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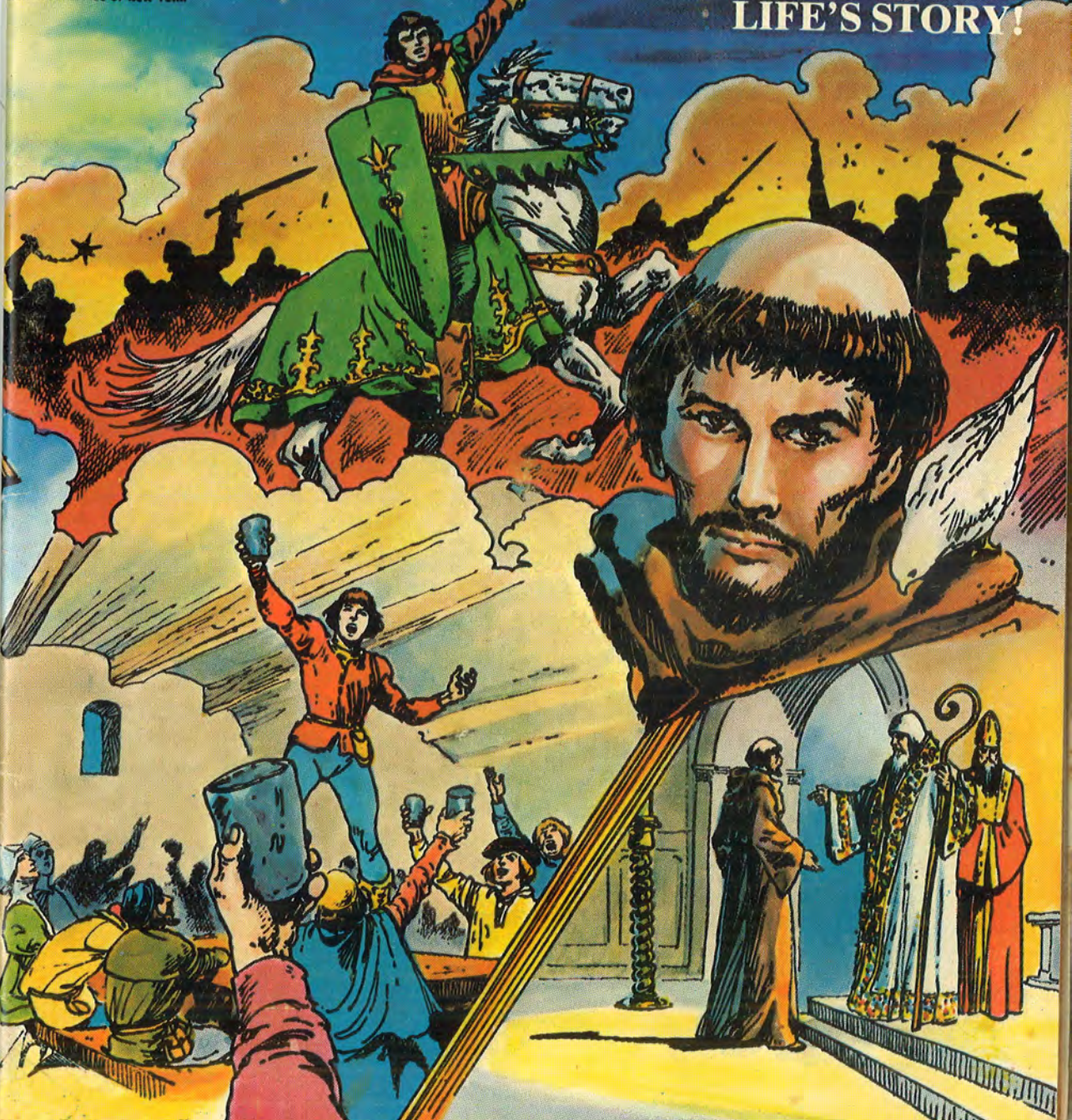
# FRANCIS

## BROTHER OF THE UNIVERSE

### HIS COMPLETE LIFE'S STORY!



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# FRANCIS, BROTHER OF THE UNIVERSE

## The Story Behind the Story

It was a chance comment in Tokyo, Japan, that brought about **Francis, Brother of the Universe**. Marvel Comics' representative in Japan, Mr. Gene Pelc, was talking over coffee at the Franciscan Chapel Center with Fr. Champion Lally, O.F.M. and Fr. Flavian Walsh, O.F.M. about his work with Marvel. "Why don't you do a book on St. Francis?" commented Fr. Champion (Franciscans go by their informal first names). Mr. Pelc thought for a moment, then said, "Why not?"

"A Franciscan would have to do the storyline and dialogue," Mr. Pelc continued, "but who?" They looked to visiting Franciscan Fr. Conrad Harkins, Director of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University in southwestern New York and one of the best-known experts in America on the life of St. Francis. Fr. Conrad remarked that what they needed was a popularizer, rather than an academician. He suggested Fr. Roy Gasnick, O.F.M., Director of the Franciscan Communications Office of New York.

Mr. Pelc wrote to Fr. Roy who, in his own words, "jumped at the chance of doing a comicbook." A comicbook buff (reader and trader) as a youngster, Fr. Roy had also worked with Paramount Pictures in publicizing Franco Zeffirelli's film about St. Francis, **Brother Sun, Sister Moon**, with N B C News for their hour-long documentary in 1977, **St. Francis of Assisi: A Search for the Man and His Meaning**, and with the Off-Broadway musical, **Francis**, in 1978.

