



Solet annuere

The Bull of the Lord Pope Honorius III

on the Rule of the Friars Minor

November 29, 1226 A. D.

Honorius

Bishop, Servant of the servants of God,

*to our beloved sons, Friar Francis
and the other friars of the Order of the Friars Minor,
health and apostolic Benediction:*

The Apostolic See is accustomed to grant the pious desires and to share her kind favor with the upright desires of those petitioning her. Wherefore, beloved sons in the Lord, having yielded to your pious entreaties, We confirm by Our apostolic authority your rule, approved by Our predecessor, Pope Innocent, of good memory, quoted herein, and We strengthen it with the patronage of this present writing, which is as follows:

Chapter I:

In the name of the Lord, begins the life of the Friars Minor.

The Rule of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience without anything of our own, and in chastity.

Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Honorius and his canonically elected successors, and to the Roman Church; and the other friars are bound to obey Francis and his successors.

Chapter II:

Concerning those who wish to adopt this life, and in what manner they should be received.

If any would desire to adopt this life and would come to our brothers, let them send

them to their ministers provincial to whom alone, and not to others, is the permission to receive friars conceded. Let the ministers examine them very diligently concerning the Catholic Faith and sacraments of the Church. If they believe all these things and desire to observe them faithfully and firmly unto the end, and if they have no wives, or if they do, their wives have already entered a convent, or having taken a vow of chastity, permission [to enter one] has been granted to them by authority of the bishop of the diocese, and the wives are of such an age that it is not possible that suspicion arise concerning them, let them say unto these the words of the Holy Gospel, that they should go and sell all that is their own and strive to give it to the poor. If they cannot do that, their good will suffices.

Let the friars and their ministers beware, lest they be solicitous concerning their temporal things, so that they may freely do with their own things, whatever the Lord will inspire them. If however should they need counsel, let the ministers have permission to send them to other God fearing men, by whose counsel they may give their goods to the poor. Afterwards let them grant them the clothes of probation, namely two tunics without a capuche, a cord, pants, and a caparone [extending] to the cord, unless it seems to the ministers [that it should be] otherwise according to God. Having truly finished the year of probation, let them be received to obedience, promising to observe always this very life and rule. And in no manner will it be licit to them to leave this [form of] religious life, according to the command of the Lord Pope, since according to the Holy Gospel "No one putting hand to the plow and turning back is fit for the Kingdom of God."

And let those who have already promised obedience have one tunic with a capuche and if they wish to have it, another without a capuche. And those who are driven by necessity can wear footwear. And let all the friars wear cheap clothing and they can patch these with sack-cloth and other pieces with the blessing of God. I admonish and exhort them, not to despise nor judge men, whom they see clothed with soft and colored clothes, using danty food and drink, but rather let each one judge and despise his very self.

Chapter III.

Concerning the divine office and fasting; and how the brothers ought to travel through the world.

Clerics are to perform the divine office according to the ordo of the Roman Church, except for the psalter, for which they can have breviaries.

Laymen are to say twenty-four "Our Fathers" for matins; for lauds five ; for prime, terce, sext and none, for each of these seven, for vespers, however, twelve; for compline seven; and let them pray for the dead.

And let them fast from the Feast of All Saints until Christmas. Indeed those who

voluntarily fast the holy lent, which begins at Epiphany and for the forty days that follow, which the Lord consecrated with His own holy fast, let them be blessed by the Lord, and let those who do not wish [to do so] not be constrained. But they shall fast the other [Lent] until the [day of the] Resurrection of the Lord.

At other times however they are not bound to fast, except on Fridays. Indeed in time of manifest necessity the friars are not bound to the corporal fast.

I truly counsel, admonish and exhort my friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that when they go about through the world, they are not to quarrel nor contend in words, nor are they to judge others, but they are to be meek, peaceable and modest, kind and humble, speaking uprightly to all, as is fitting. And they should not ride horseback, unless they are driven [to do so] by manifest necessity or infirmity.

And into whatever house they may enter, first let them say: "Peace to this house." And according to the Holy Gospel it is lawful for them to eat of any of the foods, which are placed before them.

Chapter IV.

That the brothers should not accept money.

I firmly command all the friars, that in no manner are they to receive coins or money through themselves or through an interposed person. However for the necessities of the infirm and for the clothing of the other friars, the ministers and even the custodes are to conduct a sollicitous care, by means of spiritual friends, according to places and seasons and cold regions, as they see expedites necessity; with this always preserved, that, as has been said, they receive neither coins nor money.

Chapter V.

On the manner of working.

Let those friars, to whom the Lord gives the grace to work, work faithfully and devotedly, in such a way that, having excluded idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, to which all other temporal things should be subordinated. Indeed concerning the wages for labor, let them receive for themselves and for their friars corporal necessities, excepting coins or money, and this [they should do] humbly, as befits the servants of God and the followers of most holy poverty.

Chapter VI.

That the Friars should appropriate nothing for themselves, and concerning the begging of alms and sick friars.

