

July 2023

*All-powerful, most holy, Almighty and supreme God,  
Holy and just Father, Lord King of heaven and earth  
we thank You for Yourself, for through Your holy will  
and through Your only Son with the holy Spirit  
You have created everything spiritual and corporal  
making us in Your own image and likeness,  
We thank You.*

Excerpts taken from Franciscan Sources *the Tribulations*

### Angelic Prophecies

1

After the Rule was confirmed and they were returning, meal time had passed, and they were weak and exhausted from the labor of their journey, and far away from the homes of any people. Suddenly a handsome youth joined them on the road, and offered them his bread which he brought with him, and he discussed many things with them about the perfection of the evangelical life of Christ. – **Nothing surpasses the greatness or the dignity of the human person**

2

With the power of his words he inflamed them with a great burning of charity, and their minds were overcome with astonishment at the wonder of his words. He immediately disappeared in an amazing way, and left them enkindled with the life-giving love of Christ. They all realized at the same moment that it had been an angel of God who offered them the bread. – **Reputation is what men and women think of us. Character is what God and the angels know of us.**

3

Restored both in spirit and in body, they gave great thanks to God for His gift and kindness. In fervor of spirit they knelt together, lifting their feelings and hearts to Him, and they promised and swore not to shrink from the promise of holy poverty under the pressure of any need or tribulation. They had understood by God's providence and the angelic words that God has greater care for their bodies and souls than a mother has for her child, in fact, even more than He has for heaven and earth; and that it is impossible for God not to provide His servants with what is useful and needed for the body; not to hear the prayers of the poor, and not to fulfill the holy desires which He alone inspires. – **A test of one's character is that person's respect for those who can be of no possible service to him/her.**

4

For He Himself said: "I will not desert you, nor forsake you," and "Do not be afraid, little flock, because it has pleased my Father to grant you the kingdom; how much more the necessities of life." Saint Francis himself used to say that the almighty power of God is made known and shines forth in the faith and endurance of the saints, because we have been saved by faith, and all the

works of God are done in faith. – **The more faithful you listen to the voice within you, the better you hear what is sounding outside of you.**

5

Without faith it is impossible to please God; as it is written, one who doubts divine providence is like the waves of the sea, moved and tossed about by the wind. For that man should not suppose that he will receive anything from God, because someone like that is devious in spirit and erratic in all his ways. All things are possible to one who believes, and all things, however bitter, are sweet and light to one who loves. – **Our wills are ours to make them Yours, O God.**

6

The apostles, martyrs, and the Fathers, naked and withdrawn from the world, serving God in faith and charity lived for Christ and not for themselves. Having before their eyes the examples of Christ like a cloud of witnesses of eternal refreshment, “they went about in the skins of sheep and goats, needy, afflicted, tormented: the world was not worthy of them.” – **To deny the freedom of the will and is to make morality impossible.**

7

How many torments all the saints suffered so that they might safely reach the kingdom with the palm of martyrdom! They shared in the sufferings of Christ and were abandoned to temptations, infirmities, wants, and the persecutions of demons and humans; to be tested and proven in the crucible of tribulations, as in fire, and through endurance to be numbered among the saints, reigning with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. – **God is omnipotent, but powerless still, to stop my heart from wishing what it will.**

8

We are given great and immeasurable gifts of the spirit and benefits from the Lord at the very time when, for the moment, we are afflicted and tempted, so that, once our endurance has been proven, we may reach Christ with the palm of martyrdom. When we are living just and holy lives and when, because of our observance of obedience, poverty, and chastity, we incur need, sickness, and death, we should rejoice, looking at Him who, for the sake of the joy that lay before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame. – **We glorify rugged wills, but the greatest things are done by timid people who work with simple trust.**