Once the Marvel Comics executives approved the remarkable venture—Marvel had never done a religious comicbook before—the project was on its way. Fr. Roy did the story scenario working in close collaboration with Marvel's Mary Jo Duffy, who, aided by Fr. Roy, wrote the actual dialogue. Mary Jo, an editor at Marvel Comics for nearly five years, is widely regarded as one of the best young writers in the field. Two of Marvel's top artists were assigned for the artwork. John Buscema, a talented penciler, perhaps best known for his work on **CONAN THE BARBARIAN** and the **SILVER SURFER**, did the original visual conceptions and drawings. Marie Severin, who has done memorable work on many of Marvel's most prominent characters, including **DOCTOR STRANGE**, **THE HULK**, **THE SUBMARINER**, and most recently, **THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN**, did the inking and coloring.

Besides Marvel's distribution system, **Francis, Brother of the Universe** will have its own religious distribution through the well-known Paulist Press.

The book is more than timely since the world will note the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' birth in 1982.



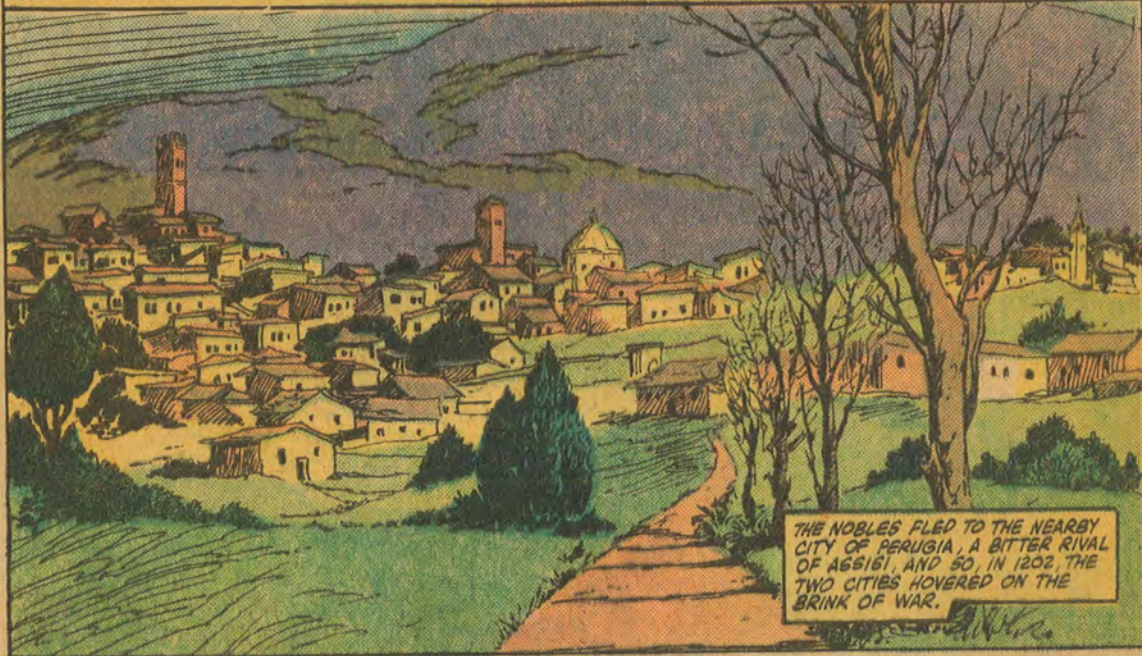
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Mary Jo Duffy SCRIPT, John Buscema LAYOUTS, Marie Severin FINISHES & COLOR, Tim Novak LETTERING, Roy Gasnick, O.F.M. STORY, Jim Shooter EDITOR, Stan Lee PUBLISHER

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HE WAS BORN IN ASSISI, A PROSPEROUS ITALIAN CITY, IN 1182, THE END OF THE DARK AGES. ASSISI WAS LOYAL TO POPE INNOCENT III DURING THAT PERIOD OF POLITICAL TURMOIL. THE POPE HAD DRIVEN OFF ASSISI'S NOBLE RULERS, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY HAD ADOPTED A FORM OF REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT IN THEIR PLACE.



THE NOBLES FLED TO THE NEARBY CITY OF PERUGIA, A BITTER RIVAL OF ASSISI, AND SO, IN 1202, THE TWO CITIES HOVERED ON THE BRINK OF WAR.

IT IS IN THIS YEAR THAT YOUNG FRANCIS BERNARDONE TURNS TWENTY. HE IS THE SON OF A WEALTHY CLOTH MERCHANT, AND A MEMBER OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES.



ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT ONE OF THEM, HE IS POPULAR WITH THE YOUNG NOBLEMEN, BECAUSE HE KNOWS HOW TO SHOW HIS FRIENDS A GOOD TIME.

WELL, FRANCIS, WHAT HAVE YOU GOT PLANNED FOR US TO DO TONIGHT?

NOTHING SPECIAL, BERNARDO, I THOUGHT WE'D JUST GO OUT AS WE ALWAYS DO, EAT, DRINK, SING, AND ENJOY OURSELVES.



"NOTHING SPECIAL" HUH? IT'S NO WONDER THEY CALL YOU "THE KING OF THE FEASTS."

AND WHILE HIS SON IS OUT SPENDING HIS HARD-EARNED MONEY, PIETRO BERNARDONE LOOKS ON AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.



THAT BOY OF MINE... SOMETIMES I THINK HE AND HIS FRIENDS WILL RUIN ME THE WAY THEY CARRY ON...

... BUT THOSE YOUNG NOBLES LIKE FRANCIS, THEY SEEM TO ACCEPT HIM.

