

The Form of Life of Clare of Assisi (1253)

1. Called “The Form of life of the order of the Poor Sisters” - 1253 as approved by Pope Innocent IV. Commonly called the rule of Saint Clare, the use of ‘Form of Life’ comes from the Latin text.
2. Addressed to Clare, abbess and the other sisters of the monastery of San Damiano in Assisi.

PROLOGUE

Innocent, Bishop , Servant of the servants of God, to his beloved daughters in Christ, Clare, Abbess, and the other sisters of the monastery of San Damiano in Assisi: health and apostolic blessing.

CHAPTER ONE

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD BEGINS THE FORM OF LIFE OF THE POOR SISTERS

The form of life of the Order of the Poor Sisters that Blessed Francis established is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity.

Clare, the unworthy servant of Christ and the little plant of the most Blessed Francis, promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Innocent and his canonically elected successors, and to the Roman Church. And, just as at the beginning of her conversion, together with her sisters she promised obedience to the Blessed Francis, so now she promises his successors to observe the same obedience inviolably. And the other sisters shall always be obliged to obey the successors of Blessed Francis and Sister Clare and the other canonically elected Abbesses who succeed her.

3. Form of Life : “to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity”.
4. “promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Innocent and his canonically elected successors, and to the Roman Church”.

Rule of Blessed Isabella (as approved by Urban IV – 1263)

1. Called “ Rule of the Enclosed Sisters Minor” – 1263 as approved by Pope Urban IV. Commonly – Urbanite rule.
2. Addressed to abbess and community of the sisters minor of the monastery of the Humility of the Blessed Mary, of the diocese of Paris.

PROLOGUE

Urban bishop, servant of the servants of God. To the beloved daughters in Christ, the abbess and community of the sisters minor of the monastery of the Humility of the Blessed Mary, of the diocese of Paris. Health and apostolic blessing.

...that it be called the Rule of the Enclosed Sisters Minor in future...
This rule and Life of these Enclosed Sisters Minor we have had noted below. It is this:...

1) ENTRANCE INTO THE MONASTERY AND RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Whoever, inspired by the Holy Spirit, embraces this order, following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ and his most holy Mother, according to the counsel of evangelical perfection, shall live in obedience, in chastity and without property, and as a hidden treasure of the glorious King, shall remain enclosed all the time of her life.

After being professed, they shall be obliged in virtue of obedience to remain for the whole time of their life within the enclosure of the monastery...

3. “shall live in obedience, in chastity and without property, and as a hidden treasure of the glorious King, shall remain enclosed all the time of her life.”
4. “..shall observe diligently the law of this life. After being professed, they shall be obliged in virtue of obedience to remain for the whole time of their life within the enclosure of the monastery...”

CHAPTER TWO

THOSE WHO WISH TO ACCEPT THIS LIFE AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE RECEIVED

5. “the Abbess is required to seek the consent of all the sisters; and if the majority have agreed, she may receive her, after having obtained the permission of the Lord Cardinal Protector”.
 6. “If she judges [the candidate] acceptable, [the Abbess] should carefully examine her, or have her examined, concerning the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the Church. And if she believes all these things and is willing to profess them faithfully and to observe them steadfastly to the end; “
 7. “and if she has no husband, or if she has [a husband] who has already entered religious life with the authority of the Bishop of the diocese and has already made a vow of continence, and if there is no impediment to her observance of this life, such as advanced age or ill-health or mental weakness, “
 8. “let the tenor of our life be thoroughly explained to her“.
 9. “If she is suitable, let the words of the holy Gospel be addressed to her that she should go and sell all that she has and take care to distribute the proceeds to the poor (cf. Matthew 19:21). If she cannot do this, her good will suffices. Let the Abbess and the sisters take care not to be concerned about her temporal affairs, so that she may freely dispose of her possessions as the Lord may inspire her. However, if some counsel is required, let them send her to some discerning and God-fearing persons, according to whose advice her goods may be distributed to the poor”.
 10. “Afterwards, once her hair has been cut off round her head and her secular clothes set aside, she may be permitted three tunics and a mantle”.
5. Does not mention consent by all sisters (unless there is an exception to be made, see point 7 below)
 6. Does not mention examination of Faith. However, it only mentions that “All those who wish to undertake this religion shall be instructed on the hard and difficult things by which one travels to the fatherland, and which they must observe according to this religion”. (similar to point 8 – clare’s rule)
 7. “No one shall be received who is considered unequal to and unsuitable for the observance of this life, because of old age or some infirmity or being simple-minded, unless perhaps occasionally, when a very reasonable cause demands it, by consent of the sister discreetly, a dispensation is sometimes granted by the afore-mentioned”.
 8. see point 6 above
 9. No mention of selling one’s possessions
 10. “...as soon as they are received within the enclosure, having had their hair cut, shall put off secular clothing if they have understanding.”
From (2) Clothing, Dormitory and Beds
“...if she wishes, have two tunics, or three, or even four, according as seems fit to the abbess. However, all shall take care to avoid excess of clothes in so far as they can, in a good manner”.

11. “Thereafter, she may not go outside the monastery except for a useful, reasonable, evident, and approved purpose”.

12. “When the year of probation is ended, let her be received into obedience, promising to observe perpetually our life and form of poverty”.

