

1.—LETTER TO ALL THE FAITHFUL.

To all Christians, religious, clerics, and laics, men and women, to all who dwell in the whole

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world, Brother Francis, their servant and subject, presents reverent homage, wishing true peace from heaven and sincere charity in the Lord.

Being the servant of all, I am bound to serve all and to administer the balm-bearing words of my Lord. [1](#) Wherefore, considering in my mind that, because of the infirmity and weakness of my body, I cannot visit each one personally, I propose by this present letter and message [2](#) to offer you the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Word of the Father and the words of the Holy Ghost which are "spirit and life." [3](#)

This Word of the Father, so worthy, so holy and glorious, whose coming the most High Father announced from heaven by His holy archangel Gabriel to the holy and glorious Virgin Mary [4](#) in whose womb He received the true flesh of our humanity and frailty, He, being rich [5](#) above all, willed, nevertheless, with His most Blessed Mother, to choose poverty.

And when His Passion was nigh, He celebrated the Pasch with His disciples and, taking bread, He gave thanks and blessed and broke saying: Take ye and eat: this is My Body. And, taking the chalice, He said: This is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you and for many unto remission of

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sins. [1](#) After that He prayed to the Father, saying: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me." [2](#) "And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." [3](#) But withal, He gave up His will to the will of the Father, saying: Father, Thy will be done: not as I will, but as Thou wilt. [4](#) Such was the will of the Father that His Son, Blessed and Glorious, whom He gave to us, and who was born for us, [5](#) should by His own Blood, sacrifice, and oblation, offer Himself on the altar of the Cross, not for Himself, by whom "all things were made," [6](#) but for our sins, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. [7](#) And He wishes that we should all be saved by Him [8](#) and that we should receive Him with a pure heart and a chaste body. But there are few who wish to receive Him and to be saved by Him, although His yoke is sweet and His burden light. [9](#)

Those who will not taste how sweet the Lord is [10](#) and who love darkness rather than the light, [11](#) not wishing to fulfil the commandments of God are cursed: of them it is said by the prophet: "They are cursed who decline from Thy commandments." [12](#) But, O how happy and blessed

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are those who love the Lord, who do as the Lord Himself says in the Gospel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and . . . thy neighbor as thyself." [1](#) Let us therefore love God and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind because

He Himself, seeking that above all, says: "The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." [2](#) For all who "adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." [3](#) And let us offer Him praises and prayers day and night, saying: "Our Father who art in heaven," for "we ought always to pray, and not to faint." [4](#)

We ought indeed to confess all our sins to a priest and receive from him the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. [5](#) He who does not eat His Flesh and does not drink His Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. [6](#) Let him, however, eat and drink worthily, because he who receives unworthily "eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord," [7](#)—that is, not discerning it from other foods.

Let us, moreover, "bring forth fruits worthy of penance." [8](#) And let us love our neighbors as ourselves, and, if any one does not wish to

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love them as himself or cannot, [1](#) let him at least do them not harm, but let him do good to them.

Let those who have received the power of judging others, exercise judgment with mercy, [2](#) as they hope to obtain mercy from the Lord. For let judgment without mercy be shown to him that doth not mercy. [3](#) Let us then have charity and humility and let us give alms because they wash souls from the foulness of sins. [4](#) For men lose all which they leave in this world; they carry with them, however, the reward of charity and alms which they have given, for which they shall receive a recompense and worthy remuneration from the Lord.

We ought also to fast and to abstain from vices and sins [5](#) and from superfluity of food and drink, and to be Catholics. We ought also to visit Churches frequently and to reverence clerics not only for themselves, if they are sinners, but on account of their office and administration of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they sacrifice on the altar and receive and administer to others. And let us all know for certain that no one can be saved except by the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the holy words of the Lord which clerics say and announce and distribute and they alone administer and not others. But religious

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especially, who have renounced the world, are bound to do more and greater things, but " not to leave the other undone." [1](#)

We ought to hate our bodies with [their] vices and sins, because the Lord says in the Gospel that all vices and sins come forth from the heart. [2](#) We ought to love our enemies and do good to them that hate us. [3](#) We ought to observe the precepts and counsels of our Lord Jesus Christ. We ought also to deny ourselves and to put our bodies beneath the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord. And let no man be bound by obedience to obey any one in that where sin or offence is committed.