9

In the same way they rejoice who win victory over opponents: they find it all the more valuable the longer they sought and longed for it. Every one of the saints puts on the elegance and beauty of incorruptible and eternal glory, placed in the line moving toward the undying good at the moment when each of them completely dies to vices and passions in exchange for imitation and profession of the life of Christ, desiring to be freed from the body, and through tortures and torments to pass over to Him, who endured suffering and death on the cross for us, who were enemies of God and slaves of sin and most deserving of eternal death. – **All great virtues bear the imprint of self-denial.**

10

Christ Jesus worked in His servant Francis in the same way as in the early saints, and many rushed toward the fragrance of his life and that of his companions, and were drawn by the power of the

Spirit of Christ to love heavenly things and put them into practice. – **No one remains what they were when they recognize themselves.**

11

Fervent in the spirit of Christ they preached the Gospel in deed and in word. The hearts of those who saw them were transformed, and to confirm their life and preaching Christ daily worked innumerable signs and miracles through Francis. – **In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up that makes us rich.**

12

Caught up in the spirit of God, they condemned the world with its passions; and, according to the counsel of Christ, selling all they had and giving it to the poor, they were joined in heart and habit to the poor of Christ. – **Those who deny themselves for Christ shall enjoy themselves in Christ.**

13

The number of brothers quickly multiplied, and were organized under ministers and custodians in the various provinces of the Christian people. But it is certainly no small undertaking to take on the discipleship of the life of Christ and to pursue the things demanded by so great a profession, because to begin something good is for many, but perseverance until the end is for the few and the perfect. – **Our divisions prevent our neighbors from hearing the Gospel as they should.**

14

To mortify the senses; to silence the tongue and heart according to the counsel of the Gospel; in a Christ-like way to offer continually both body and soul to God; to intend and accomplish both internal and external works according to the pleasure of God's will; and to endure in these things until the end is a gift from God, but it is not pursued and preserved without great anguish and—I might say—sweating blood, sharing in pains like those of the cross. – **Of what use is it to have many irons in the fire if the fire is going out?**

15

Our weakness is great and we all fall easily into things of sensuality; and the prudence of the flesh, under the cloak of discernment, like the force of a violent wind, drives us strongly toward those things—iron chains and a cell of bronze—consenting to the first and following the second. For there will be no one in the lot of the saints who follows those things. – **Church unity is like peace, we are all for it but are not willing to pay the price.**

16

Through this the first man conceived the beginning of ruin and became involved in both the worst evils of self-love and self-satisfaction. Under the appearance of discernment the brothers began to open their eyes and to take their example from other religious ways of life. Some of the more learned ones among them suggested to the simpler ones that this would be safe and useful. – **It is not our differences that really matter, but the meanness behind that is ugly.**

17

Without considering their fault of presumption, infidelity, and disobedience, and dragging others after themselves by word and deed, they had a taste for things contrary to Christ, to the founder, and to the Rule they professed. These things reached the ears of their father and he, punishing

those who did such things with harsh rebukes, turned to Christ, praying that they be set right. – **The best creed we can have is charity towards the creeds of others.**

18

While he was praying an angel of the Lord appeared to him in an amazing form and appearance: the head was gold, arms and chest silver, stomach bronze, legs of iron, feet of earth and clay; the shoulders covered with vile and rough sackcloth. The angel showed Saint Francis that he was rather ashamed of that sackcloth covering. – **Joined by mutual love and sealed by oneness of mind we can overcome any obstacle.**

19

He was amazed at seeing this. The angel said to him: “Why do you gawk and gaze? This form, in which I was sent to appear to you, signifies the beginning, development, and end which your religion will have, until the time it goes into labor, the time of the reform of the life of Christ and the state of the Church. – **Doubt is the parent of discovery.**

20

”The golden head is you, with all your companions who have carried Christ and His death written in your heart, have loved to cling to His footprints with your whole heart, and have wished for all time to have nothing under heaven on account of His love. But just as the descent of the seed of Abraham was promised not in Ishmael but in Isaac, so the descent of your name will not be in sons of flesh, but in sons of spirit, in deed and in truth. – **When unhappy, one doubts everything, when happy, one doubts nothing.**