13. No mention

11. Enclosure is mentioned very early, together with the rule. See Point 3 and 4 above. From **(1) Entrance into the Monastery...** there are some exceptions for not remaining in the Monastery. “unless for the sake of building up this Order or for reasons of its government, some may be sent to a place of the same Order; who shall be allowed to return to the monastery from which they were sent by permission of those of the second place, if it seems expedient to the ministers themselves or to another by the minister general of the Order of Friars Minor, or of the provincial of that province in which the monastery is located. But if it should happen that, through the onset of a hostile attack or through the rush of flood waters, the walls of the monastery are destroyed, or that the monastery itself is burned, or is disturbed or destroyed by some other such cause, or that ruin threatens the buildings or because at time of enemy onslaughts, that the place is in such a condition that persons cannot remain there without manifest and grave danger, and they cannot await the permission and advice of the above-mentioned minister, by counsel and consent of the whole community and command of the abbess, the sisters may take themselves to another safe place in which, *if possible, they shall remain enclosed* until, after full deliberation, it is decided what they should do. But if the community should wish for some other clear reason to build their whole monastery elsewhere, then, with the permission of the minister general, the sisters may transfer themselves to another place. The dead, both professed as well as novices or extern sisters, shall be buried within the enclosure of the monastery.

12. Includes the manner of profession. Makes profession into the hands of the abbess before the community. “Into your hands, Mother, I sister so-and-so promise God and the blessed Mary ever virgin and blessed Francis and all the saints, to live for the whole time of my life according to the Rule granted to our Order by the Lord Pope Alexander IV, as corrected and approved by the Lord Pope Urban IV, in obedience and chastity and without property, and also under enclosure according as ordained by the same rule

13. “...they may not be present at chapter within the year; however when the space of one year is completed, they shall make profession...”

14. “No one is to receive the veil during the period of probation. The sisters may also have little mantles for convenience and propriety in serving and working. In fact, the Abbess should with discernment provide them with clothing according to the diversity of persons, places, seasons and cold climates, as it shall seem expedient to her by necessity”.

15. “Young girls who are received into the monastery before the age established by law should have their hair cut round [their heads]; and, putting aside their secular clothes, they should be clothed in a religious garb, as the Abbess sees fit. However, when they reach the age required by law, they may make their profession clothed in the same way as the others”.

16. “The Abbess shall carefully provide a Mistress from among the more discerning sisters of the monastery both for these and the other novices. She shall form them diligently in a holy way of life and proper behavior according to the form of our profession”.

14. From **(2) Clothing, Dormitory and Beds**

More details on dressing than from Clare’s rule

“They shall also have one or two mantles of suitable length and width. But let these garments be of poor material, both in price and colour. No one however shall wear an outer tunic that is totally white or black.

The sisters, but only after they are professed, may have a cord as a cincture, completely devoid of curiousness. They shall cover their heads uniformly and honestly with totally white bands or bonnets, not however precious ones, so that the forehead, cheeks and neck are fittingly covered; for it is unbecoming that the spouse of the eternal King should expose herself to another, or take pleasure in another. They shall also wear a black veil extended over the head, of such width and length that it falls on both sides to the shoulders, and behind extends as far as is fitting beyond the capuch, and they can take this off at night, and sometimes by day, with the permission of the abbess. The sisters shall certain have and observe these things, and also the externs, who should not go outside. But other externs and novices shall wear a woolen cord and a white veil over their heads. The abbess however shall provide for the footwear of the sisters and the externs within the enclosure, according as she thinks it expedient for them”.

15. No mention

16. From **(1)** “a prudent mistress shall be granted to them, one who shall instruct the sisters privately in holy conduct and inflame them in fervour of devotion, and who shall teach them to bear in the sweetness of charity those things which must be borne according to this holy religion, and who shall diligently correct where correction is needed”.

17. "The same form described above should be observed in the examination and reception of the sisters who serve outside the monastery. These sisters may wear shoes".
18. "No one may live with us in the monastery unless she has been received according to the form of our profession".
19. "I admonish, beg, and exhort my sisters to always wear cheap garments out of love of the most holy and beloved Child Who was wrapped in such poor little swaddling clothes and laid in a manger and of His most holy Mother".

CHAPTER THREE
**THE DIVINE OFFICE AND FASTING,
 CONFESSION AND COMMUNION**

20. The sisters who can read shall celebrate the Divine Office according to the custom of the Friars Minor. They may have breviaries for this, but they should read it without singing. Those who, for some reasonable cause, occasionally are not able to recite their hours by reading them, may, like the other sisters, say the Our Fathers. Those who do not know how to read shall say twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins; five for Lauds; seven for each of the hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, and None; twelve, however, for Vespers; seven for Compline. Let them also say for the dead seven Our Fathers with the Requiem aeternam at Vespers; twelve for Matins, because the sisters who can read are obliged to recite the Office of the Dead. When a sister of our monastery shall have departed this life, however, they should say fifty Our Fathers.

17. From **(2) Clothing, Dormitory and Beds**
 "The abbess however shall provide for the footwear of the sisters and the externs within the enclosure, according as she thinks it expedient for them". See point 14 above
18. No mention
19. From **(2) Clothing, Dormitory and Beds**
 "...if she wishes, have two tunics, or three, or even four, according as seems fit to the abbess. However, all shall take care to avoid excess of clothes in so far as they can, in a good manner".
 No mention of 'out of love', poverty for Christ's sake.
 See Point 14
But let these garments be of poor material, both in price and colour

(3) Divine Office, Spirit of Prayer, Sacraments

20. Similar except those in (brackets)
 "Regarding the divine Office, to be recited day and night for the praise and glory of God, let this be observed: those sisters who can read and chant shall celebrate the Office reverently according to the custom of the friars minor, but with gravity and modesty; the others shall say twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins; five for Lauds; for prime, terce, sext and none, and compline, seven; for vespers twelve. This same manner shall be observed throughout for the Office of the most blessed Virgin Mary. And they shall pray for the dead".

 (If some sisters are found suitable and talented, the abbess, if she judges fit, shall have them instructed, appointing a suitable and honest mistress to educate them in chant and in the divine offices.)

21.

22. The sisters shall fast at all times. They may eat twice on Christmas, however, no matter on what day it happens to fall. The younger sisters, those who are weak, and those who are serving outside the monastery may be mercifully dispensed as the Abbess sees fit. But the sisters are not bound to corporal fasting in time of manifest necessity.