But let him to whom obedience has been entrusted and who is considered greater become as the lesser [4](#) and the servant of the other brothers, and let him show and have the mercy toward each

of his brothers that he would wish to be shown to himself if he were in the like situation. And let him not be angry with a brother on account of his offence, but let him advise him kindly and encourage him with all patience and humility.

We ought not to be "wise according to the flesh" [5](#) and prudent, but we ought rather to be simple, humble, and pure. And let us hold our bodies in dishonor and contempt because through our fault we are all wretched and corrupt,

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foul and worms, as the Lord says by the prophet: "I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people." [1](#) We should never desire to be above others, but ought rather to be servants and subject "to every human creature for God's sake." [2](#) And the spirit of the Lord [3](#) shall rest upon all those who do these things and who shall persevere to the end, and He shall make His abode and dwelling in them, [4](#) and they shall be children of the heavenly Father [5](#) whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are spouses when by the Holy Ghost the faithful soul is united to Jesus Christ. We are His brothers when we do the will of His Father who is in heaven. [6](#) We are His mothers when we bear Him in our heart and in our body through pure love and a clean conscience and we bring Him forth by holy work which ought to shine as an example to others.

O how glorious and holy and great to have a Father in heaven! O how holy, fair, and lovable to have a spouse in heaven! [7](#) O how holy and how beloved, well pleasing and humble, peaceful and sweet and desirable above all to have such a brother who has laid down His life for His sheep, [8](#) and who has prayed for us to the Father,

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saying: Father, keep them in Thy Name whom Thou hast given Me. Father, all those whom Thou hast given Me in the world were Thine, and Thou hast given them to Me. And the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came forth from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them: not for the world: bless and sanctify them. And for them I sanctify Myself that they may be sanctified in one as We also are. And I will, Father, that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may see My glory in My kingdom. [1](#)

And since He has suffered so many things for us and has done and will do so much good to us, let every creature which is in heaven and on earth and in the sea and in the abysses render praise to God and glory and honor and benediction; [2](#) for He is our strength and power who alone is good, [3](#) alone most high, alone almighty and admirable, glorious and alone holy, praiseworthy and blessed without end forever and ever. Amen.

But all those who do not do penance and who do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, but who give themselves to vices and sins and walk after evil concupiscence and bad desires and who do not observe what they have promised, corporally they serve the world

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and its fleshly desires and cares and solitudes for this life, but mentally they serve the devil, deceived by him whose sons they are and whose works they do; blind they are because they see not the true light,—our Lord Jesus Christ. They have no spiritual wisdom, for they have not in them the Son of God who is the true wisdom of the Father: of these it is said: "their wisdom was swallowed up." [1](#) They know, understand, and do evil and wittingly lose their souls. Beware, ye blind, deceived by your enemies—to wit, by the world, the flesh and by the devil—for it is sweet to the body to commit sin and bitter to serve God because all vices and sins come forth and proceed from the heart of man, as it is said in the Gospel. [2](#)

And you have nothing of good in this world or in the future. You think to possess for long the vanities of this world, but you are deceived; for a day and an hour will come of which you think not and do not know and are ignorant of. The body grows feeble, death approaches, neighbors and friends come saying: "Put your affairs in order." And his wife and his children, neighbors and friends, make believe to weep. And looking, he sees them weeping and is moved by a bad emotion, and thinking within himself he says: "Behold, I place my soul and body and my all in your hands." Verily, that man is cursed who confides and exposes his soul and body and his all in such hands. Wherefore, the Lord

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says by the prophet: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man." [1](#) And at once they cause a priest to come and the priest says to him: "Wilt thou do penance for all thy sins?" He answers: "I will." "Wilt thou from thy substance, as far as thou canst, satisfy for what thou hast done and for the things in which thou hast defrauded and deceived men." [2](#) He answers: "No."—And the priest says: "Why not?"—"Because I have put everything into the hands of my relatives and friends." And he begins to lose the power of speech and thus this miserable man dies a bitter death. [3](#)

But let all know that wheresoever or howsoever a man may die in criminal sin, without satisfaction—when he could satisfy and did not satisfy—the devil snatches his soul from his body with such violence and anguish as no one can know except him who suffers it. And all talent and power, learning and wisdom [4](#) that he thought to possess are taken from him. [5](#) And his relatives and friends take to themselves his substance and divide it and say afterwards: "Cursed be his soul because he could have acquired and given us more than he did, and did

