. Those who understand the letter of the law are the same.⁶⁹

515. Therefore, the grace and Spirit of Christ suffice to understand and observe the Rule which He composed. To achieve this it is required that we adopt the way of loving which the Lord Jesus Christ brought to us, a love which (once every vestige of divinity had been removed from Him) made Him so humble that it not only led to Him holding everything in contempt, but even to a cruel and shameful death.⁷⁰ If we take on this kind of love as our Lord Jesus Christ did, we too will understand the Rule and observe it.

Therefore while the soul is joined to Christ by love it will always be fixed on the observance of the Rule. Furthermore it will never be at peace or contented until it has reached the highest degree of perfect obedience, poverty and chastity, and will think of nothing but perfecting these things completely (as far as possible) as the most kind Lord did Himself. Look at how He observed them and see how His true lover will strive to observe them simply.

Thus I conclude, regarding this first doubt, saying that Saint Francis prohibited glosses on the Rule since he wanted Christ's life to be its gloss as he said: "Look to Christ and to me and do likewise".⁷¹

516. See below in chapters four and six for the second doubt.

⁶⁹ This touches the heart of Capuchin Franciscan spirituality, which is love as, among others, the chronicler Bernardino da Colpetrazzo states. cf. *MHOC* IV, 7. It is not necessary to demonstrate how this page reflects one of the basic motives of the *Constitutions of 1536* which propose and defend the spiritual observance of the Rule out of chaste and filial love, not out of servile fear and praise the spirit not the letter.

⁷⁰ Cf. Phil 2, 6-8.

⁷¹ This is the structural logic of the first Capuchin Constitutions and the specific concept of the reform which is based on Saint Francis as "forma Minorum". cf. C. Cargnoni, *La tradizione dei Compagni di san Francesco...*, in *CF*. 52 91982) 58s, 80s.

Regarding the third doubt concerning relaxations, I say that this was partly the reason for my changing which was such a surprise for you. You should understand that in these highly dangerous times this is very frightening because we observe that fervour, charity and the love of God has grown cold in all states of life.⁷² If a person has to be vigilant in all states of life, how much more should they be attentive⁷³ in our state of life to the perfection of the Rule, the obligation of solemn vows [32r] the intention of our father Saint Francis when writing the Rule and also to our being designated *observants*. So, with every endeavour we should seek out a method and a path to remove all impediments to the observance of our profession and to act otherwise would be to despise the Rule and the statutes which have been set down for the better observance of the Rule and consequently to despise our own salvation. Therefore not only those brothers commit mortal sins who despise serious matters, but also those who despise small things fall into more serious matters.⁷⁴ In this way such people as this become lax and move away from the observance of the Rule when they are careless over lesser matters they will despise small and serious matters and fall. Thus those wretched people fall with their eyes open and perish. Because of this they show greater ingratitude for the divine gifts the more Almighty God has lifted them up to a sublime state through these gifts. Saint Paul had these people in mind when he wrote to the Hebrews: *My dear faithful how much more and heavier punishment will be metered out to the one who by sinning has trampled on the Son of God out of contempt.*⁷⁵ The Lord complains about such as these in chapter 10 of *Jeremiah*: *What is the meaning that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house?*⁷⁶ Usually such people become worse and incorrigible, as Augustine says: *To Vincent the Donatist: Since the time when I began to serve Him just as I have hardly found any men better than those who have done well in monasteries, so I have not found any men worse than monks who have fallen. This is what he says.*⁷⁷ Indeed the motivation of those who want to live against regular observance is evil and perverse, having no respect for regulations or statutes not wishing to reform in any way. Thus if they continue in this manner they can only come to a damnable death since they not only break the solemn vows which they have promised but also (not out of ignorance but malice) deliberately refuse to accept other things which are necessary for their salvation and they cannot be saved unless they live according to the observance of the Rule which they have promised and which they knowingly break.⁷⁸

517 From this we can understand the vision that Saint Francis saw: It seemed to him that he had very delicate crumbs of bread in his hand which he had to give to the

⁷² Cf. Mt 24, 12 – With regard to the second doubt “having undue recourse to spiritual friends and procurators”, the author refers to chapters four and six. Regarding this matter see especially Pili’s *Short Discourse*.

⁷³ That is considering and keeping perfection in mind etc.

⁷⁴ Cf. Sir 19, 1; Lk 16, 10.

⁷⁵ This passage which is based on Heb 10, 29 has been quoted loosely.

⁷⁶ Jer 11, 15.

⁷⁷ Saint Augustine, *Letter 78, n, 9*: “Ex quo Deo servire coepi, quomodo difficile sum expertus meliores quam qui in monasteriis profecerunt; ita non sum expertus peiores quam qui in monasteries cecederunt”. However the letter was written to the Clergy and People of Hippo, not to Vincent the Donatist.

⁷⁸ The *Const. 1535* n. 149 also emphasise that whoever despises the Constitutions sins mortally.

brothers, but because they were so small he thought that they would fall. He heard a voice that said: "Francis form the crumbs into a host and give them to the brothers". When he did this he observed that those who despised them or picked them up without devotion immediately became lepers. When he understood the vision he heard the voice once again saying: "Francis, the crumbs are the words of the Gospel, the host is the Rule, and the leper represents evil [...]."⁷⁹

Once Jesus Christ appeared to Brother Leo, the companion of Saint Francis, complaining about three things concerning the brothers: "firstly they do not recognise My gifts. [33r] I bestow gifts upon them with such abundance and they do not have to weary themselves with sowing or reaping etc. and they live with such ease. However they are ungrateful and lazy and murmur continually. Secondly, they provoke one another to anger. Thirdly, they do not pardon injuries or make peace".⁸⁰

518 Blessed Francis also said to Brother Leo that the Lord had revealed to him how He had the greatest confidence in this Order and would pardon the world because of the merits of the Order. However with the passage of time the brothers departed from the path that had been shown to them and provoked the Lord's anger and the Lord summoned the devils against the Order and they placed such scandal between them and the world that the world almost lost faith in them.⁸¹

He also said that the Lord had revealed to him that the evil brother would continue to be malicious, leave the Order and become bewildered.⁸²

Blessed Francis saw our Lord Jesus Christ yet again with wounds that appeared to be bleeding and He said to him: "Your brothers have done this to me through transgressions of the Rule that I gave to you."⁸³

After his death Blessed Francis appeared with wings and claws like an eagle saying that the wings were to help good brothers and to carry their souls into heaven and the claws were to punish the bad and reprobate brothers. We read in the Book of Conformities: under *Franciscus fecundator, in vita fratris Leonis*.⁸⁴ [33v]. (Francis is the one who brought about accomplishment in the life of Brother Leo).

519 During the time of the Chapter at which there were five thousand brothers it was revealed to Saint Francis how eighteen thousand demons took counsel against his Order saying: "We cannot overcome these good brothers because God protests them because of their purity and holiness rather let us wait until weak young men in disguise from the

⁷⁹ Cf. 2C 209; LMj 4, 11 (FA:ED II, p. 381; p. 558).

⁸⁰ Cf. AC 21; 2MP 52, (FA:ED II, p. 134; III, p. 296).

⁸¹ 2MP 71 [Interpolation] (FA:ED, III, p. 318). Ch XXIV Gen. 70; *Verba Fr. Conradi*, ed. F. Pulignani, in *MF* (1899) 133.

⁸² Cf. 2MP 79: (FA:ED III p. 324); *Fioretti: Cons. Stimmate* II; Ch XXIV Gen., 67.

⁸³ Cf. *Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, ed. P. Sabatier, Paris 1902, 64. Ch XXIV Gen. 72.

⁸⁴ We read about this event in the *Chron. XXIV Gen*, 71 – All these episodes are taken from the *Confor.* IV, 190-192 and have parallels in the *Leggenda antica* edited by S. Minocchi, Florence 1905, 73-75, 103 (chs 33-37 and 52) and now in M. Bigaroni, *Vita del povero et humile servo de Dio Francesco*, Edizioni Porziuncola 1985, 109s, 114, 154 (cap. 36-38 e 53).

nobility are received into the Order or those who have poor health or who are not fervent and then on the occasion when these feel the need to be greatly respected we shall attack the brotherhood and induce sensuality and relaxations.. *Et utinam (ait Pisanus) hoc consilium non esset impletum!*⁸⁵ (*I wish that (the Pisan says) this advice had not yet been fulfilled!*)

Saint Francis used to say that the Lord had revealed to him that three generations of people would ruin the purity and simplicity of the Order as much as they could: people of noble birth, young people and scholars.

Brother Angelo used to say that Saint Francis had a low opinion of his brothers because they lacked the spirit of prayer and devotion, which is the foundation of the spiritual edifice, they do not speak of God but of the world, they construct immoderate buildings which displease God and they lack charity. Look in the Book of Conformities: (under the heading) *Francis the legislator*, where you will find harsh words spoken about many evil brothers.⁸⁶

520 I have said these things because you asked me whether the usual way of life within the "family" is safe in modern times [34r] and because you said that the reason for your doubting was the general blatant relaxations. Therefore I say to you that what caused you to be doubtful and fearful motivated (even constrained) me to take action, for from time to time relaxations occurred, all of which had been foreseen by Saint Francis when he wrote in the Rule that when the brothers in any place came to realise that they could not observe the Rule spiritually, they should have recourse to the Ministers (in Chapter ten). With the help of God the good brothers have always got together and helped one another. It became necessary to do the same at present.⁸⁷

As I promised you I shall explain my mind regarding the fourth doubt but note:

521 With regard to the fourth doubt concerning the factions. Although our Rule is perfect and inspired by the Holy Spirit there have always been a diversity of factions within the Order and many novelties and many good and bad brothers. This shows the human propensity towards evil but also the envy of the devils, who, seeing the fruit that the Church derives from the Order, asked God to allow them to destroy it. Although such permission was not given nevertheless they have always tried to cause it the utmost disturbance and obstruction. Look in the book called *Memoriale Ordinis*, where you will find that the Order began to fluctuate and take up novelties from the very beginning [...].⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Cf. *HTrb.*, 52-54; (Burr and Daniel pp. 47-49); *Conf.* IV, 445, where however the Pisan says: "Mihi videtur quod iam sit impletum hoc, etsi ille iniquus antichristus nondum advenerit". (It appears to me that this has already been fulfilled, even though the iniquitous antichrist has not come yet.)

⁸⁶ These two sayings are contained in *Conf.* IV, 445, 18-25.

⁸⁷ This is an explanation and justification of the vital need for reform especially for the Capuchin reform. As has just been mentioned, the author will return to this argument in a more analytical manner at the conclusion of the *Dialogue* and in the *Short Discourse*.

⁸⁸ The *Memoriale Ordinis fratrum Minorum* is a valuable historical summary or chronicles of the Franciscan Order from its beginning up to 1506 which contains the series of 29 Ministers General from Saint Francis to Antonio Rusconi through the years 1210-1446, which were followed by the 21 Vicars

The most kind Lord having been moved by the prayers of Saint Francis has never abandoned this Order, but has always sent good brothers who were really zealous for the Rule and perfect observance. He promised this to Saint Francis when the Saint was disturbed by scandals among the brother, saying to him: "Why are you disturbed by the scandals among the brothers? I planted this Order and I will preserve it, and there will always be [35v] brothers who are truly observant and I will have them born". Look in the *Conformities fruit IX*. The Lord concluded by saying: "If there were only three observant brothers in the Order, I would not abandon them and it will always be My Order" [...] ⁸⁹

522 As far as this matter is concerned I say that the reason for so many divisions was that from time to time there were many good and holy brothers, who were really zealous and observers of the Rule, who, when they saw transgression and relaxations, sought to remedy them. Within the community (with great difficulty, however, because of the many impediments and opposition) ⁹⁰ there were those who observed the Rule as best they could. Others in order to be more expedient and wishing to assist one another, sought comfort, demanding special positions within the community and outside it, either at court or in some way or other so that at different times and in various Provinces many groups were formed and reforms begun. Although these were well intentioned, nonetheless they failed bit by bit and nothing was achieved concerning these things including what was achieved at the time of Saint Bernadine and his companions. ⁹¹

7. [*Whether the Capuchin Reform will last*]

523 *Scrupulous Brother.* – Do you think anything will be achieved this time or that the reform will last?

Mature Brother. – Yes, I think so! I firmly believe that the Capuchin reform is the one for many reasons:

Firstly, because they have adopted a way of life which is in line with the purity of the Rule, the objective of Saint Francis and very close to what took place in the early days. ⁹²

Secondly, I say this because it has suffered much contradiction and persecution [36r] (which is the best indication that it is the work of God) and yet the Lord has assisted

General of the Observants beyond the Alps during the period from 1446 to 1506. The text is to be found in various Franciscan collections such as *Monumenta Ord. Min.*, Salamanca 1506, tract. III, f. 207v-230v; *Spec. Minorum* etc. A critical edition has been produced by J. –X. Lao, *Les premières mémoires imprimés de l'Ordre franciscain*, Vicenza 1976, 29-116; see also the incomplete edition by Faloci-Pulignani in *MF* 28 (1928) 15-25, 54-60. 114-119.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Conf.* IV, 429, 8-10; also 2C 158; LMj 8,3; AC 86; 2MP 41 (FA:ED II p. 380; pp. 587-8; p. 146; III, p. 288.

⁹⁰ Pili knew this at first hand as he had formerly strongly persecuted the Capuchins and as a supporter and protector of the Reformati in the Marches had encountered great difficulties. cf. P. J. Meseguer Fernández, *Una carta del P. Juan de Fano y los cronistas Bernardino de S. Maria Nova y Tomás de Montefortino*, in *CF*. 29 (1959) 87-104.

⁹¹ This is the reform of the Observants. The author speaks of all these various movements and reforms at length in the first *Dialogue*.

⁹² These words were the order of the day among the early Capuchins.

and defended it. All the Briefs that have been issued against it have been revoked as it grew larger.⁹³ It would take too long to narrate how many challenges this holy reform has met since its beginning up to the present, from all of which Christ and Saint Francis have liberated it. Thus it is clear that they began it, established it and took care of it.⁹⁴

Thirdly, I say this because the reforms of the Conventuals and of the "family" were deficient in almost every way. These good servants of God, both their leaders and others, have almost all, little by little, come over to the reform of the Capuchins, as is quite evident in the Provinces of Rome, of Saint Francis, of the Marches and elsewhere.⁹⁵ It is a significant fact that if it were not for the Briefs just mentioned all would have come over to the Capuchins. Even with all this, many brothers were not held back and came over just the same, either when the Briefs were revoked or in other just and logical ways.⁹⁶ In this our most kind Redeemer showed that He had provided a suitable remedy for the fearful consciences of good brothers so that they could satisfy their realistic desires in this holy reform and observe their profession without hindrance. I think that there will be no need for another reform apart from this true and lasting reform.⁹⁷

524. *Scrupulous Brother* – In the other *Dialogue* [36v] you strongly criticised the Capuchins attributing much blame to them and using very ominous words and now you highly commend both in words and by wearing their habit.

Mature Brother. – At that time I said these things for many reasons and in many ways tried to create obstacles for them mainly by adhering to the usual practice of the community in these cases which always abhorred such divisions,⁹⁸ not knowing God's will or that this reform was in line with His good pleasure. At present, having changed my mind, I say not only that they should not be accused of levity, pride, ambition and other ill will, as I said when ranting against them in the other *Dialogue*, but that they should be highly commended because, as was said above, I believe that we have certainly discovered the real intention of our father Saint Francis regarding the observance of the Rule. I tell you for certain that I did not think that I would ever satisfy my conscience, or be sure of salvation following the words which I had said against such a holy reform that was God's will (I regard such words to have been a blatant libel) or the real obstacles and

⁹³ This happened by means of the talent, tenacity and strategy of Lodovico Tenaglia. For all this see E. d'Alençon, *De primordiis...*, Romae 1921; id., *Tribulationes...*, Romae 1914; Isidoro de Villapadierna, *Documentación del Archivo General de la Orden sobre la Reforma capuchina (1525-1536)*, in *CF*. 48 (1978) 413-443.

⁹⁴ This concept was common among the early Capuchins and was reinforced by the early chroniclers of the Order. cf. for example, *MHOC* I 232.

⁹⁵ In fact many of the early Capuchins came from the Observants and many had formerly been Conventuals or Scalzi. cf. C. Cargnoni, *Le vocazioni all'Ordine cappuccino dagli inizi al 1619*, in *Le vocazioni all'Ordine francescano dalle origini ad oggi* (Studi scelti di francescanesimo, 8), Napoli 1983, 89-122.

⁹⁶ With regard to this point see what V. Colonna wrote to Cardinal Contarini in 1536.

⁹⁷ In a nutshell this is the concept of "the ultimate and most perfect reform" which was developed by Mattia Bellintani da Salò. cf. C Cargnoni, *Sviluppo della riforma cappuccino nella storiografia dei primi cronisti*, in *IF* 54 (1979) 389-408, especially 300 and note 40.

⁹⁸ This thought was already hinted at in the dedication to Bernardino d'Asti. cf. above in note 10 (n. 500).

persecutions which I carried out, in any better way than by retracting them *in writing* and actually wearing their habit.⁹⁹

8. [*Whether or not the decision to transfer to the Capuchins was rushed and was not well considered*].

525 *Scrupulous Brother.* – This is what I say to you: your change of habit and retraction of words is a cause of astonishment not only to me, [37v] but to all who knew you, and it appears to have taken place not without some lack of serious thought.

Mature Brother. – I reply that to the prudent and wise person it is fitting to change plans for the better and to conduct oneself with prudence at the right time and as human life comes to maturity particularly when such changes afford one's conscience the opportunity to direct that new provisions be made for the honour of God and the soul's salvation. This should not be put down to lack of consideration since many doctors have said one thing at one time and another at another time. Speaking about the ninth chapter of Daniel, Nicholas of Lyra gave one explanation of the prophesy that the angel revealed to Daniel,¹⁰⁰ then, when explaining Daniel on another occasion after reading the Book of Esdra and the Book of Esther, as he says himself, he was forced to provide a new exposition that contradicted the first. Did not Augustine write the *Book of Retractions*?¹⁰¹ Many others did the same.

Therefore I say that in the other *Dialogue* I said many things about the programme for that time for many reasons which I have mentioned above. At the moment I am constrained to speak according the needs of modern times and the maturing of life, mainly because I have read many books, chronicles of the Order, works of holy doctors and their explanations of the Rule.¹⁰²

When you say that many wonder and criticise etc. take my advice: [37v] when the love of God and the salvation of your soul is involved follow your conscience and let them say what they please. Saint Jerome says¹⁰³ that a sign of salvation exists when a person does not delay in doing good actions because of what people say, since the Apostle says: "If I still pleased men I would not be a servant of God".¹⁰⁴ Writing about himself he says to Timothy: *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength. By calling me into his service he has judged me trustworthy,*¹³ *even though I used to be a*

⁹⁹ This is the retraction and confession of his former actions and an effective apology to the Capuchins.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Dn* 12, 11. – Nicholas of Lyra (+ 1349), known as the Clear and Useful Doctor (*Doctor planus o Doctor utilis*) regarding whom see H. Labrosse, *Biographie et oeuvres de N. de Lira* in *EF* 91906-1908, 1912 and 1923); F. N. Vernet, in *Anton.* 91929) 3-44, 129-166.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Saint Augustine *Retractionum libri duo* (*PL* 32, 583-656); composed during his final years, in which he retracted or reviewed the 93 works he had written up to 427 which included 232 books, correcting some points of doctrine, clarifying certain others, indicating the time, circumstances and topics of each book.

¹⁰² This is the principle or renewal and updating that accompanied the spiritual trials of a committed man who was zealous and honest. It involved seven years of study and reflection on a vast Franciscan literature from 1527 when he published the first *Dialogue* to 1534 when he transferred to the Capuchins as he says further on.

¹⁰³ Cf. *I Epist. Ad Demetriadem*, the quote gives the meaning but is difficult to identify.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Gal 1, 10.

*blasphemer and a persecutor and contemptuous. Mercy, however, was shown me, because while I lacked faith I acted in ignorance.*¹⁰⁵ Solomon says: *Whoever keeps to an honest course fears Yahweh, whoever deserts his paths shows contempt for him,*¹⁰⁶ so let us seek only to please God and let others say what they please. *He who is of the earth, speaks of the earth. It is good for us to be here. Blessed be God.*¹⁰⁷

9. [Which is the safer, the way of life of the Observants or the way of life of the Capuchins?]

526. *Scrupulous Brother* – I am well pleased at what you tell me about these good servants of God. However, returning to my first statement, I want you to tell me decisively whether the way of life of the “family” is safe, and whether this way of life or that of the Capuchins is safer, and, finally, what must I do to be saved.

Mature Brother. – You ask that three questions be answered:¹⁰⁸ Firstly, whether the way of life of the “family” is safe. To this I answer that I have already told you that it is safe in as much as those holy fathers who were reformers were correct and observant. However, with reference to the present [38r] I do not wish to go into detail out of respect, but study this *Dialogue* yourself carefully, then consider this modern way of life diligently and respond to your doubt yourself.¹⁰⁹

Secondly, you ask which is the safer, this or that. I reply: consider both carefully and compare them or judge them against the intention of the Rule and of Saint Francis which you can see clearly in this *Dialogue*. The one that more closely approximates the essentials of the Rule is the safer since the intention of the Rule and of Saint Francis is the yardstick and measure of either way of life.¹¹⁰

527 Thirdly, you ask me what you should do etc. I reply that your question amazes me greatly since it seems to me that I have stated this to you clearly in what I have said above in setting out your obligation, which is to follow the intention of the Rule and of Saint Francis, which is the touchstone of the one and the other choice, before you. Finally look at what I have done and how my life developed, which was not unconsidered or on the spur of the moment, or fickle, or for other dubious motives, as many say. May the Lord in His mercy forgive them for their rash judgement and iniquitous speech! My decision developed out of well thought out consultation. It was considered for a long time and the search to please God was carried out with much prayer, vigils and other

¹⁰⁵ 1 Tim 1, 12-13. NJB (1985)

¹⁰⁶ Pr 14, 2 (*Vulg*). NJB (1985)

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Jn 3, 31; Lk 9, 33.

¹⁰⁸ That is you asked to be reassured and given clear answers to three questions.

¹⁰⁹ This is a respectful judgement regarding the Observants, not without a touch of shrewdness and discrete proselytising.

¹¹⁰ This has always been the basis of every Franciscan reform, beginning with the movement of the zealots and the spirituals, from the ranks of which issue writings and collections of documents with significant titles such as *Sanctissimi Patris nostri Francisci intentio regulae, Verba S. Francisci*, etc.

resources. Seeing our good will manifested in many signs His Majesty [38v] deigned to show that this was His will and so it was done.¹¹¹

You should not be moved by my progress alone but also by that of many great fathers and holy brothers who have been and will be.¹¹² See how they were prevented from coming by Briefs. In spite of all this when the Briefs were revoked, they followed divine inspiration with all the means available and came away. You should do the same and not give in to such pusillanimity and not delay any longer, so that Lord will not say to you: *I called and you refused*.¹¹³

10 [*What are the reasons for the Capuchin reform*]

528 *Scrupulous Brother* – May the Lord reward you for the good advice that you have given to me and I shall certainly follow it soon. However, to reassure my resolute desire and to assist many who live in a state of perplexity and uneasiness and whose good intentions are blocked by great fearfulness and other irrational considerations,¹¹⁴ I beg you to tell me, what the main things were that motivated these good brothers to make such provisions and undertake reforms.

Mature Brother – Truly they are very urgent, rational and even necessary fundamental principles..

The first fundamental principle is the importance of our vows, which are most important, because they are made to God, because they were accompanied with the promise of an eternal reward, because they imply the danger of damnation, because we took them freely promising consciously: “I vow and promise to my Lord God, to the most blessed Virgin Mary [39r], to our father Saint Francis and to all the Saints in heaven to observe the Rule of the Friars Minor, confirmed by Pope Honorius, all the days of my life, living in obedience without anything of my own and in chastity”.¹¹⁵ This is the same as saying: “I renounce my liberty and free will completely and give my whole life to God and to the Order and bind myself forever, and promise to commit all to his service following the disposition of whoever is in charge and commands, in such a way that I may not deliberately desire or do anything that is against my Rule or the vows I have made, or against the will of my superiors, being certain that if I were to do anything deliberately and with malice against this I would expose myself to the danger of damnation.” This is what is implied by our Profession.

Therefore a vow which is professed in this way maintains a person who observes it in continuous merit, in good standing so that his life is pleasing to God and meritorious.

¹¹¹ This is a splendid autobiographical page, cf. note 90.

¹¹² As we know, the early Capuchins, in general, were the pick of the bunch of the Observants.

¹¹³ Pr 1, 24. – Another attempt to proselytise. John of Fano was one of the most active and passionate agents of the Capuchin reform in Italy.

¹¹⁴ In the original text; *é impedita*.

¹¹⁵ This is the traditional formula of Franciscan religious profession which dates back to the Constitutions of Narbonne by Saint Bonaventure in 1260, now completely changed to overcome the controversy of the Secular Clergy regarding the binding power of the Rule and casuistry regarding precepts. With respect to this see F. Costa, *Il nuovo Rituale della professione francescana. Linee strutturali e contenuto teologico*, Roma 1982, a study that had already appeared in *MF* 81 (1981) 217-271, 546-602.

On the other hand, a vow which is professed in this way binds a person who does not observe it in continuous demerit, in bad standing and when he dies he is damned. Therefore the Pisan says in chapter two, that a brother should exercise continual care concerning the observance of what he has promised since he has been promised eternal life because of such observance, and he should always be in fear lest he commit something contrary to the Rule.¹¹⁶

529 The second fundamental principle is: although the brothers may not be bound by the evangelical counsels that are not contained in the Rule (proof of this is that Blessed Francis placed some counsels in the Rule [39v] and not others), neither are they bound even to observe those evangelical counsels which are in the Rule, since as the Lord laid down that evangelical precepts be observed as precepts and counsels as counsels, so it is in the Rule [...].¹¹⁷

The third fundamental principle is that affected ignorance, according to all the doctors, does not excuse from mortal sin in matters which are necessary for salvation, either in part or completely. This is the case when through deliberate neglect, malice or contempt a person does not want to learn what is necessary for salvation to which he is bound by vow or precept and does this to have greater freedom to sin [...].¹¹⁸ I strongly believe that those brothers who came to the Order with the good will to observe the Rule and other ordinances and did not have them explained to them will find forgiveness before God. I have seen some brothers who have been in the Order for many years and when they dislike something in the Rule or some interpretation say: "I did not know this and if this had been explained to me in the beginning I would have reconsidered my decision".¹¹⁹ Woe to the one who is the cause of such an error! Such as these should have more carefully tried to learn what was necessary for salvation so that someone might have taught them. There is great corruption and abuse in this that you will not find many who know the Rule and its interpretation [...].¹²⁰ However, it has been what has led to such ruin.

530 The fourth fundamental principle is that we are bound to be careful regarding our salvation and we place ourselves in a bad situation by holding it in contempt since, just as being fearful of being at fault where this is not the case is part of having a correct and fearful frame of mind, as Gregory says,¹²¹, so not being afraid when there are many faults and transgressions is part of having a blind outlook that does not fear God or has little regard for one's own salvation. Thus in the Rule there are any things which we have to observe and they indicate the things which we have to watch for and if we do not know

¹¹⁶ *Conf. IV*, 394, 46. This reflection is timely and useful even today. cf. *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, 59rb-59va.

¹¹⁷ The evangelical counsels in the Rule are the traditional 18 admonitions: 12 of which tell the brothers what to do that is good and 6 which teach them how to avoid evil.

¹¹⁸ With respect to this see *Quat. Mag.*, 124, 21; *Spec. Minorum* pars III, f. 15v.

¹¹⁹ There is nothing new under the sun! This situation is repeated even today.

¹²⁰ Most of all the Papal Declarations such as the Bull *Quo elongati* (1230), *Exiit qui seminat* (1279) and *Exivi de paradiso* (1312).

¹²¹ See note 23.

about them how can we avoid the one and observe the other? [40v] This does not happen without great danger of damnation [...] *Voluntarie enim peccantibus nobis post acceptam notitiam veritatis, iam non relinquitur pro peccatis hostia, terribilior autem quaedam expectatio iudicii et ignis emulatio quae consumptura est adversarios. Ad Hebros, cap. X.*¹²²

The fifth fundamental principle is: although we are not bound to be perfect, we are bound to tend to perfection, that is to take every care to perform our actions, especially those that are obligatory, such as the three main vows, and whatever is required for their observance, with as much fervour as possible, intense purpose and love of God. These two things are required of the friar minor: as well as all other religious:

531 Firstly, a unique and ardent desire to achieve a perfect love for God and a perfect union with His Majesty through love.