21. “But the sisters and externs , at the time and places laid down, as shall have been ordained, shall engage in useful and honest labours under this provision that, excluding idleness the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, to which other temporal things should contribute; and to this the spouse of Christ should dedicate herself, so that there she may enjoy the conversations and consolations of her Spouse”.

From (4) Fasting and Care of the Sick

22. A lot is said about fasting

“The sisters and the externs shall fast from the feast of blessed Francis until the feast of the Lord’s Resurrection, and from the Ascension of the Lord until Pentecost... but exception is made for Sundays, the solemnities of All Saints, Christmas, St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, the Circumcision, the Epiphany and the Purification. However, except for Fridays and fasts universally laid down by the Church, they are not bound to fast from the Resurrection of the Lord until the Ascension of the Lord, and from Pentecost to the feast of blessed Francis. They may also lawfully use wine, fish, eggs, cheese and milk foods. All other times they can use these.

Sisters who are in full health and the externs shall abstain from flesh at all times. But on Fridays they shall always fast without fish, unless the abbess has dispensed for a cause common to the community, such as when some solemn feast is celebrated on a Friday. The young who are under fifteen years of age or the old or those manifestly weak or infirm shall by no means be obliged to the above law of fast and abstinence; according to their weakness, the abbess may mercifully provide for them with meat and other necessary things, always in common and with equity. Apart from the advent of the Lord, the greater Lent, Fridays and fasts instituted by the Church, the abbess, according as she judges, may dispense extern sisters and young people under eighteen years from the fast.

The healthy sisters at the time of their bleeding, which ends in three days, are not obliged to fast outside the greater Lent and on Friday, the advent of the Lord, and the time within Ascension and Pentecost, and fasts universally instituted by the Church. Let the abbess guard against allowing the blood-letting be done in common more than six times in the year, unless certain necessity demands more; nor shall they receive the blood-letting from an external secular person, especially a man, for any reason when it can be easily avoided.

23.

24. They shall go to confession, with the permission of the Abbess, at least twelve times a year. They shall take care not to introduce other talk unless it pertains to the confession and the salvation of souls.

They should receive Communion seven times [a year], that is, on Christmas, Thursday of Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Feast of Saint Francis, and the Feast of All Saints. The Chaplain may celebrate inside [the enclosure] in order to give Communion to the sisters who are in good health or to those who are ill.

CHAPTER FOUR
**THE ELECTION AND OFFICE OF THE ABBESS;
THE CHAPTER AND THE OFFICIALS AND THE DISCREETS**

25. The sisters are bound to observe the canonical form in the election of the Abbess. They should quickly arrange to have the Minister General or the Minister Provincial of the Order of Friars Minor present. Let him dispose them, through the Word of God, to perfect harmony and the common good in the election that is to be held.

23. Let the greatest care and diligence be exercised towards the infirm; and according to what is possible and fitting, both in food which their infirmity requires as well as in other necessary things, let them be served in all with kindness and fervour of charity, in common and with solicitude. The infirm shall have their own place, where they remain separated from the healthy, lest the quiet and order of the community be in any way disturbed. (But let the abbess strive to maintain the community and lead the common life, as far she can; since she ought to be a shining mirror for the rest and an example to all her sisters. However, an abbess who is not able to lead the common life or is unwilling to shall be relieved of her charge without delay by the minister or the visitators of the order; unless there is no harm to the house from her remaining in office, but rather a very great need and evident utility shows itself.)

It is interesting to note that the above in brackets, about the abbess should be included in this section of the rule **(4) Fasting and Care of the Sick**.

24. **From (3) Divine Office, Spirit of Prayer, Sacraments**

“Having gone previously to confession when necessary, the sisters shall with reverence and devotion receive the most sacred Body of our Lord Jesus Christ twice a month; but every Sunday in Lent and in the Advent of the Lord, if it seems expedient, unless someone for a reasonable cause omits it by permission of the abbess.”

Some differences in number of times of communion and days can be seen here.

(9) Election and Authority of the Abbess

25. The election of the abbess shall freely pertain to the community; her confirmation, and rejection, that is, her removal, shall be done by the minister general of the Order of Friars Minor, if he is in the province; and in his absence, by the provincial of that province in which the afore-mentioned monastery is established; to these the ordering, governing, care and visitation, correction and reformation of this order belongs, both through themselves and through the visitators, on whom the aforesaid offices have been imposed according to place and time through these visitators the abbess can be released from office, as expressed above.

26. **No one should be elected who is not professed.** And if a non-professed is elected or somehow given them, she should not be obeyed unless she first professes our form of poverty.
27. At her death the election of another Abbess shall take place. If at any time it should appear to the entire body of sisters that she is not competent for their service and common welfare, the sisters are bound as quickly as possible to **elect another as Abbess and mother** according to the form described above.
28. Whoever is elected should reflect upon the kind of burden she has undertaken and to Whom she must render an account of the flock committed to her (cf. Matthew 12:36). She should strive as well to preside over the others more by her **virtues and holy behavior than by her office**, so that, moved by her example, the sisters may obey her more **out of love than out of fear**. Let her **avoid particular friendships**, lest by loving some more than others she cause scandal among all. Let her console those who are afflicted. Let her also be the last refuge for those who are troubled, lest the sickness of despair overcome the weak should they fail to find in her the remedies for health. Let her **preserve common life** in everything, especially in whatever pertains to the church, the dormitory, the refectory, infirmary, and clothing. Let her Vicarress be bound to serve in the same way. The Abbess is bound to call her sisters together at least once a week in the Chapter, where both she and her sisters should humbly confess their common and public offenses and negligences. Let her consult with all her sisters there concerning whatever pertains to the welfare and good of the monastery, for the Lord frequently reveals what is best to the least [among us]. Let no heavy debt be incurred except with the common consent of the sisters and by reason of manifest necessity, and let this be done by the procurator. Let the Abbess and her sisters, however, be careful that nothing is deposited in the monastery for safekeeping; for such practices often give rise to troubles and scandals.

