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Happy Thanksgiving
Be grateful God is God and that there is no Other
and for God's abundant Blessings.

November 2023

*Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing,
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun, ... Sister Moon and the stars, ...Brother Wind, ...
Sister Water, ... Brother Fire, ... our Sister Mother Earth, ...
Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, ...
Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.
Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.
Amen.*

(Canticle of the Creatures [abbreviated] by Saint Francis of Assisi)

The Book of The Tribulations ends with the daily passages for this month taken from the last chapter The Testament. The daily sayings are taken from various sources.

[The Testament]

1 - But so that he might remove every scruple of doubt from the hearts of all the brothers, Blessed Francis toward the end of his life clearly declared in his Testament the truth of his intention, as he had it in the Rule, just as he had received it from Christ. He strictly commanded all his cleric and lay brothers, through obedience, not to place any gloss upon the Rule or the Testament: - **Afflictions are but the shadows of God's wings.**

2 - "They should be understood in this way," but as the Lord gave him to write the Rule and Testament purely and simply, they should understand them purely and simply and observe them purely and simply until the end, blessing all who observe them in this way and firmly blocking the way toward asking letters or privileges from the Roman Curia, either personally or through an intermediary, against the pure and literal observance of the Rule handed over to him by Christ. – **Sorrow is a fruit: God does not make it grow on limbs too weak to bear it.**

3 - The commands and words of the saint himself, therefore, make it clear that he received the Rule and Testament by revelation from Christ, and that the correct, true, pure, faithful, and spiritual

understanding and observance of the Rule is the literal observance. The other “declarations” are pious concessions made by pious doctors for those who are ill, useful and necessary dispensations for the salvation of souls of those who are unable or unwilling to be obliged to that difficult and perfect observance of the Rule which the founder taught and fulfilled and received from Christ directly. –

Light griefs can speak, but deeper ones are dumb.

4 - But a reform of the Rule revealed to Saint Francis, to be carried out after the mystery marked by his cross, will be the pure, simple, and literal observance of the Rule and Testament, as the Holy Spirit fills those whom He chooses and calls to preach the life of Christ in word and deed like seraphim, cherubim, and thrones. Like the seraphim, confident that He dwells in them, they will carry Christ in body and soul in the form of the cross. – **Those who have known grief seldom seem sad.**

5 - As a sign of this, Francis appeared as nailed, first in soul and afterwards in the flesh, prefiguring an opposing reality in adversities. Like the cherubim, because the uncreated intelligence, begotten of the Father from eternity, he will penetrate, enlighten, and confirm the understanding of the humble lesser brothers through feeling and virtue. He will make them wise in the light, communicating to them like another Elijah appeared to six brothers in a fiery chariot, and their consciences were laid bare, one to the other. – **There are times when sorrow seems to be the only truth.**

6 - Like the thrones, the strength of the all-powerful Father, the brightness of the faith and its living action will help them mightily. Their prayers will be answered, their vows fulfilled, their threats and curses feared, and their blessings will be loved and revered. – **One who has grieved can feel the beauty of music.**

7 - Without Christ Jesus dwelling in them like the seraphim, enlightening them like cherubim, and resting and sitting in them like the thrones, the chosen ones would not be strong enough to sustain the burden of the last tribulation. In it the power of the dragon, set loose in the man of perdition, will be lifted up and extolled to such an extent that seated in the temple of God, he will display himself, above all that is called “God” or is worshipped as such. – **Often it is required to leave God for God.**

8 - For just as the life of Christ, His preaching, passion, death, wounds, burial, resurrection, ascension, and all the rest of His deeds and teachings, present, past, and future, singly and all together, humanly and divinely, begin and complete, grant and announce, seal and open, so too the dignity and majesty of His grace and glory are revealed and appear in the saints, and the secrets of His counsel are communicated in an orderly plan, so that all things which are of Christ may shine forth in each of Christ’s members and each may glow more gloriously in all by effect and virtue. – **Often we are invited to leave God’s sweetness to serve Him in sorrows and travails.**

9 - Christ Jesus is the truth—Eternal Wisdom, uncreated, begotten and creating all things, containing all things, and completing all things—and communicates himself wholly in many and varied ways, human and divine, to each one and to all as He wills according to the capacity of each, for the completion of His mystical body, renewing signs and working wonders through His Spirit for His glorification. – **Only life which deliberately picks up and starts again is victorious.**

10 - He wished to give to all in Francis a unique memorial of Himself and His wonders: therefore, after He had given through Francis the Rule and teaching of His life, He clothed him with the sign of His flesh and cross, so that the newest members would realize that they ought to be conformed to their head. – **Sorrow makes us all children again.**

