

Francis of Assisi: A New Biography

by Augustine Thompson OP

Year I
Francis in Early Life
When I was in Sin

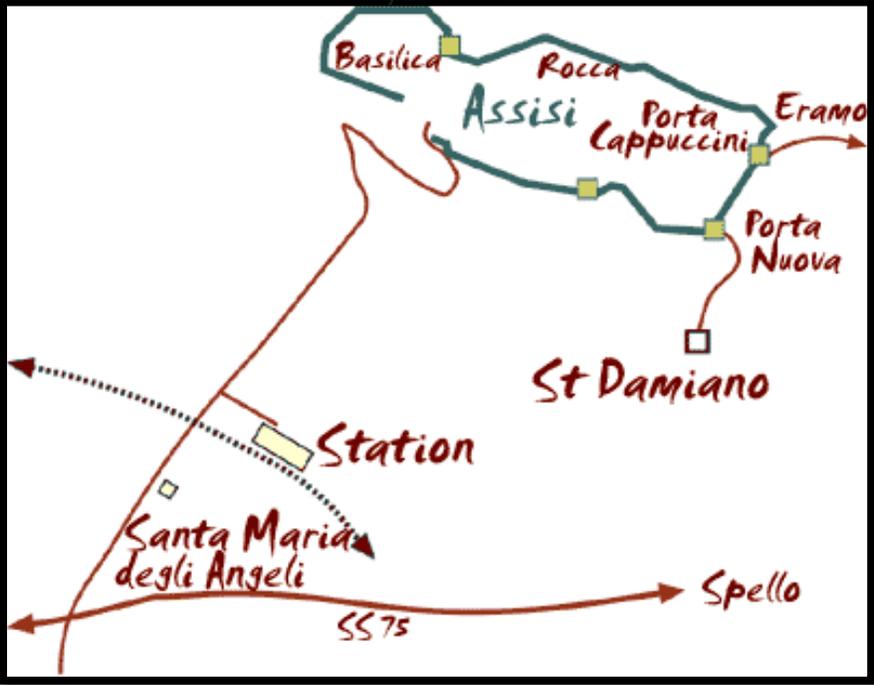
Year 3
Francis



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Umbria, Central Italy



City of Assisi



Early Life Virtues
of Generosity &
Charity - born
1181-82



Family
Merchants,
supported the
Government



Assisi defeated-
Francis
imprisoned with
aristocrats health
damaged –
released 1203