Hence in virtue of obedience we firmly command and enjoin on the abbesses and other sisters of the religion, that they obey the minister general of the Order of Friars Minor and the provincial of that province in which the aforementioned monastery is located, in those things which are not against their soul and the present Rule, since we wish them always to be subject to their government.

Likewise we enjoin by obedience on all the sisters of this religion that they diligently obey the abbess, after she has received confirmation in office, as long as she remains in it in Christ.

But when for reasons of infirmity or any reason whatever the community lacks the government of an abbess, the sisters may elect for themselves a president, whom they are obliged to obey until the abbess returns to her office. The aforementioned president meanwhile shall carry out what pertains to the office of abbess.

26. No mention

27. Only similar point is “**the abbess can be released from office**” see point 25 above.

28. No mention

29. Let all who hold offices in the monastery be chosen by the common consent of all the sisters to preserve the unity of mutual love and peace. Let at least eight sisters be elected from the more discerning ones in the same way, whose counsel the Abbess should be always bound to use in those matters which our form of life requires. Moreover, the sisters can and should, if it seems useful and expedient, remove the officials and discreet and elect others in their place.

CHAPTER FIVE

SILENCE, THE PARLOR, AND THE GRILLE

30. Let the sisters keep silence from the hour of Compline until Terce, except those who are serving outside the monastery. Let them also continually keep silence in the church, the dormitory, and the refectory, only while they are eating. They may speak discreetly at all times, however, in the infirmary for the recreation and service of the sick. Nevertheless, they can communicate always and everywhere, briefly and in a low tone of voice, whatever is necessary.

Note: Enclosure is found in Chapter Eleven.
See Point 51 below

Confession is mentioned in point 34 below.

29. No mention

(5) Silence, Recollection, Enclosure

One major difference is that of seeking permission to speak to another sister which can only take place in the parlour and with two other sisters to listen to them.

30. **Continual Silence shall be observed unbroken in this manner:** Silence shall thus be observed by all, that they speak neither among themselves nor with any other without permission, except the weak and infirm. Nevertheless, let the abbess or president take diligent care how she grants the sisters permission to speak, as to where, when, and how. Let all strive to use religious and honest signs. On double feasts and solemnities of the apostles, and on any other days, as judged fit by the abbess, they may speak from the hour of none until vespers, or any other suitable hour, on the Lord Jesus Christ and the occurring solemnity and the pious examples of the saints, and of other lawful and honest things.

When anyone seeks permission to speak with another of the sisters, she shall first inform the abbess or president; and, if she grants it, this sister shall always have two sisters with her, as she goes to the parlour, who see the sister talking and can hear what is said by both parties. But let the sisters be on their guard, when they have to lest they dissipate themselves foolishly in useless words; nor should they delay too long in conversations.

“The abbess shall have the law of the present Rule kept absolutely, and she shall observe it carefully herself, so that all excuse for conversation is totally removed except that she herself can speak to her sisters at appropriate times and places as she thinks fit before God. During their illness, the infirm and those who serve them can converse in the infirmary, according to the disposition of the abbess, and also the healthy who, with the abbess’s permission, have entered the infirmary for a charitable visit may speak with the infirm sisters.”

But when any sisters wishes to go to confession, she shall do so alone in the parlour with the priest. Their confessors, shall absolve them of all their sins.

31. The sisters may not speak in the parlor or at the grille without the permission of the Abbess or her Vicaress. Let those who have permission not dare to speak in the parlor unless they are in the presence and hearing of two sisters. Let them not presume to go to the grille, moreover, unless there are at least three sisters present [who have been] appointed by the Abbess or her Vicaress from the eight discreetes who were elected by all the sisters for the council of the Abbess. Let the Abbess and her Vicaress be themselves bound to observe this form of speaking. [Let the sisters speak] very rarely at the grille and, by all means, never at the door.

32. Let a curtain be hung inside the grille which may not be removed except when the Word of God is preached or when a sister is speaking with someone. Let the grille have a wooden door which is well provided with two distinct iron locks, bolts, and bars, so that it can be locked, especially at night, by two keys, one of which the Abbess should keep and the other the sacristan. Let it always be locked except when the Divine Office is being celebrated and for the reasons given above.

33. Under no circumstance whatever, may a sister speak to anyone at the grille before sunrise or after sun- set.

34. Let there always be a curtain on the inside of the parlor, which may not be removed. No one may speak in the parlor during the Lent of Saint Martin and the Greater Lent, except to a priest for Confession or for some other manifest necessity, which is left to the prudence of the Abbess or her Vicaress.

35. Locking of grille by two keys. See point 32 above.

31. No one shall speak through the iron grille through which they receive communion and hear the Office and sermon; unless perhaps sometimes, when a reasonable cause demands it; and then it shall be done in company, as prescribed for the parlour. But this shall be done most rarely.

“Without the permission of the minister, there shall be but one turn in the convent, through which necessary things are given to the sisters, and things taken away as required. This shall be so arranged that nothing can be seen through it. No sister may speak with anyone through it, with the exception of the two who guard it vigilantly as they do the door. “

32. No mention of who is keeping the keys to the grille A black cloth shall be placed on the inside of this grille so that in no way can any of the sisters be seen through it, not anything outside be seen from within unless it be drawn aside for a reasonable cause sometimes, with the abbess's permission. In the same way a black cloth shall be retained in the parlour which may sometimes be removed by permission of the abbess and the consent of the majority of the community. The grille shall also have wooden doors with locks and keys, so that they always remain closed, unless for the reasons named above.