"HE'S MEANT FOR GREAT THINGS. HE'S SURE TO BRING HONOR TO THE FAMILY NAME!"



THE YOUNG NOBLES DO SEEM TO ACCEPT FRANCIS, BUT IN HIS HEART HE IS SHARPLY AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM.

IF THEY ONLY KNEW WHAT NOBILITY MEANS TO ME... HOW I DREAM OF BEING ONE OF THEM...



... OF LIVING A LIFE OF CHIVALRY AND GLORY!

WHEN THE WAR WITH PERUGIA FINALLY COMES, IT SEEMS THAT FRANCIS WILL HAVE HIS CHANCE.

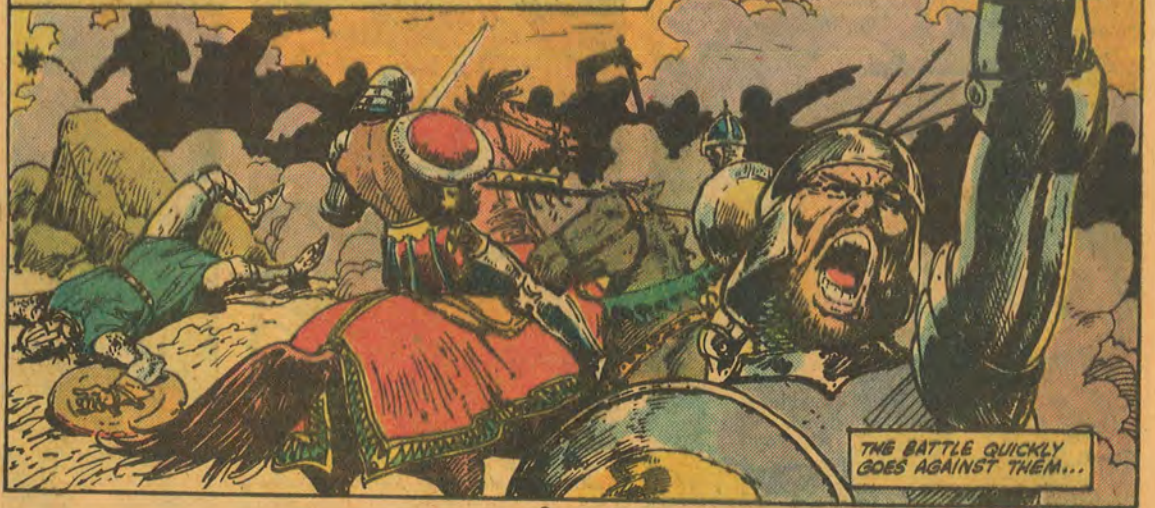


TAKE CARE, SON.

COME BACK SAFELY!

FATHER, MOTHER... HAVE NO FEAR! I'LL COME HOME FROM THIS WAR A KNIGHT!

BUT DESPITE THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH THE ARMY OF ASSISI SETS OUT, IT IS SOON CLEAR THAT THEY ARE OUT-MATCHED AND OUTNUMBERED BY THE PERUGIAN FORCES.



THE BATTLE QUICKLY GOES AGAINST THEM...



... AND FRANCIS SEES MANY OF THE KNIGHTS, THE MEN HE HAS ADMIRERD AND ENVIED SO MUCH, STRUCK DOWN TO DIE IN THE DIRT, AS QUICKLY AND TRAGICALLY AS ANY OF THE OTHERS.



FRANCIS IS TAKEN PRISONER, AND, PERHAPS, BECAUSE OF HIS OBVIOUS WEALTH, IS HOUSED IN THE SAME CELLS AS THE ASSISIAN NOBLES AWAITING RANSOM.

THERE, HE HAS LITTLE TO DO BUT REFLECT...

THIS... THIS IS THE GLORY OF WAR? TO BE SLAUGHTERED ON THE BATTLEFIELD?... TO BE CAGED LIKE ANIMALS... AND FOR WHAT? FOR HONOR?!

ALL TOO SOON, PRIVATION TAKES ITS TOLL ON MEN'S BODIES AND SPIRITS, AND THOSE FRANCIS ADMIRERD BEGIN TO ACT LIKE ANIMALS.



A-- A NOBLE... AND HE'S ATTACKING OTHER MEN FOR FOOD!



INEVITABLY, AS THE MONTHS PASS, ILLNESS STRIKES THE PRISONERS, AND FRANCIS FINDS A NEW USE FOR HIS TALENT FOR MAKING OTHERS HAPPY...

HERE... THIS MAY MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.

HE OFFERS FOOD, COMFORT AND ENTERTAINMENT TO THOSE AROUND HIM...



... EVEN AS HE, TOO, SICKENS. HOW LONG CAN THIS GO ON?

I SING FOR THEM, BUT THERE'S NO ONE TO SING FOR ME.



FINALLY, AFTER A YEAR, THE PRISONERS ARE RANSOMED AND SENT HOME, BUT...