Let the Friars appropriate nothing for themselves, neither house nor place, nor any thing. And as pilgrims and exiles in this world let them go about begging for alms confidently in poverty and humility as members of the household of God, nor is it fitting that they be ashamed [to do so], since the Lord made Himself poor in this world for us. This is that heavenliness of most high poverty, which has established you, my most dear Friars, as heirs and kings of the Kingdom of Heaven, making you poor in things, it has raised you high in virtues. Let this be your portion, which leads you into the land of the living. Cleaving totally to this, most beloved Friars, may you desire nothing else under heaven in perpetuity for [the sake of] the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

And wherever the friars are and find themselves, let them mutually show themselves to be members of the same household. And let them without fear manifest to one another their own necessities, since, if a mother nourishes and loves her own son according to the flesh, how much more diligently should he ought to love and nourish his own spiritual brother?

And, if any of them should fall into infirmity, the other friars should care for him, as they would wish to be cared for themselves.

Chapter VII.

On the penances to be imposed on Friars who sin.

If any of the friars, at the instigation of the enemy, should sin mortally, for those sins, concerning which it has been ordained among the friars, that they have recourse to the ministers provincial alone, the aforesaid friars are bound to have recourse to them as soon as they can, without delay. Indeed let the ministers themselves, if they are priests, with mercy enjoin upon them a penance; if indeed they are not priests, let them have it enjoined by other priests of the Order, as it will seem to them to better expedite [the matter] according to God. And they should beware, not to grow angry and become upset on account of the sin of another, since anger and upsetness impede charity in themselves and in others.

Chapter VIII.

On the election of the minister general of this brotherhood; and on the Chapter at Pentecost.

All the friars are bound to have always one of the friars of this very same religious [Order] as minister general and servant of the whole fraternity and they are bound firmly to obey him. When he dies, let there be made an election of a successor by the ministers provincials and the custodes in the Pentecost Chapter, in which the ministers provincial are bound always to convene together, wherever it will have been determined by the minister general; and this once every three years or at another interval greater or less, as it will have been ordained by the aforesaid

minister.

Chapter IX.

On preachers.

Let the friars not preach in the diocese of any bishop, when they will have been opposed by him. And let no friar even dare preach to the people, unless he will have been examined by the minister general of this fraternity and approved, and there be conceded to him by the same the office of preaching.

I admonish also and exhort these same friars, that in the preaching that they deliver, their expressions be considered and chaste, for the utility and edification of the people, by announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory with brevity of speech; since a brief word did the Lord speak upon the earth.

Chapter X.

On the admonition and correction of the friars.

Let the friars, who are ministers and servants of the other friars, visit and admonish their friars and humbly and charitably correct them, not commanding them something which is contrary to their conscience and our rule. Indeed let the friars, who are subjects, remember, that for the sake of God they have renounced their own wills. Whence I firmly command them, to obey their ministers in all things which they have promised the Lord to observe and which are not contrary to their souls or to our rule. And wherever the friars are, who know and understand, that they themselves are not able to observe the rule spiritually, they should and can have recourse to their ministers. Indeed let the ministers receive them charitably and kindly and be so familiar with them, that they can speak to them and act as a lord with his servants; for so it should be, because the ministers are the servants of all the friars.

Indeed I admonish and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that the friars are to beware of all pride, vain glory, envy, avarice, care and solicitude for this world, detraction and murmuring, and let those who are ignorant of letters not care to learn them; but let them strive, so that above all things they should desire to have the Spirit of the Lord and His holy operation, to pray always to Him with a pure heart and to be humble, patient in persecution and infirmity and to love those who persecute and correct and accuse us, because the Lord says, "Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute and calumniate you" (Mtt. 5:44). "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mtt. 5:10). "He who has persevered until the end, however, will be saved" (Mtt. 10:22).

Chapter XI.

That the brothers should not enter the convents of nuns.

I strictly command all the brothers not to have suspicious company or conversation with women, and not to enter the monasteries of women religious, except those to whom special permission has been conceded by the Apostolic See; neither are they to be godfathers of men or women [so that] scandal may not arise on this account among the friars nor concerning them.

Chapter XII.

Concerning those who go among the Saracens and other infidels.

Let whoever of the friars who desires by divine inspiration to go among the saracens and other infidels seek permission from their minister provincial. Indeed the ministers are to grant permission to go to none, except those whom seem to be fit to be sent.

For which sake I enjoin the ministers by obedience, to seek from the Lord Pope one of the cardinals of the Roman Church, who is to be the governor, protector, and corrector of this fraternity, so that always subject and prostrate at the feet of this same Holy Church, stable in the Catholic Faith we may observe, as we have firmly promised, the poverty and humility and the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Confirmation of the Rule

Let it not be in any way licit to anyone among men to infringe this page of our confirmation, or to contravene it with rash daring. If anyone however would presume to attempt this, let him know himself to have incurred the indignation of the Omnipotent God and of Blessed Peter and Paul, His Apostles.

Given at the Lateran, on the third day of the Kalens of December, in the eight year of Our Pontificate.

Honorius III