1204 Assisi's
military situation
changed, city
now swore
allegiance to
papacy



1205 Francis
defeated veteran,
depressed
decided not to go
to war, but in the
spring he did
again with others

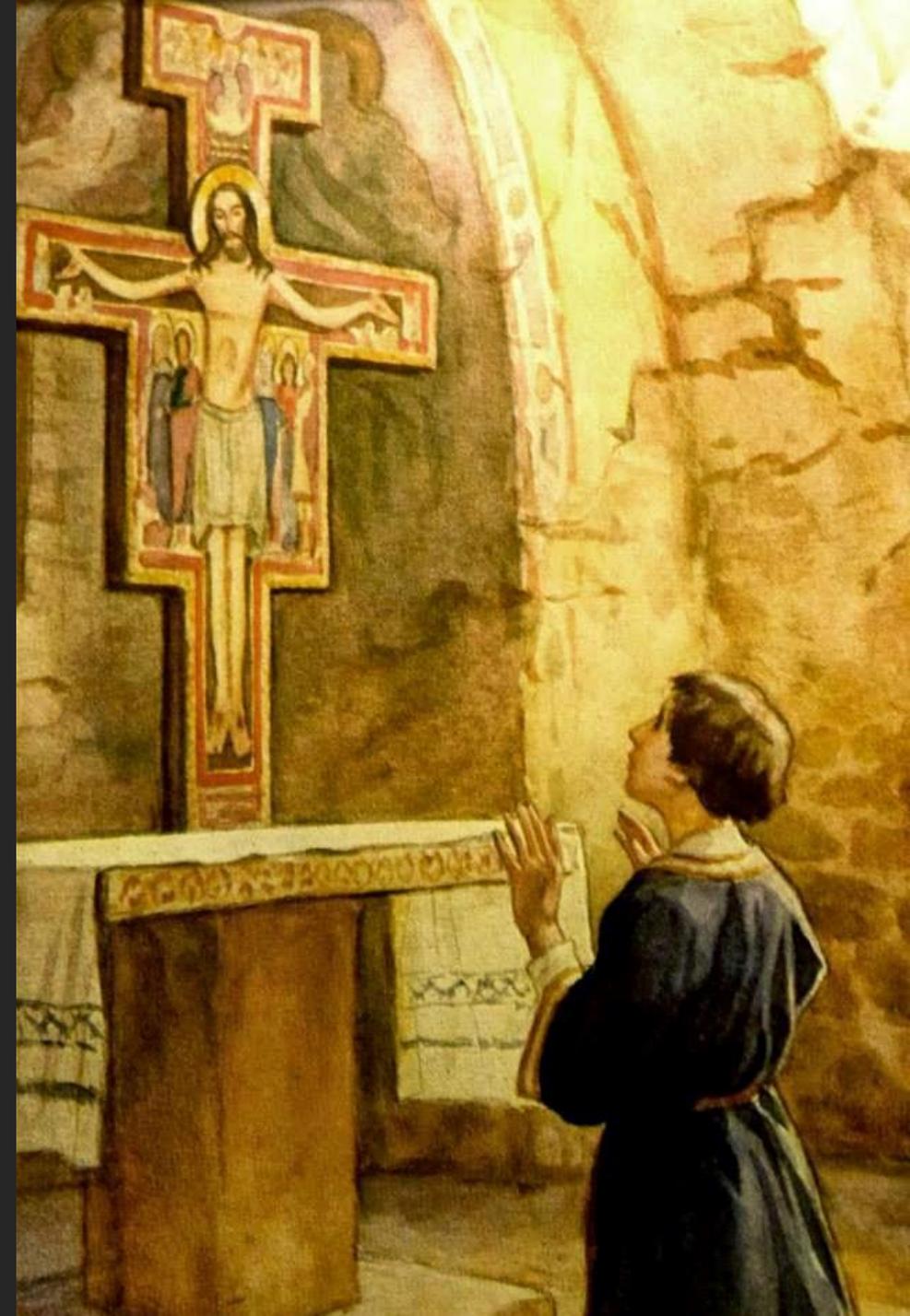


Francis realized
that he had to
follow the Lord,
still unsettled,
went to Foligno –
sold finery, arms
& horse

← EARLY LIFE →

Francis Comes to San Damiano

- Found a priest, Don Peter who would not take Francis' money – Put money on ledge
- Went back to his family
- Trying to discern the direction of his life – what did God want for him
- He had changed – old friends noticed
- May have been suffering from self-loathing & guilt, performed penance, almsgiving, prayer, mortification
- Went on Pilgrimage to Rome
- Came back to Assisi, went to Bishop Guido
- Francis racked with demonic fears prayed at San Damiano, took up residence there in late 1205





Francis Leaves the World

Cuts Family Ties

- Pietro distressed by Francis' agony, strove to bring him home, locked him up – Mother, Pica, released him
- Francis returned to San Damiano
- Pietro made one last attempt to reach his son – thought he was mentally ill
- Francis was not aware of what was really at stake (family business)
- Francis gave up his inheritance and severed ties with family.
- Francis was beaten by robbers – taken to monastery, returned to Assisi

(Father Scully – 1st Conversion Experience)

The Leper Experience

- Core of his Religious Conversion
- Francis began to work with the lepers
- He felt that, by God's grace, with no power of his own, he was remade into a different man.
- Just as suddenly, the sins that had been tormenting him – seemed to melt away