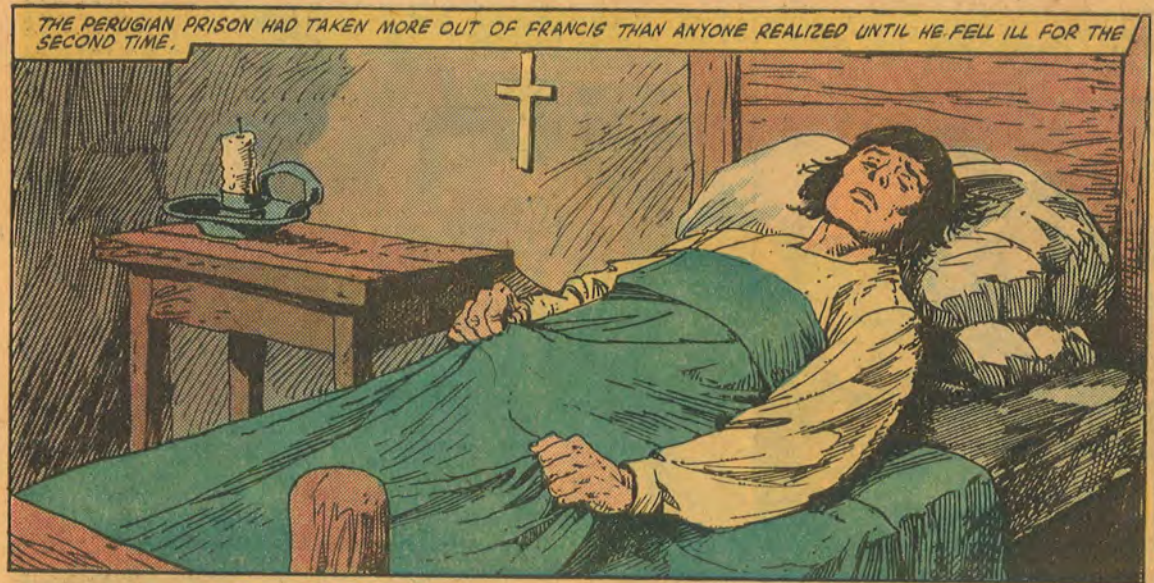
ANGELO, I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, SINCE HE GOT OUT OF PRISON, FRANCIS HAS BEEN SO QUIET AND LISTLESS, HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HIMSELF.

FOR MONTHS, FRANCIS GOES THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF HIS LIFE, UNTIL...



FRANCIS!!

OOOHHH--E



THE PERUGIAN PRISON HAD TAKEN MORE OUT OF FRANCIS THAN ANYONE REALIZED UNTIL HE FELL ILL FOR THE SECOND TIME.



FOR MONTHS, HE IS WRACKED WITH FEVER, SOMETIMES TOSSING AND MUTTERING IN DELIRIUM...



AND WHEN THE FEVER FINALLY LEAVES HIM, HE IS WEAKER AND MORE LISTLESS THAN EVER.

IT WILL BE A LONG TIME BEFORE HE IS COMPLETELY WELL.



EVENTUALLY, THOUGH, THE "KING OF THE FEASTS" REJOINS HIS OLD FRIENDS. FRANCIS ENTERS THE NEW WHIRL OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY WITH A FIERCE, DETERMINED GAITY. IT IS AS IF, AWARE NOW OF HOW HOLLOW HIS DREAMS OF NOBILITY HAVE BECOME, HE TRIES A LITTLE TOO HARD.



COME ON, EVERYONE! THIS WILL BE THE BEST NIGHT YET! FOOD, DRINK, AND ALL THE FUN YOU CAN THINK OF!

YOU KNOW... WE REALLY SHOULD RESENT THAT A COMMONER GIVES PARTIES AS GOOD AS THE ONES FRANCIS THROWS.



AS LONG AS HE PAYS THE BILLS, I'M NOT GOING TO RESENT A THING.

IT'S A DISGRACE THE WAY THAT BOY OF YOURS SQUANDERS YOUR MONEY!



I'M PROUD OF HIM... EVERYONE KNOWS THAT PIETRO BERNARDONE'S SON CAN ENTERTAIN HIS FRIENDS IN STYLE...

... BUT I WISH HE COULD DO IT A LITTLE MORE CHEAPLY.



LOOK AT THEM... YOUNG, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SPEND-THRIFTS!

AND THAT FRANCIS BERNARDONE IS THE WORST OF THE LOT!

I'VE GOT A SURPRISE TONIGHT, INSTEAD OF GOING TO ONE OF OUR USUAL PLACES, WE'RE GOING TO A PEASANT INN. THE LANDLORD WILL KEEP EVERYONE ELSE OUT, SO WE'LL HAVE THE PLACE TO OURSELVES.



THERE'LL BE A COOK THERE TO GIVE US A DINNER TO REMEMBER!

SOUNDS GREAT!



WILL YOU LOOK AT HER! SHE'S ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRLS I'VE EVER SEEN!

HELLO, THERE! YOU'RE VERY LOVELY! WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO OUT WITH MY FRIENDS AND ME?

ARE YOU CRAZY? SHE MUST BE TEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN YOU ARE, AND SHE'S COUNT SCHIFI'S DAUGHTER, CLARE.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE'D DO IF HE HEARD YOU--?



OH, WELL... I GUESS I GOT CARRIED AWAY.



WELL, FRANCIS, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN. THIS IS TERRIFIC! DON'T YOU EVER RUN OUT OF IDEAS?

I HOPE I NEVER DO, BERNARDO.



I WANT TO SPEND MY LIFE TRYING NEW THINGS, AND FINDING NEW WAYS OF SEEING AND DOING OLD THINGS.

YOU MAKE IT SOUND APPEALING... WHATEVER YOU DO, I THINK I'D LIKE TO COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE!



HEY, FRANCIS, THIS IS A LOT MORE FUN THAN BEING IN PRISON, ISN'T IT?

DON'T REMIND ME...

... ALL I WANT TO DO IS FIND SOME WAY OF FORGETTING THAT PLACE, AND LIVING DOWN MY CAPTURE AND ILLNESS!

TO THINK I ONCE DREAMED OF THE GLORY OF WAR...



HAVEN'T YOU HEARD... THERE'S GOING TO BE ANOTHER WAR, BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR!