Secondly, it is necessary for him to act in such a way that he tries with all care and fervour, with God's grace, to achieve such love and union, as human frailty will allow, In this life this love and union should be his main objective.¹²³ Since it is difficult to fully reach such perfection in this life, we state that it is not necessary for us to achieve perfection, but to tend towards perfection, that is to try to come as close as we can to this perfection with care [41r] and fervour. Since the Rule is a very apt means of reaching this objective we should apply every effort and endeavour to observe it with as much perfection as we can especially the three vows as we have said. Whoever does not have these two intentions, that is an ardent desire to come to the perfect love of God and a concern to achieve this, is in a dangerous state as the doctors say. *Diliges ex toto corde, etc.*¹²⁴

Those who say: "It is enough for me to observe the Rule. I am not concerned with reformation. God desires the heart. I am satisfied to save myself. I do not need to be scrupulous,"¹²⁵ live a very dangerous life. This kind of talk is very dangerous for a religious, and if he talks like this deliberately and intentionally, without being concerned to progress in virtues, especially in those which are required,¹²⁶ he will find it difficult to be saved since people like this are often apathetic and negligent, lacking spirit, loving themselves, indulging in sensuality and self-determination, not taking the obligation of

¹²² Heb 10, 26-27: "For if we sin wilfully after having the knowledge of the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins: but a certain dreadful expectation of judgement and the rage of a fire which shall consume adversaries".

¹²³ This is the objective and final purpose of religious life in general, and the special conviction of the early Capuchins which John of Fano had already indicated with most beautiful expressions (cf. above, note 69) and which was repeated by the early chroniclers, for example, Colpetrazzo: "The objective of religious life is nothing else but a continual exercise of the love of God" (*MHOC* III, 57). This is why John of Fano wrote for the brothers, all religious and all the faithful a "beautiful little work" entitled: *Arte de la unione con Dio* (Brescia 1536), which we published in part III section I.

¹²⁴ Cf. Mt 22, 37. – For the early Capuchins the Franciscan Rule with its radical material and spiritual poverty was closely linked to perfect contemplative life and a unique means to detach and purify oneself from all that might impede perfect union with God. This explains the insistence on the doctrine of pure love and perfect charity among the Capuchins in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

¹²⁵ *Stimoli* that is *scrupoli*.

¹²⁶ That is obedience, poverty and chastity.

their profession into account and living without scruple, taking notice of very few things. These evil-minded brothers live in places with a degree of order and right observance. When they say that it is enough for them to observe the Rule they deceive themselves, appearing to observe it, while not tending towards perfection, but living in great freedom and ease, not much concerned about their own salvation. Such brothers were odious to Blessed Francis.¹²⁷

532 The sixth fundamental principle is that enlightened by the Holy Spirit Blessed Francis [41v] knowing that through the imperfection of human nature, which is always in decline, it would sometimes be necessary to give assistance to those who wanted to observe the Rule perfectly placed the remedy for obstacles in chapter ten of the Rule [...].¹²⁸

What is more I say that in order to avoid the danger of transgressions, a day should not go by when a brother at some time brings his profession to mind and considers the Rule and its declarations. If he is not able to read it, or is uneducated, let him find someone who can teach him. For certain every brother should know the Rule off by heart as he does the Our Father.¹²⁹ The Ministers must command that in all our places an hour be set aside when a lesson is given to all the brothers concerning the Rule as is the case in places where grammar and logic etc. are taught. The study of the Rule (which is held in little esteem) in comparison to other matters to which much care is devoted even though the Rule is much more important than other things as we are bound to its observance by a solemn vow.¹³⁰

The brothers should also always discuss the Rule. Thus Saint Francis, who was a true zealot when it came to the Rule, used to give his blessing to brothers who spoke about it freely and he desired that they carry it with them and die with it in memory of their vow and oath and that they would always have it in their hearts.¹³¹ He said that to those who profess and observe it the Rule is the book of life, the hope of salvation, the

¹²⁷ Here one may observe the pragmatism and realism of a man who does not cling to formulae and words. The Capuchin is a realistic mystic far removed from ideological spiritualism. What matters to him is only what is put into practice.

¹²⁸ This refers to the "much discussed" recourse to the ministers in order to "observe the Rule spiritually". See above, note 87.

¹²⁹ This was done and is still done during the Noviciate. See *Alb.* n. 36 (*n. 117*). It says in the General ordinances of 1549: "Let no lay brother have any book, except the Rule in the vernacular". In his *Historia capuccina* speaking of Brother Francis, a lay brother in the Roman Province, Bellintani narrates that "when during prayer he did not seem to be able to contemplate he began to recite the Rule. Once, because he had become partly deaf, he recited it fairly loudly and when a brother told him to tone it down, the Provincial heard it and said to the brother: "Let him say it since he is better at prayer than you are". (*MHOC VI*, 215).

¹³⁰ This was a custom in the Order which was linked to the study of theology and later to the so-called "solution of cases" that was prescribed in all houses by the Minister Provincial each year.

¹³¹ See above note 28 and *Conf.* IV 427.

altar of glory, the marrow of the Gospel, the life of the cross, the state of perfection and the key of heaven.¹³² *Whoever shall follow this rule etc.*¹³³

11. [*Profession of the evangelical counsels*]

533. [*Mature Brother*]. – Text: “Living in obedience, without anything of one’s own and in chastity”.¹³⁴ *As if to say:* by imitation of the spiritual virtues which the Gospel proclaims as its logical substance and as the Lord observed them and set us an example. Therefore whoever desires to imitate Christ must take up these evangelical virtues, namely obedience, poverty and chastity. [42v]

This saying of Blessed Francis which invites us to the observance of the Gospel with the same virtues that Christ practised is nothing else but turning every carnal thing into a spiritual thing, every earthly thing into a heavenly thing every day and there is no better way to perfection than this, that is the observance of the three most excellent virtues which shone with greatest splendour in our Lord Jesus Christ and in which all the others are contained. Therefore whoever desires to observe this chapter and know the intention of Saint Francis, should try to observe these virtues as Christ and Francis observed them. All virtue and merit of obedience, poverty and chastity is based on the knowledge and love of the most kind Lord.¹³⁵ Because the three main vows are not mentioned in this chapter we will speak about them in what follows.

12. [*The importance and practice of the vow of religious obedience*]

534 *Scrupulous Brother.* – You have said so many things about our professions that I have become very frightened. Therefore I beg you to clearly explain its importance.

Mature Brother. – The vow of obedience is truly very important. One can see this on two counts:

Firstly because of the binding force of profession, in which a brother completely surrenders his will, giving himself totally to God and to the Order for his whole life. Therefore every deliberate transgression against this vow, no matter how small, is dangerous as I said above.¹³⁶

Secondly, because of Saint Francis’ words in chapter ten of the Rule: “Therefore I firmly command all the brothers to obey their ministers”, which, according to all those who comment on the Rule, included all superiors, since according to the Rule of the Gospel in Matthew 20 and Mark 10, superiors are to be known as ministers;¹³⁷ “in all

¹³² Ibid. – This is a very ancient text which was dear to the Capuchins and which is contained also in the *Firmamenta* Paris 1512, f. 17va: *Laudes refuluae fratrum Minorum a b. Francisco prolatae*. See also 2 C 208: 2MP 76: A Clarenno, *Htrb.* I, 8 (Burr and Daniel p. 28) (FA:ED II, pp. 380-381; III, p. 323).

¹³³ Cf. Gal 6, 16.

¹³⁴ LR 1,2 (FA:ED I, p. 100).

¹³⁵ This is the principle of the imitation of Christ and of Francis in observing the Gospel and the Rule and life of Francis by means of the three vows.

¹³⁶ See above in connection with note 74.

¹³⁷ Mt 20, 26; Mk 10, 43.

those things which they have promised the Lord to observe"; means that they must obey not only those things mentioned in the Rule, but also all those things that are commanded, as long as they are not against our soul or the Rule for this is what they have promised to the Lord. Thus by their profession they renounce their own will placing it under the will of others. This is why he says: "let them remember that it was for the love of God that they renounced their own will".¹³⁸

535 Brother Hugh¹³⁹ says that perfect obedience is not confined to specific limits but reaches the boundaries of charity, because of which one does not obey out of necessity, but obeys as Saint Francis, the true lover of perfection, commanded in a spirit of fervour when he said: "thus I firmly command them", etc. Such obedience is perfect.

Obedience is imperfect when it is restricted to certain things, that is, when one is bound to obey only those things contained in the Rule. This is servile obedience, which only considers [43v] necessity and not charity. Saint Bonaventure says the brother promises universal obedience and cannot therefore refuse any obedience whether it is mentioned in the Rule or not as if he were not obliged, except when it is against his soul or the Rule. He also says that the obedience of the friar minor is well-known because he not only obeys God but everyone for the love of God.¹⁴⁰

13. [Cases and problems of obedience]

536 *Scrupulous Brother* – Does the brother who does not obey in everything always sin mortally?

Mature Brother – If the superior commands things which are in the Rule as it is: to say the Office, to wear shabby clothing, to fast at the prescribed times etc., without a doubt disobedience in these and similar things is a mortal sin, unless where they are prevented by unavoidable necessity.

If the superior commands things that are counsels, for example, when the superior knows that a brother is grumpy and has a weakness for disputing and quarrelling, and he knows that he is going to go to a place where he usually disputes and quarrels and, in order to avoid scandal, he commands him not to argue with anyone, I maintain that in this and similar cases he is obliged to obey even though not quarrelling is a counsel in the third chapter of the Rule and not a commandment. If he does the opposite he sins mortally, because in this special case it is not a counsel but a specific precept and prohibition. Although Saint Francis placed many things in the Rule as counsels, this does not take away the superior's general authority to be able to command, [44r] anything that is not against the soul or the Rule, according to circumstances, nor the subject's general obligation to obey in all these things. I say the same about all the other counsels which

¹³⁸ LR, 10, 3-4 (FA:ED, I, p. 105).

¹³⁹ Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 180. The quotation is from Saint Bernard, *De praecepto et dispensatione* (PL 182, 868); see note 25 of the first *Dialogue* (n. 1909); *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 49vab.

¹⁴⁰ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio super regulam*, cap. I, n. 5-6 (*Op. omnia*, VIII, 394s); *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 20ra.

are in the Rule, that is which are specifically commanded, for then they are not counsels but precepts and oblige just as any other precept would.¹⁴¹

537 Some things are implicitly obligatory in the Rule namely common duties without which regular observance could not be maintained, such as: the sacristy, the infirmary and the like. In these cases the brothers are not only obliged to carry out these duties, but to carry them out with diligence in everything that they require, and transgression by noteworthy negligence, especially if committed out of contempt, or malice, would be a mortal sin.

Some things are against the Rule expressly such as seeking money, receiving it or the like. The brothers must not obey in these things. This is obvious.

538 *Scrupulous Brother* – If the superior commands something that is slightly evil although it is not absolutely evil what is to be done? I say this because there are some brothers who are so scrupulous that when the superior tells them to quest for something such as bread, wine, oil and the like, which are necessary for daily sustenance, and they know that there is enough bread in the house for three or four days and wine and the like and enough oil for eight to ten days they reply to the superior saying: this would be questing for surplus and is against the Rule; and they are unwilling to do it. Do they do the right thing or evil?

Mature Brother – I say that with respect to these daily necessities, there would not be much cheating; the subject should obey simply and purely,¹⁴² since the subject should not want to know the superior's intention in everything, nor is the superior obliged to justify everything to his subjects. Sometime he will anticipate by two or three days not to be a bother to others, or so that the brothers do not have to go out as often. The subject should put his conscience aside and obey the conscience of the superior especially when he knows that the superior has a good conscience and is discrete in governing. When indeed he sees some cheating he ought to refer it to the major superior, but for the moment he should obey since because of these scrupulous objections many unfortunate things happen and there is great disturbance within the house.

539 Some things are according to the Rule, such as the Constitutions and Ordinances which are made so that the Rule may be observed better, as the Four Masters say. The Rule intends that a General Chapter be held and that it belongs to the General Chapter to provide for those things that perfect the Rule and preserve its purity and so whatever it commands should be observed. Although by their nature the Constitutions do not bind under pain of mortal sin, except where there is deliberate contempt,¹⁴³ nevertheless ostentatious negligence regarding their observance could be the cause of ruin. The Supreme Pontiffs declared that [45r] by their nature the Constitutions do not bind under pain of mortal sin, as we have said, with respect to the past or the future. The new ones do not absolve the brothers from the old ones.

¹⁴¹ In the text "obligano" is "obligo".

¹⁴² John of Fano presents the case of a superior who commands questing for daily food and the subject sees that it is surplus. The principle of obedience which is stated here is important.

¹⁴³ Cf. *Const 1536*, nn. 145,5; 148, 3; 149, 2 (nn. 415, 425-426).

Scrupulous Brother – How then do the Constitutions oblige?

Mature Brother – [Firstly] I say that the Constitutions are set down according to present needs to safeguard and improve regular life. Although they do not contain the essence of the Rule or even the body of the law they are to be observed. Thus in the chapter beginning *Si romanorum*, distinction 19, it states that if only those things that are contained in the body of the law are to be obeyed it would follow that many things that are in the Old and New Testaments and other things taught by the holy fathers, which were laid down for the wellbeing of the faithful, would not have to be obeyed because they were not contained in the body of the law, which is most absurd.¹⁴⁴

Secondly, I say that the Order has become relaxed not only with respect to the essentials of the Rule but also in other things that provide for the essentials of the Rule. Therefore the Panormitan says that religious are bound not only to live according to the Rule but also according to the Constitutions.¹⁴⁵

540 Thirdly, I say, although it is usual for all the servants of God, both clerics and regular religious, to undergo reform when they have become relaxed in good conduct, or else the blood, that is the damnation of the subjects will be laid at the feet of the superiors,¹⁴⁶ this is even more so for religious when it means the improvement of many those things [54v] ordained by law.¹⁴⁷ Woe to the superiors who does not do this since it is just as bad not to resist error as to approve of it.¹⁴⁸ Note that if the superiors do not correct delinquent subjects they will be damned and the subjects will not be excused.

Fourthly, I say that subjects should be bound to observe the Constitutions.¹⁴⁹ The Panormitan, in his final note, says that religious should be bound to observe the customs of their Order and its statutes. He supports proper implementation of this and enlarges on what is said in Clement's first decree *de privilegis*, mainly because "they have renounced their own will". Thus it is no wonder that Orders fall short, since in cases where they are

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Decr. Gratiani*, c. 1, d. 19: *Si romanorum* (CIC I, 58s. – The phrase "in corpo di ragione" is simply the translation of the Latin expression *in corpore iuris*.

¹⁴⁵ The text cites: "chapter *Nimis*, the first regarding "*de excessibus praelatorum*", or *Decr. Gregorii IX*, lib. V, tit. 31, cap 16 (CIC II, 842). – Nicholas Tedeschi (known as the Panormitano) was a famous Canon lawyer.

¹⁴⁶ The text cites: "Cap. *Irrefragabili, de officio [iudicis] ordinarii*", that is *Decr. Greg IX*, lib I, tit. 31, c. 13 (CIC II, 191).

¹⁴⁷ Here John of Fano refers to many legal texts: "cap. *Relatum, ne clerici, vel monaci*; cap. [*Quando*], *de officio [iudicis] ordinarii*; cap. *Inter quator, de religiosis domibus*; and the final chapters of *De regularibus* even better still in cap. *Irrefragabili*" or respectively *Decr. Greg. IX*, lib. III, tit. 36, c. 5; lib. III, tit, 31, c. 24; lib. I, tit, 31, c.13 (CIC II, 659; 188, 603, 578, 191).

¹⁴⁸ He cites: "83 distinzione, cap. *Error* and cap. *Ephesis*" or *Decr. Gratiani* can. 3, dist. 83; can.4 dist. 43 (CIC I, 293s, 156).

¹⁴⁹ The author cites: "Cap. *Sicut nobis, de regularibus* and the end of *Fiat capitulum* regarding matters of appeal, that is: *Decr. Greg. IX*, lib. III, tit. 31, c. 17 and 24; Lib. II, tit. 28, c. 32 (CIC II, 575, 420).

not controlled the ship of religious life founders.¹⁵⁰ Finally such religious go against the natural process which is to progress from the less perfect to the perfect.¹⁵¹

Some things are said in the Rule which do not pertain to what is essential or to the statutes, such [46r] as: what refers to the body or some other reasonable comfort: thus if for a just reason the superior commands a subject, especially under obedience, to eat because he observes that he is weak or not healthy or exhausted, the subject is obliged to submit his judgement to that of the superior. However in no way may a superior dispense in matters that are expressly against the Rule nor should the subject obey.¹⁵²

541 *Scrupulous Brother* – What should I do if the superior commands me to do something and I do not know whether it is against the Rule?

Mature Brother – I answer that you should obey, as was said, and submit your will to the will of the superior.¹⁵³

Saint Francis used to say that if the superior commands something which is little consequence to the soul, as long as it is not expressly against your soul or the Rule, you must obey and sacrifice your will to God, since this is true and charitable obedience that satisfies God and your neighbour.¹⁵⁴

Some things are above the Rule, such as undergoing martyrdom and the like. In such a case the brother is not bound to obey unless obliged to by the essence of the faith.¹⁵⁵

542 *Scrupulous Brother* – When a brother does not obey common expressions such as, we command, we decree and the like, does he always sin?

Mature Brother – I say no except when there is contempt, or when the common expressions signify equivalent precepts since in that case disobedience would be a mortal sin when it is deliberate.

Saint Thomas says¹⁵⁶ that the intentions of the [46v] positive law bind more because of the intention of the lawmaker than by the authority of words. Therefore the subject's transgression is more against the lawmaker's intention than against his words. This becomes clearer when the precept is not observed out of contempt or for no reasonable cause. However, when the brother knows with probability that if the superior were present he would not bind him then he does not sin mortally when he does

¹⁵⁰ He is referring to: Clement's *Attendentes, de statu monachorum* 25m qa. 1: *Prima salus recte fidei est a Patrum constitutionibus non deviare: and cap. Statuta; and cap. Iustitias easemque et causa*", or *Decr. Clem V*, lib. III, tit. 10, c. 2 (*CIC II*, 1168s); *Contra Patrum statuta* (*CIC I*, 1008. 1010).

¹⁵¹ He cites: "Ioanne Andrea nel Prologo della Clementina"; John Andrea was a Canon Lawyer.

¹⁵² The author refers to "cap. Ergo, 11, q. 3" or: *Decr. Gratiani*, c.99, C. 11, q. 3: *Quid ergo* (*CIC I*, 671. – We did not place these references to juridical sources in the text so as not to make reading it a burden.

¹⁵³ Another juridical reference: *Decr. Gratiani*, c. 4, C. 23, q. 1: *Quid culpatur* and as in the previous note (*CIC I*, 892s).

¹⁵⁴ CF. *Admonition III*, (FA:ED I, p. 130).

¹⁵⁵ He cites "cap. Gesta 74 distinzione": *Decr. Gratiani*, c. 2, dist. 74 (*CIC I*, 149-150).

¹⁵⁶ *Summa Theol.* IV, dist. 15, q. 3, art. 2.

something.¹⁵⁷ This opinion is certain because it is too strict to say that in his precepts a superior always intends to impose the binding tie of mortal sin, which I believe applies only where there is contempt or where the offence is habitual, in which case contempt is presumed, otherwise it is a venial sin.

Note that when the brother understands that in all probability the superior intends him to do something, even though he does not command him to do it out of forgetfulness or hesitancy, he is bound to do that thing, even though he has not been commanded to do so. If he omits to do it out of contempt he sins mortally, especially when through his own fault, his superior has lost trust in him. Woe to those who lose their superior's trust by their words or argumentativeness or by doing things without discretion or charity!¹⁵⁸

543 *Scrupulous Brother* – I beg of you to form [47r] some kind of theory that will make it easier to understand these things.

Mature Brother – Brother Hugh says that there are many ways to recognise greater or lesser transgressions and those which are more blameworthy or less, such as when we recognise by the subject's words, demeanour and actions that his intentions are serious or insignificant, purposeful or casual, and when the precept is about something valuable or proper and when a significant penalty is attached to the transgression. In such cases the devout obedient person will recognise the weight of the obligation with a sincere heart, and will recognise the wishes of the superior in his words and consequently note carefully his meaning and intent. He will note whether the words express a precept, admonition, counsel, authorization, permission, prohibition or the like. He will note whether the manner of speaking, the actions, the demeanour are businesslike or casual and whether the superior commands as a companion or as superior. He will be more attentive to the wishes expressed than to the words and at times to obey the wishes he will leave the words aside and in this way dispensations are at times given out of charity. He will note whether penalties or conditions are attached to the command that is given and whether it concerns something that is useful, necessary or politically correct. Where there is doubt he must always enquire into the intention of the superior.

The superior, however, should beware that multiple indiscrete or doubtful precepts are not harmful to his subjects. Therefore he should conduct himself as a father would towards his children, counselling and admonishing more than confronting them with domineering words. When [47v] at times he has to command he should explain

¹⁵⁷ Here he adds: "Richard agrees with this *Quodlibeto* 1°, and the Archdeacon, 76 distinction and chapter *Utinam* [CIC I, 27] and Gemi in the general chapter, De electione, libr. 6^o", referring to Richard of Middletown (Friar Minor + c. 1308) and his work: *primi Quodlibeti. Quoslibeta ... quaestiones octoginta continentia* (Venetiis 1509) and to Guido di Baysio, known as The Archdeacon because he was named archdeacon of Bologna by Boniface VIII, canon lawyer (+ 1313), who wrote a work called *Apparatus super Sexto Decretalium* [of Gratian], which was known by the title of *Rosarium Decreti*, which was written between 1296 and 1302, cf. also *Decri. Bonif. VIII*, c. 13, tit. 6.

¹⁵⁸ Note the effect of the exclamation which is similar to what the author might do while preaching but here it conceals a degree of bitterness which he may have experienced while he was Provincial of the Marches before becoming a Capuchin.

things precisely imposing punishment for a fault as soon as possible on one who is negligent.¹⁵⁹

544 Saint Francis used to say that the superior ought to only rarely command under obedience and not strike with a sentence immediately binding the poor souls of his subjects. He also said that in an indiscrete superior the authority to command is like putting a sword in the hand of a madman.¹⁶⁰ Thus this father was very merciful and most discrete in commanding. However, he who despises the admonitions or precepts of a superior, no matter how minor or modest, does not escape guilt, since no superior can excuse contempt.¹⁶¹

Saint Francis used to also say that the decision of one who despises and the obstinacy of the impenitent, even with respect to the lightest precepts, is not a small fault and anyone who causes trouble for a superior and gives scandal to his neighbour is not without guilt. Thus among the ancients there was such readiness to obey that they were not only most faithful to precepts, but also to the manifest intention and wishes of their superior. This is perfect obedience, as Saint Francis said.¹⁶²

He also said that the subject should obey the first word of the superior and not wait for the second.¹⁶³ When blessed brother Giles was commanded by the General to go to Assisi he was outside the house and did not go back inside but went immediately to Assisi. When the brothers told him that he should have gone back to the house first he replied: "I was commanded [48r] to go to Assisi, and not to go back inside". He said that a brother should leave prayer or talking to angels in order to obey. This is the business of good true brothers and anyone who does the opposite does not fear God and shows that he has little zeal for his salvation.¹⁶⁴

Scrupulous Brother – In these matters what should the brother who desires to live with a clear conscience do?

Mature Brother – It is accepted that in virtue of his profession through which he is bound to God and the Order, a brother should always strive to spend the whole of his life in serving God and the Order as his superiors arrange and command.

When he is assigned a duty, whatever it may be, he should carry it out with all diligence and charity and manage his time in such a manner that he does not neglect the

¹⁵⁹ This passage is translated literally from the *Expositio* by Hugh of Digne, ch 2 (ed. D. Flood, 104s); *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 45ra.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. 2C, 153; 2MP 49 (FA:ED II, p. 346, III, pp. 294-4).

¹⁶¹ "Culpam tamen non effugit qui pastoris etiam monitiones seu quaelibet exilia mandata contemnit. Contemptum enim nullus potest iustificare praelatus" (Hugh of Digne, *Expositio* cit. 105s; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 35rb).

¹⁶² This passage is taken from Hugh of Digne's *Expositio*, 106, 2-10; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 35rb; see also *Conf.* IV, 604; But where John of Fano says "Saint Francis used to say that the decision etc." is not taken from Francis but from Saint Bernard, *De praecepto et dispensatione* (*Opera* III, Roma 1963, 272; *PL* 182, 876); for the rest see *Admonition* 3; 2MP 48; 2C 152 and a small piece of LMj 6, 4 (FA:ED I, p. 130, III, p.293, II, p. 345, III p. 571).

¹⁶³ Cf. 2C 51, 2MP 47(FA:ED II p. 281, III p. 292.)

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *Vita b. Aegidii*, in *Conf.* IV, 208, 5-11.

common order of the day, that is, that he joins the others for prayer and the like, that he serves everyone in all charity, especially the sick and outsiders, that he is enthusiastic in keeping things and giving them out, and always keeps an eye on holy poverty. Let him not be the reason for purchasing things that are not necessary and superfluous. Let him never waste time, but be always occupied in some commendable undertaking.¹⁶⁵

546 *Scrupulous Brother* – Is a brother who is assigned to a duty absolved from other particular obediences?

Mature Brother – Although a brother is assigned to a duty, his freedom is not restored or is his own will which was renounced at his profession. I believe that anyone who does not want to be at the disposition of the [48v] superior with respect to his work, or with respect to his supporters or his companions which he holds onto at his own whim is in a dire straits, since, as has been said, it is not up to him, but to the superior, to arrange for the above things.

However he should attend to three things: firstly, he should carry out the duty to which he has been assigned very diligently and inspire the highest confidence in himself and his companions.

Secondly, he should always cater for a particular obedience. Thus if the superior asked him to do something else while he is performing his duty he should obey immediately and leave what he is doing, especially when he can do so without giving scandal and will not dishonour God as a consequence and it is not against charity especially with respect to those who are ill. He should pay special attention to the disposition of the superior to see whether or not he is discrete, to the importance of what is being commanded and to the fittingness of what is being asked to be postponed. He who takes possession of his duty to such an extent that as not to want the superior to make arrangements and says: "I want to do it this way, this is my job, you do yours", sins mortally, etc.¹⁶⁶

Note that superiors act badly when for no reason they disturb and upset those who are working, talking to them in their place of work and laying down laws for everything, especially when the workers are good and conscientious and are satisfactory to the other brothers by their reasonable application to the work. However, in such cases subjects should conduct themselves with prudence and patience and avoid quarrels and disputation and leave fixing the situation to the major superiors.

Thirdly, when they are not occupied in performing their duties or carrying out some particular obedience they should avoid being idle and occupy themselves in some commendable occupation that suits them or promotes the welfare of the Order.

547 However, should a brother not have a specific work, he should, in the first place, be attentive to all matters on the general schedule since they all involve obedience, especially those that concern divine things. Secondly, when he is not involved in such things he should always be occupied in some commendable activity befitting his state, the

¹⁶⁵ Note the vigilance and loving attention in the use of things, in work and in "keeping an eye on holy poverty".

¹⁶⁶ What great wisdom and experience there is in these words!

honour of God or the benefit of the Order. Thirdly, he should always be prepared to follow specific commands and when he is told to do something he should obey immediately and leave what he is doing, even if it is something he likes doing, even praying, following the example of the brother who was speaking to Jesus Christ and the Madonna when the superior commanded him to go begging and he obeyed immediately. Upon his return the Lord and the Madonna told him that had he not obeyed immediately they would have gone away.¹⁶⁷

Saint Francis used to say that he would have willingly obeyed a novice of one hour if he had been assigned to him as his superior as he would have obeyed a very old and wise father; and that the subject should not consider the superior as a human being, but as God on account of whom he had become a subject. He said against those who did not hold obedience in regard: "So that he would not forfeit obeying, our Lord, he would lose his life". We should lose our lives more readily than the fruit of obedience.¹⁶⁸

548 *Scrupulous Brother* – Is it allowed for a brothers to arrange for his own transfer from one place to another?

Mature Brother – For his whole life a brother commits his life to divine providence [49v] and to the judgement of his superior by the obligation he accepts at his profession. Therefore he should never ask to be moved from a place except where there is danger to his soul as is stated below in chapter ten. He should not do this either because of a harmful climate or because of the severe disposition of his superior or the like. Rather let him persevere with patience in the place to which he had been assigned at the Chapter. If he becomes ill he should declare his situation to the superior. If he sympathises with him that is good, if not, let him be patient for the love of God who will help him. Should he die or battle illness or the inflexibility of his superior or the like let him suffer with patience since he is suffering through obedience, because of which he will obtain the highest merits. It is a great evil to disturb superiors concerning moving and replacing, since gossip will follow, disintegration, loss of time and spirit, scandal among the people, disturbance to the place and many other inconveniences.¹⁶⁹ The same can be said regarding permission to go and visit families or carry out their business or travel to gain indulgences and the like, and when they cannot obtain permission they should not insist since they will gain more merit by not persisting in their request. Those who put pressure on the superior by insisting that he does what they want do not escape mortal sin.

14. [*Whether obedience is observed within the Capuchin reform*]

549 *Scrupulous Brother* – Is obedience observed within the Capuchin reform with as much rigour as you have described? I say this because [50r] some say that there is no

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *Conf. IV*, 252s; *Chron XXIV Gen.* (AF II, 285).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *Admonition 3*, 2s. 9; 2C 151; LMj 6, 4.; 2MP 46 (FA:ED, I, p.130, II, pp. 344-345, III, p. 292,); see also *Conf. IV*, 144, 25s.

