

## TO ALL THE FRIARS.

In the name of the Highest Trinity and Holy Unity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. <sup>1</sup>

To all the reverend and much beloved brothers, to <sup>2</sup> the minister general of the Order of Minors, its lord, and to the other ministers general who shall come after him, and to all the ministers and custodes and priests of the same brotherhood, humble in Christ, and to all the simple and obedient brothers, the first and the last, Brother Francis, a mean and fallen man, your little servant, gives greeting in Him who has redeemed and washed us in His Precious Blood, <sup>3</sup> and whom when you hear His Name adore ye with fear and reverence, prostrate on the ground; <sup>4</sup> the Lord Jesus Christ, such is the Name <sup>5</sup> of the most High Son, blessed forever. Amen.

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Hear, my lords, my sons and my brothers, and with your ears receive my words. <sup>1</sup> Incline the ear <sup>2</sup> of your heart and obey the voice of the Son of God. Keep His commandments with all your heart and fulfil His counsels with a perfect mind. Praise Him for He is good <sup>3</sup> and extol Him in your works, <sup>4</sup> for therefore He has sent you through all the world that by word and deed you may bear witness to His voice, <sup>5</sup> and you may make known to all that there is no other Almighty besides Him. <sup>6</sup> Persevere under discipline <sup>7</sup> and obedience and with a good and firm purpose fulfil what you have promised Him. The Lord God offers Himself to you as to His sons. <sup>8</sup>

Wherefore, brothers, kissing your feet and with the charity of which I am capable, I conjure you all to show all reverence and all honor possible to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the things that are in heaven and the things that are on earth are pacified and reconciled to Almighty God. <sup>9</sup> I also beseech in the Lord all my brothers who are and shall be and desire to be priests <sup>10</sup> of the Most High that, when they wish to celebrate Mass, being pure, they offer the true Sacrifice

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of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ purely, with reverence, with a holy and clean intention, not for any earthly thing or fear or for the love of any man, as it were pleasing men. <sup>1</sup> But let every will, in so far as the grace of the Almighty helps, be directed to Him, <sup>2</sup> desiring thence to please the High Lord Himself alone because He alone works there [in the Holy Sacrifice] as it may please Him, for He Himself says: "Do this for a commemoration of Me;" <sup>3</sup> "if any one doth otherwise he becomes the traitor Judas <sup>4</sup> and is made guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>

Call to mind, priests, my brothers, what is written in the law of Moses: how those transgressing even materially died by the decree of the Lord without any mercy. <sup>6</sup> How much more and worse punishments he deserves to suffer "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath esteemed the Blood of the testament unclean by which he was sanctified and hath offered an affront to the spirit of grace." <sup>7</sup> For man despises, soils, and treads under foot the Lamb of God when, as the Apostle says, <sup>8</sup> not discerning and distinguishing the holy bread of Christ from other nourishments or works, he

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either eats unworthily or, if he be worthy, he eats in vain and unbecomingly since the Lord has said by the prophet: Cursed be the man that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully. <sup>1</sup> And He condemns the priests who will not take this to heart saying: "I will curse your blessings." <sup>2</sup>

Hear ye, my brothers: If the Blessed Virgin Mary is so honored, as is meet, because she bore Him in [her] most holy womb; if the blessed Baptist trembled and did not dare to touch the holy forehead of God; if the sepulchre in which He lay for some time, is venerated, how holy, just, and worthy ought he to be who touches with his hands, who receives with his heart and his mouth, and proffers to be received by others Him who is now no more to die but to triumph in a glorified eternity: on whom the angels desire to look. <sup>3</sup>

Consider your dignity, brothers, priests, and be holy because He Himself is holy. <sup>4</sup> And as the Lord God has honored you above all through this mystery, even so do you also love and reverence and honor Him above all. It is a great misery and a deplorable weakness when you have Him thus present to care for anything else in the whole world. Let the entire man be seized with fear; let the whole world tremble; let heaven exult when Christ, the Son of the Living God, is on the altar in the hands of the priest. O admirable height and stupendous condescension!

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O humble sublimity! O sublime humility! that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under a morsel of bread. Consider, brothers, the humility of God and "pour out your hearts before Him, <sup>1</sup> and be ye humbled that ye may be exalted by Him. <sup>2</sup> Do not therefore keep back anything for yourselves that He may receive you entirely who gives Himself up entirely to you.

Wherefore I admonish and exhort in the Lord, that, in the places in which the brothers live, only one Mass be celebrated in the day, according to the form of holy Church. <sup>3</sup> If, however, there be many priests in the place, let one be contented, through love of charity, by hearing the celebration of another priest, for the Lord Jesus Christ replenishes those who are worthy of it, present and absent. He, although He may seem to be present in many places, nevertheless remains undivided and suffers no change; but One everywhere He works as it may please Him with the Lord God the Father, and the

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Holy Ghost the Paraclete, world without end. Amen.

And since "he that is of God heareth the words of God," [1](#) we who have been more specially destined for the divine offices, ought, in consequence, not only to hear and do what God says, but also—in order to impress upon ourselves the greatness of our Creator and our subjection to Him—to watch the vessels and other objects which contain His holy words. On that account I warn all my brothers and I strengthen them in Christ, wheresoever they may find the divine written words to venerate them so far as they are able, and if they are not well preserved or if they lie scattered disgracefully in any place, let them, in so far as it concerns them, collect and preserve them, honoring in the words the Lord who has spoken. For many things are sanctified by the word of God, [2](#) and by the power of the words of Christ the Sacrament of the Altar is effected.

Moreover I confess all my sins to God the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost and to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin and to all the Saints in heaven and on earth and to the minister general of this our religion as to my venerable Lord, and to all the priests of our order and to all my other blessed brothers. I have offended in many ways through my grievous fault, especially because I have not observed the Rule which I have promised to the Lord and

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I have not said the office as prescribed by the Rule either by reason of my negligence or weakness or because I am ignorant and simple. Wherefore, by all means as far as I am able, I beseech my lord, the general minister, to cause the Rule to be inviolably observed by all, and let the clerics say the office with devotion before God, not attending to melody of voice but to harmony of mind, so that the voice may be in accord with the mind and the mind in accord with God, so that they may please God by purity of mind and not coax the ears of the people by voluptuousness of voice. As for myself I promise to keep these things strictly, as the Lord may give me grace, and I leave them to the brothers who are with me to be observed in the office and in the other appointed regulations. But whosoever of the brothers will not observe them, I do not hold them as Catholics or as my brothers and I do not wish either to see them or speak [with them], until they have done penance. I say this also of all others who setting aside the discipline of the Rule, go wandering about; for our Lord Jesus Christ gave His life lest He might lose the obedience of the most Holy Father. [1](#)

I, Brother Francis, a useless man and unworthy creature of the Lord God, say to Brother Elias, the minister of our whole religion, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to all the ministers general who shall be after him and to the other custodes

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and guardians of the brothers, who are and shall be, that they have this writing with them, put it in practice and [sedulously](#) preserve it. And I entreat them to guard jealously those things which are written in it and to cause them to be carefully observed according to the good pleasure of the Almighty God now and ever as long as this world may last.

Blessed be you by the Lord who shall have done these things and may the Lord be with you forever. Amen.

Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, give to us wretches to do for Thee what we know Thee to will and to will always that which is pleasing to Thee; so that inwardly purified, inwardly illumined and kindled by the flame of the Holy Ghost, we may be able to follow in the footsteps of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by Thy grace alone come to Thee the Most High, who in perfect Trinity and simple Unity livest and reignest and gloriest God Almighty forever and ever. Amen. [1](#)