The parlour shall be strongly constructed of many thick iron plates. The parlours for confessions shall be made in the church or other appropriate place, as judged fit by the minister. But the grille shall be carefully and strongly constructed of many thick iron plates

33. No mention

34. See point 30 above about permitted to go for confession alone.

35. There shall be a small window with a little iron door at one side alone of the afore-mentioned grille, through which the priest by stretching out his hand can give the Body of the Lord to the sisters; no one shall be able to put a hand through the grille through any other part of it. The aforesaid little door shall be locked with a double key, unless when the sisters receive the Body of the Lord, and hear a sermon by a suitable honest person or for any other reasonable cause decided by the abbess's judgement.

36. CHAPTER SIX THE LACK OF POSSESSIONS

After the Most High Heavenly Father saw fit by His grace to enlighten my heart to do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed Father Saint Francis, shortly after his own conversion, [I, together with my sisters, willingly promised him obedience](#). When the Blessed Father saw we had no fear of poverty, hard work, trial, shame, or contempt of the world, but, instead, regarded such things as great delights, moved by compassion he wrote a form of life for us as follows: "[Because by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the Most High King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel](#), I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers to always have that same loving care and solicitude for you as [I have] for them." As long as he lived he diligently fulfilled this and wished that it always be fulfilled by his brothers. Shortly before his death he once more wrote [his last will for us that we--or those, as well, who would come after us--would never turn aside from the holy poverty we had embraced](#). He said: "I, little brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of His holy Mother and to persevere in this until the end; and [I ask and counsel you, my ladies, to live always in this most holy life and poverty. And keep most careful watch that you never depart from this by reason of the teaching or advice of anyone](#)." Just as I, together with my sisters, have ever been solicitous to safeguard the holy poverty which we have promised the Lord God and Blessed Francis, so, too, the Abbesses who shall succeed me in office and all the sisters are bound to observe it inviolably to the end: that is to say, by not receiving or having possession or ownership either of themselves or through an intermediary, or even anything that might reasonably be called property, except as much land as necessity requires for the integrity and proper seclusion of the monastery, and this land may not be cultivated except as a garden for the needs of the sisters.

37. CHAPTER SEVEN THE MANNER OF WORKING

Let the sisters to whom the Lord has given the grace of working work faithfully and devotedly after the Hour of Terce at work that pertains to a virtuous life and the common good. They must do this in such a way that, while they banish idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all other things of our earthly existence must contribute. At the Chapter, in the presence of all, the Abbess or her Vicarress is bound to assign the work of her hands that each should perform. Let the same be done if

alms have been sent by someone for the needs of the sisters, so that a prayer may be offered for them in common. Let all such things be distributed for the common good by the Abbess or her Vicarress with the advice of the discreet

38. CHAPTER EIGHT THE SISTERS SHALL NOT ACQUIRE ANYTHING AS THEIR OWN; BEGGING ALMS; THE SICK SISTERS

Let the sisters not appropriate anything, neither a house nor a place nor anything at all; instead, as pilgrims and strangers in this world who serve the Lord in poverty and humility, let them confidently send for alms. Nor should they be ashamed, since the Lord made Himself poor in this world for us. This is that summit of the highest poverty which has established you, my dearest sisters, heiresses and queens of the kingdom of heaven; it has made you poor in the things [of this world] but exalted you in virtue. Let this be your portion which leads into the land of the living (cf. Psalm 141:6). Clinging totally to this, my most beloved sisters, do not wish to have anything else forever under heaven for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother. Let no sister be permitted to send letters or to receive or give away anything outside the monastery without the permission of the Abbess. Let it not be permitted to have anything that the Abbess has not given or allowed. Should anything be sent to a sister by her relatives or others, let the Abbess give it to the sister. If she needs it, the sister may use it; otherwise, let her in all charity give it to a sister who does need it. If, however, money is sent to her, the Abbess, with the advice of the discreet, may provide for the needs of the sister. Concerning the sick sisters, let the Abbess be strictly bound to inquire diligently, by herself and through other sisters, what their illness requires both by way of counsel as well as food and other necessities. Let her provide for them charitably and kindly according to the resources of the place. [Let this be done] because all are bound to serve and provide for their sisters who are ill just as they would wish to be served themselves if they were suffering from any illness. Let each one confidently manifest her needs to the other. For if a mother loves and nourishes her child according to the flesh, should not a sister love and nourish her sister according to the Spirit even more lovingly? Those who are ill may lay on sacks filled with straw and may use feather pillows for their heads; those who need woolen stockings and quilts may use them. When the sick sisters are visited by those who enter the monastery, they may answer them with brevity, each responding with some good words to those who speak to them. But the other sisters who have permission [to speak] may not dare to speak to those who enter the monastery unless in the presence and hearing of the two sister-discreets assigned by the Abbess or her Vicarress. Let the Abbess and her Vicarress, as well, be bound to observe this manner of speaking.

CHAPTER NINE

THE PENANCE TO BE IMPOSED ON THE SISTERS WHO SIN; THE SISTERS WHO SERVE OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY

39. There is no mention of chapter of faults in Clare's rule. However in Clare's rule, there is mentioned what to do to sisters who sin and there are instructions on behaviour for sisters towards those sisters who sin.

If any sister, at the instigation of the enemy, has sinned mortally against the form of our profession, and, if after having been admonished two or three times by the Abbess or other sisters, she does not amend, let her eat bread and water on the floor before all the sisters in the refectory for as many days as she shall have been obstinate. If it seems advisable to the Abbess, let her be subjected to even greater punishment. Meanwhile, as long as she remains obstinate, let the prayer be that the Lord will enlighten her heart to do penance.

