

EUCCHARIST in the Writings about Saint Francis of Assisi

The Beginning or Founding of the Order and the Deeds of Those Lesser Brothers Who Were the First Companions of Blessed Francis in Religion (a.k.a. The Anonymous of Perugia), 1240-1241

“He [Francis] zealously used to admonish them [the brothers] to observe the holy Gospel and the *Rule* conscientiously as they had promised; and especially to be reverent toward ecclesiastical offices and regulations; to be attentive and devoted when hearing Mass, and when they saw the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were to have reverence toward priests who handle these tremendous and greatest sacraments . . .”(VIII, 37).

The Legend of the Three Companions (1241-1247)

“He [Francis] zealously used to admonish the brothers to observe the Holy Gospel and the *Rule* which they had firmly promised; and particularly to be reverent and devoted about divine services and ecclesiastical regulations, hearing Mass devotedly, and adoring the Body of the Lord even more devotedly. He wanted priests who handle the tremendous and greatest sacraments to be honored uniquely by the brothers . . .”(XIV, 57).

The Assisi Compilation (1244-1260)

“[The general minister of the Order] must be a committed friend of holy prayer, who can distribute some hours for his soul and others for the flock entrusted to him. He must put the sacrament of the Mass first, early in the morning, and with prolonged devotion commend himself and his flock to divine protection” (42). (See also *A Mirror of the Perfection*, IV, 80.)

“[Brother Benedict of Piratro] was a brother priest, discerning and holy, an elder in religion. He sometimes celebrated for blessed Francis in that cell, since, although he was sick, he always wanted, gladly and devoutly, to hear Mass whenever he was able” (59). (See also *A Mirror of the Perfection*, 30.)

“[One of his companions] went to blessed Francis, who was in the cell where he usually prayed and slept, to read him the holy Gospel that was read in the Mass of that day. Whenever blessed Francis was unable to hear Mass, he always wanted to hear the Gospel of the day before he ate” (87). (See also *A Mirror of the Perfection*, XI, 117.)

“Now blessed Francis had such reverence and devotion to the Body of Christ that he wanted it written in the *Rule* that the brothers in the regions where they stay should take care and be concerned about this, and should admonish and preach about this to clerics and priests, so that they place the Body of Christ in a good and fitting place; and, if they did not do so, he wanted the brothers to do so. In fact one time he wanted to send some brothers through every region with pyxes and wherever they found the Body of Christ placed illicitly, they were to place It honorably in them. Out of reverence for the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, he wanted it placed in the *Rule* that, wherever the brothers find the written words and name of the Lord by which the most holy sacrament is confectioned, not well kept, or carelessly thrown around in some place, let them gather them up, honoring in the words the Lord *Who spoke them*. Many things are made holy *by the words of God*, and the sacrament of the altar is celebrated in the power of the words of Christ. Although he did not write this in the *Rule*, particularly because it did not seem good to the brother ministers that the brothers should take this as a command, nevertheless, the holy father wanted to leave the brothers in his *Testament* and in his other writings his will about these things. He also wanted to send other brothers throughout every region with good and beautiful wafer irons for making hosts” (108). (See also *A Mirror of the Perfection*, III, 65.)

The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul (a.k.a. The Second Life of Saint Francis) by Thomas of Celano, 1245-1247

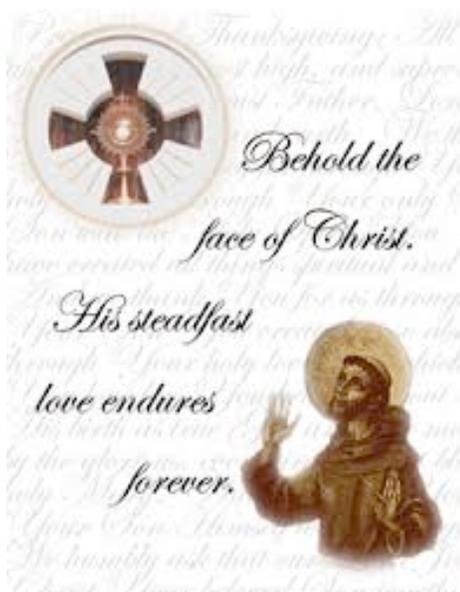
“[The general minister of the Order] must be a committed friend of holy prayer, who can distribute some hours for his soul and others for the flock entrusted to him. *Early in the morning*, he must put first the sacrament of the Mass, and with prolonged devotion commend himself and his flock to divine protection” (Second Book, CXXXIX, 185).

“Toward the sacrament of the Lord’s Body [Francis] burned with fervor to his very marrow, and with unbounded wonder of that loving condescension and condescending love. He considered it disrespectful not to hear, if time allowed, at least one Mass a day. He received Communion frequently and so devoutly that he made others devout. Following that which is so venerable with all reverence he offered the sacrifice of all his members, and receiving *the Lamb that was slain* he slew his own spirit in the *fire which always burned upon the altar* of his heart . . . He once wanted to *send brothers throughout the world* with precious pyxes, so that wherever they should find the price of our redemption in an unsuitable place they might put it away in the very best place. He wanted great reverence shown to the hands of priests, since they have the divinely granted authority to bring about this mystery. He often used to say: ‘If I should happen at the same time to come upon any saint *coming from heaven* and some little poor priest, I would *first show honor* to the priest, and hurry more quickly to kiss his hands. For I would say to the saint: Hey, Saint Lawrence, wait! His *hands may handle the Word of Life*, and possess something more than human!’” (Second Book, CLII, 201).

The Major Legend of Saint Francis by Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, 1260-1263

“One day while [Francis] was devoutly hearing a Mass of the Apostles, the Gospel was read in which Christ sends out his disciples to preach and gives them the Gospel form of life . . .” (III, 1). (See also *The Minor Legend of Saint Francis* by Bonaventure, II, 1).

“When the most sacred body of Christ was elevated during the Solemnity of the Mass, [the lamb which had been given as a gift to Francis at St. Mary of the Portiuncula] would bow down on its knees as if this reverent animal were reproaching the irreverence of those who were not devout and inviting the devout to reverence of the Sacrament” (VIII, 7).



“Toward the sacrament of the Lord’s Body [Francis] burned with fervor to his very marrow, marveling with unbounded wonder of that loving condescension and condescending love. He received Communion frequently and so devoutly that he made others devout, for at the sweet taste of *the spotless Lamb* he was often rapt in ecstasy as if drunk in the Spirit” (IX, 2).

Inscription of Brother Leo (1257-1260)

“[Francis] also had the Book of the Gospels copied, and whenever he would be unable to hear Mass due to infirmity or any other manifest impediment, he had that Gospel read to him which on that day was read at Mass in church. And he continued to do this until his death. For he used to say: ‘When I do not hear Mass, I adore the Body of Christ in prayer with the eyes of my mind, just as I adore It when I see It at Mass.’”