



Franciscan Timeline

- 1181/1182** Giovanni (John) di Pietro di Bernardone (Lady Pica his mother and Pietro his father) is born and baptized in Umbria, in Assisi, Italy; later named by his father, Francesco (Francis' nickname was "Frenchie")
- 1190** Francis attends the parish school at San Giorgio
- 1193/1194** Chiara (Clare) di Favarone di Offreduccio [Lady Ortolana (Ortulana) her mother and Favarone her father] is the first born to a renowned family of nobility in Assisi
- 1198** Innocent III elected Pope; Fourth Crusade announced
- 1199** Civil war rages between the "maiores" and the "minores" in Assisi; nobility including the Offreduccio women and children flee to the city of Perugia, Assisi's archrival
- 1202 – 1209** Intermittent war between Assisi and Perugia
- 1202** (November) Francis fights in a battle between Assisi, a city intent on independence from both papal and imperial power, and Perugia in which Assisi is defeated at Collestrada; Francis spends a year in captivity in a prison in Perugia and falls ill
- 1203 - 1205** Offreduccios are in exile in Perugia along with families from the nobility at war with the Commune of Assisi
- 1203** Francis' father ransoms him; Francis endures a long illness and convalesces at home
- 1204** (Late) Francis sets out to join the army of Walter de Brienne to participate in a crusade; en route in Spoleto, he hears a voice "Who can do more for you, the lord or the servant?" [*The Anonymous of Perugia*, by John of Perugia, p. 36 in Vol. II: *Francis of Assisi ED: The Founder*] and returns home in disgrace
- 1205** (Spring) Francis' gradual conversion begins; he gives generously to the poor and embraces a leper; he is mocked by fellow Assisians and seeks solitude with God in caves and abandoned churches
- 1205** (Fall) While at San Damiano gazing at the image of Christ crucified, Francis sees the lips of Jesus move and hears, "Francis," it said, *calling him by name*, "go rebuild My house; as you see, it is all being destroyed" [*The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, by Thomas of Celano, The First Book, Chapter VI, p. 249 in Vol. II: *Francis of Assisi ED: The Founder*]; he sells cloth from his father's shop and gives money to repair the church building
- 1205/1206** Francis prays *The Prayer before the Crucifix*
- 1206** His enraged father takes Francis to trial before Guido, the bishop of Assisi, demanding repayment for his cloth; Francis strips, returning his clothes and renouncing his inheritance; Francis nurses lepers and begs for stones to repair churches; Francis is officially recognized as a penitent
- 1207** (Summer to January or February of 1208) Francis repairs the churches of *San Damiano*, *San Pietro della Spina* and *Our Lady of the Angels*, a.k.a. "*The Portiuncula*"

- Francis expresses his love for *The Portiuncula*: “See to it, my sons, that you never abandon this place. If you are driven out from one side, go back in from the other, for this *is truly a holy place and the dwelling place of God*. Here the Most High increased our numbers *when we were only a few*; here He *enlightened the hearts* of his poor ones with the light of His wisdom; here He kindled our wills with the fire of His love; here all who pray wholeheartedly will receive what they ask, while offenders will be severely punished. Therefore, my sons, hold this place, *God’s dwelling*, as worthy of all honor and *here praise God in cries of joy and praise with your whole heart*.” [*The Life of Saint Francis* by Thomas of Celano: *The Second Book*, p. 275 in Vol. I: *Francis of Assisi ED: The Saint*]

1208 (February 24) Francis desires to imitate Jesus perfectly; hears the Gospel read on the Feast of St. Matthias and accepts the Gospel as his way of life; replaces the belt on his hermit’s habit with a rough cord and begins to preach penance, repentance and peace; several young men leave their families and possessions to join Francis including Bernard of Quintavalle who was the first follower and the priest Peter di Catani

1209 – 1215 Francis writes the *Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (The First Version of the *Letter to the Faithful*)

1209 Francis writes a Rule, a.k.a. *The Primitive Rule* (guiding charter) for his new brotherhood; goes to Rome to gain papal approval for the Order and receives oral approval from Pope Innocent III after Innocent’s dream of Francis holding up the Lateran Basilica; settles with his brothers in a place called Rivo Torto near Assisi; possible date for the beginning of the Franciscan Order of Penance, later called the “Third Order”