The Abbess and her sisters, however, should beware not to become angry or disturbed on account of anyone's sin, for anger and disturbance prevent charity in oneself and in others. If it should happen--may it never be so--that an occasion of trouble or scandal should arise between sister and sister through a word or gesture, let she who was the cause of the trouble, before offering her gift of prayer to the Lord, not only prostrate herself humbly at once at the feet of the other and ask pardon, but also beg her simply to intercede for her to the Lord that He might forgive her. Let the other sister, mindful of that word of the Lord--"If you do not forgive from the heart, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you" (Matthew 6:15;18:35)--generously pardon her sister every wrong she has done her.

Let the sisters who serve outside the monastery not linger outside unless some manifest necessity requires it. Let them conduct themselves virtuously and say little, so that those who see them may always be edified. Let them strictly beware of having suspicious meetings and dealings with others. They may not be godmothers of men or women lest gossip or trouble arise because of this. Let them not presume to repeat the gossip of the world inside the monastery. Let them be strictly bound not to repeat outside the monastery anything that was said or done within which could cause scandal. If anyone should innocently offend in these two matters, let it be left to the prudence of the Abbess to mercifully impose a penance on her. But if a sister does this through a vicious habit, let the Abbess, with the advice of her discreet, impose a penance on her according to the nature of the fault.

(11) Chapter of Faults and Faithfulness to Vocation

39. The abbess shall hold a chapter twice or at least once a week for the correction, admonition and regulation of the sisters.

For correction and admonition of sisters, see point 40 of Clare's rule below. There is much that is mentioned about admonition.

(In this matter, we absolutely forbid any visitor or minister to make, on his own authority any Constitutions in the afore-mentioned Monastery beyond its form of life and Rule, which would oblige the sisters under sin or penalty, without the consent and will of all the sisters. If anyone should perhaps do so, they are in no way bound to observe them. We wish and earnestly warn that they shall not command them anything or that anything be commanded, without great usefulness and very evident and manifest necessity.)

Above in brackets are not mentioned in Clare's Rule.

There is no mention of conduct for externs for Urbanite Rule.

40. CHAPTER TEN
THE ADMONITION AND CORRECTION OF THE SISTERS

Let the Abbess admonish and visit her sisters, and humbly and charitably correct them, not commanding them anything that is against their soul and the form of our profession. Let the sisters, however, who are subjects, remember that they have renounced their wills for God's sake. Let them, therefore, be firmly bound to obey their Abbess in all the things they have promised the Lord to observe and which are not against their soul and our profession.

Let the Abbess, on her part, be so familiar with them that they can speak and act with her as ladies do with their servant. For this is the way it should be: the Abbess should be the servant of all the sisters.

In fact, I admonish and exhort the sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ to beware of all pride, vainglory, envy, avarice, care and anxiety about this world, detraction and murmuring, dissension and division. Let them be always eager to preserve among themselves the unity of mutual love which is the bond of perfection. Let those who do not know how to read not be eager to learn. Let them rather devote themselves to what they should desire to have above all else: the Spirit of the Lord and His holy manner of working, to pray always to Him with a pure heart, and to have humility, patience in difficulty and infirmity, and to love those who persecute, blame, and accuse us, for the Lord says: Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs' is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:10). But whoever perseveres to the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22).

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE CUSTODY OF THE ENCLOSURE

41. Let the portress be mature in her manner of acting, discerning, and of a suitable age. Let her remain in an open cell without a door during the day. Let a suitable companion be assigned to her who may take her place in everything whenever necessary.

40. There is mention of admonition and correction but not much is said. See Point 39 above.

41. No mention of a portress but of a door keeper
(7) Vigilance at the door
see pg 20 below

42. Let the door be well secured by two different iron locks, with bars and bolts, so that, especially at night, it may be locked with two keys, one of which the portress may have, the other the Abbess. Let it never be left without a guard and securely locked with one key. Let them most diligently take care to see that the door is never left open, except when this can hardly be conveniently avoided.

43. Let it never be opened to anyone who wishes to enter, except to those who have been given permission by the Supreme Pontiff or our Lord Cardinal.

The Rule of Urban gives special permission to the King of France and mentions the minister general of the OFM.

44. The sisters may not allow anyone to enter the monastery before sunrise or to remain within after sunset, unless a manifest, reasonable, and unavoidable cause demands otherwise. If a bishop has permission to offer Mass within the enclosure, either for the blessing of an Abbess or for the consecration of one of the sisters as a nun or for any other reason, let him be satisfied with both as few and virtuous companions and assistants as possible.

From (5) Silence, Recollection, Enclosure

42. Question is grille and the door – does it refer to the same door?
See point 31 and 32 above.
No mention of a guard.

43. For the rest, we strictly command in virtue of obedience that no abbess at all or anyone of her sisters may allow any religious or secular person of whatever dignity to enter within the monastery or enclosure, that is, into any place to which the sisters have access, without special permission of the Apostolic See. And in the same way we forbid entry to all others, except the king of France, in whose kingdom this monastery is founded, with some companions to him, up to as many as ten, and the minister general of the Order of Friars Minor with two honest companions, and whose whom evident necessity demands that they enter to do any necessary work, by order of the abbess with the counsel and consent of the sister discreet; and, if they are many, several shall be employed at the task so that, when the work is finished, they leave without the delay, in order that in all things the good name be observed. In this the consent of the minister provincial is required when it can be conveniently done.

44. But if a bishop is sometimes granted permission to enter so as to celebrate Mass within, for the blessing of an abbess or for consecrating some sister as a nun, or for another cause, he shall be content with three or four companions or ministers.

45. Whenever it is necessary for other men to enter the monastery to do some work, let the Abbess carefully post a suitable person at the door, who may only open it to those assigned for work and to no one else. Let the sisters be extremely careful at such times not to be seen by those who enter.

46. About silence, refer to point 30 above. Clare's rule does not have much about who one could speak to. Urban rule stresses much on which type of men, sisters can talk to.

47. No mention

45.