¹⁶⁹ The text has *impedimenti* which has been cancelled and corrected by another hand which wrote *inconvenienti*.

obedience within the reform and that they live in liberty of spirit and without structures and that those who join them do so to gain such freedom.¹⁷⁰

Mature Brother – May God forgive those who make such unjust and iniquitous accusations against these good servants of God and truly legitimate sons of Saint Francis.¹⁷¹ Know, my son, that here we live under great structures and where there are no more than three or four brothers in a place they observe the ordinances as if there were twenty. With the grace of God obedience is strictly observed by everyone, the old and the young. I say nothing further and if you come here you will see that obedience is not observed with perfection, charity and peace as I have said above you can reprove me.

If you come here in search of freedom I can tell you that I have never heard of a bird that flew out of a large cage into a small one to find freedom. You know well whether I and the other fathers who came here lacked freedom where we were like masters and lords. I tell you that it is certain that those who say such lies need to find another cover, in this life and in the next, with which to hide their obvious relaxations. It is better to do good than to speak evil. Let us pray that the Lord may enlighten those who need to be enlightened.¹⁷²

15. [*Meaning and spirituality of poverty*]

550 The text continues: *without anything of one's own*.

Scrupulous Brother – What is the Friar Minor's poverty? [50v]

Mature Brother – The Four Masters¹⁷³ say that it is the kind of poverty of spirit that retains nothing, either necessary or superfluous, as one's own, but depends on divine providence completely. This kind of poverty is known as begging. See below in chapter six: *Like pilgrims*, etc.

So that you will gain a better understanding of this subject note:

Firstly, if we want to observe our Rule and save our soul, we should be conscious of the binding force of our vows, which bind under mortal sin and also consider the rigour of the Rule and what it intends with respect to poverty especially in regard to its simplicity and purity. If you still want to consult the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs take up those of Nicholas III and Clement V and also the *Minorica* by Bartolo.¹⁷⁴

551 Secondly. Note that the poverty of the friar minor is the greatest in the world both because it is voluntary and because it includes every kind of abnegation of all temporal things as regards ownership, includes the use of necessary things and also because it is modelled on the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, his most holy Mother and the Apostles.

¹⁷⁰ This was one of the most widespread accusations against the Capuchins. See also the vigorous response contained in the letter of Victoria Colonna to Cardinal Contarini.

¹⁷¹ Words which allude to the parable of Saint Francis and the woman in the desert (cf. L3C 50; 2C 16; LMj 3, 10; AP 35 (FA:ED, II, p. 97, p. 255, p. 548, p. 50); *HTrb*, I, 14.

¹⁷² This is a splendid and effective answer.

¹⁷³ Cf. *Quat. Mag.* 158, 103-106.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. above note 62.

What is more, as Bartolo says in the *Minorica*, this kind of poverty is even stricter than that, because some things are said in the Rule concerning which the Lord did not say a word or set an example, such as: *I strictly command all my brothers by obedience [51r] not to receive coin or money by any means* etc. Bartolo concludes that our kind of poverty is the greatest and strictest poverty that ever was in the world and so Blessed Francis said when he commanded it: *This is that sublime height* etc. This is what Bartolo says and he cites Clement's *Exivi* and the chapter beginning *Exiit, de verborum significatione* from chapter six.

Saint Bonaventure says; this is the real Rule that teaches how to observe the purest poverty, and reproves severely those in the Order who want to be wealthy and yet were poor in the world.¹⁷⁵

552 *Scrupulous Brother* – Why does the Rule say: *living without anything of one's own, and not in poverty*. Many claim that we do not promise poverty. What is your opinion?

Mature Brother – I hold and believe that we promise poverty, which consists in not having anything of our own and using necessary things austerely, sparingly and rigorously, as all the doctors teach. Where there is surplus there is no poverty and thus *Exiit*¹⁷⁶ says that we should not have the use of anything that is not necessary for the preservation of life and the carrying out of the duties of the Order but not the use of all things as we shall see below. Therefore if we were only bound not to have our own things and not to poverty in the use of things, we could enjoy the use of opulent and rich things as do wealthy and noble people in the world, as well as vineyards, fields and the like as they would not belong to us but to others. This is absurd and very false.

533 Besides [51v] this as it says in chapter two we promise to observe the life and Rule: *promising this life and Rule*, etc. It is certain that there are many things in the Rule which indicate this kind of poverty as Brother Hugh says:¹⁷⁷

Firstly, when it commands all who enter the Order to give all their things to the poor;

Second, changing their clothes;

Third, investiture;

Fourth, a few tunics, only two are allowed;

Fifth, going barefoot;

Sixth, not riding on horseback;

Seventh, we are pilgrims;

¹⁷⁵ For these quotes see the *Brief Discourse* by the same author notes 9-10.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* note 11.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* note 14.

Eighth, begging, that is going in search of alms, concerning which the Four Masters¹⁷⁸ say that poverty in use is commanded here since we are to be poor and mendicant;

554 Ninth, the extolling of poverty in chapter six: *This is that sublime height* etc. where the Pisan¹⁷⁹ says: this is extolling highest poverty where Saint Francis concludes that it is nothing but Gospel poverty that the Rule intends to impose on the brothers;

Tenth, the close embracing of such poverty by the renouncing of everything else in chapter six: *Giving yourselves totally to this, beloved brothers* etc. concerning which Brother Hugh says: this includes the precept of the observance of poverty to the full, where it says: *never seek anything else under heaven for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that is anything else apart from highest poverty. The whole of chapter six proves that we promise poverty, as we shall see below. It says in chapter five: *as followers of most holy poverty* [52r]; and in the last chapter *let us observe poverty, humility and the holy Gospel as we have firmly promised*, and the Rule says the same in many other places. The decrees of the holy Church and the Supreme Pontiffs also substantiate this. Thus Nicholas III says in *Exiit, de verborum significatione* in 6^o: *the meek and humble religious Order of Friars Minor is based on poverty and humility*; and in § *Nec quisquam*: *It was becoming to the Order that vowed to imitate Christ in such poverty*. Clement's *Exivi*, § *Ceterum*, says that Saint Francis established those who profess his Rule in highest poverty. In § *Proinde* it says, when speaking of sumptuous buildings: so that the promise of such poverty might not be undermined. In § 5 *Cui igitur* it says that if the brothers were only obliged to obedience, to not having anything of their own and to chastity and not to the whole Rule it would have been useless to have said in chapter two: *Promising to observe always this Rule and life*; where Brother Hugh says that where the one who promises to observe this life and Rule, promises to observe poverty, since these three vows are foremost and the substance of every religious Order. In the Prologue to their privileges Innocent IV and Alexander IV say: *You who endure poverty in the name of Christ*. They agree with the others.

555 Saint Bonaventure says in chapter six: Since the brothers profess highest poverty, it is necessary that whatever they have for their use, as far as possible, be shabby, austere and poor, three qualities which naturally accompany highest poverty. In *fruit* 16 of the Conformities the Pisan says expressly that we promise extreme poverty, and that Saint Francis commanded highest poverty in the Rule. Read *fruit* 16 and you will see great things regarding the intent of Saint Francis with respect to poverty. The doctors of the Order are in agreement with the Supreme Pontiffs in stating that we promise poverty, and John Pecham adds that this is why we are forbidden to have cellars, granaries, excessive buildings and any kind of surplus.¹⁸⁰ This is further proof of the intention of Saint Francis and how much he loved, praised and recommended the virtue of poverty from his heart. Thus while he was in Rome praying to the Apostles Peter and Paul pleading that he receive the treasure of highest poverty, they appeared to him saying that the Lord had

¹⁷⁸ *Quat. Mag.*, 158, 110-112.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *Breve discorso*, note 13.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, notes 15-21.

heard his prayer and that this treasure had been given to him and his followers and all those who pursued this desire would be blessed by God and sure of salvation.¹⁸¹

556 Blessed Francis opened the book of the Gospels three times and the words that appeared were always the same: "If you will be perfect, go sell all that you have, and give to the poor and follow me". He did this and so did his companions and thus the Order was launched.¹⁸²

557 In a vision Brother Leo saw that the brothers who crossed a river loaded down with books were drown and he almost drown because his had a breviary which he had copied.¹⁸³

558 Saint Francis used to say: "Whoever wants to be a genuine friar minor should have no [53r] more that two tunics, as the Rule permits, a cord, underwear and a breviary". Calling to mind the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother, he used to say that poverty was the queen of the virtues since it shone in the King of kings and His Queen Mother. When the brothers asked him which was the virtue that made the soul to be loved the most by Christ he replied: "Poverty is the special way to salvation as the nourishment of humility and the root of perfection, the fruit of which is manifold but hidden. This is the treasure hidden in the field mentioned in the Gospel to buy which a man has to sell all that he has and if he cannot do this he should hold his possessions in contempt. Whoever wishes to reach such heights must renounce not only human prudence but also being the expertise of learning so that having renounced even this possession he might enter into the mighty works of the Lord and offer himself naked to the arms of the Crucified."¹⁸⁴

559 He taught the brothers to build humble and ordinary houses similar to the poor, in which they should live as if they were not their own but belonged to others as do pilgrims and strangers whose aim is to live under someone else's roof and desire to pass on peacefully to their own country.

He used to say that poverty was the foundation of his Order on which the whole Rule was established so that it would stand solid on its steadfastness but would be destroyed by seeking novelty. To God's servants all money is nothing but the devil and a venomous serpent.¹⁸⁵ As the brothers withdraw from poverty the world will fly from them; they shall seek but not [53v] find. However if they embrace my lady poverty the world will nourish them, since they have been dedicated to the salvation of the world. There is an alliance between the brothers and the world in which they are to give the world good example and the world will give them what they need. When they fail to give good example the world will fail to provide for them.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Cf. ABF chapter 13 n. 27; LF1 13, (FA:ED, III, p. 464, p. 588).

¹⁸² Cf. LMj 3, 3; L3C 29 (FA:ED II, p. 544; p. 91). *Conf.* IV, 180.

¹⁸³ Cf. *Breve discorso* note 50.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. LMj 7, 1-2 (FA:ED, II, pp. 577-578); *Conf.* IV, 607.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 7, 2 and 5 (FA:ED, II pp. 578 and 580); see also other sources in *CF.* 52 (1982) 102.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. 2C 70 (FA:ED, II, p. 294). *Conf.* IV, 608, 6-11.

560 Brother Masseo used to say: "The treasure of blessed poverty is so very worthy and divine that we are not worthy to possess it in our shabby vases, since it is a heavenly virtue by which all earthly and transitory things are trampled upon and every obstacle is cleared away, so that the mind is focused on to the Lord. This is what allows the soul which is on earth to communicate with the angels in heaven, join Christ on the Cross, and be close to Him in the grave and with Him when He rises and ascends into heaven and which gives loving souls in this life the agility to fly up to heaven and behold the arms of charity and humility".¹⁸⁷

561 Brother Peter Catani asked Saint Francis whether he wanted any of the novices' belongings kept. He replied: "I would prefer that you stripped the altar of the Blessed Virgin if that were necessary than that you kept anything against the vow of holy poverty and the observance of the holy Gospel because I hold it more dear that while observing the Gospel her altar were stripped and left naked than that her Son's counsel, which we have promised, was held in contempt".¹⁸⁸

562 When Innocent III saw that Blessed Francis had requested the conformation [54r] of the Rule in which strictest poverty was promised in common and for the individual. He deferred granting approval, until he had a vision in which it seemed that the Saint John Lateran was falling down and a poor, wretched man was holding it up with his shoulder. He realised that this was Blessed Francis, who was to hold up the Catholic Church. When he said to Saint Francis that the Rule was too strict and that the brothers would die of hunger, Saint Francis replied; "There is no reason to fear that the sons of the eternal King will die of hunger [or that they would lack the necessary food] and that the heirs who are the image of Christ the King who was born of a mother who was a virgin and poor should also be born in an Order that is poor.. The Pope then said: "Others have merely touched poverty you wish to take it to heart", and he approved the first Rule.¹⁸⁹

All of these things have been mentioned to clarify that we have promised poverty and woe to those who by means of their sensual imagination and passionate words, want to take away from such truths which certainly have been recommended not only by Saint Francis, but also by Jesus Christ, His most holy Mother and the other saints and apostles and all who are in heaven as they shall see at the time of their death.

16. [*Only the "straitened and restricted" use of things*]

563 *Scrupulous Brother* – Father, these matters are of the utmost importance and increasingly incite in me the wish to free myself of such dangers. However I beg of you to explain to me how the brothers have the use of things but not the ownership.

Mature Brother – Note two consequences. The first consequence is that by profession of the Rule and our profession ownership of anything is forbidden to us, as is said in chapter six: *Let the brothers appropriate nothing to themselves..* [54v] Therefore, the brothers cannot hold or use anything as their own, nor give it away by any means, nor

¹⁸⁷ *Conf.* IV, 608, 12-21; V, 103, 7-13; ABF cit. 13, 21-24; LFI 13 (FA:ED III p. 587-589; p. 587-589).

¹⁸⁸ Cf. LMj 7,4; 2C 67 (FA:ED, II, p. 579; p. 291); *Conf.* IV, 608, 22-28; V, 116, 21-29.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Conf.* V, 102, 15-23; LMj 3, 10; L3C 50-53; (FA:ED, II, p 548-549; pp. 97-99); *HTrb.* I, 5.

prevent that the superiors assign the use of anything to someone else. However, with respect to coin or money, the brothers should have neither ownership, or use. See chapter six.

Second consequence is that according to Nicholas III in § *Porro* the brothers only have the *de facto* use of necessary things, that is they can use things not as their own since they belong to the one who gave them or to the Apostolic See as will be explained. They can use them with permission of the superior without having dominion or ownership over the use of the thing or the thing itself according to Nicholas III § *Ne quisquam*.¹⁹⁰

564 *Scrupulous Brother* – What does it mean to have the right¹⁹¹ of ownership or use?

Mature Brother – When a brother holds onto or uses a thing in such a way that he does not want anyone else to use it but himself and whoever he wants to use it, he excises dominion over its use, which is forbidden to us, Whoever does this is an owner. Often a sign of this is locking rooms or boxes etc. Others have clothing, books or tools which they keep under lock and key and do not wish to lend them to anyone under any circumstances nor allow anyone but themselves to use them. These exercise ownership in usage and are owners. The ancients held everything that they required in common, even breviaries.

Scrupulous Brother – Can ownership and use be separated and can a brother have the use of something without being its owner?

Mature Brother – In § *Porro* Nicholas III and other Supreme Pontiffs as well as [55r] the doctors of the Order say that this is so. Saint Bonaventure says that in cases where some have the use of things but the ownership belongs to someone else, use and ownership can be separated, but not with respect to those who use something as if it were their own and yet are not the owners.¹⁹²

Scrupulous Brother – Are we bound to the straitened and restricted use of things or not?

Mature Brother – Both because of the intention of the Rule and of Saint Francis and also of the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas III in § *Porro*, and Clement V near the end, I say that the brothers are bound by their profession to poor and restricted use, and not just of all things, but of things which are necessary for the sustenance of nature and the carrying out of the work of the Order. When in chapter four the acceptance of money which would be most beneficial for opulent living is prohibited, and from what is said in chapter six, it is evident that Saint Francis wanted us to observe poor and restricted use. This is in the declarations of the doctors of the Order. John of Pecham says that the brothers cannot have the use of everything, but only of those things which do not go beyond the way of living highest poverty. Therefore it is not right for us to have

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *Breve discorso*, note 22.

¹⁹¹ John of Fano translates the word *ius* with *ragione* which means *diritto*.

¹⁹² Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio*, chapter VI, n. 11 (*Op. omnia* VIII, 422).

granaries, or cellars, not sumptuous buildings, rather everything should display highest poverty and bring it to mind.¹⁹³

566 I believe that this is what the Lord proposed to the Apostles, and Saint Francis to the brothers. However dispensations and privileges have been granted mainly in situations of sensuality and to accommodate sensuality. Concerning the phrase in chapter three which reads: *let them not accept* it says: It is evident that the brothers should adhere to the style of highest poverty in the use of things. When two tunics are allowed this means that they observe strictest poverty. In chapter five [55v] where it allows them to receive wages for their work it means that we receive this to supply bodily needs but not surplus things, and, although this recompense may be received justifiably, it prefers that we exercise poor use in those things over which we have little control.

567 Blessed Francis wished that only a few brothers live in a place, because it seemed to him to be difficult for poverty to be observed where there were many brothers.¹⁹⁴

When a minister asked Blessed Francis about his intention concerning poverty, he said: "I intend that a friar minor should have no more than a habit, cord and underwear and a breviary according to the Rule."¹⁹⁵ He ordered that the book from which the Office was read in the house be given to the extremely poor mother of two brothers so she could sell it because there was nothing else in the house. This shows their poverty since there was nothing else in the house. See the *Conformity* fruit 16.¹⁹⁶

568 Ubertino says: Saint Francis burst out with much praise of our Rule and how sublime it was in its estimation of poverty declaring that poverty was most excellent and fruitful to such an extent that nothing else surpassed it. Therefore without restricted use such praise would be frivolous as would also be the Bulls of the Supreme Pontiffs which proclaimed it to be of the highest quality, especially those of Innocent IV and Alexander IV; *Vobis patientibus extremam pro Christi nomine paupertatem*.

Saint Bonaventure says that it is a horrible thing and a profane lie to claim to profess the highest poverty and not wish to suffer destitution in possessions. Clement [56r] says that friars minor are bound to the restricted use of things. The Pisan says: It follows that the brothers are allowed to use things which are necessary but not surplus. That is a true necessity when at present or imminently there is a situation in which the community or individual is not able to carry out its work without hindrance. The Four Masters say that indulging in what is superfluous consists in this that were what is surplus were taken away what remained would suffice. Two things are surplus if one would suffice, something is too much if a little would suffice, something is sumptuous if what is shabby would suffice and something is expensive if something cheap would suffice.

¹⁹³ Cf. *Breve discorso* note 25-28.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, note 29.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *Conf.* IV, 255, 25s; 2MP,3; AC 102 (FA:ED, III, pp. 256-257; II, p. 206).

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *Conf.* V, 110, 20-28; AC 93 2MP; 38; 2C 91 (FA:ED, II, p. 196; III, p. 286; II, p. 306).

569 Clement [V] also says that we are bound to straitened and poor use,¹⁹⁷ of those things mentioned in the Rule, and to the degree that they are mentioned in the Rule. For certain nothing else is mentioned in the Rule except a habit with a hood, a tunic, underwear, cord and breviary. In the sixth chapter where Saint Francis praises poverty, it says: *This is the height* etc. He expressly intends that we adhere to that and neither have nor seek to have anything else under heaven apart from being heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven, poor in possessions, rich in virtue. Such things are allowed by the Rule, other things are the subject of dispensations.¹⁹⁸

In the *Defensorio della Povertà* Saint Bonaventure does not defend all kinds of poverty, but Gospel and penniless poverty and the kind that obliges under a vow to observe the restricted use of necessary things and abstain from what is superfluous. He says that this is the kind of poverty that was practiced by Christ, the Apostles, Saint Francis and those who profess his Rule. This [56v] motivates a person to divest himself of everything both with regard to attachment and control, and to be satisfied with what is strictly necessary for the support of natural needs as well as the use of things. Thus what is necessary for the support of nature is provided for without departing from restricted usage. This is what Saint Bonaventure says.¹⁹⁹

570 Nicholas III, who reigned in 1277, said that he had spoken to several companions of Saint Francis concerning his intentions regarding the observance of the Rule and this is what he said: "Let the brothers not accept vessels or household effects, nor other things the use of which is not required for subsistence or the carrying out of the work of the Order and let them not display abundance, surplus, wealth, stock piling which disgrace poverty. They should not accept such things with the intention of distributing or selling them under the pretext of providing for the future or for other reasons. Rather let a complete abdication of ownership be evident among them and the use of what is necessary. Peter John corroborates this."²⁰⁰

The Council of Constance decreed that the superiors maintain the brothers and the houses in a state that is in accord with strict observance according to the declarations and statutes of the Apostolic See and the Order removing all excess in mobile and immobile things with the advice of the major superiors and the counsellors. The procurators may sell these surplus things and spend the income on other necessary things.²⁰¹

571 Clement V decreed in § *Proinde* that ownership be withdrawn both in common and individually.²⁰² At the General Chapter Saint Bonaventure commanded the Ministers to take away all [57r] surplus things, clothing, books and all odd and prohibited items from the brothers and not allow them to carry swords at their side. At table let them not use water-tight or glass cups, and let them observe poverty in buildings. Churches, art

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Breve discourse* notes 31-34.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. LR 2, 11-17; 6, 5 (FA:ED I, pp. 100-101, 103).

¹⁹⁹ Cf. *Breve discourse* note 35.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Nicholas III, *Exiit*, prologue 5, art. V, 1 (*Seraphicae legislationis textus originales*, 185, 199; FA:ED, II, p. 741); Olivi, *Expositio*, 163.

²⁰¹ This is the Decree of 23 September 1415: *Supplicationibus personarum* (BF VII, 493-95).

²⁰² Cf. Clement V, *Exivi*, art. VII, 1 (*Seraph. Leg. Textus originales*, 246; FA:ED, III, P. 775).

work, windows, columns and the like, and let them not build bell towers so that zeal which those holy brothers had for poverty might be apparent.²⁰³

Brother Hugh says that at the beginning there were few brothers who were satisfied to have a few shabby things. At times they supported life with a little bit of bread and water along the way. At times they only had fruit considering themselves to be more blessed to rub the ears of corn with the Apostles than to enjoy flesh pots with the Egyptians. Their clothing made of shabby material lasted three or four years and they overcame delicacy in dress through fervour of spirit. Those who were ill did not look for medicine suitable for those who are wealthy, but with humility, patience and the incentive of poverty when providing what was necessary they were satisfied and they were thrilled to be like the poor and distressed Christ in undergoing misfortune when they lacked something that was necessary.²⁰⁴

572 Why are brothers not satisfied with a few things now but wish to be provided with fine and superfluous things and extravagant household items, and burden themselves with superfluous and extravagant books, and want to have purses and boxes, filled with oddities and sumptuous things and so strive to find superfluous things, are always out and about, lose the spirit [57v] and set no store on divine things, on regular life and ceremonies? They fuss over the world importunately to such an extent that persons who previously used to greet them cap in hand and give them something now when they see them coming either run away or hide. This is so serious that the restlessness to obtain such surplus things multiplies activities so much that the brothers are almost always engaged in physical activities. They do not occupy their mind or senses with some good deliberations and so little by little they impede the spirit and extend themselves to such a point that they bring about the ruin and destruction of their own souls, regular observance, their profession and the Rule.

573 A major declaration states that the Rule explicitly allows the use of certain things namely the habit, tunic, cord, underwear and breviary. Certain things are allowed implicitly. Thus by ordering them to preach it implicitly decrees that they have the necessary books, not however a surplus number or expensive ones etc. By ordering them to take care of the sick and cloth them it implicitly decrees that they have those things without which they could not carry this out and yet this and similar things are not clearly mentioned.

Nicholas III says this in § *Nec quisquam*.²⁰⁵ Let those brothers who have cells and boxes full of surplus things and those houses which have surplus household fittings, wine, oil and other food stuffs beware. Usage, whether implicit or explicit, is meant to be restricted, poor, for necessities, [58r] moderate, not superfluous or expensive etc. As the Rule says usage should be poor and preach highest poverty.

574 We have the use of some things by way of dispensation given either by the superiors or the Supreme Pontiffs and no other as the Rule states implicitly or implicitly.

²⁰³ Cf. *Const. Narb.* III, 14-19 (*AFH* 34 [1941] 47s).

²⁰⁴ Cf. *Breve discourse*, note 36.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Nicholas III, *Exiit*, art II, 3 (*Seraph. Leg. Textus originales*, 192; *FA:ED* III, pp. 745-746).

This is given because of evident necessity which is not fabricated to provide for the sustenance of nature or the carrying out of the duties of the Order, and it excludes all superfluity, abundance, pretence, accumulating and the intention to provide for the future, as Nicholas III, Clement V and Saint Bonaventure and all the others say. Otherwise it would not be a dispensation but dissipation.²⁰⁶

Note well here that anyone who does things which the Rule does not allow without permission or dispensation is an owner. He who does these things with permission, but without evident necessity is an owner since this is not a true dispensation, but dissipation as has been said. He who does something with permission and out of necessity but wishes to have dominion and the right to use it and does not want it to be taken away either by the superiors or given to someone else, is an owner, as has been said above.

575 *Scrupulous Brother* – This kind of usage that we are permitted to exercise is clear. But why does the Rule explicitly allow only the use of the habit, tunic etc.? Can we use many other things that are not in the Rule with a good conscience, such as a mantle, handkerchief, rosary, discipline etc.?

Mature Brother – Brother Hugh says that the usual thing is to have the habit, tunic etc. However, those things which go beyond what is stated in the Rule, such as the things mentioned above, require a dispensation. However lack of necessity cancels [58v] dispensation. Thus for it to be lawful to use such things two conditions are required, namely necessity and permission,²⁰⁷ and anyone who does not have these is an owner as has been said. In such cases a brother should be very scrupulous in order not act contrary to the Rule.

576 Saint Francis allowed a habit and tunic but did not allow a mantle. If they wish the brothers can do without handkerchiefs, knives and the like, since many go without these things for the love of God without experiencing any inconvenience. If they cannot do without handkerchiefs they should be satisfied with two small shabby ones and get permission. Knives, scissors and the like should be held in common in all places. Hats are superfluous. When I came to the Order they were not worn and the brothers did not die because of this. Capuchins do not wear them nor do they die because of this, nor do I believe that Christ, the Apostles or Saint Francis wore them. Believe me, all such things as well as rosaries made of amber, aloe, chalcedony or mother-of-pearl and the like are procured to satisfy sensuality and are more worthy of damnation the more they are commonly purchased for money. See below in chapter six. What is worse many do not want the superiors to see them in case they confiscate them etc.

577 *Scrupulous Brother* – Is it necessary to go to the superior for permission for every little thing such as thread, needle, a pen and the like?

Mature Brother – Brother Hugh says that it is sufficient in such small things to have the general permission of the superior.²⁰⁸ However, I believe that it would be safer

²⁰⁶ Cf. Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio* cap. VI, n. 7 (*Op omnia* VIII, 422).

²⁰⁷ This criterion appears in the *Constitutions of 1536* n. 60.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 152, 158.

to have special permission because of the danger of transgression, or to have such things in common, as the Capuchins usually [59r] have.

578 *Scrupulous Brother* – To whom does dominion and ownership of the things set down for the use of the brothers belong?

Mature Brother – It belongs to the donor and he can always asks for them to be returned. If he does not wish to exercise ownership or he dies without saying what should become of them, then they belong to the Apostolic See according to Gregory IX, Innocent IV, Clement V and Nicholas III in § *Ad haec* and the doctors of the Order.²⁰⁹ When these things are no longer necessary, by the authority of the Minister General or Provincial they may be exchanged for other necessities of the brothers or the procurator may sell them and spend the income from the sale on other necessities present or imminent as long as this is not kept for unspecified future necessities. Let the brothers in no way interfere in the sale of such things since that may not accept coin of money whether by themselves nor through an intermediary. This is what Nicholas III § *Quia vero* says.²¹⁰

Note that when superfluous things are changed over to necessary things by the General or Provincial, this does not apply to consumable items that have been provided for daily sustenance, since because the brothers are bound to restricted and poor usage, they should not procure such items in such quantities that they are left over to be exchanged.

17. [Regarding privileges]

579 *Scrupulous Brother* – Since you have mentioned dispensations, tell me, I beg of you, what do you think about privileges which have been requested that take away from poverty?

Mature Brother – Alvarus says that a friar minor may no more have ownership than privileges [59r] since being men of the Gospel, they should be subject to every creature for the love of God especially to the prelates of the Church. Having renounced all rights, including privileges, which are personal laws, what business have friars minor to become great in the world through privileges?

In doing so they go against their title and profession as is clear when we think about their position, except for the privilege of the confirmation of the Rule. Thus through the privileges and declarations that have been given by the Church, brothers who were weak of spirit were generally granted use of money, which they accepted and used against the Rule, even though the Church with good intentions granted this to many who were relaxed for whom regulations concerning money appeared to be too narrow and strict. Because the primitive Apostolic spirit within the Order and the spirit of Saint Francis had become cold and the brothers who lived a life of simplicity had gone, having

²⁰⁹ Cf. Gregory IX, *Quo elongati*; Innocent IV, *Ordinem vestrum* (BF I, 68 and 400°; Nicholas III, *Exivi*, art VIII, 1 (*Seraph. Leg. Textus originales*, 196s, 246; FA:ED III, p. 753); *Quaedam brevis exposition* cit. in *Spec. Minorum* pars III, f. 124v.