1209/1210 – 1221 Francis writes *The Earlier Rule* (*Regula Non Bullata*, the *Rule* without a Papal Seal) of the Lesser Brothers (*fratres minores*) or Friars Minor [First Order]

1210 – 1212 Clare hears Francis preach and meets with him secretly

1211 Francis tries to reach Muslim territory to convert Muslims; heavy winds detour his ship and force his return

1212 (March 18) Palm Sunday, Clare receives her palm from Bishop Guido; she leaves her father’s house by way of the “death door” and receives the religious habit from the hands of Francis at *The Portiuncula*; Clare stays at the monastery of San Paolo delle Abbadesse in Bastia and then moves to Sant’ Angelo of Panzo (April 3 or 4); only 16 days after Clare’s departure from her home, her sister Catherine (Francis later names her Agnes in honor of the youthful virgin martyr of the early Church) joins Clare; in late April or early May, Clare and Agnes settle at San Damiano where Clare’s group is known as the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, Damianites or the Poor Ladies of Assisi [known today as the Poor Clares (Second Order)]



1213 Francis receives from Count Orlando as a gift, La Verna, a mountain in the Tuscan Valley where Francis often seeks solitude

1215 Francis begins his “Eucharistic Crusade,” exhorting people to show reverence for Holy Communion; Francis gives a “*Form of Life*” to Clare and her companions; Clare accepts the title and role as Abbess of San Damiano; Pope Innocent III grants the Privilege of Poverty for San Damiano Monastery; Francis may have met Dominic, future founder of the Order of Friar Preachers

1215 The Fourth Lateran Council is convened where Francis hears about the sign of the Tau (a Hebrew and Greek letter). The origin of its use as a sign is in Ezekiel (9:4) “Pass through the city (Jerusalem) and mark a **T** on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced within it.” (Not all translations use the word Tau.) Pope Innocent III preaches on this text and Francis is there. The Pope sets forth the Tau as a sign of penance and renewal in Christ. Francis embraces this sign as an expression of Christ’s cross. In hearing the story, Francis experiences a confirmation of the LIFE and MISSION of his new Order. The Tau becomes for him a symbol of exodus and pilgrimage with which he wants his companions signed as “the new and humble people of God.”

1216 (July 16) Pope Innocent III dies and on July 18 Honorius III becomes Pope; Francis receives *The Portiuncula Indulgence* or *Pardon of Assisi* from Pope Honorius III

It is said that Francis chose this date because the feast of the Chains of St. Peter (his release from prison) is celebrated on the first of August and Francis felt that sinners should also be freed from the chains of their sins on the day following this great feast. Furthermore, this date was the anniversary of the consecration of *The Portiuncula* chapel. It is a plenary indulgence (under the usual conditions of prayer for the pope, confession, and reception of the Eucharist) for everyone who visits and prays in this small chapel on the anniversary of its dedication (August 2).

1217 Some 5,000 brothers convene for the first *Chapter of Mats* (*Chapters* still continue to this very day); the Order is divided into Provinces; Francis seeks volunteers to preach in Germany, Tunis and Syria; eventually, brothers reach Spain and England

1219 (May 26) the first friar missionaries leave for Morocco; June 24, Francis sails to the Holy Land; Cardinal Hugolino imposes a *Rule* on Clare and her sisters based on the *Rule* of Benedict, but not including the Privilege of Poverty or ministry by the Friars Minor, Clare struggles with this; during the Fifth Crusade, in November at the Battle of Damietta in Egypt, Francis visits the Sultan, Al-Malik Al-Kamil

1220 Franciscan missionaries in Morocco (Berard and his companions) are killed, becoming the Order’s first martyrs; Cardinal Hugolino, at that time the Bishop of Ostia, is appointed Protector of the Order; Pope Honorius III requires Francis to establish more discipline in his Order; Francis recognizes his own poor administrative skills and appoints Peter di Catani as Minister General; Dominic establishes his Order of Friar Preachers (known today as the Dominican Order)

1220(?) Francis writes the *Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (Second Version of the *Letter to the Faithful*)