46. When some one enters within the enclosure, the abbess may speak with him, always with two of the more discreet and mature sisters of the community. If some woman is allowed to enter the monastery, the sisters may speak with her with the abbess's permission. Let the sisters be very diligent lest anyone should speak knowingly to any man who has entered, except in the manner noted above. They can sometimes speak with discreet and mature men, and with their honest confessors, or also with others, at appropriate places and times, for their own consolation and edification, with the permission of the minister general or provincial or the abbess, and if this occurs within the monastery, in the sight or presence of three sisters or two. In order that the sisters may be able to dedicate themselves to the divine praises more peacefully and freely, and more rightly attend to their own affairs, we attach a sentence against all who knowingly presume to enter any monastery of this religion, contrary to the aforesaid norm.

47. Precaution shall especially be taken that those to whom permission is sometimes granted to enter the monastery, shall be such whose words and conduct, as well as life and behaviour may edify those who see them, and from which no motive for scandal should arise.

48.

49.

CHAPTER TWELVE
**THE VISITATOR, THE CHAPLAIN,
AND THE CARDINAL PROTECTOR**

50. Let our Visitator always be taken from the Order of the Friars Minor according to the will and command of our Cardinal. Let him be the kind of person who is well known for his integrity and good manner of living. His duty shall be to correct any excesses against the form of our profession, whether these be in head or in the members. Taking his stand in a public place, that he can be seen by others, let him speak with several and with each one concerning the matters that pertain to the duty of the visitation as he sees best.

51. See point 50. above

48. Further more, the minister provincial of the province in question can enter the afore-mentioned monastery with two honest companions for the purpose of visitation or reform of the community, since he cannot do this without entering; and other advantages and necessary causes that arise, according as the minister with the counsel of his discreets decides to grant to him.

49. If perhaps some cardinal comes sometimes to the monastery of this religion, and wishes to enter, he shall be received with reverence and devotion, but he shall bring with him not more than ten companions. Any other prelate, to whom the Supreme Pontiff has at times given permission to enter, shall be content with two honest companions

(8) Prelates and Visitators

50. As regards the visitation of this religion, it is to be carefully provided that whoever is appointed visitator, whether it be a general one or sometimes a special one, he should be such that full knowledge and security is possessed about his religious life and conduct. Having entered any monastery of this religion on visitation, he shall conduct and show himself in all things while there, so that he arouses all from good to better and enkindles the love of God in them, and always inflames the sisters with mutual charity. And when he has entered the cloister of the monastery on visitation, he shall bring two suitable religious companions; and these same companions shall never separate from one another while they are within the enclosure.

(see point 48 above)

51. All monasteries of this order shall be visited each year, and at least once every two years. The Visitator shall always be of the order of the Friars Minor, and shall be sent by the minister general of the Order. Every year in which visitation cannot be held by a visitator send by the general, the monasteries shall, if necessary, be visited by the minister of the respective province, according to the form of visitation of this present Rule.

See point 44 above which mentions about sunrise and sunset.
point 33 is about talking at the grille.

The visitor undertaking the visitation, having first read the Rule shall investigate with much care, under obedience, the truth concerning the state of the sisters and the observance of their religion, by all in general and especially individually.

Where he finds anything to be corrected or reformed, motivated by zeal of charity and love of justice, he shall correct and reform with discretion, both in the head as well as in the members.

When any sister is visited, she shall remain outside the chapter. Likewise the abbess, handing up the seal, when not present at personal visitation. Absolutely nothing shall be voiced against these in public which cannot be proved as having occurred or proved by public form. But let the sisters be watchful and let them consider carefully, especially in the visitation of the sisters, that they be moved to speak solely from divine love and the correction of their sisters.

If they wish to defend themselves, a hearing shall not be denied to those who refuse to admit the fault imputed to them, especially if the faults are grave. Those who make grave accusations and fail to prove these, shall be legitimately punished according to the manner of the imputed fault. An abuse which has been sufficiently corrected by the visitor shall in no way be corrected again.

The visitor shall observe the above-said manner of speaking, namely when he speaks to all or at least two, in the sight of several nearby, unless outside the enclosure of the monastery and in the parlour with one alone or with several, he wishes to speak of those things which are known to pertain to his office.

We absolutely wish that visitors carry out what concerns visitation and without being a burden to the house, so that, the visitation is fully ended within four or five days, unless clear necessity demands more. Nor has he the faculty of entering the monastery afterwards. Without special permission of the minister general, the afore-mentioned time of visitation may not be prorogued for any reason; and we do not wish the minister general to change the afore-mentioned time, unless for some certain reason.

Under obedience we strictly forbid visitors and all others no matter how authorized that they shall in no way be **permitted to enter and remain in the monastery from sundown to sunrise**, except for the confession of a very sick sister or some other clear and imminent danger. Additionally we wish and very much warn the sisters that, publicly and privately, they recommend to the Visitor, as seems best, those things which should be decided and corrected according to the form and regular observance of their life; they are obliged by obedience to firmly obey him in those matters pertaining to his office, within the

52. We ask as a favor of the same Order a chaplain and a clerical companion of good reputation, of prudent discernment and two lay brothers, lovers of a holy and upright way of life, in support of our poverty, as we have always mercifully had from the aforesaid Order of Friars Minor, in light of the love of God and our Blessed Francis.

53. Let the chaplain not be permitted to enter the monastery without a companion. When they enter, let them remain in an open place, in such a way that they can always see each other and be seen by others.

afore-mentioned time. Whoever acts otherwise shall be duly punished by the visitor according as is fitting.

If her defects or deserts demand it, he shall release the abbess from office. Similarly the chaplain and the lay sisters, and also other servants, shall be corrected if they have been found blameworthy in anything. If they refuse or despise amendment, they shall be removed from the monastery. Their confessors and companions, staying there, who administer the Eucharist and other sacraments to them, shall be of the Order of friars minor; unless perhaps in some place the minister general or provincial has otherwise ordained for a reasonable and just cause. Against whom, if the visitor should find anything noteworthy is obliged to notify the minister of the province about it, and he shall immediately correct them or even remove them from the place.