WHAT?!



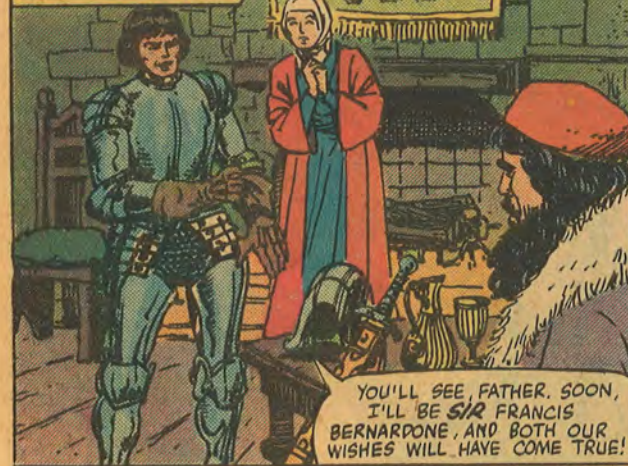
SURE... THE POPE HAS A NEW GENERAL, **WALTER OF BRIENNE**. THEY'RE MUSTERING ARMIES ALL OVER ITALY TO FIGHT BACK THE GERMAN PRINCES.

THIS IS IT, THEN! MY BIG CHANCE TO REDEEM MYSELF!



THIS TIME I **KNOW** I'LL COME BACK A KNIGHT!

AS IF TO ENSURE THAT THIS TIME HE WILL FULFILL HIS DREAMS, FRANCIS OUTFITS HIMSELF SPLENDIDLY, AS BEFITS A NOBLEMAN.



YOU'LL SEE, FATHER, SOON, I'LL BE **SIR FRANCIS BERNARDONE**, AND BOTH OUR WISHES WILL HAVE COME TRUE!

MOTHER...

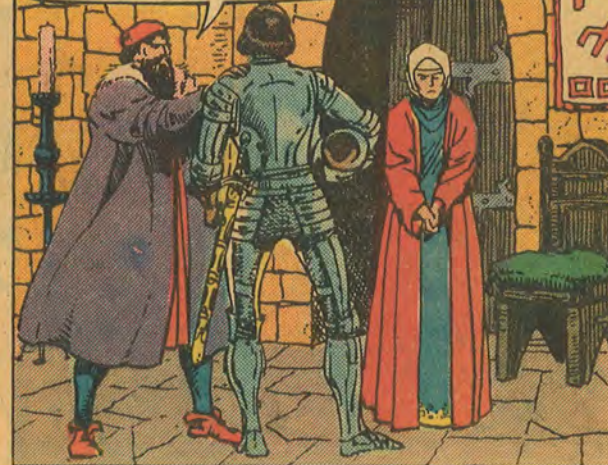
FRANCIS, WHY MUST YOU GO TO WAR AGAIN... AFTER WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME, AND ALL YOUR FOOLISH CAROUSING... I'VE PRAYED FOR YOU, SO HARD...



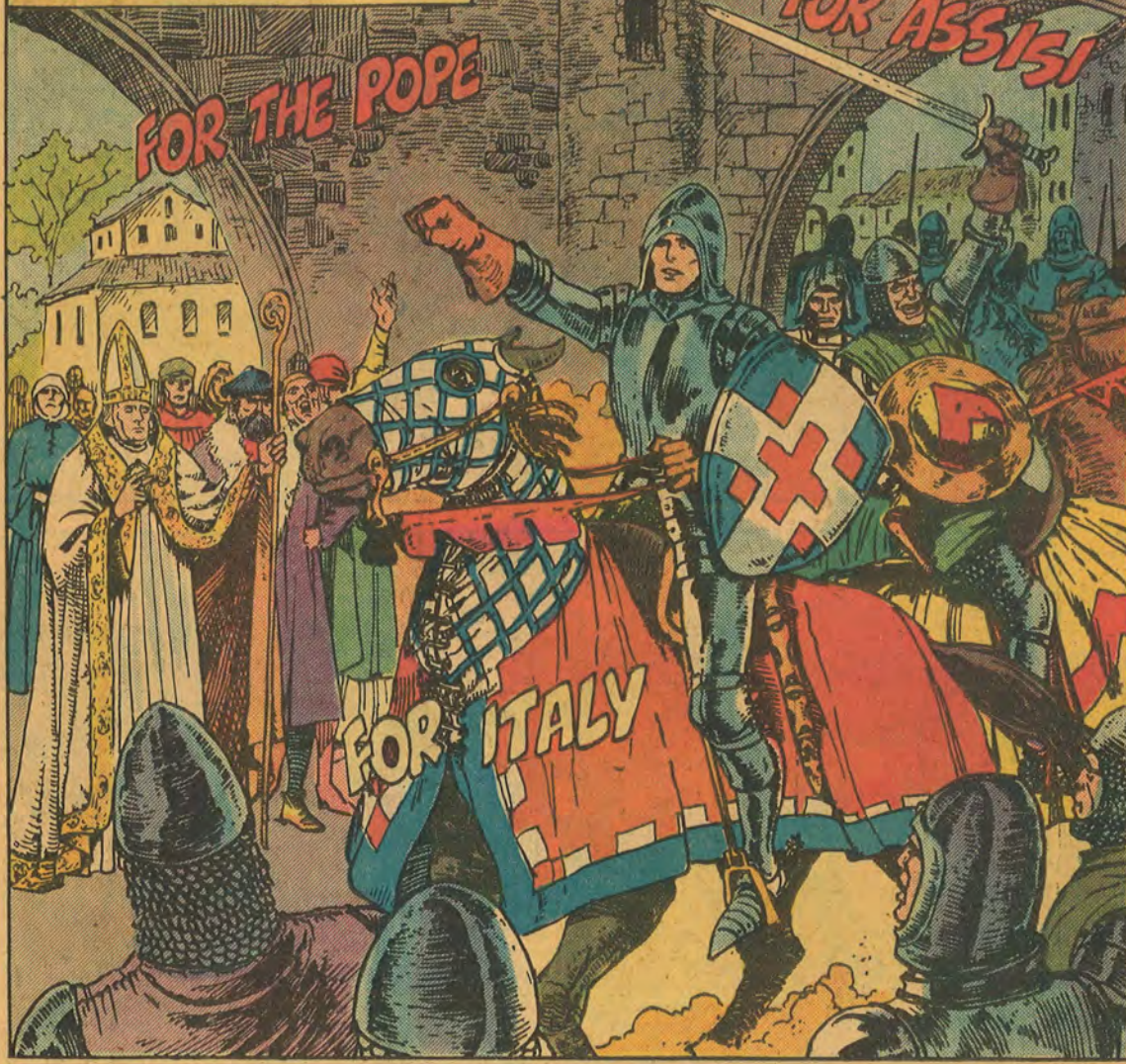
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, PICA... OUR SON IS CALLED TO GREATNESS AND GLORY.