1221 – 1222 Francis goes on a preaching tour throughout Italy

1221 Francis writes a letter that becomes the basic *Rule* (*Memoriale Propositi*) of the Third Order, a Franciscan Order for lay men, lay women and diocesan clergy; at the request of church authorities, Francis begins to create a more formal *Rule* for the First Order; Peter di Catani dies and at *Chapter*, Brother Elias becomes the Vicar

1223 Francis goes to Fonte Colombo to write the definitive *Rule* for the Order of Friars Minor, the *Chapter* discusses it and further changes are made until the final revision of the *Rule* (*Regula Bullata/The Later Rule*) is approved by Pope Honorius III on November 29 (which remains the *Rule* of the First Order even to this day)

December 24/25: Exhausted and ill, Francis travels to Greccio; he re-enacts the Christmas story, popularizing the nativity scene, and serves as deacon at the Mass

1224 Marks the beginning of Clare's illness which often confines her to bed; Anthony receives Francis' written permission to teach theology to the brothers; Francis returns to La Verna to pray and fast (August 15 – September 29); he receives the stigmata, marks of Christ's wounds, which is commemorated each September 17; the parchment with *The Praises of God and the Blessing* is given to Brother Leo on La Verna

1225 Nearly blind and possibly suffering from tuberculoid leprosy, Francis returns to San Damiano, where Clare and her sisters care for him; Francis writes *The Canticle of Brother Sun* (also known as *The Canticle of the Creatures*) and *The Canticle of Exhortation for the Ladies of San Damiano*; in late summer, Francis submits to cauterization treatment for his eye maladies

1226 – 1227 Elias serves as Minister General of the Order

(The undated writings of St. Francis:

The Admonitions

Exhortation to the Praise of God

The Office of the Passion

A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father

The Praises to Be Said at All the Hours

A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

A Salutation of the Virtues

True and Perfect Joy)



1226 Francis writes his *Testament*; Clare's mother Ortolana enters San Damiano Monastery; end of September or beginning of October, Francis makes final recommendations to Clare and her sisters concerning their *Rule* of life; Francis asks to be taken back to *The Portiuncula*; he composes a final verse about "Sister Death" for his *Canticle*

+ **1226** (October 3) Francis dies (*Transitus*); October 4, his body is brought to San Damiano and is then buried at the Church of San Giorgio in Assisi

1227 – 1232 John Parenti serves as Minister General of the Order

1227 (March 18) Pope Honorius III dies and on March 19 Cardinal Hugolino, Francis' friend and protector, is elected Pope, taking the name Gregory IX; Pope dispenses Clare and her sisters from the ideals of Poverty and removes Friars Minor as chaplains to the Poor Ladies

1228 – 1229 Thomas of Celano writes *The Life of St. Francis*

1228 (July 16) Francis is canonized in Assisi by Pope Gregory IX

1228 (September 17) Pope Gregory IX restores the Privilege of Poverty and ministry by Friars Minor to the Poor Ladies

1229 Clare's sister Beatrice enters San Damiano Monastery; Anthony teaches theology to the friars in Padua

1230 (May 25) Francis' remains transferred to the new Papal Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi

1232 – 1235 Julian of Speyer writes *The Life of St. Francis*

1232 – 1239 Elias again serves as Minister General of the Order

1234 Lady Agnes, daughter of the king of Bohemia, founds a monastery of Poor Ladies in Prague, and takes the veil there; Clare writes her *First Letter to Agnes of Prague* (not her blood sister)

1235 Clare writes *Second Letter to Agnes of Prague*

1238 Clare writes *Third Letter to Agnes of Prague*



1239 Abeit of Pisa serves as Minister General of the Order

1239 – 1244 Haymo of Faversham serves as Minister General

1240 – 1241 John of Perugia writes *The Anonymous of Perugia*

1240 (September) Attempted Saracen invasion of San Damiano Monastery is repelled by Clare and the Eucharist

1241 – 1246 Bernard of Quintavalle dies sometime during this span and is buried close to Francis' tomb in the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi

1241 – 1247 *The Legend of the Three Companions* is written

1241 Miracle of the liberation of Assisi from Vitale d'Aversa via Clare and her sisters' intercessory prayers; on August 22 Pope Gregory IX dies

1243 (June 25) Innocent IV is elected Pope

1244 – 1260 *The Assisi Compilation* is written

1244 – 1247 Crescentius of Iesi serves as Minister General of the Order

1245 – 1247 Thomas of Celano writes *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (his Second Life of Saint Francis)