²¹⁰ Nicholas III, *Exivi*, art. IX (*Seraph. Leg. Cit.* 207; FA:ED III, pp. 753-754).

taken the path of learning and curiosity there was room for receiving money by way of privileges and widespread and general misrepresentation of the Rule and of poverty within the Order. This is what Alvarus says and he adds that no superior within the Order can explain away the Rule or dispense from it.²¹¹

580 John of Pecham says that privileges and dispensations are given because of the flesh and sensuality, and that the Supreme Pontiffs granted them at the request of the brothers to satisfy their [60r] imperfection. Because they wanted to live in the midst of plenty and not according to strict poverty they made the Pontiffs allow them to have bequests, to conduct funerals and the like which relaxed the purity of the Rule. Like kind fathers the Supreme Pontiffs, who were importunately petitioned by the brothers, conceded privileges, because the petitioners said it was a matter of urgency. They said: "*Si sic est, fiat*; if the situation is as you say it is let it be done"; and their consciences remained clear.²¹²

Father Brendolino, who was a good and scrupulous brother in the family, the leader of the reformers in the Province of Saint Anthony, proves that dispensation tries to establish a legitimate and urgent reason.²¹³ Thus Saint Bernardine in his book *De praecepto et dispensatione* says that superiors who for no reasonable and urgent cause, but only on a whim, grant permission to go against the law are dissipaters not dispensers. This is what Bernardine says.²¹⁴ From these words we note that in order to grant a legitimate dispensation it is necessary that there is some legitimate and urgent reason, especially with respect to matters that are not simply a matter of positive law, such as a vow or oath or the like. He cites examples of many illegitimate privileges etc.

581 It was never the intention of Saint Francis that such privileges would be granted, because he knew the great ruin that with money there would follow buildings, decorations and countless evils. This is what Alvarus said. The companions of Saint Francis said the same thing.²¹⁵

Scrupulous Brother – All that you have said is very true. However why is it that I see general [60v] relaxation in everything. Tell me, I beg of you, about the use of things and how to act.

Mature Brother – From what has been said you can see that no kind of usage is permitted to the brothers other than poor, controlled, restricted usage of things that are necessary for the sustenance of nature and the carrying out of the work of the Order and all surplus, abundance and excess and the like is forbidden to the brothers as has been said.. John Philippus²¹⁶ says that from the words of Nicholas III, in which he says that the

²¹¹ Cf. *Breve discourse* note 37.

²¹² *Ibid.*, note 38.

²¹³ Cf. *Expositione de la Regula di frati minori* [Venetia 1533], f. 144v.

²¹⁴ Here the author confuses Saint Bernardine with Saint Bernard. cf. instead Saint Bernard *De praecepto et dispensatione* (PL 182, 867; *S. Bernardi opera* III, Romae 1963, 261).

²¹⁵ Cf. *Breve discorso* note 39.

²¹⁶ Cf. *Tractatus utilis fratris Ioannis Philippi de recursu ad amicos spirituales*, art. I (*Spec. Minorum*, III, f. 179ra).

brothers are not allowed the use of all things but only those which are necessary, it follows that the brothers ought to be satisfied with a few things and the necessary sustenance of nature, and undertake activities which are congruent with their state. In this way they satisfy necessity without ever indulging the flesh. Thus both the Rule and the declarations demonstrate that we are obliged to practice strict and poor usage.

I shall not go into more detail, but you should consider carefully what has been said above and what will be said regarding chapters 4 and 6 and the whole of this *Dialogue* and you will decide quickly to enter this holy reform, which Christ has recently organised through the merits and prayers of Saint Francis, so that the true zealots of observance to the Rule might observe the Rule as spiritually as they wished.

18. [*Recalling the intent and life of Saint Francis and his companions*]

582 *Scrupulous Brother* – Truly, Father, the things which have been said are all very true and of the utmost importance and have been the cause of such ruin because they have been neither seen nor studied. I thank the Lord infinitely, *qui de tenebris vocavit me in admirabile lumen suum*,²¹⁷ and who has shown me this very safe way and I shall soon follow your advice. However, to satisfy [61r] me and for the common good of others, tell me, I beg of you, Do you know anything about the intention of Saint Francis with respect to the use of things and concerning the life of strict observance of the brothers in his day?

Mature Brother – From what I have read in the *Conformity* and in the *Chronicles* of the Order²¹⁸ this way of life appears to the eyes of my mind as follows:

I seem to see our Father Saint Francis and his companions being rather pale, thin and exhausted from fasting, vigils and abstinence, barefoot, poorly dressed with tightly fitting, coarse and rude habits, which were harsh and shabby, all patched with pieces of sacking and other shabby material, with a rough and shabby cord. Some wore a hairshirt, others a coat of mail or an iron belt next to their skin. I did not see, either around the place or in their cells, knives or hats or purses or handkerchiefs, except a linen or woollen cloth for necessities, and, with permission, a shabby rosary made of beads or wood. Amber, chalcedony or mother-of-pearl, silver or brass seals and the like were not even mentioned.²¹⁹

583 The simple priest and the cleric had a shabby breviary with paper bookmarks devoid of silk, gold or anything else expensive and it was kept in a public place.²²⁰ In

²¹⁷ Cf. 1 Pt 2, 9 and Saint Bernard, *Sermo 15 in cantica* (PL 183, 846, n. 6).

²¹⁸ The identification of these sources is generic, since in the text which follows one is able to find an exact reference for almost every phrase in the 2MP. in the L3C, *Htrb.* or the *Leggenda antica* of Minocchi. This is a characteristic example of how John of Fano goes about summarizing and making a practical application in reality of the many readings of Franciscan sources. However, following his practical method as a preacher, he was satisfied with summary indications and, perhaps, he also relied a little on memory.

²¹⁹ This description is worthy of the fathers of the desert. Note that up to that time they had either the rosary of Our Lady or the Franciscan rosary.

²²⁰ Cf. 2MP 5; L3C 43; AP 27 (FA:ED III, p. 259; II p. 94; p. 27); also *Conf.*, IV, 397, 30s; V, 110, 6s: *Const 1536*, n. 121 (n.337)..

their small cells that were made of wicker and mud.²²¹ There was nothing but a block for prayer and a wooden cross, not desks with keys and locks, nor anything extra. They slept on the ground or trellis-work or straw, not on feather beds or mattresses. Their pillow was wood or stone and not feathers.²²² [61v] In a preacher's cell nothing was to be seen except a little book or two of sermons written by hand, without ornamentation, which others were welcome to use.²²³ The other simple brothers had nothing but what the Rule mentions.

Procurators or agents were not even mentioned as neither were purses, fairs, markets, competitions, raffles, carnivals, amusements, recreations or fine dinners. They did not waste time, quarrel or the like. Some ate twice a week and no more. Some ate one day and not the next. Some ate cooked food as well as bread. Some never drank wine. Some never ate either meat or fish. Some tormented their bodies in one way or another.²²⁴

584 I will not mention other things such as very prompt obedience which did not only obey at the first sound of the voice of the superior but at his mere wish. I will not mention their angelic modesty and chastity, nor their other outstanding virtues, contemplation, familiarity with God and enflamed love, desire for eternal things, forgetfulness of self-love, of love of any person and all earthly things. They were dead to the world, alive to God, embracing the cross and the crucified and the tearful life of Jesus Christ. They experienced devotion, fervour, the desire to suffer martyrdom and every tribulation,²²⁵ anguish and persecution for the love of Jesus Christ, unanimity, piety, humility, and discretion. These virtues and others like them were to be found in these apostolic, evangelical and angelic men. I do not relate to what degree they possessed them since this is indescribable and the deficiency [62r] of my intellect does not reach to such heights.²²⁶

However I have said these things to satisfy you so that if you, or anyone else wishes to be a true friar minor, he should make every effort to acquire these virtues, take up this life, and imitate those saints as far as possible and at least do what he can with regard to poverty and the restricted and necessary use of things..

At the beginning of many of the reforms which have already been undertaken many strove to adopt the above way of life and virtues. At present there are many who

²²¹ Just as Saint Francis wanted. cf. 2MP 7 and 10; AC 11 and 16 (FA:ED III, pp. 260, 263-264; II, 56, p. 154-158). *Conf.* IV, 148, 4-9; V, 106, 15-19.

²²² Cf. for example 2C 63-64 (FA:ED II, pp. 288-289). See also the relevant prescriptions of early Capuchin legislation: *Const. 1536*, n. 25.

²²³ This rare detail concerning ownership is interesting! cf. *Alb. N 24*; *Const 1536*, n. 116.

²²⁴ The 1536 Constitution and before them the Albacina Statutes authorized these penances and austerities: cf. *Alb. N.* 41 and 13-15; *Const 1536* n. 57 and 50-54.

²²⁵ Cf. *MHOC* II, 215 and 136; concerning the desire for martyrdom see C. Cargnoni, *Nel nome del dolce Gesù congregate servivano e testimoniavano. Elevazione sulla missionarietà dei primi cappuccino*, Milano 1987, 15-18.

²²⁶ This impassioned and resounding presentation of the poverty of the external appearance of the habit, dwellings, use of things, of books, cells, food, beds, obedience, chastity and other virtues are all images which correspond to the other chapters of the *Mirror of Perfection*, Celano's *Second Life*, the *Major Legend* or the *Assisi Compilation*. Everything is brought into line with the descriptions of daily Capuchin life as furnished by the early chroniclers and contemporary witnesses.

aspire to the things mentioned above with fervent desires. I maintain for certain that Jesus Christ and our father Saint Francis will help them and free them from every impediment and opposition. You too can resolve to respond to Jesus Christ and Saint Francis who are gently calling you.²²⁷

585 However in order to confirm what has been said above, take note of two consequences which follow on from them and also from the things which will be said below.

The first consequence: Given that the Roman See accepts ownership of those things which are necessary for the brothers to use and not of things which are superfluous, as had been said, indeed it prohibits all surplus, it follows that it has the ownership of those things, of the places and of the brothers.

The second consequence: Since the Rule says that where one cannot observe the Rule spiritually in a place he should have recourse to the ministers etc., and since at present this impediment is almost everywhere (which can be seen in chapter X which deals with this subject) I say that we should by all means have recourse to the ministers etc. If they do not make provision, as we see is clearly the case, Jesus Christ and our Father [62v] have provided this holy reform.²²⁸

19. [*Consecrated chastity*]

586. [*Mature Brother*]. – The text continues: “and in chastity”. This is the third main vow of our profession, which without any reservation of dispensation, binds under mortal sin. Thus in order to observe it a brother must not only preserve his body pure and immaculate from every contamination but also avoid all occasions, maintain²²⁹ custody of the eyes and of all the senses so that death may not enter the soul through them. Therefore he should very conscientiously flee from any friendship, thought or conversation with women, neither sending nor receiving letters or gifts.²³⁰ He may not conduct any business with seculars such as enter into marriage or the like. He should avoid being idle, being dissolute and the like. He should control the flesh, reducing it to servitude in the spirit, through abstinence, fasting, discipline, prayer, confession or other appropriate remedies as did Saint Chrysanthus.²³¹

²²⁷ This is another discrete invitation to enter the Capuchin reform without delay.

²²⁸ Thus it was the relaxation that had come into the order and not being able to “spiritually” observe the Rule that forced the brothers towards the new reform.

²²⁹ That is *custodire*.

²³⁰ As was laid down in the Statutes or Ordinances of Albacina, n. 32-33 and in *Const. 1536*, n. 87 and 132, except that in the latter dependence in writing and receiving letters or gifts only applies to young brothers, not to all.

²³¹ Martyred in the persecution of Numerian (c. 283), he was son of the Alexandrian senator Polemius. Having come to Rome he converted at the same time as his spouse Daria. However according to another version of the Acts Daria married him after his conversion to take him away from the Christian faith. Following many tortures, both were buried alive in a sandpit near the Salarian Way. Very popular saints, the Acts of their martyrdom ran to many editions. They are mentioned in all Martyrologies, Mosarabic calendars and three Itinerari of the seventh century. The *Matrt. Rom.* commemorates them on 25 October. cf. *Bibl. Sanctorum* IV, 300=306; *Diz. Ecclesiastico* I, Torino, 1953, 767. Why does John of Fano mention

These are the best remedies: flee immediately, *quia diaboli sagittae non melius quam fugiendo vincuntur, ait Hieronimus*;²³² avoid the occasions, immediate, integral and sincere confession, assiduous prayer, meditation on the Passion of Christ, and think how we will gain the promises made by God, glory, punishment and the last judgement and the like. *Deo gratias.*

Chapter II

Concerning those who wish to be received into this life and how they ought to be received

587 Text: *If any persons would desire to adopt this life and would come to our brothers, let them send them to their Ministers provincial, (equivalent precept) to whom alone, and not to others, is the permission to receive friars conceded.*

20. [Responsibilities of the Ministers]

Scrupulous Brother – Can [63r] anyone other than the ministers accept candidates to the Order?

Mature Brother – The doctors of the Order say that according to the Rule this belongs exclusively to the Ministers, who by means of a privilege granted by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas III in § *Sed quoniam* and other documents this can be committed to others with the advice of the Father discreet. Innocent IV says that this was given to the Vicars of the Ministers, who did not enjoy this in virtue of their office as vicars, but by a privilege that was approved by Eugenius IV and Calistus III. Nicholas III and Martin V add: that the Minister should be careful not to grant this to others indiscriminately and in general. This shows how important acceptance into the Order is. Hugh backs this up observing that there is a need to take into account the circumstances at the time, since at the beginning there were few places and the ministers could easily perform this duty personally. However with the growth of the Order sometimes they could do nothing without causing great damage to the Order and to souls but pass it on to others,. This was never the intention of Saint Francis.²³³

21. [The Intention of Saint Francis Regarding Vocations to the Order]

588 *Scrupulous Brother* – What was the intention of Saint Francis when he commissioned reception into the Order to the Ministers exclusively?

Mature Brother – The companions of Saint Francis used to say that Christ had revealed to him that many would enter the Order who had been called by the devils and

this martyr? He could have referred to many others who suffered in defense of their purity. Perhaps it was 25 October 1536 when he write this page.

²³² Bernardine of Lampedonia identifies the source like this: *Epist. 54 ad Furiam: De viduitate servanda* (PL 22, 553, n. 7), but this does not correspond to the citation.

²³³ For these different quotations cf. Nicholas III, *Exiit*, art. XVIII, 1-2 (*Seraph. Leg. Textus originales*, 217s; FA:ED III, pp. 781-782); Innocent IV, *Ordinem vestrum; Constitutiones et declarationes Martini V*, cap. II (*Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 13); Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 99.

not Christ, not to observe the rigour of the Rule and its harshness but to relax it and contaminate it with worldliness.²³⁴ Thus great detriment and ruin to regular observance had to follow upon careless acceptance. Yet he wished that this be done with great maturity and so he commissioned this exclusively to the Ministers, so that by conscious deliberation and exertion those who were unworthy would not be accepted. [63v]. Truly it was because of this that great ruin followed and continued to follow.

Text: *Let the ministers indeed examine them diligently concerning the Catholic Faith and the sacraments of the Church. [...]*²³⁵

Note that we must explain the Rule and its perfection and importance, and the statutes and ordinances about fasts and other rigours of religious life, especially the three main vows and their binding force, as set out by Capistran regarding chapter two.²³⁶ Many improper things are taking place because this is not observed at present. Some say that if they had known such things they would have not taken on this responsibility, and they are always unhappy [...].²³⁷

It was Saint Francis' intention that those who came to the Order would give all their possessions to the poor if they could. In the Marches he was unwilling to receive someone who had given his possession to his relatives, saying that he had defrauded the poor [...].²³⁸

589 *Scrupulous Brother* – On occasions I have seen the brothers themselves giving advice to young men concerning the distribution of their goods. What do you think of that?

Mature Brother – I have already told you that they act against the intention of the Rule and of Saint Francis. This was, as his companions indicate, that above all the brothers should be on their guard not to set an example of avarice to those who come to embrace this [64v] Gospel love by being concerned about the things of this world, since they gain first impressions, both for good and for evil, from those who receive them into the Order.²³⁹ They should show no attachment whatsoever in word or action towards temporal things. Acting otherwise they think of themselves as spiritual children when they are children of perdition.²⁴⁰ Therefore if they want to have God's blessing and that of

²³⁴ Cf. *Conf.* IV, 445, 1-16; *ChrXXIVGen* in *AF* III, 27: *Legenda antica. Nuova fonte biografica di S. Francesco d'Assisi tratta da un codice vaticano*, ed. Minocchi, Firenze 1904, c. 22, p. 47s; *Vita del povero et humile servo de Dio Francesco*, ed. M. Bigaroni, c. 23. p. 72; A. Clarenò, *HTrb.*, 51-54.(Burr and Daniel pp. 47-49).

²³⁵ Cf. LR 2, 3 (FA:ED, I, p. 100).

²³⁶ In his *Ordinationes seu constituiones super regulam fratrum Minorum* (1443) which were addressed to the Cisalpine observants, chapter 2 (*Spec. Minorum*, pars III, Venetiis 1513, f. 224; or in J. di Grumello, *Miscellanea iuris franciscalis*, Brixiae 1502, f. 155).

²³⁷ The thought has already been expressed in another context. cf. above in connection with note 119 (*n* 529).

²³⁸ Cf. 2C, 81; LMj (FA:ED II, p. 300,); also *Conf.* IV, 148, 36s; 587, 13-21.

²³⁹ What a wealth of experience there is in this observation which is made also by Saint Theresa in her *Fondazioni* (cf. *Opere*, Roma, 1949, 965s, n. 6, 7).

²⁴⁰ A reference to Mt 23, 15 which appeared later in *Const.* 1536, n. 17 (*n*. 171).

Saint Francis and avoid their indignation and curse, they should set an example of virtue especially of the virtues which are to be promised in the Rule.

22. [*Education of young men in the Capuchins*]

590 *Scrupulous Brother* – How do the Capuchins regard these matters?

Mature Brother – As has been said above following the true, simple and absolute intention of Saint Francis.

Scrupulous Brother – Can the brothers accept any of these goods?

Mature Brother - Clement, Martin, the Pisan and others say yes, when there is a need, and the novices donate them spontaneously and are not induced to do so by the brothers for then it would not be lawful.²⁴¹

Note that there must most diligent care taken over the masters of novices to see that they are well prepared, spiritual, devout, enthusiastic and practical, that they teach divine things, the Rule and its importance, the declarations, statutes and ordinances of the Order. Many claim to observe the Rule and do not know what it means and live in such ignorance for many years and some even up to their death. They make out that they are spiritual and enthusiastic to quieten their consciences.²⁴²

591 Even professed young friars will be better looked after if they are kept in [65r] regular observance, observing the customs of novices and not contaminated by bad company. Let them not be allowed to develop habits, to send or receive letters without permission or have anything except what has been mentioned above in the first chapter.

Let study be permitted to such a degree that the spirit of holy prayer and devotion is not extinguished. Let them be kept to this in study and other matters so that the style of religious life is not lost immediately after profession. These things were provided for in the old general and provincial statutes composed by the saintly fathers of the Order, when observance flourished in the Order [...] ²⁴³

The intentions of Saint Francis and of Christ were that those who were not suitable for religious life and did not have a loving heart and desire for holiness were not

²⁴¹ The author is relying on the authority of the Bull *Exivi* (1312) issued by Clement V, the Constitutions of Martin of 1430, and the commentary on the Rule by Bartholomew of Pisa in *De conformitate* (AF IV, 369-425), repeatedly reprinted separately under the title; *Declaratio magistri Bartholomaei de Pisis super regulam* (for example in *Spec. Minorum*, Venetiis 1513, pars III, f. 52va-68ra). Other authors cited include; The Four Masters, Hugh of Degne, Saint Bonaventure, a short commentary on the Rule called "dei Padri dell'ordine", *Serena Conscientia* which is another anonymous commentary etc., texts collected in compilations of the Franciscan juridical sources which are cited at various times.

²⁴² Compare this passage to the Albacina Statutes and the 1536 Constitutions with regard to the duties of the Master of Novices (cf. *Alb.* n. 36; *Const.* 1536 n. 17;).

²⁴³ John of Fano could have had the old general and provincial statutes with him in the anthologies of *Spec. Minorum* or *Monumenta* already mentioned where he could have read the general statutes of Narbonne (1260), of Assisi (1316), of Benedict XII (1336), of William Farinerio (1354), of Martin V (1430), of Barcellona (1451), of Saint John Capistrano (1443), of Barcellona (1451), of Alexander IV (1500) and Julius II (1508) etc.

to be received. Therefore he wanted them to be strongly tested regarding character and conduct. That is why he decreed a year of probation [...].²⁴⁴

592 Text: *Having truly finished the year of probation let them be received to obedience, promising to observe always this life and Rule.*

The Pisan says that since the vow made at profession is a solemn vow it should be made in public in the presence of the brothers, placing one's hands in the hands of the one who is receiving the vows, on bended knees, with the head uncovered and the mind raised to God. Before that he should be asked whether he needs more time to test the rigour of the Order.²⁴⁵

Note that it belongs to the ministers to receive profession and that they can delegate it to others. However they should consider well to whom they delegate it since because of this many have left the Order causing damage to and prejudice against the order [...].

23. [*The clothing of the brothers and the intention of Saint Francis*]

593 *Scrupulous Brother* – Can we know the specific intention of Saint Francis on this matter?

Mature Brother – On many occasions when Saint Francis was asked about his intention regarding [67v] the use of things, he replied that his intention was that the brothers have only a tunic with a hood and one without, cord, underwear, breviary and nothing else.²⁴⁶

Text: *And let those who are driven by necessity be able to wear footwear. [...] that is they may not wear shoes unless forced by evident necessity.*²⁴⁷

Note that what is meant by shoes, according to the Supreme Pontiffs and the doctors of the Order, is footwear made of rope which encloses the foot. Thus socks or short woollen socks and the like are not regarded as shoes.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ In practice when the young brothers had concluded the year of noviciate, they continued to lead a life identical to that in the noviciate for reasons that have been noted here and expressed in a summary manner in *Alb. n. 37 and Const. 1536 n. 19*. Even the study which the young brothers could engage in was subordinated to the life of prayer, and "the life of the spirit", following the intention of Saint Francis (cf. the Rule and the Letter to Saint Anthony and the *Const. 1536 n. 123*. This recommendation concerning the serious formation of the young brothers which should include being available to obey and which refers to the days of original fervour may be a gentle reference to the present decadence in this area.

²⁴⁵ Cf. *Conf. IV*, 391, 393. – This means that the novice may lengthen the time of noviciate before profession.

²⁴⁶ Cf. LR 2, 15; 3, 2; AC 101 and 102; 2MP, 2 and 3 (FA:ED I, pp. 101, 101; II, pp. 204-207; III, pp. 255-257).

²⁴⁷ LR 2, 16 (FA:ED I, p. 101). The text adds that this is an equivalent precept.

²⁴⁸ This is why the brothers wore them. For example who will not remember using "short woollen socks" which in some places were called "calcagnetti"? cf. *Quat. Mag.*, 135; *Spec. Minorum* cit. pars. III, f. 16vb: "Items of footwear cannot be strictly called shoes unless they enclose the foot. It would appear that neither socks nor short woollen socks are regarded as shoes."

Note also that regarding chapter 2 the Four Masters²⁴⁹ say that going barefoot pertains to the manner of regular life and to the purity of the Rule. However to wear some sort of footwear made of leather²⁵⁰ or other material is lawful with permission in cases of necessity. Therefore to wear sandals or socks is subject of minor dispensation but on the other hand wearing socks or short woollen socks from the ankles to the knees without covering the foot, as the brothers north of the Alps²⁵¹ do is the subject of a major dispensation. Wearing shoes and socks requires the highest dispensation and demands maximum necessity. However to wear top-boots and boots reaching half way up the leg is not appropriate for one who professes Gospel poverty.²⁵²

594 *Scrupulous Brother* – Under what necessity can the brothers wear shoes?

Mature Brother – The Four Masters, Peter John and others²⁵³ say that not every necessity excuses only that [68r] without which something becomes impossible. This does not include ordinary foot discomfort resulting from the cold, or an excessive concern about causing injury for which there is no apparent evidence. When assessing this necessity one has to take into account the person, whether he is weak, sick or old etc; the place, whether one can travel a long and difficult journey without danger; the importance of the activity and the like. The necessity should also be urgent for it to be lawful to wear shoes. Therefore non-essential activity should be immediately put aside, especially going on holiday or because of relatives or friends that would deviate from the style and purity of the Rule that was observed so strictly by the ancients as Hugh says.²⁵⁴ The Pisan says: Note that not all necessity is to be considered evident, but when a brother requests a letter of obedience he should first explore the situation to see whether he can abstain and not go ahead without investigating first.²⁵⁵ See Saint Bonaventure regarding chapter two of the Rule where he proves that Jesus Christ and the Apostles went barefoot.²⁵⁶

Note that this is observed perfectly among the Capuchins [...]

Brother Leo²⁵⁷ said; that it was the intention of Saint Francis that the brothers go barefoot [68v] in summer and during winter it was lawful to wear socks, since the foot would appear to be naked but no other footwear could be worn lawfully, whether made of cloth or anything else.

²⁴⁹ "Calciari vero dispensationis est Regulae in necessitate, non calciari vero regularis est forma vitae. Videtur tamen aliis quod omne quod ad calciamentum petinet dispensationis est minoris, ut in soleis, aut maioris, ut in soleis et caligis, aut maxime, ut in sotularibus et caligis". (*Ibid.*)

²⁵⁰ "corio" is an old fashioned word for "cuoio".

²⁵¹ That is the Observants in France..

²⁵² The Conventuals wore shoes. "Borsacchini" were boots that reached half way up the leg.

²⁵³ *Quat. Mag.* 135; *Olivi Expositio* 133; *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 16va, 110 rb.

²⁵⁴ Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 110, 30-32; *Spec. Minorum* pars III, f. 36rb.

²⁵⁵ *Conf.* IV, 395, 26-28. This ides is taken up again in *Alb.* n. 23 and *Const.* 1536, n. 26.

²⁵⁶ Saint Bonaventure *Expositio* (*Op. omnia* VIII, 402 n. 17; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 22vab-23ra).

²⁵⁷ I have not identified this quotation. See above, note 89 concerning *L'amore evangelico* and n. 482.

Text: *And let all the friars wear cheap clothing*²⁵⁸

595 *Scrupulous Brother* – Since I have a doubt about ordinary clothing, I beg of you to explain what cheapness means.

Mature Brother – Clement V says that it is determined by the price and the colour according to the circumstances of the country. This turns it back to the judgement of the consciences of the superiors, in such a way that cheap clothing reflects poverty, asperity and not being worth much. Martin V says the same, as do many others. Brother Hugh adds that the material should not appear to be fine with respect to its softness, thickness or costliness.²⁵⁹

Thus Saint Francis used to say in great sorrow; “A time will come when strictures will be relaxed, and tepidity will hold such sway, that sons of a poor father will not be the least ashamed to wear even velvet cloth, just changing the colour”.²⁶⁰

Some argue that fine clothes last longer and thus are more in accord with poverty because the brothers will not have to clothe themselves so often. I reply that it is true that they do last longer, but this is not more worthy of praise considering our state, indeed it is more detestable as we shall see. The Scripture curses costly clothes and the Lord says in Saint Matthew 11 that those who dress in soft clothes are in the houses of kings, that is, they belong to the earthly kingdom not the heavenly. Matthew 11 commends John and his cheap clothing. Luke 16 condemns the [69r] Rich Man for his costly clothing.²⁶¹

Again some say that it is a scandal to wear cheap clothing in the presence of seculars mainly because they are an embarrassment to those not wearing them. I reply that it is not a scandal, what is more it sets a good example and incites to penance and contempt of the world, and, if indeed it is a scandal to some who are incapable of recognising the importance of our state and Rule, the scandal is on their side and not to be considered, indeed, by those who know about our Rule, it would be scandalous to wear soft and costly clothing, and if those who make such criticisms dressed as the Rule commanded they would not criticise as they do.²⁶²

596 Text: *and be able to patch these with sack-cloth and other pieces with the blessing of God.[...]*.²⁶³

²⁵⁸ The author points out that, according to the Supreme Pontiffs, this is an equivalent precept.

²⁵⁹ These characteristics which were first established by the Four Masters (*Expositio* ed. Cit. 136), were adopted by successive Franciscan legislation and repeated in the declarations and expositions of the Rule. cf. *Alb.* n. 26; *Const 1536* n. 21.

²⁶⁰ 2MP 15; 2C 69 (FA:ED III p. 267; II, p. 293); *Conf.* V, 105, 4-6.

²⁶¹ Cf. Lk 16, 19; Mt 11, 7-8; The comparison with John the Baptist is also present in *Const 1536* n. 12 and is repeated by LMJ 5, 2 (FA:ED II, p. 561) and by Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, ed. Cit. 112; and *Disputatio inter zelatorem paupertatis et inimicum domesticum eius*, in A. Sisto, *Figure del primo francescanesimo in Provenza*, Firenze 1971, 358s; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 131s. The penitential tone of the experience of the reform by the early Capuchins coincides perfectly with the prophetic image of the Precursor of Christ, who set an example for their preaching. cf. *Const. 1536*, n. 118.

²⁶² This response “ad hominem” is still valid.

²⁶³ LR 2, 17 (FA:ED I, p. 101).

Scrupulous Brother – What is the meaning of these words?

Mature Brother – Ubertino understands them to mean that there should be close similarity between the material that the brothers wear and sack-cloth so that when a piece of sack-cloth is attached to the habit there appears to be no clash rather it matches, which is what Saint Francis and his companions saw.²⁶⁴

Scrupulous Brother – With respect to this matter do you have anything salient to say about the intention of Saint Francis?