11 - And just as the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God and His inscrutable judgments, which are sealed, are closed and openly revealed by the Father through the Holy Spirit in Christ, so now in this last hour Christ placed the sign of the Cross in the heaven of the Church, and

willed it to appear in Francis, so that those who look at him put on Christ and follow him and flee in front of the plundering sword of the hellish man, and are not caught in the trap of his errors, nor cling to falsehood through the work of lies, and thus fall away from the truth. – **Prejudice is the reasoning of the stupid.**

12 - Finally, as someone says, how was it far from Francis to glory except in the cross of the Lord? Who can express it? Who can understand? It was given to him alone to experience it. For this reason perhaps it had to appear in the flesh, since it could not be explained in words. This alone intimates to human ears what is not yet entirely clear: why that sacrament appeared in the saint, as what is revealed by him to him, and draws understanding from the future: at the end it will be true and worthy of faith, to which nature, law, and grace will be witnesses; for the sign cries out the signified; let silence speak where words fall short. – **Christianity is asceticism without rigorism, and love without sentimentality.**

13 - For now that all these things have happened, there is the beginning of clarity about those secrets, revealed through the seraph to Francis himself, and closed within the signs of the wounds. Christ Jesus, true God and man, the beginning and the end of created nature, law, grace, and glory, circumscribed and enclosed in the cross the immensity of His omnipotence, the infinity of His wisdom, the bounty of His mercy, and the ineffable goodness of His charity. He destroyed death by death and enlightened life and incorruptibility through the Gospel; and Francis, professing it, was made, in word and action, its herald in the Church by Christ. – **Nothing is more depressing and more illogical than aggressive Christianity.**

14 - Christ crucified, rising from the dead, and giving the apostles the Holy Spirit, from the death of the letter poured forth the Spirit of life. Rising from the dead, Christ gave this revelation, received from the Father through death, to His servants the apostles. – **The world around us will recognize us as disciples of Jesus when they see our prayers are being answered.**

15 - And they knew that they had received, through the death of the flesh, the life of the life-giving Christ; and being made saints among the saints by the power of sanctification through His Spirit, they preached life-giving faith against deadly and death-dealing unbelief. – **The main business of a Christian is to go through the world turning its water into wine.**

16 - And their tongue was made the key of heaven, opening the ways of life to God's worthy and faithful ones, demonstrating by signs, words, and deeds the destruction of the world and the demise and eternal perdition of those who love it. They separated the precious from the vile, truth from lies, goodness from malice, and they were made the mouth of God and the chariot of His omnipotence against the world and the prince of the world. – **If we were willing to learn the meaning of true discipleship and actually to become disciples, the Church in the west would become transformed and the impact on society would be staggering.**

17 - They preached the Gospel to the crucifiers of Christ, those who despised His humility. The apostles tried, through the love of heavenly things and the acknowledgment and imitation of Christ, to draw them away from infidelity and disobedience to God, which they incurred through the sin of envy against Christ, and from the enmity of God, which they incurred under the pretext of preserving divine worship ... but God broke them and dispersed them and made His name great among the nations. – **It takes two to make peace.**

18 - Those who were his brothers in name only denied and opposed by their words and deeds the evangelical life and perfection, which was solemnly introduced and renewed by Christ in the Church through Francis in opposition to the cunning of demons and the errors and fallacies of the precursors

of Antichrist. Then the sign of his wounds will cry out and proclaim the malice of the persecutors signified in the wounds and silence, and speaking, will declare that innocence and perfection truly exists in those who will endure persecution. – **Peace is not made at the council tables or by treaties, but in the hearts of men.**

19 - For faith, as it is sure knowledge of God, not having demonstrable first principles, since it is one of those things above the mind and understanding, is an existing substance, and works beyond nature in those who are truly faithful. Those dependent upon the reasonings of human philosophy will attempt, with the devil agitating them, to overturn and revoke those who are grounded, rooted in it, demonstrating by sophistry that they live contrary to Scripture and the example and teachings of the early fathers; and that they act foolishly, rashly and irrationally, presuming to live and observe things impossible for human nature, out of harmony with common custom and tradition of the early fathers, derived from the saints and by the saints up to the present time. Accordingly, Christians will consider that they are doing a service to God when they kill those Christians striving for true perfection with all their might. – **Yes, we love peace, yet we are not willing to take wounds for it, as we are for war.**

20 - For this reason, the one who wrote the first legend says that it will be true and worthy of faith, to which nature, law, and grace will be witnesses, since the innocence of Abel, the meekness and humility of Moses, and the kindness and charity of Christ will bear witness for these latest poor men, humble in mind and heart. They are truly blessed, much like the saints before them, who once served the Lord under the law of nature, the law of Moses, and the law of the grace, and they will suffer in the end of the time of the Church of the nations. – **My religion is based on truth and non-violence.**