1247 – 1253 Clare writes her *Testament*

1247 – 1257 John of Parma serves Minister General of the Order

1247 The *Rule of Pope Innocent IV* lessens fasting and permits possessions to the Poor Ladies; Clare starts to write her own *Rule*

1250 Clare's illness gets worse; a cat (a symbol of a contemplative life) retrieves yarn for her

1250 – 1252 Thomas of Celano writes *The Treatise on the Miracles of Saint Francis*

1252 (September 16) Cardinal Raynaldus verbally approves Clare's *Rule*; Clare experiences Christmas Midnight Mass, even though she is physically absent

1253 Clare writes *Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague* and her *Blessing*; Agnes (Clare's sister) returns to San Damiano after 34 years away; in April, Pope Innocent IV visits Clare at San Damiano and approves Clare's *Rule* on August 9 by means of the Papal Bull *Solet Annuere*, the first papally approved *Rule* written by a woman in the history of the Church

+ **1253** (August 11) Clare dies and is buried in the Church of San Giorgio in Assisi, 27 years after Francis' death; Agnes of Assisi (Clare's sister) dies in November

1254 (December 7) Pope Innocent IV dies; on December 12 Cardinal Raynaldus becomes Pope Alexander IV

1255 (August 15) Clare is canonized by Pope Alexander IV

1255 – 1267 Bonaventure writes the *Legends* and many Sermons about St. Francis

1257 – 1273 Bonaventure serves as Minister General of the Order

- 1257** Poor Ladies move from San Damiano to the Proto-Monastery in Assisi, taking the original San Damiano Crucifix with them
- 1260** Clare's body is transferred to the Basilica of Santa Chiara in Assisi
- 1263** The Order of San Damiano takes the name of the Order of St. Clare, "Poor Clares"
- 1289** Pope Nicholas IV, first Franciscan friar elected Pope (February 22, 1288), in the Papal Bull *Supra Montem* recognizes Francis as the founder of the Order of Penitents
- 1318** *The Mirror of the Perfection (The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version; and The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version)* are written
- 1328 – 1337** Ugolino Boniscambi of Montegiorgio writes *The Deeds of Blessed Francis and His Companions*
- After 1337** Anonymous writes *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis (Fioretti)* (a translation and re-editing of *The Deeds of Saint Francis and His Companions*)
- 1569** Construction begins on the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli (St. Mary of the Angels) that surrounds *The Portiuncula* (the hillside city of Assisi has stopped growing geographically and expansion occurs on the plain nearby)
- 1850** (August 30) Sarcophagus and remains of Clare are found
- 1872** (October 3) Clare's body is placed in a crypt in the Basilica of Santa Chiara
- 1883** A revised *Rule of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis* is promulgated by Pope Leo XIII
- 1893** Original Papal Bull *Solet Annuere* containing Clare's *Rule* is found in a fold of her mantle
- 1958** (February 17) Pope Pius XII declares Clare, because of her Christmas Eve vision in 1252, Patroness of all those involved in any way in the production of television
- 1978** (June 24) Pope Paul VI (now Blessed Paul VI) promulgates a revised *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order* (26 articles)
- 1979** Pope John Paul II (now Pope St. John Paul II) declares Francis the Patron of the environment and ecological concerns
- 1986** (October 27) Pope John Paul II (now Pope St. John Paul II) and 235 leaders of the world's major religions begin their Day of Prayer for World Peace with a prayer service in front of the tiny chapel, *The Portiuncula*. (Every year thousands of pilgrims come to the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli to pray for their own intentions, for family needs, and for reconciliation throughout the world.)

[This *Timeline* is a compilation from many sources. If some of the sources were not in agreement with specific dates, the compilers did their best to reflect accurate information. Sources Consulted: Christian Today/Christian History Magazine, Joanne Schatzlein, O.S.F., 1994; *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*, Ingrid J. Peterson, O.S.F., 1993; *Clare of Assisi: The Lady: Early Documents*, Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., 2006; *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (Vol. 1: *The Saint*; Vol. II: *The Founder*; Vol. III: *The Prophet*), Editors: Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap.; J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.; and William J. Short, O.F.M., 1999 – 2001; and www.franciscanfriarstor.com]