IT IS HIS DESTINY!

AND THEY WILL RESPECT YOU, BECAUSE YOU ARE OUTFITTED IN A MANNER MANY KNIGHTS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD... THIS IS THE FINEST ARMOR MY MONEY COULD BUY!



AND SO, FOR THE SECOND TIME IN FOUR YEARS, FRANCIS SETS OUT ON THE ROAD TO GLORY.



FOR THE POPE

FOR ASSISI!

FOR ITALY

SIR ALBERTO! YOU'RE A KNIGHT! WHY DON'T YOU HAVE ANY ARMOR?

TIMES ARE HARD FOR PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS, LIKE ME. IT'S MEN LIKE YOUR FATHER WHO HAVE ALL THE MONEY, NOW.



BUT... THAT'S SO UNFAIR!

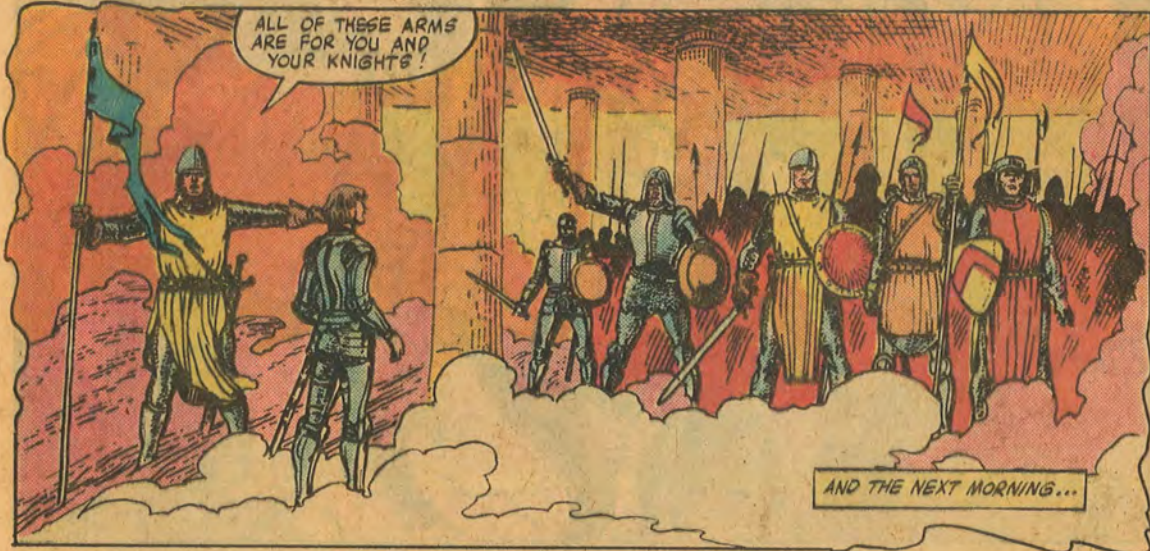
HERE... YOU HAVE MORE RIGHT TO THIS FINE ARMOR.

TAKE IT.



B-BUT... FRANCIS--!







AFTER HE RETURNS HOME, FRANCIS FINDS THE REACTION OF HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS EVEN HARDER TO BEAR THAN HE'D IMAGINED.



POOR PICA BERNARDONE... IT MUST BE HARD ON HER! THEY SAY HER SON HEARS VOICES!

YOU CAN GUESS WHAT KIND OF VOICES HE HEARS! IT WAS BAD ENOUGH WHEN HE WAS A LIBERTINE!

QUITE A COMEDOWN FOR PIETRO ISN'T IT? THAT'S WHAT HE GETS FOR BRAGGING ABOUT HIS WONDERFUL SON. THAT KID WILL NEVER BE A NOBLE, NOW.

AND, INSIDE THE BERNARDONE HOME...



WELL, I HOPE YOU'RE PROUD OF YOURSELF! YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO ME, TO OUR ENTIRE FAMILY!

OH, PIETRO, BE KIND TO HIM. HE HASN'T REALLY BEEN WELL SINCE HE WAS IN THAT AWFUL PERUGIAN PRISON. MAYBE HE HAS THE FEVER AGAIN.

OR MAYBE... MAYBE IT'S POSSIBLE...

STOP THAT! DON'T YOU GO GODPLY ON ME, TOO! ONE RELIGIOUS FOOL IN THE FAMILY IS BAD ENOUGH!