21 - At last the ancient serpent, who by his own pride was cast down from his high state, seduced the first man, attacked Moses, tempted Christ, and had Him crucified, at the beginning of the fullness of the end will be let loose to tempt the Church of the nations. In his release wickedness will overflow, or abound, and charity will grow cold, so that the humility, faith, poverty, purity, and charity of Christ will be considered pride, perfidy, heresy, sterility, and foolishness. – **A bad peace is better than a good war.**

22 - For Brother Pacificus, who in ecstasy of mind saw and heard that the seat of Lucifer was reserved for the humble Francis. And Brother Salvo saw that Francis was chosen by God from all the saints to have a particular battle with Lucifer. And another brother saw that Lucifer had entered into the religion of the Lesser Brothers, and assumed the habit, so that he could vanquish Francis more easily. – **Who is narrow of vision cannot be big of heart.**

23 - Brothers in appearance and name will attack and persecute the Brothers who are Lesser in fact and deed, and will hate them in a fanatical and insane way, and boldly follow a leader of foolishness, error, and disbelief, the enemy of Francis, the most humble and poorest man, namely, Lucifer, and, having drawn the sons of his flesh away from him, in irreverence, incredulity, and disobedience they will have provoked and exasperated him as long as he lived. – **Compassion is the root of religion; pride the root of sin.**

24 - This was, therefore, the first conflict of incredulity and irreverence and disobedience against Francis, the founder under Christ, and his true and heartfelt followers, against which Christ, in Francis and his companions, stood and went out conquering, so that he might vanquish through true poverty and humility, and rule triumphantly in peace and charity. So be it. Amen – **God does not wish us to remember what He is willing to forget.**

25 - Near the time of the passing of the humble, poor servant of God, Francis, he had all the brothers of the place called to him, and spoke consoling words to them about his death. With fatherly affection and powerful words he exhorted them to observance of the life and Rule they had promised, to divine mutual love, and to reverence and obedience to the holy mother Roman Church and all clerics. With the most powerful and reliable words he inflamed them to possess poverty, humility, peace, and mutual love, leaving and bequeathing these as inheritance rights; and to ardent following of the footprints of Jesus Christ and contempt and hatred of the world. – **Unless you are deliberately kind to every creature, you will often be cruel to many.**

26 - As they were sitting around him he ordered a brief testament written, in which he wrote down all the truth of his first and last intention, revealed to him by Christ, purely and clearly, both for those present as well as for those absent and those to come to the religion until the end of the age. And he ordered with all possible strictness that it be faithfully and reverently observed and preserved under the protection of the Most High heavenly Father and His blessed Son Jesus Christ and His blessing. – **Compassion will cure more sins than condemnation.**

27 - He blessed all the brothers, present and absent in the power and name of Jesus Christ Crucified, his arms crossed, extending over them in the form of a cross, his hands marked with the wounds of Jesus Christ. He also had Brother Bernard of Quintavalle, the first brother, called to him. Placing his right hand on the head of this brother in front of all the brothers, he blessed him with particular, heartfelt affection. – **Justice seeks out the merits of the case, but pity only regards the needs.**

28 - After the blessing, Blessed Francis ordered one of his companions: “Write what I tell you: the first brother the Lord gave me was Brother Bernard, and he first began and perfectly fulfilled the perfection of the Holy Gospel, distributing all he had to the poor. Because of this, and many other prerogatives given to him by God, I am held to love him more than any other brother of the whole religion. Therefore, it is my will and my command, as much as I am able, that the general minister of the religion, whoever he may be, should love him and honor him as myself, and also all the Provincial ministers and the brothers of the whole religion should hold him in my place.” – **Friendship-one soul in two bodies.**

29 - And Saint Francis also prophesied about Brother Bernard that toward the end of his life he would be supplied with many graces and gifts from Christ Jesus, and would pass from this life to Christ, in assurance and filled with the anointing of the Holy Spirit in admirable peace and rest of body and soul, as clearly appeared later to all the brothers who were present at his passing. Then, as the brothers observed his confidence in Christ at death, and his overwhelming devotion to his last breath, they could not restrain themselves from crying, but out of gladness and wonder said: “This man was truly an unrecognized saint!” – **A man may have authority over others, but he can never have their heart but by giving his own.**

30 - After his death they looked upon him as a saint of God, spreading gladness and joy with a marvelous fragrance and singular beauty which he did not have before when he was living. And they were delighted by his appearance, because a certain power came forth from him, cheering those standing by and looking at him, and it filled them with both sweetness and spiritual consolation. – **I do not want merely to possess a faith; I want a faith that possesses me.**

Peace and Blessings,
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