We strictly enjoin on the visitor that matters which he has discovered under secrecy in his visitation, shall in no way be knowingly revealed; but, having read out the abuses and imposed penances, he shall burn all writings before the community, unless they are such that by advise of the sister discreet of the community, they should be absolutely reported to the minister general. But if the minister provincial discovers anything noteworthy against the visitor or his companions after visitation, he is obliged to notify this to the minister general. The companions of visitors shall not be present at visitations.

52. Not mentioned that chaplain must be from OFM.

53.

54. They may enter the enclosure for the confession of the sick who cannot go to the parlor, for their Communion,

55. for the Last Anointing and the Prayers of the Dying. Suitable and sufficient outsiders may enter, moreover, according to the prudence of the Abbess, for funeral services and on the solemnity of Masses for the Dead, for digging or opening a grave, or also for making arrangements for it.

(6) Chaplain of the Monastery

54. When, therefore, any sister is afflicted by grave bodily illness, so that she cannot easily come to the parlour, and needs to confess and receive the Body of the Lord and other sacraments of the Church, their confessor shall enter wearing priestly vestments apart from the chasuble, and his companion shall go in likewise always wearing an alb; and then the infirm sister shall confess, while not far off there are three sisters who see the confessor and the penitent and who can likewise be seen by them. Having heard the confession or administered another sacrament, they shall go out dressed as they came in. Nor shall they dare to make delay, or speak to any other sister, unless in the way prescribed. They shall conduct themselves in this way at the commendation of the soul of the sisters.

55. In carrying out the burial rites of sisters or others, two or three priest friars minor may enter in priestly vestments when the body is being carried out for burial; doing what the office requires, they shall always stay together while there, and depart immediately once the task is over.

But if it is necessary that some enter to dig or open a grave or to arrange the earth afterwards, and the abbess and community consider this appropriate because of the physical weakness of the sisters, it shall be lawful for the chaplain and his companion to enter, with some two other people, honest and suitable for the work; these shall remain together while there, and leave without delay once the work is completed.

56. Let the sisters be strictly bound to always have that Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, who has been delegated by the Lord Pope for the Friars Minor, as Governor, Protector, and Corrector, that always submissive and subject at the feet of that holy Church and steadfast in the Catholic faith, we may always observe the poverty and humility of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother and the Holy Gospel we have firmly promised. Amen..

56. no mention

57. Let the master take diligent care, and whoever is visitor at the time, and those who must enter the monastery for work, if such works are necessary, and when or how these workmen enter, and how they should act inside; and let them order and dispose concerning these matters as they consider expedient for the welfare and good repute of the sisters.

(7) Vigilance at the door

For the custody of the door one of the sisters shall be appointed who wholly loves God, let her be diligent and discreet, and mature in conduct and age. She shall so dispose, strongly guard the key of the aforesaid door and keep it so that the doorway can never be opened without her, or unknown to her. The abbess shall keep the other key distinct from it. Another equally suitable companion shall be also assigned to her, who will take her place in all things when she is engaged because of a reasonable and necessary cause.

These door-keepers shall take the greatest care and see that the door is never left open, unless for the least required time. The door shall be carefully protected with iron locks, with the little door and bolts, and the vigilance shall never be relaxed without any of these. Firmly locked day and night; it shall not be opened immediately to

all who call, unless the door-keeper first looks through the little window which should be in the door and knows for certain who the caller is, that it is a person to whom one should open without any doubt, in accordance with the form given above about entrance.

We absolutely wish that the door be set high, to which one climbs by a wooden ladder which is raised by an iron chain in the evening and secured with a key, and in the morning at daylight it shall be lowered in the presence of three sisters. But we allow them to have a lower door through which heavy loads may be brought in, such as jars of wine and the like, using locks and keys with great care.

If at times some work has to be done within the monastery, for which some seculars or any persons at all must enter, let the abness provide carefully; and, while the work is being done, let three sisters or externs from the more mature and discreet sisters of the community be appointed to guard the door, who open to such appointed workers always in silence, and in no way allow other people to enter.

Where there is too great a crowd and great commotion, others besides the enclosed sisters shall be appointed on guard.

(10) Good and Seal of the Monastery

The minister and visitor, however, should always reform abuses and correct what needs correction, in temporal and spiritual matters.

In this matter, to avoid inopportune going under the pretext of temporal needs, and so that the aforesaid sisters may more peacefully serve the Lord, it is lawful for them to receive incomes and possessions in common and freely retain them. In order to duly

administer these possessions, there shall be one prudent and faithful procurator in this said monastery, who should be appointed by the abness, with the advise and consent of the community, and also removed whenever it seem fit to them. he shall be obliged to give an account to the abness and to other certain sisters on behalf of the community, and also to the visitor when he wishes to hear it, of all matters entrusted to him, both receipts and expenses, And he may in no way sell, mortgage, commute or alienate anything of the immovable things of the monastery. We decree as null and void anything attempted against this. Since therefore the external dwelling of the sisters of this religion is elsewhere, we wish that they avoid in every way over-niceness which is hateful to God in all things and very hateful and contrary to piety and an excess of superfluity in buildings.

The seal of the community shall be kept and conserved according to the ordinance of that convent. Every letter, written on behalf of the community, shall first be read in chapter. No sister may send or receive letters unless she first reads them to the abness, or unless read by someone appointed for this in the presence of the abness.

(12) Plenary Indulgence

We therefore decree that no ecclesiastical or secular person may break or in any way change the present Rule approved and corrected by us.

Given at Civitavecchia, 27th July , the second year of our pontificate.