

To the Brothers and Sisters of Penance
(The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful)
(1209-1215)

In the Name of the Lord!

[Chapter One]
Those Who Do Penance

¹All those who love the Lord *with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength* ^{Mk12:30} and love their neighbors as themselves, ^{Mt 22:39} ²who hate their bodies with their vices and sins, ³who receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴and who produce worthy fruits of penance. ⁵O how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them, ^{b Mt 22:39} ⁶because *the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them* ^{Is 11:2} and *make Its home and dwelling place* among them, ^{Jn 14:23} ⁷and they are children of the heavenly Father Whose works they do, ^{Mt 5:45} and they are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. ^{Mt 12:50}

⁸We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹We are brothers to Him when we do *the will of the Father who is in heaven.* ^{Mt 12:50} ¹⁰We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others. ^{b Mt 5:16}

¹¹O how glorious it is to have a holy and great Father in heaven!^c

¹²O how holy, consoling to have such a beautiful and wonderful Spouse! ¹³O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and, above all things, desirable: to have such a Brother and such a Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who laid down His life for His sheep and prayed to His Father, saying:

¹⁴*Holy Father, in your name, save those whom you have given me in the world; they were yours and you gave them to me.* ^{Jn 17:11 Jn 17:6} ¹⁵*The words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and have believed in truth that I have come from you and they have known that you have sent me.*

¹⁶*I pray for them and not for the world.* ^{Jn 17:9} ¹⁷*Bless and sanctify them;* ^{Jn 17:17} *I sanctify myself for them.* ^{Jn 17:19} ¹⁸*I pray not only for them, but for those who will believe in me through their word* ^{Jn 17:20 Jn 17:23} *that they might be sanctified in being one* ^{Jn 17:11} *as we are.*

¹⁹*I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me that they may see my glory in your kingdom.* ^{Jn 17:24 Mt 20:21} Amen.

[Chapter Two]
Those Who Do Not Do Penance

¹All those men and women who are not living in penance, ²who do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, ³who practice vice and sin and walk after the evil concupiscence and the evil desires of their flesh, ⁴who do not observe what they have promised to the Lord, ⁵and who in their body serve the world through the desires of the flesh, ^a the concerns of the world and the cares of this life: ⁶They are held captive by the devil, whose children they are, and whose works they do. ⁷They are blind because they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ. ^{Jn 8:41}
⁸They do not possess spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God, the true wisdom of the Father. ⁹It is said of them: *Their wisdom has been swallowed up* ^{Ps 107:27 [Vulgate, Ps 106:27]} *and Cursed are those who turn away from your commands.* ^{Ps 118:21 [Vulgate, Ps 117:21]} ¹⁰They see and acknowledge, know and do evil, and knowingly lose their souls.

¹¹See, you blind ones, deceived by your enemies: the flesh, ^b the world, and the devil, because it is sweet for the body to sin and it is bitter to serve God, ¹²for every vice and sin flow and *proceed from the human heart* ^{Mt 15:19} as the Lord says in the Gospel. ¹³And you have nothing in this world or in that to come. ¹⁴And you think that you will possess this world's vanities for a long time, but you are deceived because a day and an hour will come of which you give no thought, which you do not know, and of which you are unaware when the body becomes weak, death approaches, and it dies a bitter death. ¹⁵And no matter where, when, or how a person dies in the guilt of sin without penance and satisfaction, if he can perform an act of satisfaction and does not do so, the devil snatches his soul from its body with such anguish and distress that no one can know [what it is like] except the one receiving it.c

¹⁶And every talent, ability, *knowledge, and wisdom* ^{2Chr 1:12} they think they have will be taken away from them. ^{Lk 8:18} ¹⁷And they leave their wealth to their relatives and friends who take and divide it and afterwards say: "May his soul be cursed because he could have given us more and acquired more than what he distributed to us." ¹⁸Worms eat his body and so body and soul perish in this brief world and they will go to hell where they will be tortured forever.

¹⁹In the love which is God we beg all those whom these words reach to receive those fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ written above with divine love and kindness. ²⁰And let whoever does not know how to read have them read to them frequently. ²¹Because they are spirit and life, ^{Jn 6:63} they should preserve them together with a holy activity to the end.

²²And whoever has not done these things will be held accountable *before the tribunal of* ^{Rm 14:10} our Lord Jesus *Christ on the day of judgment*