WELL, FRANCIS, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF? WHERE DO YOU DISAPPEAR TO EVERY DAY?

SPEAK! I COMMAND YOU TO TELL ME!



I GO TO THE CAVES ON MOUNT SUBASIO... TO PRAY... TO LOOK FOR ANSWERS... TO TRY TO FIND MYSELF.



FIND YOURSELF?!



YOU LISTEN TO ME, SON! I EXPECT TO FIND YOU EVERY DAY, WORKING IN MY CLOTH SHOP.



IF YOU CAN'T BECOME A KNIGHT OR A NOBLE, AT LEAST YOU'LL BE A GOOD MERCHANT, LIKE YOUR FATHER.



BUT, IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW...

WELL, WHERE IS FRANCIS THIS TIME?

I DON'T KNOW, SIR. HE SLIPPED OUT OF THE SHOP WHEN MY BACK WAS TURNED.

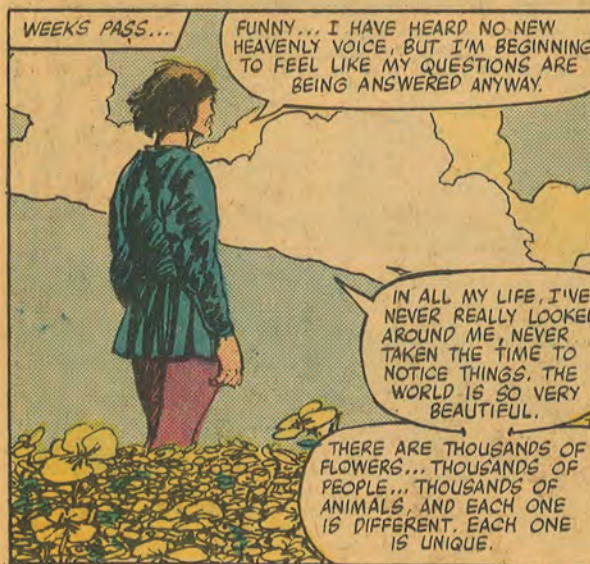
AND I CAN GUESS WHERE HE WENT. HE'S VISITING THOSE DAMNED CAVES AGAIN!



AND, ON MOUNT SUBASIO...

OH, GOD, I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING MAD! PLEASE, SPEAK TO ME AGAIN... HELP ME! I'M BEGINNING TO DOUBT MY OWN SENSES!

DID I EVER REALLY HEAR YOUR VOICE, OR WAS IT ALL JUST THE PRODUCT OF SOME FEVERED DREAM?



WEEKS PASS...

FUNNY... I HAVE HEARD NO NEW HEAVENLY VOICE, BUT I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL LIKE MY QUESTIONS ARE BEING ANSWERED ANYWAY.

IN ALL MY LIFE, I'VE NEVER REALLY LOOKED AROUND ME, NEVER TAKEN THE TIME TO NOTICE THINGS. THE WORLD IS SO VERY BEAUTIFUL.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF FLOWERS... THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE... THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS, AND EACH ONE IS DIFFERENT. EACH ONE IS UNIQUE.



WHY HAVE I NEVER SEEN THESE THINGS BEFORE?



FINALLY...

FOR A YEAR NOW, I'VE PRAYED, BUT THERE'S BEEN NO SIGN... NO VOICE.

I MUST BE MAD... AND YET, I'M HAPPIER THAN I'VE EVER BEEN BEFORE. THIS NOT KNOWING IS TEARING ME APART.

THEN, AS FRANCIS IS ON THE ROAD HOME...

DING DING DING

THAT SOUNDS... LIKE A LEPER'S BELL!

I HOPE IT'S NOT! I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF A LEPER, THEY MAKE ME ILL!

AND SURE ENOUGH... IT IS...

YOU'RE THE MOST HORRIBLE THING I'VE EVER SEEN!

BUT THEN, THE YOUNG MAN STOPS TO THINK...

"THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, AND EACH ONE OF THEM IS UNIQUE."

I'M SORRY, THAT WAS A TERRIBLE THING TO SAY, I'VE GOT SOME MONEY IN MY POCKET. YOU CAN HAVE THAT. YOU'LL NEED IT MORE THAN I DO.

THANK YOU.

HOW STRANGE... I WAS EXPECTING THE MOST AWFUL STENCH... LEPERS USUALLY SMELL OF ILLNESS AND DECAY...

AND YET, THERE'S THE SWEETEST ODOR IN THE AIR. I'M GLAD I DID THAT! IT MADE ME FEEL GOOD!

AND WHEN FRANCIS LOOKS AROUND FOR THE MAN HE HAS JUST EMBRACED, HE FINDS THAT THE LEPER HAS... VANISHED!

LATER, FRANCIS GOES TO THE BROKEN-DOWN CHURCH OF SAN DAMIANO TO PRAY...

LORD, YOU HAVE NEVER BROKEN TO ME SINCE THAT NIGHT IN APULIA, BUT I AM CONTENT. MY DOUBTS ARE GONE.

"IN THE PAST MONTHS, I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT YOUR WORLD... YOUR PEOPLE."

"THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE... SO MANY GOOD PEOPLE IN THE WORLD!"

AND THEN, JUST WHEN FRANCIS HAS CEASED ASKING FOR ANOTHER MIRACLE...

FRANCIS...

MY CHURCH IS FALLING INTO RUIN. I WANT YOU TO REBUILD IT FOR ME.