Mature Brother – When Saint Francis decreed that their cincture should be cheap, that they should go about barefoot, he said that they should dress in inexpensive clothing and that they could patch it with sack-cloth (such things are characteristic of very poor people and absolutely low-priced), he intended that the habit would be so cheap that that it would match what was affirmed. This is contained in the declarations of the fathers of the order.²⁶⁵

The Pisan²⁶⁶ says that Saint Francis stated that to dress in soft clothing [69v] was a sign that the spirit was extinct and that the devil had greater advantage over those who dressed like this. Therefore from beginning to end he wore nothing else than the habit with a hood, and this was made of cheap, rough and crinkled material and with the colour of insipid grey or brown, reminiscent of our Lord hanging on the cross,²⁶⁷ which was patched inside and out, very close fitting, without any ornamentation. This is what he intended the habit of the friar minor to be so that he might preach contempt for the world and for human glory even by his dress and reproduce the shape of the cross, mortification of the flesh, love for poverty and deficiency and not of show, sensuality or superfluity. Consult fruit 16 in the *Conformity* and you will find wonderful things, under the heading *Franciscus regulator*, where there many examples and unspeakable judgements against those who want to wear costly and ornate habits. I believe it to be certain that such persons are an abomination to God and to Blessed Francis and will find themselves being very unhappy at the time of their death.

597 Our Farther Saint Francis used to say that the brothers should abhor fine clothing and he strongly rebuked and reprehended those who wore it and to embarrass them by his example he wanted his habit all covered in sack-cloth and when he died he wanted his shroud to be covered with sack-cloth.²⁶⁸ The Pisan says that it is a great shame for a friar minor to wear soft and ornate clothing since more than any other religious he has promised to observe poverty more strictly and it is going outside the footsteps of the father whom he has promised to imitate before God and the saints and when all other

²⁶⁴ Cf. Ubertino da Casale, *Articuli accepti de regula*, ed. F. Ehrle, in *ALKG* 3 (1887) 101,(art. 1, n 7).

²⁶⁵ That is in the *Brevis expositio et verissima intentio Regulae edita a sanctis patribus Ordinis*, in *Monumenta Ord. Min.*, Salamanca 1506, f. 94r-97v; or in other similar collections. This is a strict explanation of the Rule, which is perhaps the work of a Spiritual, which contains 63 precepts. cf. F. Elizondo, *Doctrinales regulae franciscanae expositones usque ad annum 1517*, in *Laurent.* 2 (1961) 485.

²⁶⁶ Cf. 2C 69; 2MP, 15 (FA:ED II, pp. 293-294; and III, p. 267); *Conf.* IV, 148, 17-21; 395s; V, 104s, 25-35.

²⁶⁷ This idea comes from A. Clareno, *HTrb*,221.(Burr and Daniel p 218).

²⁶⁸ Cf. AC 8; 2MP 112 (FA:ED II, p. 121-123; III pp. 360-361).

examples fell short of the mark there remained the comparison to the poverty of our Lord [70r] Jesus Christ and his most holy Mother. See Saint Bonaventure regarding this passage.²⁶⁹

You may see the intention of Saint Francis where he says: "they may patch them with sack-cloth" and when he displays a kind of spiritual joy and gladness, *quasi dicat*: "O you who desire to enjoy divine blessing and love and the friendship of the Only Beloved Son of God strive to be like Him since resembling and being like someone causes friendship not only with respect to the inner habits of virtue but also in outer clothing and garb, why then, he says, beloved children, are you embarrassed to dress cheaply? See how the noblest Son of God out of love for us and to set us an example went about for his whole life cheaply dressed, barefoot, poor and despised. Therefore I beg of you my dearest brothers that in memory of our Lord Jesus Christ that you wear cheap clothing for your whole life. While you can still patch it with sack-cloth and other pieces do not look for other clothing, nor buy it for money, since if he who was the Son of God deigned to become poor for love of us and to set an example how could we be imitating him by wearing many new and soft clothes? How could we who are mortal and shabby be ashamed to patch them? However I heartily and earnestly beg those who are burning with love and the memory of such kindness to continue to use this external cheap and despised habit because the most kind Lord set the pattern for our habit and our love for harshness and scorn not only by his exterior habit but also by his pale, bruised and broken most holy body. Therefore let my brothers who desire [70v] to observe the purity of the Rule know that while the habit can be patched and thus protect them from the cold, they should be satisfied with it and it is never permitted to spend money to buy any other

²⁷⁰

598 Saint Francis used to say that this was his intention and that of the Rule, as his companions²⁷¹ used to state. Peter John says that Saint Francis foresaw that as in other Orders such patching might appear to be insincere and not in line with uniformity and might be judged as such by some of our knowledgeable brothers who recognise exalted things more quickly than they do humble things. Just to exclude something like this he said; "they may patch them", etc. This is what they said.²⁷²

Saint Bonaventure says that Saint Francis added God's blessing since he who becomes foolish to the world and despised becomes precious to God.²⁷³ Peter John says: "Since patching is an excess of abjection, derided by those who are proud, Saint Francis

²⁶⁹ Cf. Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio* (*Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 23rab; *Op. omnia* VIII, 405a-406b); *Conf. V*, 104; LMJ 5, 2 (FA:ED II, pp. 561-562).

²⁷⁰ Here John of Fano allows himself to be carried away by his seraphic fervour, copying from *L'amore evangelico* (cf. above n. 482).

²⁷¹ Cf. 2MP 15; 122; 113 (FA:ED III, pp. 267; 370; 362); *Conf. V*, 104, 3-19; A Clarenò, *HTrb.* 221s. (Burr and Daniel p. 218).

²⁷² Cf. Peter John Olivi, *Expositio*, (note 189), 134, 10-14; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 110vr.

²⁷³ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio*, c. 2, n.24. (*Op. omnia* VIII, 405b; *Spec. Minorum* cit. F. 23ra).

added; 'with God's blessing', as if to say: if they do this with a humble heart they shall merit God's special blessing."²⁷⁴

Once when Saint Francis met a poorly dressed man he said to his companion: "Truly I felt great shame at the sight of this poor man since he is such a contrast to our poverty and I was very ashamed to see him like this since I have chosen Lady Poverty to be my spiritual and material wealth, and news of this has gone out throughout the whole world and yet others observe it better than I do."²⁷⁵ In any case, my son, I have stated the intention of Saint Francis; you do as God inspires you.

599 *Scrupulous Brother* – Certainly the intention of Saint Francis with regard to clothing is very strict and quite different [71r] from the common usage. May we follow the community with a good conscience?

Mature Brother – At different times the community has and does make great changes to clothing.²⁷⁶ Different Provinces dressed differently. One continually sees rigour and scruple over poverty being narrowed down; even set aside, both with regard to buying fine, soft material and also with regard to the cut and amplitude of the length of the habit, the width of the sleeves and hood with much adornment in dressing and other extras and comforts. Often new material is bought when there is no need and extra clothing is stored. All such things are not only contrary to the intention of Saint Francis, but were cursed and abominable as was said above. They are also contrary to the declarations of the doctors of the Order and of the Supreme Pontiffs including Martin V.²⁷⁷ It is safer to follow the intentions of Saint Francis and of the Rule, which we may ascertain from the wording, and from the material that he and his companions wore and then we will not err.

May the Lord be praised and continually thanked for allowing us to wear this most holy habit which our Seraphic Father wore, in which he received the sacred stigmata and in which he died. His companions and Saint Anthony, Saint Louis, Saint Bonaventure and the entire Order always wore this habit over a period of six years at the time when it was represented by the golden head, in the vision of the statue, and was at the height of perfection and sanctity.²⁷⁸

600. Although many see it as a great embarrassment and complain saying that it is too [71v] ugly and horrible and belongs to mad people and provokes laughter, I am more

²⁷⁴ Cf. note 272. – This insistence on the cut and appearance of the style of dress was intended to forcefully signify interior spiritual poverty.

²⁷⁵ Cf. 2MP 17; LMj 7,6; 2C 84 (FA:ED III, p. 268; II, p. 581; p. 302); *Conf.* V, 111, 33-38.

²⁷⁶ With regard to the evolution of the Franciscan habit see *Lexicon cap.* 115s (under the word *Habitus minoriticus*). The early Capuchin chroniclers dedicated many pages to this subject.

²⁷⁷ In the Constitutions of 1430 which are known as "Martin's Constitutions".

²⁷⁸ This idea comes from Ubertino da Casale and A. Clareno, *HTrb*, ed. Cit., 221s and 27-29 (Burr and Daniel pp. 218 and 21-24) by way of *Conf.*, V. 104, 3s; 163-65. See also ABF 25 (FA:ED III pp. 486-489); *Spec. vitae*, Metis 1509, f. 38v-40v. Related by the chroniclers and fully treated by Mattia Bellintani. The polemical, 'spiritualist' interpretation of the evolution of the Order as involution or decline excludes the way it is used in 2C 82 where the application is positive referring to the different parts of the statue as representative of the various virtues of Saint Francis.

contented to imitate my beloved Father and his angelic college²⁷⁹ and their wise foolishness than the present sensual multitude with their foolish wisdom since this is what Saint Paul²⁸⁰ did and strongly exhorts me to do. I would much rather laugh at the mad world and the sensual apparent imitators of gospel perfection than go to hell with them and the Rich Man who dressed in fine clothing. The Lord says that those who dress in soft clothing live in the palaces of kings²⁸¹ and not in the desert and the homes of the poor in imitation of the poor Christ and his Apostles. I am not concerned about passionate words *quia si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem. Dominus autem dissipabit ossa eorum qui hominibus placent.*²⁸²

You should continue to observe what you have promised God in the Rule and follow your Holy Father and the other angelic servants of God. Leave the others to go to death. *Qui habitat in coelis irridebit eos.*²⁸³

24. [Defence of the hood and austerity]

601 *Scrupulous Brother* – I accept that in those days our father Saint Francis and the entire Order dressed as you say that they did. However with regard to the hood do you think that they used the same shape as do the Capuchins?

Mature Brother – Know for certain that they did since they intended to preach contempt of the world even by the habit which they wore. I think they obtained it from the Cistercian Fathers since they still wear it this way. You know well how strict and observant that most worthy [72r] Order has always been.²⁸⁴

In those days Saint Francis and the entire Order wore the hood that we have:

Firstly in the *Conformity fruit 16*, where it says that Francis had a four-sided hood, that had four sides like the one we wear.²⁸⁵

Secondly, all the paintings of Saint Francis and the other brothers, I means the old ones, have this pointed hood, as can be seen in all the old churches.

²⁷⁹ That is the first companions of Saint Francis.

²⁸⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 4, 10.

²⁸¹ Remarks have already been passed above in note 261.

²⁸² Gal 1, 10; Ps 53, 6. – Because it was different to other Franciscan habits, the Capuchin habit became a sign of contradiction.

²⁸³ Ps 2, 4.

²⁸⁴ AC 8 mentions that on his deathbed Francis wanted to be dressed “in unbleached cloth the colour of ashes, similar to that made by the Cistercian monks in the region beyond the Alps”, (FA:ED II, p. 122), while 2MP 112 only says “monks’ cloth the colour of ashes” (FA:ED III, p. 360). The early Capuchin chroniclers were of the opinion that the Capuchin habit was patterned on the old monastic habit particularly that of the Cistercians (cf. *MHOC* II, 87, 359, 512 etc.). Thus for the early Capuchins the defence of the habit served to demonstrate that we are not dealing with an innovation but a return to the origins.

²⁸⁵ *Conf.* V, 104. The expressions “cappuccino quadrato”, “capucinum quadrum” are taken from A Clarenò, *HTrb.* 221s. (Burr and Daniel pp. 218ff) cf. H. Felder, *Unsere “viereckige” kapuze.* In *St. Fidelis* 15 (1928) 11-14; A. Wagner, *Unser Ordenskleid und die “viereckige” Kapuze,* *ibid.* 124-127, 153-155; E. d’Alençon, *Del cappuccino dei frati minori,* in *MF* 24 (1924) 185-187.

Thirdly, there are still many Capuchins who wear it that shape and I have seen Brother Ruffino's little hood in St Clare's in Assisi, and the habit of blessed Rainerio with this hood in Saint Francis' in Borgo San Sepolcro, and that of Blessed Philip the Long in Saint Francis' in Monte Eclino, and that of Blessed Simone in Spoleto; in S. Simono a hood belonging to Saint Francis and in Rome in Santi Apostoli, one in S. Marcello, two in the Bishop's residence in Rieti and at L'Verna and there are many in other places.²⁸⁶

May God be praised for deigning to renew within the world this precious treasure and his glory through his good servants the Capuchins, and for allowing them to rediscover and promote it together with saintly brothers to the honour of the Seraphic Father in contempt of the world!²⁸⁷ [...]

602 *Scrupulous Brother* – Where did the brothers discover the form of the caperone which the Capuchins make the novices wear?

Mature Brother – In the Sacro Convento in Assisi where the relics are preserved (as you can see) many of the brothers have seen it and tried it on.

603 *Scrupulous Brother* – What do you think with regard to sleep?

Mature Brother – The Rule does not mention this. However as you know the "family"²⁸⁸ use sacks of straw. Martin V refers to Fariniero in chapter 2 who says that healthy brothers should not sleep on featherbeds nor use sheets (from which it is concluded that mattresses are prohibited), nor use feather pillows or feather head rests beneath their heads.²⁸⁹

Some of these poor little Capuchins sleep on bare planks; others put a mat on top of a table. Some put a little bit of straw or hay or fern between the table and the mat [...]

²⁹⁰

Note that Martin V and Fariniero prohibit linen or cotton shirts and because of this it is not lawful to wear pieces of linen clothing or towels.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Such evidence from paintings and relics was stressed by the Capuchins in defence of the habit with the hood as an external sign of the reform. The early chroniclers dwelt on this topic, as, for example, in the report of the confrontation between Brother Lousi of Reggio and the Observants in the palace of the Duke of Nocera (cf. *MHOC* II, 358s) and also in the short chronicles by Giovanni da Terranova and Girolamo da Dinami..

²⁸⁷ We consider this joy over wearing the habit with a hood to be anachronistic whereas for the early Capuchins it was a triumphal mark of the reform. The sign of the reform was a sign of the rediscovery of Saint Francis. It was the wedding garment at the nuptial feast of Saint Francis and Lady Poverty.

²⁸⁸ The Observants.

²⁸⁹ "Item sani fratres in dormitorio culcritis, linteanimibus et pulvinaribus de pluma non utantur." (*Const. Fr. Guilelmi Farinelli*, in *Spec. Minorum*, Venetiis 1513, pars III, f. 212va).

²⁹⁰ Cf. *Alb.* n. 54 (n. 135); *Const* 1536 n. 25 (n. 185).

²⁹¹ Cf. *Const. Fr. Guilelmi Farinerii* cit.

Chapter III

Concerning the Divine Office and Fasting and how the Brothers ought to go about in the World.

604 Text: *Clerics are to perform [faciant] the divine office according to the Ordo of the Holy Roman Church,*²⁹²

25. [Liturgical prayer and mental prayer]

Scrupulous Brother – What does the term Divine Office mean?

Mature Brother – The Four Masters²⁹³ say that it refers to both the things contained in the breviary and those in the missal. Therefore the brothers should carefully study the rubrics and observe them inviolably. They should also observe uniformity in the office and Mass any variation [73r] to which disturbs the peace of the community and is a scandal to seculars. [...]

605 *Scrupulous Brother* – Have we any concession regarding the Divine Office?

Mature Brother – Innocent VIII permitted that when a brother omitted something from the Divine Office, but not through malice, he could make up for this by saying any Psalm, or Our Father, or Ave Maria and Alexander IV permitted the same [...]²⁹⁴ Leo X allowed brothers who were legitimately occupied to say the office ahead of time or later without scruple. This meant that they could say Matins before midnight and the Hours during the day up to Vespers. It sufficed that in that case they consider saying them with more devotion and quiet. Note that whoever is not impeded or occupied should say the Office at the proper time. It is better for anyone who is occupied to anticipate the time because it is prudent to anticipate rather than delay, which amounts to negligence [...]²⁹⁵

606 *Scrupulous Brother* – Are the brothers always obliged to say the office in the choir?

²⁹² The author adds that this is an equivalent precept.

²⁹³ *Quat. Mag* 137s.

²⁹⁴ Cf. *Compendium privilegiorum fratrum Minorum et aliorum fratrum mendicantium ordine alphabetico congestum*, Venetiis 1532, see *Officium divinum* f. 190v; "Innocentius 8 concessit quod quando fratres minores dimittunt aliquod de divino officio, non ex dolo, possint supplere dicendo aliquem psalmum, vel orationem dominicam, vel Ave Maria".

²⁹⁵ "Idem Leo concessit, quod quando fratres praedicti habent aliquas occupationes, possint sine conscientiae scrupulo antepone sive postponere officium divinum, ut puta dicendo Matutinum ante mediam noctem quacumque hora voluerint et alias horas de mane usque de vespere exclusive, etiam si occupatio non sit multum necessaria; sed satis est quod cogitent tunc devotius ac quietius dicere" (*Ibid.*, 192r).

Mature Brother – Martin V says that those brothers who do not have a reasonable excuse should assemble in the choir before the office begins to prepare their hearts for the Lord [...] ²⁹⁶

Scrupulous Brother – Quote some good document about this for those who are scrupulously devout.

Mature Brother – I say that a brother should recite the office like an angel of God and always think that he is standing before the eyes of the divine majesty. Let him go into the choir at the first sound of the bell for office, and after genuflecting, prepare his heart for the Lord, observing all the ceremonies and rubrics with the greatest diligence. Let him stand upright look at the book with the highest thoughts, making the profound bows, being mindful of the brother who did not bow at the *Gloria Patri*, who appeared after his death, while he was in Purgatory, standing on a very high pillar in the middle of the ocean and having to bow one hundred times during the day and a hundred times during the night in the greatest agony and torment, in fear of falling until he had completed the inclinations that had been omitted. ²⁹⁷

He should recite the psalms with the highest devotion and attention with uncovered head at the prescribed times [75r] and when the office is finished he should not leave the church immediately but stay for a while to praise the Lord [...] ²⁹⁸

607. Never omit the Office for the Dead when it is prescribed in the calendar. With respect to the brothers who have died remember the brother who was in Purgatory in very great torment and God applied the Masses which were offered for him to the brothers for whom he had failed to offer the Masses he should have offered as he revealed following his death. ²⁹⁹

When you need to say the office outside choir, say it standing still. If you are forced to walk, summon up all the devotion that you can. It is better to say the office at home, before going on a journey. When Saint Francis was on a journey while he was sick he used to dismount from his donkey in pouring rain and standing still said the office and he used to say to his companion: "My dear brother, if the body looks for shade, springs and other comforts when it wants eat in quite and repose much more should the soul take its food by saying the office with devotion." ³⁰⁰ Never omit the office of devotion. ³⁰¹ At night do not leave the church after Compline. Pass in front of the Blessed Sacrament with the greatest reverence, genuflect and say: *Adoramus te Christe.* ³⁰²

²⁹⁶ "Ante missarum et horarum principia, fratres omnes quos caus rationabilis non excusat, ad chorum convenient Donino preparaturi cords sua"). *Constituiones et declarations Martini V*, in *Spec. Minorum*, p. III, f. 13vab).

²⁹⁷ Cf. *Conf.* IV, 451.

²⁹⁸ Reciting the psalms with head uncovered and standing is done in imitation of Saint Francis. cf. note 300.

²⁹⁹ The story is told in the Conformities. cf. *Conf.* IV, 451.

³⁰⁰ Cf. 2C 96; LMJ 10, 6; 2MP 94 (FA:ED II, p. 311; 609; III, p. 341). *Conf.* IV, 601, 21s; V, 87, 35s; 254, 19-28.

³⁰¹ The 'officio di gratia' is an office of devotion such as the *Benedicta* or the Office of Our Lady and others (cf. *Alb.* N. 3.). These were suggestions that became customs among the Capuchins.

³⁰² Note how the author insists on preparation and thanksgiving. Compare this with *Const 1536*, n. 31-32 ..

608 When a brother wants to undertake a journey let him first hear Mass. This was the intention of Saint Francis as his first companions indicate.³⁰³ Those who are priests who want to undertake a journey should do as was said above.

On the greatest solemnities let them prepare to receive grace from God and indulgences³⁰⁴ with the greatest care, abstinence, vigils, and prayers

Those who serve Mass should observe modesty and maturity when going to serve and do so with all devotion since they are performing a work of angles.³⁰⁵

609 Let prayer be always said in the church with the others but better than the others since it is one of the main foundations of the spiritual building. Saint Francis placed great hope in prayer because in prayer the soul is united to God, receives divine illumination, exposes our heart's desire to God, receives grace, strengthens all good resolutions and makes marvellous profit. Therefore this is often recommended and repeated in the Rule.³⁰⁶

610 He prayed willingly with his arms extended as his companions say.³⁰⁷ He had a special love for the saving sign of the cross and held it in his heart and he earnestly begged the brothers to pray and he used to say: "It is necessary that we conform ourselves to the Son of God interiorly [76r] and exteriorly. Therefore like the most pious Redeemer, while he hung on the cross to clear away our sins and to reconcile us miserable sinners to the Father with his arms spread out in the form of a cross he often raised his eyes to heaven exposing the wounds, pain and anxiety he suffered. His tearful prayers were pleasing to God as the Apostle says.³⁰⁸ Thus we will be true lovers of the Son of God in the observance of this gospel Rule and be interiorly conformed to him through the real observance of godlike virtues, especially of the three which are the main foundation of our perfection, namely obedience, poverty and chastity and exteriorly conformed to him through shabby clothing and austerity of lifestyle. Then when praying let us extend our arms in the shape of a cross and raise our eyes to the Father of mercies in memory of his crucified only beloved Son, displaying before him through the shape of a cross an image similar to another crucified Christ, and by bearing his stigmata spiritually in our hearts through heartfelt sorrow and compassion towards the most bitter cross which he carried in his body, our prayer and petitions will be pleasing to God and bring most efficacious graces. This will occur through the spiritual and physical image of his most beloved Son that he will behold in us since by that raising up of our arms in the shape of a cross the eternal Father always sees the image and likeness of his crucified Son in us. Therefore his

³⁰³ Cf. *Conf. IV, 624s; especially the Leggenda antica (ed. Minocchi), c. 46, p. 90.* "Camminare" means to walk on a journey.

³⁰⁴ Compare this with *Const 1536*, n. 33.

³⁰⁵ This shows the liveliness of the liturgical life of the early Capuchins

³⁰⁶ We hear an echo of the *Arte de la unione* and the clear reference to two passages in the LR 3, 5 and 10, 10-11 (FA:ED I, p. 101; 105)

³⁰⁷ This method of prayer of Saint Francis is evident in many passages in the Franciscan sources and it was imitated immediately by the Capuchins who greatly admired praying with this attitude. cf. 1C 48; LMJ 10, 4 (FA:ED I, pp. 224-225; II, pp. 607-608).

³⁰⁸ Cf. Heb. 5, 7.

most clement eyes cannot but look upon that image of the cross which will remind him of the extraordinary and inestimable charity which led his most sweet Son to the cruellest death on the cross, an oblation and sweet smelling [76v] offering of gentleness".³⁰⁹

Saint Francis exhorted the brothers to pray with these and similar words [...] ³¹⁰

26. [*Libraries and the use of books*]

611 *Scrupulous Brother* – The use of the breviary is permitted to us by the Rule, is the use of other books allowed?

Mature Brother – As has been said above because the office of preaching has been imposed on us the use of books to fulfil that office is also allowed as Nicholas III says.³¹¹

Innocent IV says that the use of books is to be had in common not individually.³¹² This was the intention of Saint Francis as the Pisan says, quoting Brother Leo to the extent that even breviaries were to be held in common, and not individually. Brother Leo was in danger of drowning just because of the breviary, when others drown because of having many books, as he saw in a vision.³¹³ Ubertino says that Saint Francis used to say expressly that whoever wanted to be a genuine friar minor should not have books or anything else set aside for his own use except the clothing which the Rule permitted. Thus he never wanted to allow any brother, no matter how friendly he was towards him, to have any book for his personal use.³¹⁴

612 The Pisan tells how when Saint Francis returned from overseas a minister asked him about his intention regarding the chapter about poverty. . He replied: "It is my intention that a brother should not have anything more than the habit, tunic, underwear and cord as the Rule states". The minister said: "What am I to do since I have many books?" Saint Francis replied: "I cannot nor do I wish to go against my conscience, nor the perfection of the gospel which we have promised. You wish to appear minor brothers and followers of the gospel, but you do not wish to be such in your actions." Thus following his death he appeared to a brother saying that there never was a brother who had books who following his death was not upset that he had them. See in the

³⁰⁹ Cf. Eph 5,2. – This is the wonderful reason behind the gesture of praying with arms extended like Christ on the cross. It is a splendid example of the concrete, efficacious and spiritual style of John of Fano, that he insists on the inner and outer imitation of Christ, the God-Man, already expressed earlier and also in the *Arte della unione*. This passage draws its inspiration from *L'amore evangelico* 9n. 488).

³¹⁰ Cf. for example, 2MP 72, 85 etc. (FA:ED, III, pp. 319-321; 333). Pili recasts and enlarges his interpretation of Franciscan sources and so it is often difficult to identify a quote that adheres to the text exactly.

³¹¹ Nicholas III, *Exiit*, art II, n. 6 (*Spec. Minorum* pars III, f. 4vb).

³¹² Cf. Bull *Ordinem vestrum* (1245), in *BF*, 399.

³¹³ This event has been mentioned before. cf. *Conf* IV, 190, 192, 397; 2MP 5; L3C 43; 2C 62 (FA:ED, III, p. 259; II, p. 94; 288). See also DBF ch 60; (FA:ED, III, p. 550) and the corresponding part of *The Little Flowers* 36 (FA:ED, III, p. 627); *CHR XXIV Gen.* (AF III, 69); *Verba fr. Conradi*, 5 (ed. P. Sabatier) in *Opus. Cit. Hist.* I, Paris 1903, 377s; A Clareno *Expositio regulae*, 82.

³¹⁴ Cf. *Arbor vitae*, lib. V, 5; also in *Articuli accepti* (above n. 200), n. 13, p. 111.

Conformità, Franciscus regulator, where there is a horrifying sentence passed on those who have books.³¹⁵

613 The ancient preachers had [79r] a small handwritten book or two, without any ornamentation.³¹⁶ The confessors had an examination of conscience book.³¹⁷ I do not know how those who have a number of superfluous books which are ornate in their binding, bookmarks, covers and the like can feel safe, for, contrary to the Rule, such things require money. They are unwilling to lend them to others and so they show that they have dominion over their use. [...] ³¹⁸

27. [*The Divine Office of the brothers and penitential fasting*].

Text: *Let the lay brothers say 24 Our Fathers for Matins* [etc.]

614 [*Mature Brother*] – Note also that they must say the *Hail Marys*, that is, first say the *Our Father* for that Hour and then the other *Hail Marys*, according to the author of the book called *Speculum fratrum Minorum*³¹⁹ Brandolino agrees with this.³²⁰

Note also that in the first Rule Saint Francis imposed on lay brothers that they say seven *Our Fathers* with *Eternal rest* each day for the dead, which they should observe with all diligence, knowing the intention of their saintly Father, even if the later Rule does not say this [...] ³²¹

Text: *And they shall fast* [etc.]. The whole of this text is clear.

Those brothers who followed reasonable suggestions in addition to the fast that was laid down by the Rule and the holy Church observed other fasts such as the Lent of the Holy Spirit, of the Assumption of Our Lady and the Fridays in March eating bread and water. Others ate nothing on these days. They did these and other things to please God.³²²

615 *Scrupulous Brother* – Do you think that whoever does not observe this Lent [Benedetta] sins?

³¹⁵ Cf. 2C 195 and 62; 2MP 3 and 69, A. Clarenò, *HTrb.* II, 5 (Burr and Daniel pp. 40-41); (FA:ED, II, p. 372, 228; III, p. 256-257; 314-315). See also above, note 246 and *Conf IV*, 447 and 591.

³¹⁶ Cf. *Alb* nn. 24 and 27 (nn. 105 and 108;) *Const 1536* n. 116 and 121 (nn. 370 and 377).

³¹⁷ An "interrogatorio" was a manual for confessors containing the questions that they could put to penitents. With regard to confessions in the sixteenth century see Lousi Vereecke, *La confession auriculaire au XVI^e siècle. Crise et renouveau*, in *Studia milanesi di confessione editi tr ail 1474 e il 1523*, in *AFH* 65 (1972) 107-156.

³¹⁸ Words that make us blush.

³¹⁹ This is the well known anthology which has been cited before. It had two editions; Rouen 1509 and Venice 1513.

³²⁰ Cf. Bartolomeo di Brendola, known as Brendolino, rif. (+ 1550), *Expositione de la regula di Frati minori*, [Venetia 1533], f. 51r-55r.

³²¹ LR 3, 13 (FA:ED I, p. 101); Brendolino, *Expositione* cit. F. 54 v-55r.

³²² Cf. *Const 1536* n. 50 (n. 230) – The early Capuchins observed the fasts which Saint Francis observed. Cf. *MHOC IV*, 19.

