

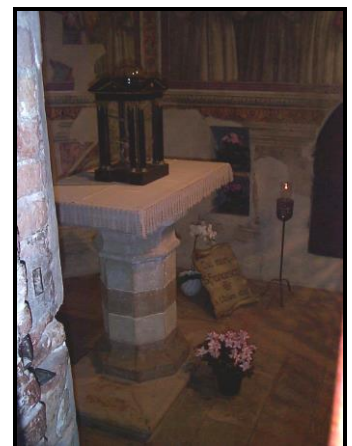
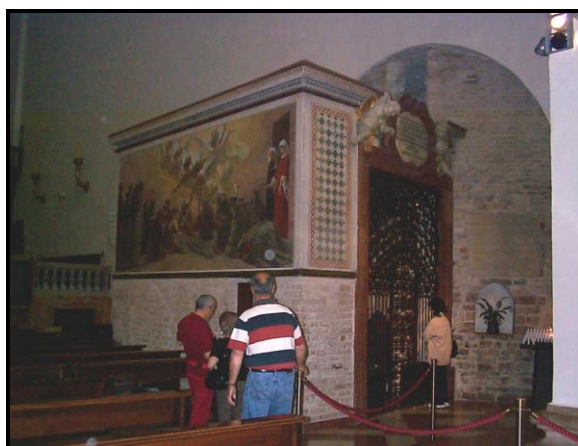
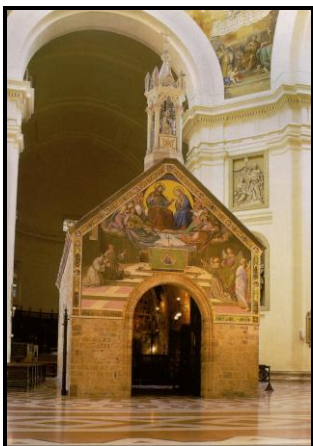
Composing the Canticle of the Creatures



In the Year of our Lord, 1225, during March and April, two years before his death and while very ill and rapidly losing his eyesight, Francis was staying in a little cell at San Damiano (left). The Poor Ladies of Assisi – Clare and her sisters – looked after him. He could not bear the light of the sun in the day or of the fire at night. In darkness, unable to sleep, and bothered by many mice that were running about the little hermitage, he prayed, “Lord, make haste to help me in my illnesses that I may be able to bear them patiently.” He was reminded by the Spirit of God that his greatest treasure was not the things of the earth or freedom

from the suffering, but that he was assured of already sharing in God’s Kingdom. With this encouragement, he began to write The Canticle of the Creatures. Relying on his mind’s eye he recalled the beauty of the Assisi countryside he loved so much and wrote of how God’s creation praises its maker. To Francis, all things and everyone is Brother or Sister to us, since we share the One who is Father and Creator of all.

In June of 1225, the Mayor and the Bishop of Assisi had an argument and each threatened sanctions against the other and anyone who dared do business with the other. The entire city suffered from the unfortunate dispute. Hearing of it, Francis added a verse to the Canticle to teach that those who grant pardon for love of God actually give praise to God. He sent one of the brothers to invite the Bishop and Mayor to the square adjacent to Saint Mary Major and the Bishop’s residence (right). The Friar then sang the Canticle, including the new verse, which so touched the civil and religious officials that they immediately reconciled.



In September of 1226, knowing that his transitus from this life to life with God was immanent, he asked to be brought back to the tiny chapel of Portiuncula (left); the birthplace of the Fraternity. In a hermitage (center), next to this chapel of St. Mary of the Angels, he composed the final verse to the Canticle, where it begins, “Praise be to Thee my Lord for our Sister Bodily Death...” ‘She’ came for him here (right) on

October 3, 1226. He did not fear death, but welcomed 'her,' as if a sister, who would unite him forever to his Creator, the "Most High omnipotent good Lord."