

*I just finished studying Francis of Assisi's first Rule (he rewrote the Rule years later for confirmation by papal bull) and taking notes, and I think I will sum my interpretation of it:*

**I.** Live the whole gospel of Jesus Christ in its most obvious and simple way, all His teaching, all His footsteps. First, sell your property and give all you possess to the poor. Seek out the conversation of the poor, despised, sick, and beggars and show joy in it. Judge none, but judge your own self severely. Observe the Golden Rule toward everyone; love one another, in works and then words, which is Christ's Commandment; resist no evil fate but accept violence, even from nature, and expect martyrdom. Never become depressed, never complain, but show forth joy, contentment in the Lord, and merriment. Show chivalry and courtesy.

**II.** Revere all churches, ordinances, and clerics. Study the gospel and pray in a regular pattern daily; seek repentance in a regular pattern daily; fast regularly and during holy seasons. Yet if it become necessary, to further the work of the Kingdom, fasts or any other constraints may be abandoned. Expel a brother or sister who is proved a heretic. Among unbelievers, or in the countries of unbelievers, do not contend but only freely confess you are a Christian. Then, when there is opportunity, explain the gospel of Christ to who will listen. When God is blasphemed, respond with a word of praise of God. Any may preach, but none may call himself a preacher, make of it a career, or preach in an aggrandizing way. Confess sins and faults to one another. Confess all sins before taking the bread and wine.

**III.** Wear poor clothes and have very few. Neither own nor use private transportation. Own nothing but food and clothing and perhaps the tools of your trade. Work at an honest, preferably manual, trade you knew before you were converted to support your own needs. Do not become a businessman or a manager; do not take a morally-ambiguous job; do not take a job for the money. Do not borrow, save, or invest money. If you discover money or a money-making opportunity, let it lie as though it were nothing but a stone. Ask boldly for donations for the poor, or for your work or yourself if necessary; remember that insults are a shame only for the insulter; remember that every person's wealth will perish except the wealth of charity. Never claim a space as home, and always welcome any who comes, even if he is a thief. Never be idle, but always be doing a job, your good work, or your devotions. Travel everywhere doing good work; lodge in pious households as you come to them; accept attacks on the way and give to any who asks. Yet, if you become ill, you may instead seek care from your brothers and sisters, and these constraints may be abandoned. Do not let illness make you morose or angry, but learn from it as from the chastisement of a Father.

**IV.** Do not ogle the opposite sex and do not dally with them alone. Offer them spiritual counsel and encouragement. Expel immediately a brother or sister who is proved a fornicator; afterward, urge him or her to repent.

**V.** Establish servants who will arrange the brothers and sisters throughout the country to best effect and others who will visit them often with admonishment and comforting. Remember that such servants are not masters but slaves, for the first shall be last. Never shall any among you be called Prior. Let all watch the servants carefully for any wrongdoing, and, after three private admonishments, let nothing prevent you from reporting them. Also, let all watch each other, and admonish wrongdoing three times, and then report it openly. Yet let no such discovery make you angry or sad but at peace with God and apter to judge yourself. All shall obey all. No one who does any conscious sin is being obedient; no one who follows the gospel is being disobedient; and no one shall obey against his soul. All shall hold all in reverence. No one shall argue, be angry, or accuse others, but shall be silent or offer a humble, ready answer. Everyone in the country shall meet yearly, and everyone in the world shall meet tri-yearly. Wash one another's feet.

**VI.** [Francis offers a very short benediction and sermon that a brother or sister may use anytime in any company.]

**VII.** [Francis concludes with a long and beautiful summation of the gospel of Christ, admonishment for the brothers and sisters' souls, and praise of God.]