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not acquire it." But the worms eat his body. And thus he loses soul and body in this short life and goes into hell, where he shall be tormented without end.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. [1](#) All to whom this letter may come, I, Brother Francis, your little servant, pray and conjure you by the charity which God is, [2](#) and with the will to kiss your feet, to receive these balm-bearing words [3](#) of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and charity and to put them in practice kindly and to observe them perfectly. [4](#) And let those who do not know how to read have them read often and let them keep them by them with holy operation unto the end, for they are spirit and life. [5](#) And those who do not do this shall render an account on the day of Judgment before the tribunal of Christ. And all those who shall receive them kindly and understand them and send them to others as example, if

they persevere in them unto the end, [6](#) may the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost bless them. Amen.

Footnotes

[99:1](#) Cod. O. reads: "all the words of the Lord."

[99:2](#) Cod. O. reads: "by this present letter and now."

[99:3](#) John 6: 64.

[99:4](#) See Luke 1: 31.

[99:5](#) See II Cor. 8: 9.

[100:1](#) See Matt. 26: 26-28; Luke 22: 19-20; I Cor. 11: 24-25.

[100:2](#) Matt. 26: 39.

[100:3](#) Luke 22: 44.

[100:4](#) See Matt. 26: 42 and 39.

[100:5](#) Cod. O. omits: "and was born for us."

[100:6](#) John 1: 3.

[100:7](#) See I Peter 2: 21.

[100:8](#) Cod. O. omits: "And He wishes that we should all be saved by Him."

[100:9](#) See Matt. 11: 30.

[100:10](#) See Ps. 33: 9.

[100:11](#) See John 3: 39.

[100:12](#) Ps. 118: 21.

[101:1](#) Matt. 22: 37-39.

[101:2](#) John 4: 23.

[101:3](#) John 4: 24.

[101:4](#) Luke 18: 1.

[101:5](#) Cod. O. adds: "For the Lord says, who does not eat," etc.

[101:6](#) See John 6: 54.

[101:7](#) I Cor. 11: 29.

[101:8](#) Luke 3: 8.

[102:1](#) Cod. As. and editions omit "or cannot."

[102:2](#) Cod. O. reads: "judgment and mercy."

[102:3](#) See Jas. 2: 13.

[102:4](#) See Tob. 4: t 1.

[102:5](#) See Eccli. 3: 32.

[103:1](#) Luke 11: 42.

[103:2](#) See Matt. 15: 18-19.

[103:3](#) See Luke 6: 27.

[103:4](#) See Luke 22: 26.

[103:5](#) I Cor. 1: 26.

[104:1](#) Ps. 21: 7.

[104:2](#) I Peter 2: 13.

[104:3](#) See Is. 11: 2.

[104:4](#) See John 14: 23.

[104:5](#) See Matt. 5: 45.

[104:6](#) See Matt. 12: 50.

[104:7](#) Cod. As. and that of Volterra with the *Mon.* add: "the Paraclete."

[104:8](#) See John 10: 15.

[105:1](#) See John 17: 6-24.

[105:2](#) See Apoc. 5: 13.

[105:3](#) See Luke 18: 19.

[106:1](#) Ps. 106: 27.

[106:2](#) See Matt. 15: 19.

[107:1](#) Jer. 17: 5.

[107:2](#) Cod. O. and Pis. read: "Wilt thou satisfy for the things taken unjustly,—that is, those things by which thou hast cheated thy neighbor."

[107:3](#) Cod. As. and *Mon.* omit: "a bitter death." Cod. Pis. and Volterra omit "miserable man."

[107:4](#) Cod. As. and *Mon.* omit "wisdom."

[107:5](#) See Luke 8: 18.

[108:1](#) These words are not found except in Cod. As., which omits the following sentence: "All to whom this letter may come."

[108:2](#) See I John 4: 16.

[108:3](#) Cod. As. and *Mon.* read: "that these words and others."

[108:4](#) Cod. As. and *Mon.* omit what follows up to "And all those."

[108:5](#) See John 6: 64.

[108:6](#) See Matt. 10: 22.