Mature Brother – I do not think so, simply because Saint Francis leaves it up to the brothers freely. However he may sin *per accidens* and according to the circumstances, that is if there was contempt or if he was healthy and robust and did not want to observe it out of gluttony or sensuality. At a General Chapter Saint Bonaventure decreed that to merit the blessing of the Lord and to avoid many inordinate things the brothers should be satisfied with one meal [...].³²³

Note that the obligatory³²⁴ fasts must be observed according to the rigour of the Rule, avoiding any dispensation that is requested without a legitimate reason, and superfluous taking of food³²⁵, since it is easy to break the fast.

28. [*The virtues of the friar minor when he goes about in the world*]

Text: *I counsel, admonish and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ that when they go about in the world [...]*³²⁶

616 [*Mature Brother*] – Since we read that Saint Francis sent the brothers out into the world two by two following the example of the Lord, they must never go alone, nor separate from one another.³²⁷

Text: *They shall not quarrel or argue or judge others.*

Such imperfections are bad in all Christians, especially in minor brothers, both because they should avoid mental disturbance, and because of scandal to seculars. If some injury is done to someone, he should immediately forgive for the love of Jesus Christ and treat the offender better than he treats the other brothers. Whoever does the opposite is not a genuine minor brother.

Text: *But let them be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle and humble, speaking courteously [80v] to everyone as is becoming.*³²⁸

These virtues and all the others should shine collectively in the minor brother, especially when he is out, in word, gesture and conduct and he should be on his guard not to set a bad example to seculars. Thus Saint Francis curses those brothers who set a bad example to seculars saying; “By you, most holy Lord, and by the whole court of Heaven, and by me, your little one, may they be cursed who break up and destroy by their bad example what you built up earlier and destroy by their bad example what you raised up earlier, and do not cease to build up, through holy brothers of this Order”. [...]³²⁹

³²³ Decree of the rulings of the General Chapter of Narbonne (1260), n. 3, which later became of the General Constitutions of Paris (1292), IV, 1 (ed. M. Bihl, in *AFH* 34 [1941] 59, n. la).

³²⁴ “di debito” means “obligatory”.

³²⁵ “colazioni” means “taking of food”.

³²⁶ LR 3, 1 (FA:ED I, p.102). *Admonitio est*, Pili specifies that it is an admonition.

³²⁷ Cf. 1C 29; LMJ 3, 7; 2MP 65 (FA:ED I, 207; II, p.546; III, pp. 308-310); *Conf. IV*, 399, 5s.

³²⁸ LR 3, 12 (FA:ED I, p. 102).

³²⁹ Cf. 2C 156; LMJ 8, 3; 2MP 87 (FA:ED II, p. 348; p. 588; III, p. 336); *Conf. IV*, 588, 20s; 619, 22-30.

617 Text: *they should not ride on horseback unless compelled by manifest necessity or by infirmity (equivalent precept)*, that is we should not ride horses as Saint Bonaventure says and he means neither horses, mules, donkeys nor ride in carriages or the like, and as Saint Bonaventure and Martin V say, except in cases of evident and unavoidable necessity, that is because of a long and difficult journey, or urgent business, illness of the like.³³⁰

Peter John says³³¹ that the brothers are not allowed to ride just for any little thing or for something that is not appropriate to our station, even more for comfort or recreation, or to stir up things or quarrel, or to quest, or to undertake private affairs for themselves or seculars outside of obedience. Even someone who is sick and weak cannot excuse himself of sin on such occasions because journeys and undertakings which are not necessary should be omitted as soon as possible rather than go against the Rule.

Note also that on holidays of obligation they should not travel on horseback or on foot on unnecessary journeys. Both the superior who grants permission and the subject who asks permission sin mortally and even more when [81r] the subject insists. I do not think it to be a legitimate reason, as some do, to travel on the day following the feast if fasting can be observed, especially if the journey is not necessary.

The general statutes³³² state that no one should ride without the permission of the Guardian and Discreets, charging their consciences, prescribing that they have permission in writing and that the Guardians demand to see the written permission. If they have to ride during the journey they are to explain the necessity to the Guardian immediately on arrival at the place and anyone who does otherwise or grants permission is to fast on bread and water for a whole day.

Therefore the brothers should travel on foot and not ride as Jesus Christ did who rode on a donkey only once to fulfil Scripture. When he sent the disciples out into the world to preach he sent them on foot not on horseback.³³³

618 Text: *Whatever house they enter they shall first say: "Peace to this house". And according to the Holy Gospel, they may eat of whatever food is set before them which it is lawful for them to eat.*³³⁴

Saint Bonaventure says³³⁵ that by saying "they may" this does not command but permits. Therefore whoever wishes to abstain from such food is not going against the Rule. It also says "they may" not simply but according to the Holy Gospel, thus modifying the permission so that all is done according to the rule of gospel propriety. This is only permitted to those who have been sent to preach. Thus those who do not go about for the salvation of souls do not have this permission. Since this statement is taken

³³⁰ Cf. Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio*, cap. III, n. 14 (*Op. omnia VIII*); *Const. Et declarationes Martini V*, cap. III (*Spec. Minorum*, pars. III, cit.).

³³¹ Cf. Olivi, *Expositio* 139 s.

³³² *Const. Narb. V*, 18 (*AFH* 34 [1941] 65).

³³³ Cf. Mt 21, 1-11; Mk 16. 15-16.

³³⁴ LR 3, 13-14 (FA:ED I, p. 102). To the greeting of peace the author adds that it is an admonition.

³³⁵ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio* c. III, n. 15 (*Op. omnia VIII*, 411); *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 24 rab.

from chapter ten of Saint Luke: *Eat such things as they give*, and there immediately follows: "Cure [81v] the sick who are there"³³⁶ it is certain that this means spiritually. Thus the way to heal souls is not by using very delicate food which those who send the invitation do not use, because this will not heal souls but through bad example turn them from holiness to infirmity. Thus where those who run the house abstain from meat it is not legitimate for the brothers to eat it, and where there is excess of food the way of gospel holiness is not promoted. This is what Saint Bonaventure says.³³⁷

619 The companions of Saint Francis say that, although he did not simply prohibit eating meat, so that they could eat it outside the house and in the homes of seculars, yet it was not his intention that the brothers eat meat as their common ordinary food when they could live on bread and watered wine and on a common dish of the poor. To do otherwise is not to understand the mind of Saint Francis regarding apostolic life.³³⁸

Thus the things that seculars seek with solicitude are prohibited to us, especially those without which nature can be sustained and which other poor people do not use or even rarely see.³³⁹ Thus to seek out these things or buy them with money would not only be against the purity of the Rule but also a scandal to seculars. Therefore just as the brothers should dress in shabby clothing, so they should eat plain and poor food such as other poor people eat when they are really unfortunate. Saint Francis reprimanded brothers who set out more food than usual at Christmas because of the visit of a minister³⁴⁰, and [82r] he said that they had acted against poverty and on that day the Queen of the world only had bread and the Lord of the universe lay in a crib like a poor person. This is in the *Leggenda antique* [...].³⁴¹

Chapter IV

That the Brothers may not accept Money.

The subject of poverty is raised once again, which is also dealt with in the Short Discourse. However some passages are typical and deserve to be repeated.

29. [Concerning "Syndics Apostolic" and "Spiritual Friends"]

620 *Scrupulous Brother.* – Since this subject is so very important I beg you not to tire in explaining it in detail and at length.

³³⁶ Luke 10, 8-9.

³³⁷ Cf. note 235.

³³⁸ Cf. 2C 78; LMJ 5, 1; 2MP 27; Lfl 4 (FA:ED II, pp. 298-299; p. 560; III, pp. 278-279; p. 573); *Conf.* V, 191.

³³⁹ The standard is set through comparison with those who are in fact poor.

³⁴⁰ That is on the arrival.

³⁴¹ We do not know precisely what John of Fano has in mind in this reference to the 'Leggenda antica'. The event can be found in 2MP 20; AC 74 (FA:ED III, pp. 270-270; II, p. 175). In LMj 7,9 and 2C 61 the event took place at Easter (FA:ED II, pp582-583; p. 287).

Mature Brother. – This cannot be done without becoming tiresome since through the grace of God in this holy reform such things did not happen. These poor little ones suffered very many discomforts in food, clothing, housing and everything in order not to offend God and break the Rule [...].

Scrupulous Brother. – With regard to syndics,³⁴² do you think that Saint Francis intended them?

Mature Brother. – From what has been said especially in the chapter on the subject of poverty and chapter six [...] you will know that Saint Francis did not want recourse to spiritual friends except for the needs of the sick or for the clothing of the brothers. Although these things were necessary there was no [87v] dispensation about accepting money and thus he says; “always providing that they in no way accept coin or money”.³⁴³

However the deceit lies in this that the brothers not being satisfied with few things according to the poverty of Jesus Christ and Saint Francis, but wishing to have excess, approached the Apostolic See alleging that there was great need because of the number of brothers and the like and demanded privileges to accept money that was offered to them in various ways, bequeathed in wills or given for services rendered, Masses and the like, and that they had to employ syndics who had the authority to spend it, administer it and perform other acts of business.³⁴⁴ [...] Although the Rule forbids all acceptance of money when the brothers claimed that it was dangerous to their souls not to have someone to hold and spend these donations, the Pope trusting in their consciences and moved by their insistence allowed them to have syndics since it was a lesser evil for them to accept, hold and spend the money than for the brothers to do so. Thus the Pope acquiesced to their imperfection just as he had also granted the privileges of having large houses, vestments, cemeteries and the like, believing that those who had made these requests did so in good conscience.³⁴⁵

621 As he had foreseen this Saint Francis commanded in his *Testament* that the brothers should not request privileges for any reason. He never wanted anything to do with this³⁴⁶ Even though those who explain the Rule says that we are not obliged to observe this text nevertheless his intention is expressed in these words. Therefore, as the holy brothers did at the beginning of the Order and as the Capuchins [88r] do at present, it is better not to have syndics, or to have them only as is laid down in *Exiit* since this was written after Saint Francis and states that there was consultation with some of the companions of the Saint regarding the Rule and its explanation. It was the intention of Saint Francis that the brothers should live in a poor manner being satisfied with a few

³⁴² “Syndics Apostolic” were charged with the business of the brothers and the administration of money on behalf of the brothers.

³⁴³ LR 4, 3-4 (FA:ED I, p. 102).

³⁴⁴ That is juridical acts.

³⁴⁵ Thus according to John of Fano, who held a rigorist attitude close to that of the Spirituels, the Bulls of Innocent IV, *Quanto studiosius* (1247), of Martin V, *Exultantes in Domino* (1423) and Nicholas IV, *Religionis favour* (1290) are concessions which lessen the rigour of the Rule. cf. BF I, 487s; III, 501s; IV, 190.

³⁴⁶ Cf. Test. 25-26; CA 20; 2MP, 50 (FA:ED I, p. 126; II, p. 134; III, p. 294).

things which were cheap and plain which they could obtain each day by begging and that they avoid all excess in imitation of the poor Jesus Christ and his most holy Mother and the disciples.³⁴⁷ [...]

Thus not even a farthing should ever be deposited in the hands of syndicates or other people. As was said above let them have recourse to spiritual friends only when other inevitable expenses have to be provided for by means of money and which can in no way be provided for by begging. Because they do not act thus very many uncomfortable situations involving unjustifiable recourse develop, relating to depositing money, spending it, having inexcusable comforts, excess and sensuousness, hoarding for unforeseen future needs and excess concern to store up for a whole year under the pretence of providing for the sick and clothing. There follows a sumptuous lifestyle of excess and many other unwarranted things which are completely repugnant to our state.

622 They should not enlist syndicates except as spiritual friends nominated by the brothers and introduced to the main benefactors of the money, since the Supreme Pontiffs, although they have granted syndics by way of dispensation in connection with unspecified alms or bequests or alms that still have proprietors, do not intend to go against the purity of the Rule completely. Because they nominated the syndics they also control them when [88v] in the name of the Roman Church and not of the brothers they hold monetary alms, accept and spend them. All the conditions that apply to spiritual friends apply to syndics and they are to act in the same way. See these conditions which have been explained above in part and will be dealt with more fully below and study them well and you will observe great transgressions in this matter.

Let the guardians and the other brothers be aware that, if the syndic is not aware of it, they may not deposit alms with different people, be they men or women. This is much more malicious if the brother covers himself by saying that he does not want all his brothers to know his business. This is even worse if the person is not a representative (of the brothers) since then the brothers are accepting money through an intermediary. It is evil to deposit money with a family.³⁴⁸ It is worse if they are not representatives (of the brothers) and the syndic knows nothing about it or how it is spent. The brothers cannot say on their own authority: "Go and spend etc. go and pay so much money to such a person." Nor may they buy something and then say: "go and pay". They may not arrange accounts with people. Nor may they demand an account of what money was spent. Nor may they have them count it in their presence. It is worse if they help them to deposit money.

³⁴⁷ "Nos autem qui a teneris annis ad Ordinem ipsum affectus nostros ereximus, in illis succrescendo cum aliquibus eiusdem Confessoris sociis, quibus vita eius et conversatione nota errant, super ipsa Regula et sancta ipsius beati Francisci intentione frequenti collatione tractavimus" Nicholas III, *Exiit qui seminat* in *Spec. Minorum* pars III, f. 3vab; BF III, 404s; FA:ED III, p. 741). Thus John of Fano is not in agreement with the "spiritualist" position of Ubertino da Casale who did not accept the Bull *Exiit* which he considered as "lapis molaris appensus ad ventrem Ordinis" (*Arbor vitae*) and in this matter, as in other things, is more inclined to follow Olivi which shows more balance. (cf. *Expositio* cit. note 189, p. 159; *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 116ra).

³⁴⁸ Or with domestics.

623 These things are prohibited not only by Clement's *Exivi* but also because the spiritual friends, or their representatives, may not do them, much less the syndics or their representatives, or families. The brothers may not buy the things themselves and they say: "Go to so-and-so and he will pay you" or get an invoice³⁴⁹ and take it to someone who holds the money.

They may not say; "Give this money to someone because they are owed so much. Hold this for me or at my discretion, or [89r] do not spend this without asking me, since I have appointed you or wish to nominate someone else".

They may not keep money in the sacristy or in any other place in the house, nor have the keys to strong-boxes as they would then become owners. Nor may they buy things and then say to the creditor: "Come to this place for your money", and then put out a box of money, or a purse saying: "Take what is owing to you" and then place the money in the box either by himself or through another. They may not act this way with domestics, builders, carpenters³⁵⁰ or others whoever they may be who have done work for the brothers.

624 *Scrupulous Brother* – What do you think about having recourse to money for fairs and markets and in Venice etc. for sensual, superfluous fancy things such as garlands, knives, coral or the like to keep them, to give them away etc. and also for excess food stuff³⁵¹ such as spices, confectionary and things to make savouries and the like?

Mature Brother – In the thing that you have mentioned or will mention you can recognise and observe the open transgression and ruin of highest poverty and of the soul, bad example and infinite evil, the indignation of God and of Saint Francis and their curse. This is one of the causes which motivated this reform and separation [...].

625 *Scrupulous Brother* – Is it lawful for the brothers to ask the syndics or their representatives to accept money for Masses or other services?

Mature Brother – I say that it is never lawful to celebrate simply for money since this means giving spiritual things in exchange for temporal and is simony. This should not be done out of greed since this implies *turpe lucrum* and the vice of avarice, or some other kind of notorious evil. It is not lawful to either promise or to make an arrangement to say a number of Masses for a given payment since this is an act of ownership as Saint Bernardine says³⁵² even though they intend to avoid the vice of simony. However without making any agreement or contract and having removed any sinister suggestion of alms or avarice, the brothers may, when requested, say Masses or perform other sacred services out of charity and to satisfy their devotion, not for a price or for payment but out of charity and accept by way of alms what is necessary to support life such as bread, wine, oil and the like, or something for the sick or for clothing. If they do not need these things they may not accept them for future needs [...].

³⁴⁹ Bollettino.

³⁵⁰ "Marangoni" that is carpenters or his apprentice.

³⁵¹ "magnative" edibles.

³⁵² Cf. *Casus proprietatis secundum sanctum Bernardinum*, casus 29 (*Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 171r).

It is better when the brothers are told: "Here is your money, to who should we give it?" to say; "We do not want your money. However if you give us something to live on we will accept it *for the love of God*" and leave it up to the donor.³⁵³

626 Therefore in no way may they accept money for Masses or for services except as mentioned above. Nor may they say: "Give it to so-and-so who is the syndic or his representative"; or "I will send it to your family who will give it to you", indicating an slot or box or altar lifting up the cloth themselves and covering the money with it, not in the sacristy or outside, nor say: "Put it where you like" [...].

When wax, linen cloth and the like are offered for saying Masses and the brothers need these things for the house they may accept them as alms as long as no other arrangement has been entered into, accepting as much as needed and no more; but not with intent to sell them or have them sold or bartered, or to pay debts with them since this would be to accept money contrary to the Rule. The brothers may use wax, cloth or funeral drapes³⁵⁴ when they are needed, but not sell them or have them sold etc, as has been said. Great danger is evident in such cases and in many more like them and there are many transgressions of the Rule.

Note that when the brothers say Masses outside the house in the churches of others [92v] or villages or castles and say to those who want to give them money "We do not accept money but give it to that person" indicating someone who will accept it they commit a great evil and I believe that they sin mortally in doing this as does the guardian who orders such a thing since they accept money against the Rule having it placed in the hand of someone else on their authority. Often they accept this money for future needs. Taking no notice of *Exiit* they display inordinate avarice and attachment to money, because if there was no hope of being paid the guardians would not have sent them and they would not have gone [...].

627 *Scrupulous Brother* – Therefore should they forfeit this money and bring harm upon the place?

Mature Brother – Damage to the soul is the greater thing. Augustine says *lucrum in aecha, damnum in conscientia* is not good.³⁵⁵ What is more it is better to lose a hundred ducats and the whole world than to offend God, one's conscience and the Rule and lose one's soul [...].

Let the brothers be aware that when they can have things by begging as they have done on other occasions without much trouble it is not lawful for them to procure them by means of payment, nor through spiritual friends etc. The same applies if the item is not really necessary. Many times when an item is paid for this is to avoid the embarrassment of begging or to obtain a larger amount or excess.

If this is not followed there will be great scope and excuse for relaxation and begging, to which we are strongly bound by the Rule, will disappear completely. Thus it

³⁵³ This is the same solution as that given in the *Albacina statutes* n. 6.

³⁵⁴ "Ràsia" is a kind of rough cloth. Here it refers to any kind of black cloth with a fringe which is attached to the front of a church or house or the premises of an undertaker when there is a funeral.

³⁵⁵ Saint Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalm.* 123, (PL 37, 1645, n. 9).

says: *Let them go seeking alms* etc. According to those who comment on the Rule this precept extends to those things which can be begged for without money. This appears to be what Saint Francis said when he commissioned the superiors in a special way to provide what was necessary for the sick and for clothing. He also laid down the method of procuring this that is through recourse to spiritual friends [79r]. In doing so he wanted to make a distinction between the necessities which can be met through begging without money and others which have to be purchased through payment as Hugo says.³⁵⁶

628 It follows from this that when the needs of the sick and clothing can be met by alms and begging we should not have recourse to money and much more for necessities that are not that urgent. When this cannot be done then it is lawful to have recourse to spiritual friends in the manner described.

Other needs should always be met by begging and when this cannot happen whatever it is should be left aside as soon as possible rather than have recourse to money against the Rule. It is better to suffer some discomfort than to sin [...].

30. [*The zeal for poverty among the early Capuchins*]

*Exivi*³⁵⁷ says with respect to providing for the future that is not likely that Saint Francis would have wanted the brothers to have granaries and cellars especially where they were able to beg daily to support life. This appears to be the intention of Saint Francis. Where they could not live otherwise the Pope handed the responsibility to the ministers and custodies as a group and individually together with the guardians and discreets charging their consciences that they advise faithfully whether such provision could be made or not.

629 The Four Masters say that some argue: If it is not lawful to store wine in cellar or grain in the silo then it would not be lawful to for the brothers to keep wood for a month, cheese, vegetables and the like, nor bread and wine for a week. They also argue that if they can be kept for a week they may also be kept for a month and for the whole year for the same reason. They say the same about fruit which are replaced once a year.

On the contrary gospel life does not make provision for tomorrow, Matthew 6: *Do not worry about tomorrow*. The Rule of the friars minor is to observe the gospel. Therefore they should not provide for the future. Further, pilgrims do not provide for the future in the places that they pass through. Chapter 6 of the Rule says: *like pilgrims and strangers*. In these things having considered the Rule and its interpretations it seems that when necessity requires the brothers may make provision for the future in such a way however that the way of poverty not be exceeded either in the length of time [99v] nor the quality and quantity of things.. This is what the Four Masters say.³⁵⁸

Brother Hugo says: I believe that it is allowed to provide things in some quantity and which are expensive in order to leave the brothers at peace, to edify the people

³⁵⁶ Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 134, 22-26.

³⁵⁷ Clement V, *Exivi*, art XIV (Seraph.leg. Textus originales, 253).

³⁵⁸ *Quat. Mag.* 147s.

because if the brothers go questing for such things they will go about too much giving scandal to seculars and losing the spirit.³⁵⁹

630 Blessed Francis did not want vegetables that could last a long time to be planted in the garden so that the brothers might be involved in greater things because of this. He allowed herbs which soon vanish especially because they are in continual use and it would be a great disturbance to seek them continually. This is what Hugo said.³⁶⁰

631 *Scrupulous Brother.* – Since we are bound by the strict and severe use of things in the Rule and because the gospel forbids concern about making provision, what is to be done in countries where necessities to sustain life cannot be had except by storing them?

Mature Brother. – It has been said that the guardians with permission of the minister and the discreets taking into account places and climates can make certain provision for things without which life cannot be sustained or where there would be great disturbance to the peace and quiet of the brothers, and impediment to the spirit by begging daily, especially if the quest were over a long distance and it was winter, and where bother and scandal to seculars would be a consequence of such repetition.

Great attention, however, should be paid to the perfection of the Rule, to holy poverty and to the intention of Saint Francis. If there is no great need, no accumulation of things is permitted. The habit of vice soon grows. Little by little [100r] abuse takes hold even of strong souls and so today the use especially of superfluous provisions, which is almost general and unlimited, is tolerated by many.³⁶¹

632 *Scrupulous Brother.* – Now I know that there is great relaxation in this matter. However since in providing things there is such a range of cases that it is difficult to discern what is allowed and what is not I beg you to come down to detail.

Mature Brother. – I told you above that I preferred not to go into these details. However to satisfy you I will say this.

If you do not wish to err you have to consider the circumstances of our situation and its perfection very carefully and the obligations with regard to holy poverty. You also have to consider carefully what has been said above in chapter one. Consider also the circumstances of time and place. What has been said above establishes the basis of my opinion. I maintain that in places that are close to farms where wine can be provided for three or four days or a week at the most it is not lawful under any circumstances to store it for a month, much less for six or a year.

633 The Capuchins provide for three or four days and live sparingly³⁶² putting a lot of water in the wine and being content with a little. When there is no meal for a day they go without, thanking the Lord with great joy. This is the cause of great good and especially sobriety, because where there is excess, sobriety and poverty are set aside and the same

³⁵⁹ Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 134, 22-26.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 134, 27s; also 2MP, 118; CA,88; 2C 165 (FA:ED III, p. 166; II, p. 192; p. 354).

³⁶¹ Once more this is an idea of Hugh of Digne, *Expositio* 135, 9-13.

³⁶² "saragno" is dialect for "risparmio".

could be done with whatever you like suffering some discomfort for the love of Jesus Christ as Saint Francis and his companions did as is evident in the miracle of water [100v] changed into wine when he was sick and there was not a drop of wine in the place.³⁶³

Where there are forests and a supply of wood, wood should not be provided for the brothers for the whole year, much less for a year and a half or more. Sufficient may be provided for bad weather taking poverty into account. In place where wood is scarce having regard for poverty they should provide through begging or cut a little themselves.

Where oil is plentiful the brothers can beg for it for a week or two. Where they cannot collect it they can provide it having the greatest regard for poverty and living sparingly. However where they obtain nothing when questing I believe that they may have recourse to those people who ask them to say Masses or provide services and ask them whether they want to provide a little for the love of God as an alms. I believe that this is so because it is a similar necessity as the needs of the sick and clothing, especially as it is required for Divine worship. Recourse is not being had as if to those who are in our debt because we offered Masses for them, but as spiritual friends giving alms. However provision of oil in great quantity to have excess and to waste on preserving fish, fried food or similar superfluity I believe not to be allowed for either by means of questing, offering Masses or anything else.

634 When given for the love of God cheese, dairy products and eggs may be accepted by the brothers in sufficient supply for a few days. However I do not think that it is lawful to have them bought directly or indirectly for healthy brothers especially as human life can survive without them. Therefore it is not according to the rigour of our most high poverty to provide such things either by questing, or purchase and much more [101r] for the whole year and in abundance and use them with no scruple with regard to poverty out of sensuality or excess when often they spoil or ruin and are thrown away because of excess. I am not referring to the sick, for whom eggs, meat and all the necessary things may be provided according to the directive of the doctor either by questing or through spiritual friends and the same applies to meat.

With respect to vegetables I say that it is lawful to provide them for a month or a little more either by questing or when they are donated, but not for the whole year or even for a month or two. Often they will spoil or ruin. It is not allowed to have them bought because nature can be sustained by other means.

635 It is against the intention of Saint Francis³⁶⁴ to accumulate a large quantity of vegetables, broad beans, chick-peas, corn and the like. In the same way excess provision of herbs in the garden or of citrus fruit and fruit which often turn bad in superfluity and sensuality.

It is against the Rule to provide fresh and salted fish for the whole year and the periods of Lent in great quantity and quality especially if they are bought. If a small portion is given for the love of God it may be accepted honestly.

³⁶³ Cf. 1C 61; LMj 5, 10 (FA:ED I, p. 236; II, p. 567); *Conf.* IV, 38; V, 232, 21s.

³⁶⁴ Cf. note 360.

To have spices, confectionary and the like bought is expressly against the Rule, except for those who are sick and most of all because such things are not necessities but excess and sensual. Nor should the brothers accept them even when they are offered because they are not the kind of things poor people have as we claim to be and great masters hardly use them and many rich people do not buy them.

636 The same applies to other sensual things such as condiments, mustard sauce, the juice of wild unfermented grapes, honey, baked must [101v], rich food, thawed food and the like which are not allowed to the brothers³⁶⁵ especially where they give money to make them.

There is also no need to gather a great provision of fruit to last a long time, or to go questing for it regularly because it is continuously donated and it does not matter if there is none because one can go without.

What I have said about things above I say about all the other things which are provided to sustain life, that is that the brothers are bound to live in a poor manner, being satisfied with little, avoiding all excess and sensuality. If you study carefully the things said in this rely and in the first chapter where we spoke of poor usage and below in chapter six and in the whole book, and carefully consider the perfection of our state and the life of Saint Francis and his intention, you will see that all these things are true and even more than I have said. However they will seem rash to sensual people *whose god is their belly*.³⁶⁶

637 *Scrupulous Brother*. – Some say that these few provisions will suffice where there are few brothers and not where there are many and thus they excuse having many provisions.

Mature Brother. – I have told you that this is the reason why Saint Francis wanted a few brothers in a place.³⁶⁷ However this transgression cannot be excused because of the large number of brothers. It is done to satisfy seculars and it is not legitimate to give such satisfaction by going against the Rule especially since under this pretext one rather satisfies sensuality and excess than need and countless evils and transgressions are the result. *Et non sunt facienda mala, ut veniant bona*.³⁶⁸

638 *Scrupulous Brother*. – Is it lawful to quest for wheat or corn or not?

Mature Brother. – [102r] When visiting the Marches, the Minister General (Francis) of the Angels made this statute:³⁶⁹ It is prohibited, under pain of privation of

³⁶⁵ "Sapori" are sauces or condiments in general; "mustarde" are sauces made with mustard, flour, vinegar, must and the like with the occasional addition of candied fruit; "agresto" is the juice of wild grapes which has not been fermented; "composta" is preserved fruit; "sapa" is must reduced to half or a third of its volume by baking and used as a condiment

³⁶⁶ Phil. 3, 19.

³⁶⁷ Cf. AC 58; 2MP 10 (FA:ED II, pp. 159-161 ; III, pp. 262-264); *Conf.* V, 105, 35s.

³⁶⁸ Cf. Rom 3, 8.

³⁶⁹ Francesco Quiñones visited the Marches in the month of November 1525 and celebrated the Chapter at Recanati on 23 November and promulgated certain statutes. cf. E. d'Alençon, *De primordiis*, 20; *AM* Xvi, 237, n. 12; C. Urbanelli, *Storia I/i*, 165.

active and passive voice for three years, that questing for wheat be undertaken in any place except in those places where it has been determined by the minister with the consent of the fathers, and this for three reasons:

First: where questing for bread in no way suffices.

Second: where there is no other way to support the sick.

Third: When there is no other way to clothe the brothers. When these needs have been satisfied and some it left over let it be given to poor places for the same reasons and for no other.

Note that when the brothers do not have a true and evident need for clothing it is not allowed to quest for wheat just to continue the practice (of questing), indeed this would be an abuse of time in the matter of clothing.. I say this because in many places it is the custom of the brothers to quest for clothing every two or three years, when they can easily wear the clothes for two or three years and because of this when many brothers have worn the habit and tunic for this length of time, they could well wear it for another two or three years, in order to economise, by wearing the community habit during summer. Some wish to invoke custom and the statute in all circumstances and this is not in any way lawful.