21

“For they shall abandon the state of the golden life of humility and poverty, having nothing, wishing nothing, and seeking and loving Christ alone. Having put aside prayer and devotion, they will turn to knowledge which inflates, eagerness for lectures and the accumulation of a multitude of books under the pretext of their neighbor’s edification and the salvation of souls. And because they prefer verbs to virtues, and science to sanctity, they will remain cold within and devoid of charity, having changed gold into cold and porous silver. – **When in doubt risk it!**

22

“Since they shall speak much but do little, they will start to trample on the solidity of the humble life and the substance of their foundation, namely the truth of poverty; taking on distracting cares and concerns they will change silver into bronze, and they will not be concerned about returning to the earlier good things, namely to the fervor of heavenly desires. – **Insecurity welcomes restraints to keep the hands from shaking.**

23

They will put on a simulation of humble and religious manners of great holiness, but inwardly they will be clothed in hypocrisy, panting for praises and honors. They will wish, not to be more outstanding and holier than others, but to be considered and to appear so. – **Doubt comes in at the window when inquiry is denied at the door.**

24

Thus they will sink to worse things and, to their own great loss, like bad merchants, will exchange the silver of eloquence and the product of learning for a hypocritical simulation in bronze, producing their works in order to get human praise. – **Give me the benefit of your convictions if you have any, but keep your doubts to yourself for I have enough of my own.**

25

“But their simulation and hypocrisy cannot be concealed for long; and when it is laid bare, they will sense that they are losing their worth in the eyes of those who praised them, day to day becoming filthier, and because of this they will start to become angry and indignant and will persecute those they once tried so hard to please, seeking opportunities to afflict those who have stopped revering and complimenting them. In this way they shall change red and ringing bronze into hard and harsh iron. – **Love is above all the gift of oneself.**

26

Changed into an iron nature, they will be ready and bold, not just to take revenge but also quick to do evil for insults received, but fragile, petty, and impatient beyond measure when it comes to bearing any insults. – **God wants the heart.**

27

”Like the iron mixed with tile you see in my feet, so in the end the brothers will be, like iron, quick and cruel in inflicting evils and, like tile, impatient and fragile in bearing them. And so those brothers who at the beginning were clothed in the purest gold of the charity of Christ, in the last days, when the religion you founded will go into labor, will be considered like clay pots. – **One loving heart sets another on fire.**

28

“This sackcloth I am wearing, and of which I show that I am ashamed, is the cheapness and austerity of poverty which the brothers promised the Lord they would wear proudly and joyfully. But they have abandoned their earlier charity: it was this that united them to God, and made them think that holding to the submissiveness of poverty and humility in all things was the first payment of heavenly honor, and the pledge of eternal glory. So they will refuse to bear the labors and shortages of poverty inwardly; and outwardly they will bear it only in appearance and in words, and even then with shame.” – **God made us to love Him not to understand Him.**

29

After this the angel left him and, filled with grief, he began to lament anxiously in the presence of the Lord about all that he had seen and heard. Christ appeared to him and said: “Why are you so troubled and sad, Francis? I was the one who called you out of the world, ignorant, weak, and simple, so that in you I might show forth my wisdom and strength. – **All virtue is loving right; all sin is loving wrong.**

30

Anything good that you have begun or done in the Church and in the religion will be credited to my name. I am the one who created humanity, assumed it, redeemed, repaired, and reconciled it freely. I direct, protect, and preserve those whom I have chosen and call to penance. And without me no one can will or accomplish the good. I called you from the world when you were in sin. I

enlightened you and taught you to take the easy yoke of my way of life upon you and carry it humbly. – **Love is the only force that can make things one without destroying them.**

31

I will guard and preserve all that I founded and planted through you. I will raise up whatever falls, and will repair whatever is destroyed, and I will substitute others for those who have fallen. If they are not yet born, I will cause them to be born. And even if your religion should be reduced in numbers to three, it will still remain, by my favor, unshaken until the end of time. – **Human beings must be known to be loved, but divine things must be loved to be known.**