- *HE EXPERIENCED SPIRITUAL REBIRTH AND HEALING*

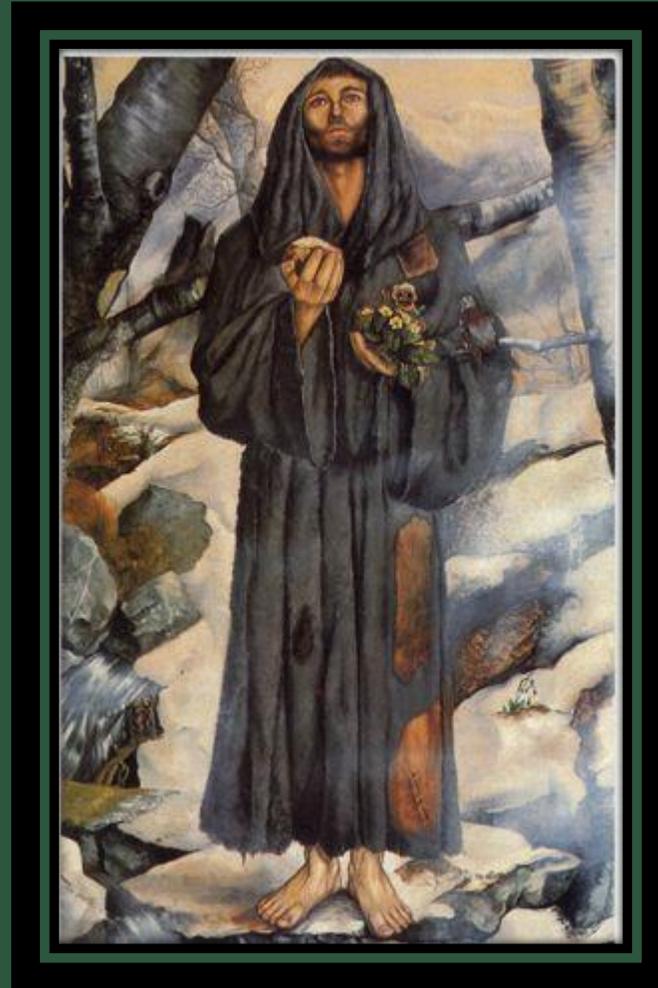
- *(Father Scully – this is the 2nd Conversion Experience)*



The Penitent from Assisi



San Damiano
“Francis, Rebuild My Church”