639 Nor should they quest for wheat to eat when there is no present, pressing and certain evident need and not under the pretext of providing for future and uncertain needs and to live with greater abundance. It is not permitted to keep wheat for a long time, in order to sell when it is of greater value or saying: We might need it, and it is to be hoarded, and then when they do not need it to sell it and to spend the money on meat, fish or other things included in the three needs mentioned above, or to pay debts, [102v] or to barter for other things which are not necessary or which could be had through begging. Nor can the brothers sell it themselves, but let the syndics sell it and live off what they syndics provide. Nor should they give it to builders or to other workers as payment for work or for any other material received from them. Nor should they do other things like this since it is against the Rule. The same thing applies to wheat offered or given to the brothers and all the other things.

I shall give you my opinion on this matter. If the brothers wish to live in a poor manner and be satisfied with few things and dress in shabby and cheap material which is economical and patched let them not make such provisions nor quest for grain or other crops or vegetables or flax or the like to sell them since they are questing outside³⁷⁰ the house during the entire year and the whole concern is focused on physical provisions and the satisfaction of seculars to such an extent that the spirit, observance and poverty suffer disaster and damage.

³⁷⁰ "volta" means going around outside the friary.

31. ["Capuchin" architecture]

640 *Mature Brother* – [...] With respect to buildings *Exivi*³⁷¹ says that the brothers should be satisfied with modest and humble buildings in such a way that when they have taken our state and the number of brothers into consideration they do not exceed what is required in regard to number and dimensions.

When speaking to the brothers about poverty Saint Francis cited the saying of Jesus Christ: *Foxes have holes*³⁷² etc. He recalled the three days he spent in Jerusalem, the day he argued in the Temple, the night he spent with the poor and the forty days he spent in the desert without building a cell. He wanted the brothers to make small houses out of mud and straw like poor people did, with small cells in them to sleep [103r] and pray. Let them have small gardens inside strong fences instead of walls as a sign of holy poverty.

In sorrow he used to say: "Listen my brothers, after us our brothers will come who will build large houses in which great masters and lords will live with honour". See in the *Conformities, fruit sixteen* where you will find that he wanted to destroy the house that was built of stone and mortar near the Portiuncula and other wonderful things. This was the doing of *Francis the legislator* as was the sentence pronounced on the brother who destroyed the house built by him.³⁷³ Alvaro says that it is not lawful for the brothers to have large gardens, many fields, excess workshops, fish-ponds, bee-hives and the like.³⁷⁴

641 Note that when Saint Bernardine³⁷⁵ says that those who have not instigated sumptuous houses may live in them with a good conscience, but not those who have instigated them. He is referring to large, sumptuous friaries which were being built at his time. Because the "family" was being renewed at that time it meant that many had to live in such houses concerning which they had concerns of conscience. However it was his intention that such as these would not be built in future. Thus those that were sumptuous and large that were built after his time and, indeed, there were some that were built, were not according to his intention. Those who excuse themselves citing the above mentioned words of Saint Bernardine greatly deceive themselves.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Cf. Clement V, *Exivi de paradise* cit.: "Item quod ecclesias vel alia aedificia faciunt vel procurant fieri in quantitate et curiositate figurae et formae ac sumptuositate notabiliter excessiva, ita quod non videntur habitacula pauperum, sed magnatum [...]. Nullo modo deinceps fieri faciant vel fieri sustineant ecclesias vel alia quaecumque aedificia, quae (considerato fratrum inhabitantium numero) excessiva in multitudine et magnitudine debeant reputari; ideoque volumus, quod ubicumque in suo ordine deinceps temperatis et humilibus aedificiis sint contenti". (*Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 9va, 10rb.)

³⁷² Mt 8, 20; Lk 9, 58. – *Const* 1536 n. 25 and 69; *Conf.* IV, 127; 414, 25-27; 375, 23-25; V, 105, 20s; 109, 15s; See also 2C 59 and 56; LMj, 7, 2; 2MP 9 (FA:ED II, p. 286 and p. 285; p. 578; III, pp. 261-262).

³⁷³ Cf. 2C 57; 2MP 7(FA:ED II, p. 285; III, p. 260); *Conf.* V, 106, 33-37; 107, 8-26, 165 21s.

³⁷⁴ Cf. *De planctu Ecclesiae* cit., lib. II, cap. 67, f. 171.

³⁷⁵ However it matches the *Declarationes super regula* of Nicholas of Osimo cf. Oieciafucco, *Fr. Nicolò da Osimi*, Montepreandone 1980, 45-58; the text is also in *Spec. Minorum*, p. III, f. 70va. The Cingolo codex always says *Berardino* instead of *Bernardino*.

³⁷⁶ "are deceived" from the Latin *decepti*

The poor little Capuchins mastered the art of building according to the mind of our father Saint Francis [...].³⁷⁷

32. [*Caring for the sick*]

Text: *for the needs of the poor* [...]

642 *Scrupulous Brother* – What kind of care and attentiveness should be shown to the sick?

Mature Brother – [...] Let the good, charitable and observant brothers often visit the sick, showing them compassion. Let them comfort them with sweet words and exercise works of charity towards them as they would wish to be done to themselves, as the Rule says,³⁷⁸ such as washing their clothes, cleaning their room and the like.

The infirmarian brother, Accursio, when he was speaking with the Virgin Mary, heard a sick brother call out and leaving the Madonna he immediately went to him. When the Madonna appeared to him again she said that she was more pleased with the charity practiced towards the sick brother than if he had spoken to her.³⁷⁹

The sick person should be satisfied with the charitable provisions made for him by the infirmarian showing patience, humility and regard for holy poverty not being worried [106r] about expensive things and being very demanding.

Therefore Saint Francis says in the Earlier Rule³⁸⁰ "I beg my sick brothers not to be disturbed or angry with God or his brothers when they are not completely satisfied,³⁸¹ nor seek medicine with too much concern. Let them not be worried about being set free from the flesh, which is the enemy of the soul, which must soon die. Let them thank God for everything and desire to be whatever God wants. Therefore He who has destined them to paradise tests them through sickness and tribulation and says "*Those whom I love, I correct and chastise* [...]."³⁸²

Chapter V

33. [*The grace and spirituality of work*]

643 [Text:] *The brothers to whom the Lord has given the grace of working shall work faithfully*, that is with respect to their neighbour and the work itself, *and devotedly* that is

³⁷⁷ Cf. above where Capuchin architecture is discussed, *n.* 640; see also what is written in 2MP 10, AC 56; 2C 56 (FA:ED III, pp. 262-264; II, pp. 154-158; p. 285).

³⁷⁸ LR 6, 9 FA:ED, I p. 103).

³⁷⁹ Cf. *Conf.* IV, 252s; *Chronica XXIV Generalium* 285.

³⁸⁰ ER 10, 4 (FA:ED I p. 72). {Trnas. Note: This is not a literal quote from chapter 10, nor does it follow the order of ideas presented there.}

³⁸¹ That is when things are not to their absolute liking.

³⁸² Rev. 3, 19.

with respect to God, as Saint Bonaventure says: since every good intention concerning work should be referred to God.³⁸³

Scrupulous Brother – What is the aim of this chapter?

Mature Brother – the Supreme Pontiffs declared that it is not to be understood simply with respect to physical effort since the exhaustion which Saint Francis wishes to be avoided is laziness which manifests itself in many ways within the Order, namely when studying, reading, teaching, preaching, hearing confessions, in works of charity to both the healthy and the sick and the like. [106]

Those who are engaged in these works, especially because of obedience or charity, fulfil the Rule. Reference to those who are not occupied in these things is contained in chapter 5 of *Exiit* which begins with *Continetur* does not include contemplatives who should not be obstructed from doing such good activities.³⁸⁴

644 Text; *so that avoiding idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things must contribute*³⁸⁵

Scrupulous Brother – How does physical exercise extinguish the Spirit of prayer?

Mature Brother – The Four Masters say that the spirit of prayer is extinguished when there is such preoccupation with manual work that the spirit of prayer laid down by the Rule is obstructed. Worldly minded people wish to defend their laziness by this statement in the Rule. When the superiors command them to do something they say that it will extinguish the spirit of prayer. This is what they claim.³⁸⁶

Note that laziness is to be avoided lest it extinguish the spirit. Thus a brother should not neglect required prayer for physical activities, except for obedience, but he should first seek the kingdom of God,³⁸⁷ and thus perform the duties of Mary but not lose the grace of Magdalene.³⁸⁸ Saint Francis, who loathed laziness and who wanted the brothers to be occupied in suitable activity after they had eaten and to speak of good things, knew this well. [...]³⁸⁹

³⁸³ Pili adds that this is an *admonition*. cf. Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio cit. in Op. omnia* VIII 419b; *Spec. Minorum*, pars, III, f. 17ra.

³⁸⁴ Cf. Nicholas III, *Exiit*, 5 “ad alios vero, qui se in praedictis spiritualibus operibus non exercent (nisi tales aliorum fratrum licitis servitiis occupentur) ne otiose vivant, verba praedicta declaramus extendi; nisi et tales tam excellentis et nobililis contemplationis et orationis existerent, quod merito propter hoc non essent a tanto bono et pro exercitio subrahendi.” (*Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 6vb). – We read in the Chronicles of the Order about some brothers who were dispensed from all manual labour and who dedicated themselves completely to contemplation.

³⁸⁵ ER, 5, 2. (FA;ED I, P. 102.)

³⁸⁶ Cf. *Quat. Mag.*, 149, 10-17; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 17vab.

³⁸⁷ Cf. Mt 6, 33; Lk 12, 31; also *Conf.* IV, 408.

³⁸⁸ Cf. Lk 10, 40s.

³⁸⁹ 2C 161; LMj 5, 6; 2MP 75 and 82 (FA:ED II, pp. 350-351; p. 564; III, p322 and pp. 328-329).

Chapter VI

Let the Brothers not make anything their own begging alms, the Sick Brothers

Here John of Fano dwells at length once again on the topic of poverty, above all listing "the actions and cases of ownership taken from Alvarus, Saint Bonaventure and other doctors of the Order": in all 69 cases. For a systematic summary of these things we refer to the Short Discourse by the same author.

34 [Poverty and humility in questing]

645 Text: *But like pilgrims and strangers in this world let them serve the Lord in poverty and humility.*

Scrupulous Brother – What kind of poverty do we promise?

Mature Brother - According the Four Masters gospel poverty is to be understood in two ways.³⁹⁰

One way is that in the spirit of poverty nothing excessive in temporal things is to be retained but only what is necessary. Another way which is more perfect is that in the spirit of poverty nothing, whether necessary or superfluous, is retained as one's own but one depends on divine providence and this is called the poverty of questing. This is the style of poverty of the Friars Minor by which they are defined and it has two aspects.

Firstly, they possess nothing of their own, neither fixed income nor annual rents and the like, since they should serve the Lord in poverty as strangers and pilgrims.

Secondly, the brothers should be poor with regard to the use of what is necessary, with regard to the use of what is required to sustain life as was explained in the first chapter. Thus *Exiit § Porro* says: It is fitting to that state and profession which has made a vow to imitate Christ voluntarily to remove all ownership and be satisfied with the use of necessary things.³⁹¹

646 Text: *and let them go seeking alms with confidence*³⁹²

[*Mature Brother*] – According to the Four Masters, poverty in use is commanded here since the brothers should be both poor and beggars. Thus the necessary things which they may have through receiving alms they are never permitted to procure, especially by having recourse to spiritual friends or syndics.³⁹³

³⁹⁰ *Quat Mag.* 157s.

³⁹¹ Nicholas III, *Exiit*, art. III, 1 (*Seraph. leg. textus originales* 193s).

³⁹² LR, 6, 2 (FA:ED I, p. 103).

³⁹³ *Quat. Mag.* 158; *Spec Minorum*, pars III, f. 18rb: "Debent habere paupertatem quantum ad usum, ut aliter sint pauperes quod etiam sint mendici". – Remember that begging does not exclude working, but defines it.

Thus they may beg with confidence and live in poverty to serve the Lord. Thus when there is a need it is lawful to beg but not otherwise. To beg for excess is no small sin because what kind of poverty is it to possess things and beg for excess?

Saint Francis used to say that to beg, when it is not necessary, is theft since it is robbing the substance of the poor. Thus he did not want to beg for bread to supply many days, much less for things that were not needed [...].³⁹⁴

The Pisan says that in addition to theft it is pretending to practice poverty where there is none and thus is hypocrisy. Matthew 23: *Woe to you scribes and Pharisees! For you devour widows' houses* [...].³⁹⁵

647 Text: *they should not be ashamed, for our sakes, our Lord made Himself poor in this world.*³⁹⁶

It is stupendously wretched to beg like plain people, but it is praiseworthy that we are like Christ.

Saint Francis used to say: "Whenever you see a poor person you ought to hold up to yourself a mirror of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His most holy mother, who when he was rich in His majesty, became poor and despised³⁹⁷ in our humble state, was born poor, lived in a very poor state and died poor and naked on the cross and was buried in another person's grave."³⁹⁸

When he was invited to eat with Cardinals and lords, he went begging first, saying; "I do not want to put aside my regal dignity, heredity [113v] and profession and that of my brothers. Bread which is received as alms is holy bread which is sanctified by the praise and love of God for when we beg it we say: "Praised be God, give us alms for the love of God"! How could we be ashamed of such dignity, honour and glory of poverty, which I see in the King of the world and most worthy Queen Mother and the princes of the earth the holy Apostles? Thus our Lord Jesus Christ begged as well as His Mother"³⁹⁹.

648 Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure and the Pisan⁴⁰⁰ say that during the three days Jesus stayed in Jerusalem he lived by begging. Therefore Saint Francis went begging for alms to give good example to others so that the brothers would not be ashamed. He said that a brother should not go long without asking alms for the great merit and in order to

³⁹⁴ 2MP 12, 2; 2C 87 (FA:ED III, p. 265, II, p. 304).

³⁹⁵ Mat 23, 14; also *Conf.* IV, 414.

³⁹⁶ LR 6, 3 (FA:ED I, p. 103). The text adds *This is an admonition.*

³⁹⁷ "despetto" = "disprezzato".

³⁹⁸ 2MP 37; 2C 85 (FA:ED III, p. 285; II p. 303)

³⁹⁹ 2MP 23 and 22; LMj 7, 7; LR 6, 4-5 (FA:ED III, pp. 273-275, 272-273; II p. 582; I, p. 103).

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. *Tractatus de iesu puero duodenni*, 6, by the Abbott Alfred Rievalli, in the works of Saint Bernard (PL 184, 853); Saint Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum*, cap. VII, n. 7ss; *Expositio regulae*, cap. VI, n. 22 (*Op. omnia* VIII, 288ss, 423s); *Conf.* 414.

accustom himself to not becoming ashamed and to afford merit to the one who gave the alms.⁴⁰¹

When a brother came back with alms singing, blessed Francis lifted the sack off his shoulder with great joy kissing the place where the sack had been and blessing the brother.⁴⁰²

35. [The height of poverty and the depth of love]

649 Text: *This is that sublime height of most exalted poverty* because it is the most removed from the world and closest to the kingdom of highest heaven, and as similar as possible to eternal life where there is nothing of earthly things whether individually or in common but where all that is there is spiritual and heavenly.

Text: *which has made you, my brothers, heirs* since whoever has left everything for the love of God is promised eternal life.⁴⁰³

Text: *and kings in the kingdom of heaven* Matthew 5: *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*⁴⁰⁴ having given up everything for the love of God they have become lords in heaven, although they entered possessing nothing.

Text: [114r] having *become poor in temporal things, but rich in virtue.*

The objective of this kind of poverty is the growth of holiness in virtue with all impediments removed. These poor people, seeing how they live in stricter poverty than others, strive to be more virtuous than others.

650 Text: *Let this be your portion which leads into the land of the living*, because of which you will have no part with the land of the dead. *This is a most noble exhortation.*

Text: *Giving yourselves totally to this* in such a way that everything that you use may preach poverty.

Text: *never wish to seek anything else under heaven for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* It does not say "do not seek" since this was said above, but "do not wish to seek" since it is not poverty that constitutes the vow but the love of poverty. Willpower, as the basis of merit, brings about perseverance.⁴⁰⁵

651 Text: *And wherever the brothers may be and meet one another, let them show that they are members of the same family. Let each one confidently make known his needs to*

⁴⁰¹ Conf. IV, 140, 32-34; V, 113, 12s; 115, 12s; AC; 51; 2MP 18, 23 (FA:ED II pp. 150-151; III, pp. 268-269/273-275).

⁴⁰² Conf. IV, 140, 34-36; V, 113, 31s; AC, 98; 2MP 25 (FA:ED II, p. 202; III, pp. 275-276).

⁴⁰³ Cf. Mt 19, 29.

⁴⁰⁴ Mt 5, 3.

⁴⁰⁵ "Non dicit; Nihil habeatis hoc enim superius docuit, sed 'nihil habere velitis', quia non paupertas, sed paupertatis armor virtus est. Voluntas quoque sicut radix est mentis sic et perseverantiam operator". (Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, cit., 164, 17-20; *Spec Minorum*, pars III, f. 46 va).

*the other.*⁴⁰⁶ Because if a mother nourishes and loves her child according to the flesh, how much more diligently should each one love and nourish his spiritual brother?

It is not enough for the friar minor not to hate his brother, as is required of every Christian. But the brothers should show exterior familiarity towards their brothers as a mark of charity as within the one family and should make known their needs to one another as members of the same family. Therefore visiting brothers are to be received with all kindness, joy and made welcome, washing their feet after the example of the Lord and providing the necessary things with charity, [114v] extending friendship to them. Superiors should be watchful of this [...].⁴⁰⁷

Chapter VII

Concerning the penance to be imposed on the brothers who sin.

652 Text: *If any brother, at the instigation of the enemy, sin mortally [...]*

36 [*Love and mercy towards sinners*]

Mature Brother – [...] Ubertino says that there should be great discretion and charity in this matter, since superiors often withhold the authority to absolve reserved sins⁴⁰⁸ to such an extent that the wretches do not dare to have recourse to them. Therefore they fall from sin to sin and remain enmeshed for long periods. Often the superiors proceed without discretion, making the offenders known, transferring them or depriving them of office, or threatening them with harsh words which creates serious danger for souls and is prejudicial to the seal of confession. This is what he says.⁴⁰⁹ Superiors are even more reprehensible when they are not *simply* motivated by zeal, but by the desire to gain a reputation for being zealous and threatening and when they call cruelty and ambition [115r] zeal. *Prelatus pronior esse debet ad miserendum quam ad puniendum.*⁴¹⁰

Writing to a Minister⁴¹¹ Saint Francis says: "If anyone who has sinned comes to you, with whatever sin it might be, see to it that he never leaves you without mercy. If he comes back a thousand times, love him more than ever, so that you can lead him back to God and always have compassion on such a person and command that the brothers who know about this do not speak about it or inflict any injury on him. Let them keep that sin a secret, so that when the wretch sees that he has been discovered he will not despair or become incorrigible out of shame. *Non enim habent opus medico sani, sed male habentes, ait Dominus.*⁴¹² Let him receive sinners with great kindness and thus provide

⁴⁰⁶ John of Fano adds *this is as admonition*.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. *Const.* 1536 n. 55. – The first parts of the text, down to the words "it is not enough for the friar minor" etc. is taken from High of Digne, *Expositio* cit., 166, 11-14; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 47ra.

⁴⁰⁸ That is in cases of reserved sins.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. *Articuli accepti* (above note 264), n. 18, p. 120.

⁴¹⁰ *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, c. 12, C. 26, q. 7: *Alligat* (CIC I, 1044); dist. 45, cap. 13 (CIC I, 165).

⁴¹¹ *Letter to a Minister* 9-11, 14-15, 17 (FA:ED I, pp. 97-98). This letter of Saint Francis made a great impression on the practice and the Constitutions of the Capuchins.

⁴¹² Mt 9, 12; Mk 2, 17.

for the salvation of the soul of your poor little sheep as your would wish to be done to you in similar circumstances." *This is what blessed Francis said [...]*

Chapter VIII

Concerning the election of the Minister General And the Chapter of Pentecost.

654 Text: *Let all the brothers of this Order be bound to have a brother as Minister General and servant of this fraternity [...]*.

37. [Service of authority and the accusation of disobedience levelled against the Capuchins]

[*Mature Brother*] – Our wise father did not wish the body of this Order to be deformed and so he did not wish it to be headless without a top member and so made provision for a head that is a Minister General. The lover of unity also wanted it to have only one head and that there be only one pastor of the whole flock.⁴¹³

Scrupulous Brother. – In this matter you Capuchins are very much at fault, since you do not offer obedience to a Minister General. Even many good brothers are scrupulous about this matter and do not come to join you.⁴¹⁴

Mature Brother. – I say that those who make such an accusation have little information regarding the things mentioned in the Rule and also in law. I say the same about those who hesitate to join and show little fervour in this and lack zeal for the observance of the Rule.

655 Note well that the perfection of a superior does not consist in his title or the letters before his name. *Non enim in sermone est regum Dei, sed in virtute.*⁴¹⁵ It consists rather in the life of the true superior, following the example [116r] of Christ, living a good life, conducting himself well, setting an example, consoling, correcting and governing his subjects with admonitions and words and leading them to the state of perfection, assisting them to progress in religious life and in the observance of the Rule. This is the precedence and status that they should hold over them not that based on pride and ambition. Subjects are bound to obey them in as much as they promote their salvation and no further. Therefore it is not necessary to salvation that they hold the title of vicar or custos and any other title.⁴¹⁶

Therefore Saint Francis is speaking about Custodes when he says: “when the General is not qualified the electors are bound to elect another as Custos”.⁴¹⁷ He

⁴¹³ Cf. John 1016. – Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, cit., 172, 27-29; *Spec. Minorum*, III, f. 48rb: “voluit Sanctus unitatis amator, ut familia sua poneret sibimet caput unum et totius ovili sui fieret pastor unus”.

⁴¹⁴ This was one of the greatest accusations levelled against the Capuchins and because of this many did not go over to the reform.

⁴¹⁵ I Cor 4, 20. – Writing to Paul III Victoria Colonna says the same thing.

⁴¹⁶ He is speaking here as one who recognises the responsibility of a superior as animator!

⁴¹⁷ LR 8, 4 (FA:ED I, p. 104).

addresses the superior here as "minister" or "custos". The title of 'minister' does signify a major superior. Therefore when he says in chapter ten that the brothers are obliged to obey their minister general alone, it means that the brothers are not obliged to obey anyone besides him and not other superiors, as the Pisan says.

656 Hugh⁴¹⁸ says that in the old days all the superiors were called ministers, even though some were called more specifically custos or guardian. Thus the Rule does intend to call them only ministers, though in reality and in effect they are a minister, that is they minister to us those things that are necessary for our salvation, and so it does not say that they are to be called minister but that "they should be ministers and servants of the whole fraternity".⁴¹⁹ Thus the title is not required for the observance of the Rule, but its application is. Neither saint Francis or any Pontiff ever intended anything else.

Therefore the person who serves and ministers what is required for salvation and helps us to observe the Rule [116v] is a real minister and can have the title if he so wishes. Therefore if a superior does not provide me with what is required for salvation, and does not assist me to observe the Rule, but does the opposite through bad example and an bad life he scandalises me and I do not regard him to be my superior, even though he might be called minister because obedience is aimed at observance of the Rule, not the Rule aimed at obedience. Thus I am bound by the obedience that promotes observance of the Rule and salvation but not by that which obstructs this.⁴²⁰

Brother Bernard, the first follower of Saint Francis, withdrew himself from obedience to Brother Elias, who was Minister General, because he destroyed the observance of the Rule and obstructed good brothers from observing it and lived for two years in the woods, fed by a woodcutter as we read in the *Chronicles of the Order* [...].⁴²¹

657 *Scrupulous Brother.* – [...] Why did Saint Francis call superiors ministers and servants?

Mature Brother. – The Pisan says that he did it as a true follower of the Gospel to show that he had given that title according to the Gospel, Luke 22: *Qui maior est vestrum, sit vester minister.*⁴²² In doing this he imitated Christ, who came to serve and not to be served, and resembled His humility, Matthew 20. When it says: *et dare animam suam in redemptionem pro multis*⁴²³ it shows that such ministering refers chiefly to the salvation of the subjects and not to material provisions. *This is what the Pisan says.*⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁸ Cf. LR 10

⁴¹⁹ Cf. LR 10, 1 and 5 (FA:ED I, p. 105).

⁴²⁰ This is the logical and radical consequence of the words of Saint Francis in LR 10, 4 (FA:ED I, p. 105.). See also Victoria Colonna's letter to Paul III

⁴²¹ Cf. A. Clarenò, *HTrb.*, 83. (Burr and Daniel p. 80). Here the *Chronicles of the Order* refers to the *Chronicle* by Clarenò. (2, 132ss in Boccali's edition).

⁴²² Lk 22, 26.

⁴²³ Mt 20, 28

⁴²⁴ The words in this passage correspond literally to *Expositio o compilatio* by Bartholomew of Pisa (cf. *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 66 vb); see also *Conf.* IV, 421; Hugh of Digne, *Expositio*, 178; *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 49 rab.

They add⁴²⁵ that Blessed Francis used the title servant so that they would not have dominion over their subjects and he wished that neither in name nor [117r] in effect would they be lords or masters but servants in humility and ministry in serving them. If these two titles were continually in the minds of those who presided over the Order they would not seek the office of superior with as much pride and ambition as they do now.⁴²⁶ Consequently they should keep this in mind.

In the Earlier Rule Blessed Francis⁴²⁷ says that if anyone should perish the ministers would be bound to render an account before God and our Lord Jesus Christ since the care of souls has been committed to them. *This is what they say.*⁴²⁸ Does not Saint Francis say expressly below in chapter 10 that where the salvation of souls and observance of the Rule are concerned subjects may command superiors as lords would command their servants over whom they are masters? [...]⁴²⁹

38. [Why the Capuchins were made subject to the Conventuals]

658 *Scrupulous Brother.* – I like your line of reasoning very much. However it does not account for the situation for it appears to be a frightful thing that having left the Observants you were made subject to the Conventuals.⁴³⁰

Mature Brother. – Do they think that we are in a bad way because of this?

Scrupulous Brother. – They not only believe this but regard it as certain.

Mature Brother. – One must say that they suffer from great ignorance or great malice. However note: Firstly, that we did not move away from observance but embraced it fully as can be clearly seen by considering conditions before and after with respect to lifestyle, food, clothing, dwellings, the provision of things for the future, ceremonies, customs, sacristies and, in brief, everything which pertained to the true observance of the Rule, because true observance does not consist in titles but in deeds.⁴³¹

659 Secondly, note that if we were in a bad way by being subjected to the Conventual Fathers it would follow; firstly that the Conventual Fathers, at our head would be in a bad

⁴²⁵ Cf. Bartholomew of Pisa, *Compilatio super regulam* in *Spec. Minorum* cit., f. 66 vb: "Nomine servi beatus Franciscus exprimit quia super subditos non habent dominum nec domini sunt censendi, sed debent esse servi fratrum utilitate et ministerio servientes".

⁴²⁶ This is sad statement which history will not forget.

⁴²⁷ ER, 4, (FA:ED I, p. 66).

⁴²⁸ That is the Pisan (Bartholomew of Pisa) and Hugh of Digne, since the concept is taken from them. cf. *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 67ra and 49rb.

⁴²⁹ Cf. LR 10, 5-6, (FA:ED I p. 105).

⁴³⁰ Cf. *Const. 1536*, n. 10. On this point Victoria Colonna defends the Capuchins in her letter to Paul III.. Only in 1619 will the Capuchin reform have its own Minister General separate from the other Franciscan families, through the Brief of Paul V, *Alias felicitis recordationis* of 23 January; see also G. Abate, *Conferme dei Vicari Generali cappuccino date dai Maestri Generali Conventuali* (1528-1619), in *CF*. 33 (1963) 423-441.

⁴³¹ The answer is clear and leaves no room for subterfuge and expresses the most vivid conviction of the early Capuchins of having discovered the true intent and wish of Saint Francis.

way; secondly, that their reforming brothers,⁴³² that is those among the Conventual Fathers, were in a bad way, even those who lived in an observant manner with regard to the purity of the Rule, not relying on the title [118r] but on deeds; thirdly, it would follow that the "family"⁴³³ during the 70 years they lived subject to the Conventual Fathers and had Vicars and not Ministers General⁴³⁴ were always in a bad way and all the brothers who lived at the time were damned including Saint Bernardine, Blessed Brother John Capistran, Blessed James of the Marches, Blessed Feltrino and all the holy brothers who lived at the time.⁴³⁵ Thus during the whole time the world would have been deluded. The Council of Constance would have committed a grave error.⁴³⁶ Eugene IV and all his successors who confirmed his actions would have been in error [...].⁴³⁷

660 [119r] I say that we do not seek Bulls or privileges, as is stated in the *Testament*, to escape from persecutions of the body but of the soul.⁴³⁸ Thus we have now renounced privileges which would relax regular observance, and wish to be subject to every human creature for the love of God, as the Apostle says.⁴³⁹ We wish to be subject not only to our own superiors and to the Supreme Pontiff as the Vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church militant, but also to all Ordinaries as member of the Apostolic College and especially those who are involved with us. However as has been said we want nothing to do with privileges which bring relaxations since they are the cause of great ruin as can be seen clearly. Much was said about this in the first chapter.⁴⁴⁰

661 Thus the privileges that we seek are for greater observance of the Rule. I am highly amazed by your brothers who have scruples over these spiritual privileges and do not have any scruple concerning so many privileges, briefs, and predictions that permit relaxation of the observance of the Rule and almost total ruin and destruction. This is especially the case with the Bull of Union⁴⁴¹ with regard to administration, seals and precedence etc. by which the "family" has suffered such ruin, misfortune and damage

⁴³² That is reforming brothers within the Conventuals concerning whom see G. Odoardi in *DIP* 91976) 94-106.

