

Letters of St. Francis of Assisi

Letter to a Minister

Friar N., minister, may the Lord bless you.

I tell you, as I can, regarding the state of your soul, that those things which impede you to love the Lord God, and whoever has caused you an impediment or if other friars have done the like, even if they have whipped you, all these you ought to regard as a grace. And want it so and not something else. And let this be your duty in virtue of a true obedience to the Lord God and to myself, because I know firmly, that this is a true obedience. And love them who do those things to you. And do not want something else from them, except as much as the Lord has given you to desire it. And in this love them; and do not wish that they be better Christians. And let that be more to you than a hermitage. And in this I want to know, if you love the Lord and myself, His servant and yours, if you have done this, namely, that there be no friar in the world, who has sinned, as much as one could sin, that, after he has seen your eyes, never leaves without your mercy, if he seeks mercy. And if he would not seek mercy, you are to ask him, if he wants mercy. And if afterwards he would have sinned a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me for this, so that you draw him to the Lord; and you are to always pity such ones. And you are to announce this to the guardians, when you will be able, that as far as you are concerned you are resolved to act thus.

Moreover from all the chapters, which are in the Rule, which speak of mortal sins, with the Lord assisting us in the Chapter at Pentecost, with the counsel of the friars, we shall make a chapter such as this:

If one of the friars at the instigation of the enemy has sinned mortally, he is bound by obedience to have recourse to his own guardian. And let all the friars, who know he has sinned, not shame him nor utter detraction, but let them have great mercy upon him and keep very private the sin of their brother; "because a doctor is not needed" by the healthy, "but by those who have a malady." Similarly they are bound by obedience to send him to their custos with a companion. And let the custos himself mercifully provide for him, just as he himself would want to be provided for, if he was in an exactly similar situation. And if he has fallen into any venial sin, let him entrust the friar to his priest. And if there is not a priest there, let him entrust him to his brother companion, until he will find a priest, to absolve him canonically, just as has been said. And those (friars) are to have entirely no power of enjoining any penance except this: Go and sin no more.

This having been written, so that it ought to be better observed, you are to keep it with you until Pentecost; you are to be there with your friars. And this and all other things, which are lesser in the Rule, with the Lord God assisting, you shall take care to fulfill.

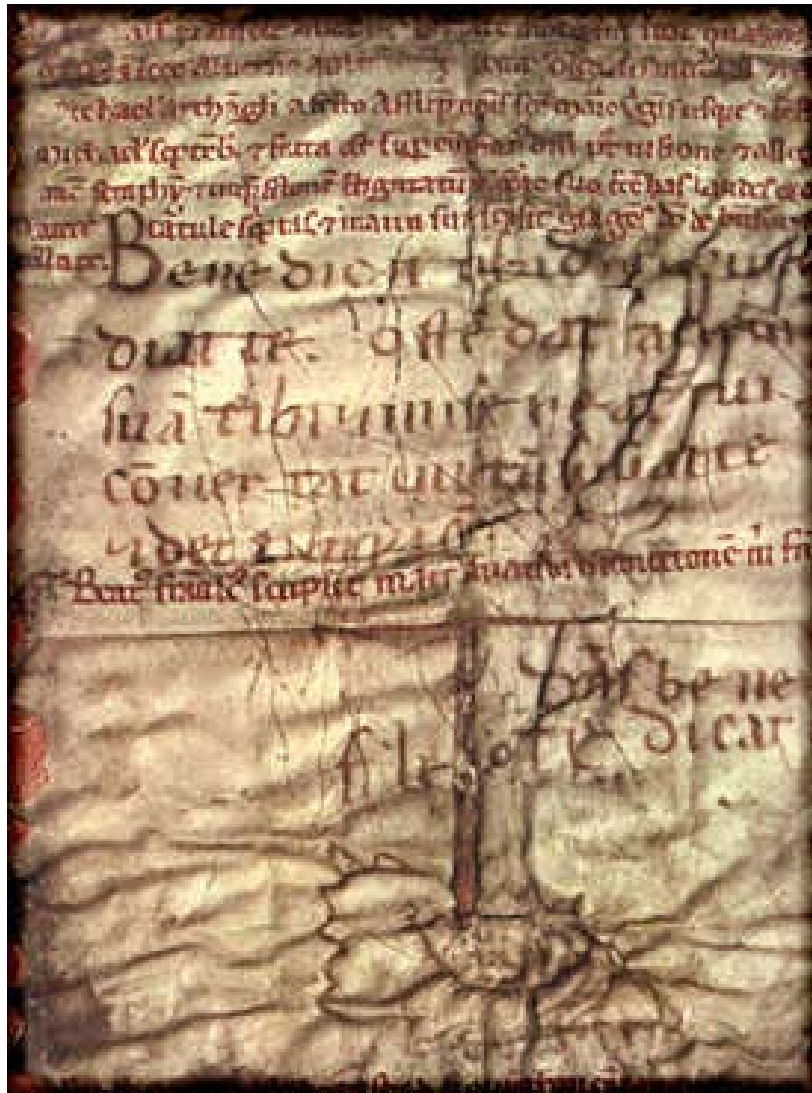
Letter to Brother Anthony

To Friar Anthony, my bishop, Francis wishes salvation. It pleases me that you read sacred theology to the friars, so long as in the study of this you "do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion," just as is contained in the Rule.

Letter to Brother Leo

Brother Leo, health and peace from Brother Francis!

I am speaking, my son, in this way—as a mother would—because I am putting everything we said on the road in this brief message and advice. If afterwards, you need to come to me for counsel, I advise you thus: In whatever way it seems better to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footprint and poverty, do it with the blessing of the Lord God and my obedience. And if you need and want to come to me for the sake of your soul or for some consolation, Leo, come.





Think of a significant person in your life with whom you would like to share a special word, as St. Francis did with Brother Leo.

Take a few minutes to search your heart for what you most want to say. Then compose and write that person a simple letter.

Make no more than four sentences.