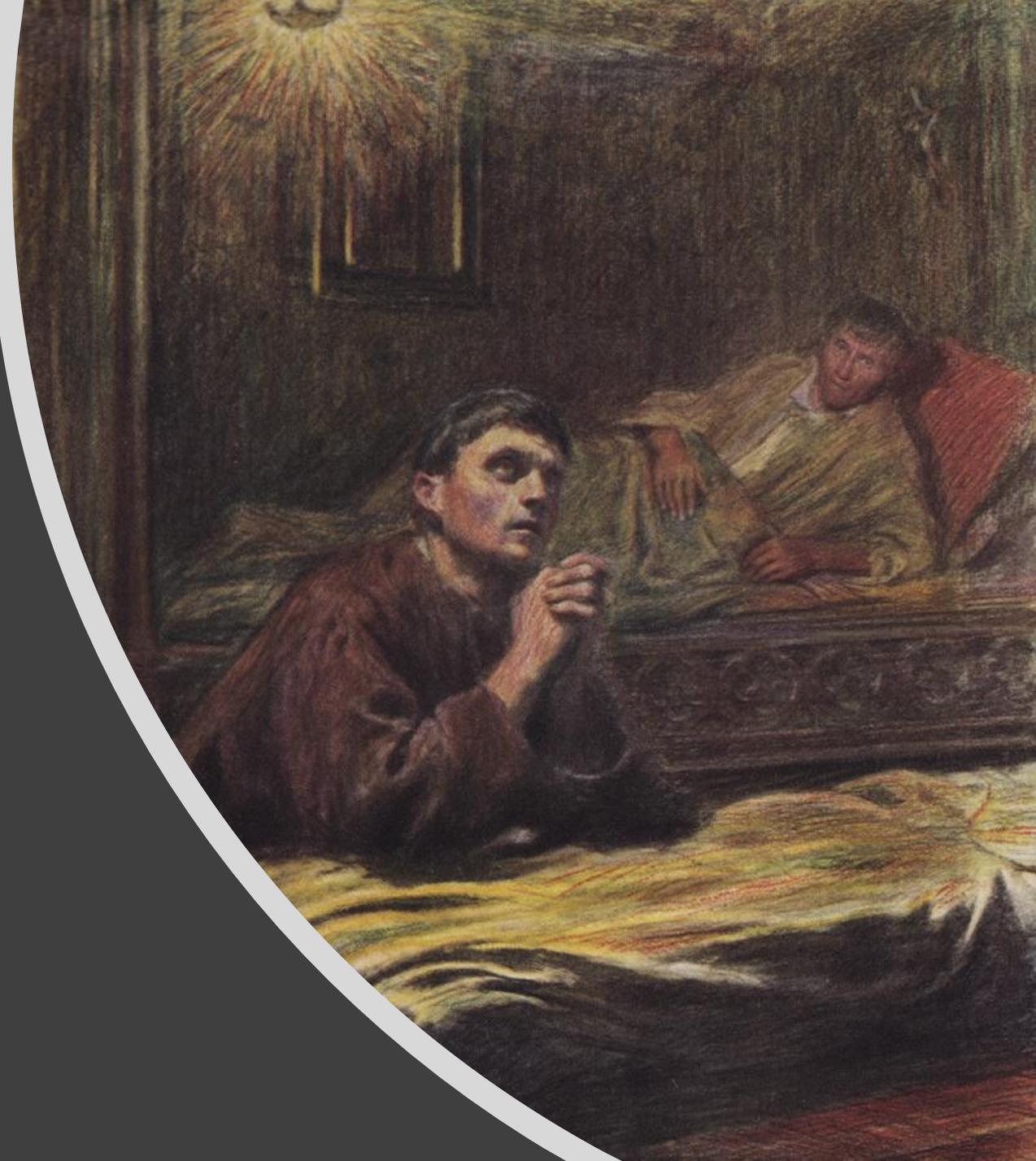


**External Sign of his choice of
Penance – Simple brown habit**

God Sends Francis Followers

- Francis lived as a hermit “around church” for 2 years
- Bernadino & Peter became followers – wanted to imitate his practice of penance
- They found a priest, opened the Bible at random – a practice of lay piety
 - **“Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow Me”** - Mark 10:17-21
 - **‘Take Nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not have two tunics’** – Luke 9:1-6
 - **If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.**”
– Matthew 16:24-28

Core of what Francis would call his “Form of Life”



Penitents Go to Rome

- Francis worried about risk of delusion: the identification of one's own desires, possibly selfish or deluded, with divine commands
- Francis, obedient Catholic wanted the Church's approval – he and 3 others headed for Rome



Francis Meets Pope

- Bishop Guido was in Rome and felt Francis was over his head, but gradually came to help him
- Sent Francis to Cardinal Colonna who set up meeting with Pope Innocent III
- He approved them to be tenured to become preachers – which they did not expect and were not prepared for!
- Francis was in spiritual agony over how to combine the solitary aspects of penance & prayer with the public work of preaching
- Francis did not go immediately into preaching