⁴³³ Namely the Zoccolanti of Paoluccio Trinci and later the Observants.

⁴³⁴ More than seventy years elapsed from 1368 (the beginning of the Zoccolanti of Paoluccio Trinci) up till the Bull *Ut sacra Ordinis* of Eugene IV in 1446 which in practice sanctioned the independence of the Observants from the Conventuals. The definitive juridical independence and separation, as is known, took place however in 1517 with the Bull *Its vos* of Leo X.

⁴³⁵ The "four columns of the Observance" are named here as well as blessed Bernardino da Feltre in a kind of argumentation which destroys the content of the accusations.

⁴³⁶ The Council of Constance approved and established the autonomy the French Observance with brother Tommaso da la Cour with the Constitution *Supplicationibus personarum* of 23 September 1415.

⁴³⁷ Namely the Bull *Ut sacra Ordinis* of 1446.

⁴³⁸ Cf. *Test.* 25 (FA:ED I, p. 126). This is the beatitude of persecutions and weakness that Saint Francis praises in the story about "perfect joy".

⁴³⁹ Cf. 1 Pet 2, 13.

⁴⁴⁰ In practise these ideas are echoed in the *Const.* 1536, n 8-9 and 11.

⁴⁴¹ That is the Bull *Omnipotens Deus* of 12 June 1517 of Leo X and *Instrumentum transactionis et concordiae "Sicut universi"* of 19 July of the same year. With regard to these debates see L. Di Fonzo – G. Odoardi – A. Pompei, *I Frati Minori Conventuali. Storia e vita, 1209-1976*, Roma 1978, 118s (with Bibliography).

that it would have been better if it never had happened which is so clear that it cannot be denied [...].

Chapter IX

Concerning Preachers

39 [The intention of Saint Francis regarding the exercise of preaching]

622. [Mature Brother]. – Note that Saint Francis did not want the brothers to seek privileges in order to be able to preach in churches against the will of their sponsors. He used to say: “I want only this privilege from the Lord: never to have any privilege from any human being, except to show reverence to all, and by the obedience of the holy Rule to convert sinners more by example than by word. You do likewise and preach by holy humility and good example more than in virtue of privileges [...].”⁴⁴²

[...] Saint Francis used to say⁴⁴³ that a religious is as good a preacher as he is of good conduct since the tree is known by its fruits. One must try to first practice what he preaches and always pray before starting, asking Jesus Christ to put words on his lips and that he always preach whatever is useful for the honour of God and the salvation of souls, avoiding extravagances and pomp. Let Sacred Scripture be the whole basis of his preaching accompanied by the fear of God, religious and devout gestures and behaviour and humility and patience with respect to food being content with a few poor things for the love of Jesus Christ with the sole motivation of the love of God and neighbour.⁴⁴⁴

663 When Saint Francis was asked if he wanted the learned brothers who had joined the Order to devote themselves to the study of Sacred Scripture, he replied in the affirmative, as long as following the example of Christ who prayed more than He read, they do not omit the study of holy prayer [121v] and as long as they do not study to learn how to speak well, but how to conduct themselves well and explain to others how to behave well: “I want my brothers to be Gospel disciples and so progress in the knowledge of truth that they increase in pure simplicity without separating the simplicity of the dove from the wisdom of the serpent both of which our eminent Master combined in a statement from his holy lips.”⁴⁴⁵

664 Saint Francis states that the office of preaching was more acceptable than any sacrifice, especially if it was carried out with regard for perfect charity and if the preacher put more effort into preaching by example than by words, more by tearful prayer than loquacious speech. He used to say that the preacher who did not seek the salvation of souls, but his own reputation, or who destroyed the edification which his preaching gave by the depravity of his life, should lament as though he had been deprived of charity. A

⁴⁴² Cf. 2MP 50; AC 20 (FA:ED III, p. 204; II, p. 134); *Conf.* IV, 420-3s; 471, 5s; V, 140,34s; 360, 34s.

⁴⁴³ Cf. 2MP 72-73; L3C 54; 2C 163; (FA:ED III, pp; 319- 321; II, p. 99; p. 352) ; A Clarenò *HTrb* II, 7; (Burr and Daniel, p. 66); *Conf.* IV, 501-503, 615s.

⁴⁴⁴ This is a summary of what the *Const. 1536* require of preachers.

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. LMj 11, 1; 2MP 69; (FA:ED II, p. 613; III, p. 315); *Conf.* IV, 470,614.

simple brother, bereft of eloquence, who provokes others to do good by his example and bears out the statement *donec sterilis peperit plurimos*⁴⁴⁶ is to be preferred to him.

“The sterile one is the poor little brother who does not have the duty of giving birth to children in the church through preaching. On judgement day this brother will bring many forth since those who now he is converting by his private prayers will be reckoned to his glory by the judge. *Et qui multos habebat filios infirmabitur*⁴⁴⁷ because the loquacious preacher [122r] who now prides himself on having converted many through his own efforts, is vain. He will then recognise that there was nothing of his own in this. There are some who think of nothing else than knowledge and how to show others the way to salvation while doing nothing about themselves. They will appear naked and empty handed before the judgement seat of Christ only wearing the stole of embarrassment, shame and sorrow. At that time the genuineness of holy humility, simplicity, prayer and poverty, which is our calling, will be exalted, highly valued and glorified, a fact which those who have been inflated by knowledge have underestimated by their life and vain preaching. At that time the error of the opinion which they have followed, which they preached as truth and through which many have fallen into a ditch through blindness will come to an end in sorrow, confusion and shame and they together with their dark opinions will go into exterior darkness and be drown with the spirits of darkness.”⁴⁴⁸

Saint Francis said many things against vain preachers.

Chapter X

Concerning the admonition and correction of the Brothers

40. [*Portrait of the “minister and servant” of the brothers*]

665 Text: *Let the brothers who are the ministers and servants of the others should visit and admonish their brothers and humbly and charitably correct them, not commanding them anything that is against their soul and our rule.*⁴⁴⁹ [...]

Scrupulous Brother. – Should a brother who wishes to live without danger accept being Minister?

Mature Brother. – I say that as far as he can he should avoid that office and other offices. When he sees that he cannot exercise [122v] it with proper diligence because either he cannot correct abuses and relaxations, or correct the imperfect multitude or for any other reason he should not accept it under any circumstances.

Likewise this is true just as much when he knows that he is incapable or unworthy and this is so as well as when he seeks office directly or indirectly and exercises that

⁴⁴⁶ 1 Sam 2, 5. With regard to the Franciscan sources see note 448.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. LMj 8, 2; 2C 164; 2MP 69, 72 (FA:ED II, p. 587; pp. 352-353; III, pp. 314-315, 319-321); *Conf.* IV, 470, 502, 615-17. This is the exaltation of those whom Saint Francis called his “knights of the round table”.

⁴⁴⁹ LR 10, 2 (FA:ED I, p. 105). Pili places *monitio est* in brackets: it is an admonition.

office to the detriment of his soul. One cannot count how many evils are due to ambition. Can. *Multi*, 40 distinction reads; *Quicumque desideravit primatum in terra, inveniet confusionem in coelo; nec inter servos Christi computabitur, qui de primatu tractaverit.*⁴⁵⁰

If he is forced to accept office, let him exercise it with great fear of God and zeal for religion, always working towards reform as far as he can so that the Rule and ordinances are observed especially things pertaining to divine worship and honour, work, prayer, charity towards the sick, the preservation and support of regular observance.

666 Let him visit the brothers with concern, charity and humility, extending every courtesy to them; *Praelatus debet erga subditos sollicitam curam gerere,*⁴⁵¹ admonish them kindly, lest *si inordinatum silentium culpa non esset, nequaquam Propheta diceret: Vae mihi quia tacui.*⁴⁵²

Let him correct them with discretion and charity as it says in the Rule and not out of an appetite for revenge: *Praelatus non debet ex vindicta corrigere subditos,*⁴⁵³ and impose a penance with mercy, since *tutius redditur ratio de misericordia quam de crudelitate.*⁴⁵⁴ Let him not be precipitant nor believe [123r] easily, but before going ahead let him examine the case carefully and discover the truth: *Praelatus non debet de subditis facile credere.*⁴⁵⁵

Let him be observant, scrupulous, devout, humble poor in food and clothing and exemplary in all his conduct, being on guard against giving bad example as if it were death: *Praelatus mali tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos suos perditionis exempla transmittunt. Praelatus malus suo exemplo multos secum trahit ad inferos. Vita pastoris debet esse exemplar subditis.*⁴⁵⁶

He should go ahead of all others in things that are good: *Praelatus debet in conversatione et sermone praeire.*⁴⁵⁷ He should correct delinquents and not allow transgressions, since *peccata subditorum prelati imputantur.*⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁰ *Decr. Gratiani*, 12, dist. 40 (*CIC* I, 147s); "He who aspires to pre-eminence on earth, will discover confusion in heaven. He who seeks the first place will not be counted among the servants of Christ."

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, c. 8, dist. 96: *In Scripturis* (*CIC*, 339s); "The superior must attend to his subjects with care".

⁴⁵² Is 6,5 – "If irresponsible silence was never blameworthy, the Prophet would never have said: Woe to me because I kept silent!"

⁴⁵³ *Decr. Gratiani*, dist. 68, can. 8 and 6; C. 26 q. 7 c. 12 (*CIC* I, 299s, 1044). – "The superior should never correct his subjects out of revenge".

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, can. 13 dist. 45 (*CIC* I, 165). – "It is safer to give an account for mercy than for cruelty."

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.* dist. 86, can. 23 (*CIC* I, 303). "The superior should not immediately believe what is said about his subjects".

⁴⁵⁶ The author inserts here many juridical citations; *Dec. Gratiani* C. 11, q. 3, can. 3; Precipue. Dist. 40, c. 6; *Si Papa*; C. 2, q. 7, c. 58; *Cum Pastoris* (*CIC*) t I, 642s, 146, 502). "Cruel superiors are worthy of death every time that they set a bad example for subjects. A bad superior drags many behind him into hell by his example. The pastor's life should be a mirror for his subjects."

⁴⁵⁷ *Id.*, dist 40, c. 1-2 (*CIC*) I, 145.

⁴⁵⁸ *Id.*, C. I, q. 2, c. 8; *Si quis*; c. 9; *Episcopo*; C. 9, q. 3 (*CIC*) I, 410, 609). This insistence on the responsibilities of the superior is noteworthy! We see here the sensitivity of an ex-superior! Other

667 I say the same with regard to the guardian who fears God and wishes to save himself. In addition to what has been said let him study the Rule and its explanations and the ordinances and have them observed especially with respect to money. Let him have the ordinances read continually and have them explained and at an appointed time consult with the brothers always exhorting them to observe them and to be reasonably scrupulous, especially with respect to poverty.⁴⁵⁹

Let him provide most scrupulously for the life and clothing of the brothers according to the declarations mentioned above. Let him be solicitous for godly matters, prayer, the office, silence etc., and charity towards the sick and visitors. Let him keep the brothers in the house not giving them permission to go out for every reason, not allowing arguments which the cause of so much evil. Let him have them observe the divine precepts not having them occupied in servile work on the holy days of obligation. Let him have control of their lifestyle not allowing recreations or discussions, always promoting good by word and example. In a word, let him not exercise his office causing misfortune and damage to regular observance and the damnation of his soul.

It is the truth and proven by long experience that if the superiors did what they should do there would be no need⁴⁶⁰ to seek further reform. However because they are negligent and faint-hearted, not concerned about observance, they are the first transgressors and so do not dare to admonish and punish offenders. Thus they are the strongest cause of all evil and also of all breach of order that comes about through their fault and they damage religious life and when they die they will have to render a very strict account to God [...]⁴⁶¹

668 Text: *Let the brothers who are subject, remember that, for God's sake, they have renounced their own wills* (This is an admonition). *Therefore, I strictly command them to obey their ministers* (This is a precept). According to the Pisan⁴⁶² this includes all superiors because masters are called ministers in the Gospel; in all those things that they have promised the Lord to observe.

[*Mature Brother*]. – Note that when the Rule says that the brothers are obliged to obey in all those matters which they have promised to observe it means that they should obey in all the things that they are commanded to obey as long as they are not against their soul or the Rule. Thus they renounce their own wills at profession and submit themselves to the will of others. Abandonment of one's will is the foundation [124r] of obedience, and so it says: "Let them remember that for the love of God they have renounced their own wills". Although Saint admonishes them to remember this renunciation, by reason of profession its observance had the force of a precept through

commentators on the Rule also insist on this matter and it shows the zeal of the early Capuchin Ministers General.

⁴⁵⁹ This is a portrait of the superior as animator as we would say today. These suggestions were put into practice by the brothers by the periodic reading of the Rule and the solution of moral cases and questions about the Rule.

⁴⁶⁰ "bisognaria" = "there would be no need".

⁴⁶¹ Clearly John of Fano who was a superior "who was tested by long experience" is not lenient with irresponsible superiors.

⁴⁶² Cf. *Conf.* IV, 422.

the *declarations of the fathers of the Order*.⁴⁶³ See above in the first chapter, where *living in obedience* is mentioned.

41. [Concerning Sacramental Confession]

669 *Scrupulous Brother*. If a brother recognises that he is weak and knows that he cannot confess without damaging his soul is he obliged to obey when commanded?

Mature Brother. – The Four Masters and the Pisan⁴⁶⁴ say that when the superior knows this, he may not command the subject and the subject is not obliged to obey, just as in other matters which are against his soul and the Rule. Saint Francis does not make any mention of confession in the Rule. When he dies a brother will not be asked whether he had confessed but whether he has observed the Rule.

He who confesses does not have to go beyond what the law commands. Therefore where the danger is great it is better not to confess, as Saint Francis exhorted his brothers. See in the Conformities under the heading *Franciscus praedicator*.⁴⁶⁵ This applies all the more to one who does not feel up to it. Ignorance, temerity, cupidity and not wanting to displease are causes of very many evils in confession.

Saint Bonaventure⁴⁶⁶ says that not only is against the soul but also what is near or incites to sin.

42. [Observing the Rule spiritually]

670 Text: *Wherever the brothers may be who know and feel they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, they can and should have recourse to their ministers.*

[*Mature Brother*]. – Note the when it says “they should” [124v] it commands those who cannot observe the Rule spiritually to have recourse to their ministers. When it says “they can” it means that they are not to be obstructed and thus it commands the other brothers not to impede them.

Scrupulous Brother. – The Four Masters, Brother Hugh, Saint Bonaventure and the Pisan say that to observe the Rule spiritually is to observe it in its purity and rigour, or without the proximate occasion of sin. On the other hand not to be able to observe it spiritually would be not to be able to observe it in its rigour and purity or without going into the occasion of sin against the purity of the Rule, especially in spiritual matters, such as peace of heart and purity of conscience. This is what Saint Bonaventure says.

In the explanation by the Fathers of the Order it says: “To observe the Rule spiritually, that is according to its true meaning, which the Holy Spirit expresses in it at the level of its perfection”.

⁴⁶³ Cf. *Quaedam brevis expositio*, cit. cap. X.

⁴⁶⁴ *Quat. Mag.* 165; Conf. IV, 422.

⁴⁶⁵ Conf. IV, 471.

⁴⁶⁶ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio*, cap. 10, n. 4 (Op. omnia VIII, 432).

671 Saint Francis said: "Something is carried out spiritually that is performed simply and in a religious manner, following the spirit not the flesh". However there are some who observe it physically but not spiritually, when, imbued with a false spirit, they despise the environment within the Order and the things which other brothers observe spiritually and always criticise those who are good, and do not consider that they are living according to the Rule.⁴⁶⁷

Therefore where they observe that obedience, poverty, chastity and charity or other essential points of the Rule are in danger they should have recourse to their ministers. This is what Martin V says; 'When property is added to the place, the care of souls, or because of shortages there is need to exceed the usual practice of the Order in questing and dishonest hoarding [125r] against the purity of the Rule, or where there is dishonest friendships, which the brothers cannot abide, especially those who are simple and weak and similar things'. At the end of chapter two Saint Bernard says the same thing.

Ubertino and the *Serena conscientiae* say: "When the brothers are impeded from wearing plain clothing and living austerely, as the Rule commands, or if the places have annual rents or quest for money or items that are inordinate or prohibited, or where there is the danger of annoying friendships which do not foster the Rule and obstruct others;⁴⁶⁸ the Rule says that in these and similar circumstances, they not only "can" but "must" have recourse to their superiors and demand that places be set up where the Rule can be observed spiritually and where there are no such impediments. Otherwise they are blameworthy and despise their own salvation by not manifesting the danger to their soul to their superior. The Rule states "where the brothers know" that is by experience, "and are aware" that is through balanced judgement. This is what Saint Bonaventure says.⁴⁶⁹

672 Text: *Let the ministers, moreover, receive them charitably and kindly and have such familiarity with them that these same brothers may speak and deal with them as masters with their servants, for so it must be that the ministers are the servants of all the brothers.*

Some commentators on the Rule say that it is a precept for the ministers to provide for the brothers who ask for the above mentioned places. Trust that is based on charity is wonderful, when a subject can say this to his superior and behave as a master would towards his servant.

However, as Saint Bonaventure says, in this situation superiors should not say [125r] an overbearing word to their subjects and surrender all acts of superiority after the example of Him who said "Let he who is greater among you be your servant". This is what Saint Bonaventure says. Superiors are servants for love of Him who, although He was God, took on the appearance of a servant for us. The Rule does not demand more nor does it mean anything else but that superiors be the servants of their subjects and so it

⁴⁶⁷ For the various quotes see *Short Discourse* notes 98-99.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.* notes 100-102.

⁴⁶⁹ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio*, c. 10, n. 4 cit.; *Spec minorum* cit., f. 30vb-31ra. – The Capuchins gathered all these cases in a summary text entitled *Regola e Testamento*, Venezia 1690, 126-129. There are nine cases.. This text is a summary taken from John of Fano's *Dialogue*.

says; *Non ita debet esse* etc. In this regard subjects may force superiors and remove them when they do the opposite, since they must serve in respect to regular observance. *Ex declarationibus Patrum*. See the first chapter.⁴⁷⁰

673 Note that Pope Honorius reviewing very carefully what was in the Rule said to Saint Francis: Blessed is he etc. See the first chapter.⁴⁷¹ However note these words, namely; Wherever the bothers may be who know that they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, they can and should have recourse to their ministers, and the ministers are bound by obedience to grant the brothers what they ask with kindness and freely. If they do not want to do this the brothers are permitted and have an obedience to observe the Rule to the letter where they can, since both superiors and subjects are subject to the Rule. The Pope said that the words which were quoted above could be a cause of peril for brothers who are not well founded in the love of virtue and occasion division and scandal within the Order and because of this he wanted to change the words.

Saint Francis replied: "I did not put those words in the Rule, Jesus Christ did, who knows best what is required for the salvation [126r] of the brothers and the good preservation of the religious milieu, and everything that is in the church and the Order in the future is present and clear to Him. Therefore Christ's words should not and cannot be changed. The time will come when the ministers and other superiors will inflict many bitter tribulations on those who wish to observe the Rule spiritually and just as it is His will and it is obedience to Christ that this life and Rule, which is His, should be understood and observed according to the letter, so it is His will that the above words be placed in the Rule and observed".

674 Then the Pope said: "He who inspired you to write those words inspired me to change them, however I will see to it that, preserving the true meaning of the Rule, I will mitigate the literal meaning of the words this passage literally so that the ministers will know that that they are obliged to do as Christ and the Rule wish purely, simply and there will be no chance of anyone sinning under the pretext of wanting to observe the Rule.."

Thus the Pope, not Saint Francis, changed these words and inserted those which appear in the Rule at present. This means that good and zealous brothers have authority over superiors with respect to observance of the Rule as masters do over their servants. Thus they can command and force them to assist them to observe the Rule for it states; *Possint eis dicere et facere* etc. Here great freedom is given to good brothers to put into practice their desire to observe the Rule. These facts are quoted from the chronicles [126v] of the Order where they are related by Brother Leo the companion of Saint Francis.⁴⁷²

675 Note the when Saint was at the Portiuncula Lord Nicholas of Todi told him with great reverence; "I have resolved to observe the Gospel and the Rule, as I have promised, simply and faithfully, according to the interpretation which Christ dictated through you with the help of his grace. However I ask a favour of you, that if in my days the brothers

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. *Short Discourse* notes 103-104.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. n 505.

⁴⁷² Cf. above note 35 where the sources are cited.

fall away from the pure observance of the Rule, as you proclaimed it through the Holy Spirit, with your obedience I, either alone or with some of those who wish to observe it purely, can separate from those who do not wish to observe it and observe it perfectly." He understood this Saint Francis was very happy and blessed him saying: "Know that what you asked of Christ and of me is granted." Placing his right hand on that brother he said: "*Tu es sacerdos in aeternam secundum ordinem Melchisedech*". He added that all the promises made by Christ to him would be fulfilled with joy in all those who strove to observe the Rule *to the letter* without gloss and simply. *Laus Deo. Haec ex supredictis chronicis Ordinis.*⁴⁷³

43. [The study of wisdom]

676 Text: *Let those who are illiterate not be anxious to learn*]

Mature Brother. – Saint Francis knew how much misfortune and damage would be caused to regular observance by learning and study through ambition and prestige within the Order and outside it, through the extinguishing of prayer and devotion, to poverty through purchasing costly and superfluous books and having recourse to money, through riding, by the destruction of an observant lifestyle and countless evils, which we have experienced in days gone by and at present. He wanted brothers to proceed along the path of simplicity and to avoid the occasion of such evils. Thus he invoked curses on the first brother who wanted to study at Bologna, a curse he never wished to withdraw and that wretched brother died in a bad way.⁴⁷⁴

Once the Bishop of Ostia, when the brothers persuaded the Cardinal to speak to Saint Francis, asked him to accept the advice of wise and learned brothers to follow what was taught in the Rule of Saint Augustine and Saint Benedict. On that occasion he said to the brothers in the presence of the Cardinal: "My Brothers, the Lord called by the path of simplicity and humility. In truth he showed this to me and to those who would believe in me. Therefore I do not wish that you mention [127v] any Rule to me other than the one the Lord gave me, who wished that in this world I should be a rod to confound the foolish wisdom of the world. Thus I do not wish to lead you by any other wisdom than by this. God will confound you through your wisdom and knowledge". *This is from the chronicles of the Order.*⁴⁷⁵ [...].

44. [The activity of the Holy Spirit]

677 Text: *Let them pay attention to what they must desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the lord and Its holy activity, to pray always to him with a pure heart, to have humility and patience in persecution and infirmity, and to love those who persecute, rebuke and find fault with us, because the lord says; Love you enemies and pray for those*

⁴⁷³ A Clarenò, *Htrb* cit. 49s; (Burr and Daniel pp. 40-41); *Conf.* IV, 445, 10-26; V, 177s; *Leg. Antica* ed. Miocchi c. 21, p. 45s.

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. 2MP 6; 2C 58 (FA:ED III, pp. 259-260; II, p. 286); A Clarenò, *Htrb.*, II, 45s; (Burr and Daniel p. 42); *Conf.* V, 108s.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. 2MP 68; AC 18; (FE:ED III, pp. 313-314; II, pp. 132-133); A. Clarenò, *HTbr* II, 34-41; (Burr and Daniel pp. 31-37); *Conf.* IV, 143, 29s; 585, 33s. This is an important text for Franciscan spirituality as taken up by the Capuchins.

who persecute and calumniate you. Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But whoever perseveres to the end will be saved."⁴⁷⁶

[*Mature Brother*]. – Patience, humility, love of enemies and other virtues are the activities of the Holy Spirit. To pray always and to always observe the spirit of prayer and devotion is the only way to implore the clemency of the Saviour with unmentionable sighs.⁴⁷⁷

Chapter XI

That the brothers shall not enter the convents of nuns

54. [*Tact and watchfulness in dealing with women*].

678. [*Mature Brother*]. – [...] Note that, as it is written in the *Legenda Maggiore*⁴⁷⁸ Saint Francis commanded the brothers to most carefully avoid looking at and speaking with women, something which has been the occasion of ruin to many, stating that through this those who are weak have been broken and strength of spirit become infirm. It is just as likely that someone who converses with women will not be contaminated as it is, as Scripture says,⁴⁷⁹ to walk through fire without being burnt. He did not regard it as being safe to keep images of women in mind as they might inflame the flesh with lust and stain the purity of the mind. When he feels too secure the enemy catches a person off guard, and if the devil finds as much as a hair of his own in a person he will quickly [128v] make it grow into a torrent. This is what Saint Francis said.⁴⁸⁰

Chapter XII

Concerning those who wish to go among the Saracens and other infidels.

46. [*Missionary vocation*]

679 Text: *Let those brothers who by divine inspiration, not out of frivolity or impetuosity, or cunning or to avoid the discipline of the Order, wish to go among the Saracens or other infidels, ask permission of the Minister Provincial (this is a precept). since this permission should not be imposed on those who do not wish to go, as Saint Bonaventure says.*⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁶ LR 10, 8-12 (FA:ED I, p. 105).

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. Rom 8, 26.

⁴⁷⁸ LMj, 5,5 (FA:ED II, p. 563-564).

⁴⁷⁹ Prov 6, 27-28.

⁴⁸⁰ LMj 5, 5; 2C 112-114 (FA:ED II, pp. 563- 564; pp. 321-324); *Conf.* IV, 311; V, 198.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. LR 12, 1 (FA:ED I p. 106). – Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio* c. 12, 2: "quia huius rei obedientia non est involuntariis imponenda" (*Op. Omnia* VIII, 436; *Spec. Minorum*, pars III, f. 32ra).

Text: *The ministers, however, may not grant permission except to those whom they deem fit to be sent. (This is a precept).*⁴⁸²

Saint Bonaventure says that those who are fit are those who are robust physically, have constancy of heart with respect to the faith, proven virtue and have always displayed irreprehensible conduct. [...] ⁴⁸³

Epilogue

680. 47. Here end the *Dialogue of Salvation*, which was written a second time by the same person who wrote the first, with many necessary additions, especially regarding things which are essential to the Rule and intention of Saint Francis concerning the most important point. This happened because [129r] in the time that elapsed between when the first *Dialogue* was written⁴⁸⁴ many changes took place over time in our lifestyle. This forced a change of opinion concerning many things that had been written in the first *Dialogue* which are better explained in this one with greater security and many points that are most necessary for the observance of the Rule have been added. It has also been done because the other one seriously blamed and criticised those who wanted reform, mainly on the grounds of separation by claiming that this was not necessary, especially in the case of the Capuchins, having been convinced that this would not last considering the example of many others who had done the same thing. Having seen that although matters were confused that the Lord nevertheless provided assistance as this venture was enlightened by God and recognising that this was truly the work of God and an authentic reform which was most necessary in these very imperfect days, I changed my mind and took up the habit and life of the Capuchins sincerely thanking and praising the Lord for such a beautiful grace.⁴⁸⁵

681 Much has been said in this *Dialogue* regarding recourse to spiritual friends and syndics and many other things which are not required in this blessed reform of the Capuchins, since with the grace of the Lord we live according to the purity and simplicity of the Rule. However they have their place for common convenience and for others and in mentioning them many errors have been exposed and those who live a relaxed live have been shown to have no excuse.

All the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs and the doctors of the Order regarding the Rule have been put together in this work so that everyone can know about them more easily. It has been written in the vernacular for the convenience [129v] of both the learned and the simple.

Therefore, my son, try to have it always with you and study it well and observe it with all your strength and do not linger in following me in putting on this habit,⁴⁸⁶ as you

⁴⁸² LR 12, 2 (FA:ED I, p. 106).

⁴⁸³ Saint Bonaventure, *Expositio*, c. 12, n. 2: "Idonei autem sunt robusti corpore et constants in fide, probati virtute et semper irreprehensibiliter conversati" (*Op. omnia* VIII, 435; *Spec. Minorum* cit. f. 32ra).

⁴⁸⁴ That is between 1527 and 1536.

⁴⁸⁵ He confirms the reasons that justify his moving to the Capuchins.

⁴⁸⁶ That is from the moment that you accept my line of reasoning, do not delay any longer in passing over to the capuchin reform.

have followed my teaching, since *vere bonum est nos hic esse*⁴⁸⁷ where we may serve God with great calmness of soul and safe conscience, peace and charity.

*Quicumque hanc Regulam secuti fuerint pax super illos et misericordia.*⁴⁸⁸

FINIS

⁴⁸⁷ Mt 17, 4.

⁴⁸⁸ Gal 6, 16.