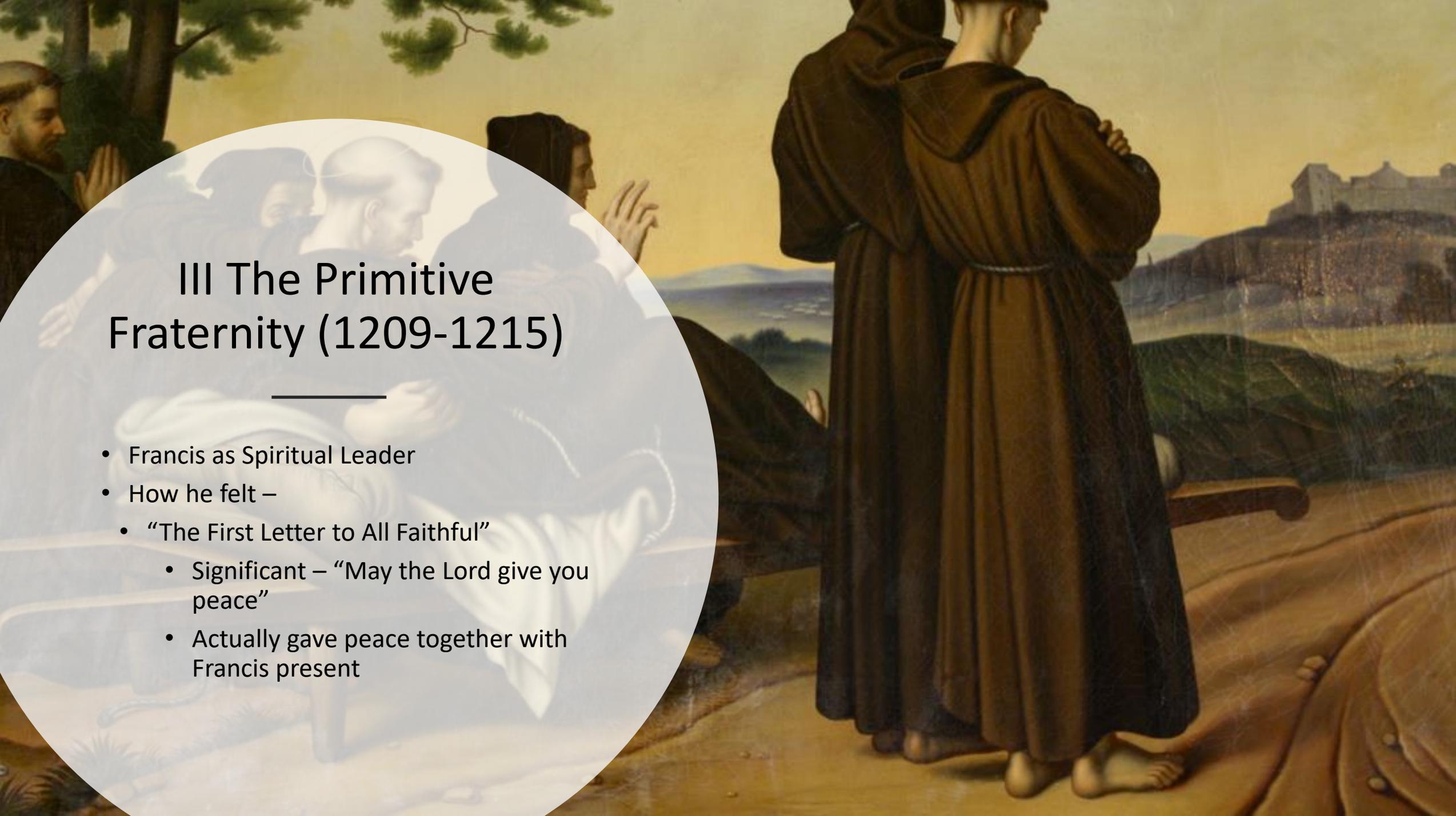


The Fraternity of Brothers

- Takes up a more ordered & structured way of life
- 1st place – 2 miles outside of A-Rivo Torto
- There about 3 months working probably with lepers
- Took up the “habit” and cord

The Porziuncula

- Francis realized that they needed a “church” since they were “tonsured” and recite the Divine Office
- Benedictine monks gave him Santa Maria degli Angeli in the district known as Porziuncula, the “Little Portion”
 - Fixed Up Church
 - More Brothers joined
 - Part of Francis’ Conversion

The background is a painting of a group of monks in a landscape. In the foreground, two monks in brown robes stand with their backs to the viewer, looking out over a valley. In the background, other monks are visible, some with their hands raised in prayer. The landscape features rolling hills and a distant building on a hill. A large, semi-transparent circular overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing text.

III The Primitive Fraternity (1209-1215)

- Francis as Spiritual Leader
- How he felt –
 - “The First Letter to All Faithful”
 - Significant – “May the Lord give you peace”
 - Actually gave peace together with Francis present