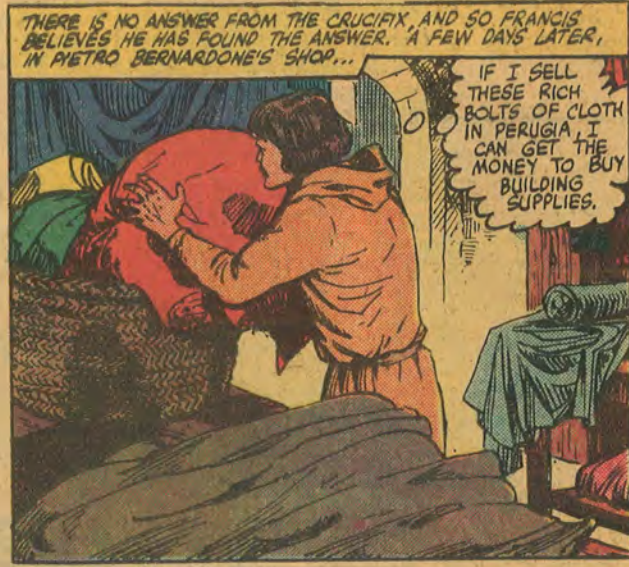
THE CHURCH? THE ENTIRE CHURCH?! BUT THERE'S SO MUCH CORRUPTION. THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS SEEM LIKE KINGS AND CIVIL MONARCHS, THINKING ONLY OF THEIR SUBJECTS AND THEIR WEALTH.

THEY'RE HARDLY MEN OF GOD ANYMORE... AND THE CHURCHES, LIKE THIS ONE WE'RE IN, ARE FALLING APART...





IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN? SHOULD I REBUILD THE BUILDINGS... INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES?  
A LITTLE AT A TIME... I THINK I COULD DO THAT.



THERE IS NO ANSWER FROM THE CRUCIFIX, AND SO FRANCIS BELIEVES HE HAS FOUND THE ANSWER. A FEW DAYS LATER, IN PIETRO BERNARDONE'S SHOP...  
IF I SELL THESE RICH BOLTS OF CLOTH IN PERUGIA, I CAN GET THE MONEY TO BUY BUILDING SUPPLIES.



EVERYTHING...?  
VERY WELL, FATHER.



HERE'S EVERYTHING I'VE EVER TAKEN FROM YOU... MONEY, CLOTHES, THE LOT.  
BUT... BUT FRANCIS... SON, I NEVER... THAT IS... I DIDN'T MEAN...



BUT WHEN PIETRO LEARNS WHAT HIS SON IS DOING...  
WHAT?!  
WAIT UNTIL I GET MY HANDS ON THAT BOY-- I'LL KILL HIM! IT WAS BAD ENOUGH WHEN HE SPENT MY MONEY ON IDLE PLEASURES, BUT TO SQUANDER IT ON THE CHURCH IS TOO MUCH!



AND... I'M TAKING YOU TO THE MAYOR. HE'LL MAKE YOU RETURN WHAT YOU'VE STOLEN.  
THE MAYOR HAS NO AUTHORITY OVER ME, FATHER. I BELONG TO GOD NOW.  
OH, TO GOD, IS IT? THEN I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE BISHOP! MAYBE HE CAN PUT AN END TO THIS FOOLISHNESS-- AND TO YOUR SMART ANSWERS!



DON'T WORRY, FATHER, IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. YOU'LL SEE, NOW I'M TRULY JUST A SON OF GOD.  
ALL RIGHT, FRANCIS, YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT-- MOST GRAPHICALLY. YOU'D BETTER COVER YOURSELF WITH MY MANTLE.



GOOD-BYE, GOOD-BYE, FATHER, FRANCIS.



SOON, IN THE PALACE OF THE BISHOP...  
BISHOP GUIDO, THIS BOY OF MINE IS A THIEF! HE HAS ROBBED ME, AND HE CLAIMS TO BE DOING IT IN THE NAME OF GOD!  
IN THE NAME OF GOD...? FRANCIS YOU MUST EXPLAIN YOURSELF.



IT'S TRUE, GOD CAME TO ME IN A--A VISION, AND HE TOLD ME TO REBUILD THE CHURCH AT SAN DAMIANO.  
I WAS SELLING MY FATHER'S GOODS SO I COULD BUY STONES.  
FRANCIS, YOU CANNOT HELP GOD AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS. YOU MUST RETURN WHAT YOU HAVE TAKEN FROM YOUR FATHER.



AFTER PIETRO HAS DEPARTED...  
WELL, FRANCIS, I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING. YOU'VE BURNED ALL YOUR BRIDGES BEHIND YOU.  
I THINK I DO...



I'VE DISCOVERED THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS... A COMPASSIONATE MAN, A BROTHER TO ALL PEOPLE. I'D LIKE TO HELP OTHERS SEE CHRIST THE SAME WAY, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE CHURCH HAS MADE HIM SO DISTANT.  
GOOD LUCK AND GOD BLESS YOU, LITTLE BROTHER. I HOPE YOU FIND OTHERS TO SHARE YOUR TASK.



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW, THE PEOPLE OF ASSISI CAN SCARCELY RECOGNIZE THEIR FORMER "KING OF THE FEASTS" AS HE APPEARS AMONG THEM, WEARING A PATCHED, WORN WORKER'S TUNIC.



STONES, STONES... I BEG FOR BUILDING MATERIALS FOR SAN DAMIANO, WON'T YOU PLEASE GIVE?

IT'S THAT FOOL FRANCIS, WITH HIS FUNNY-LOOKING SHAVED HEAD!

SPIT ON HIM OR YOU'LL HAVE BAD LUCK!

YET, DESPITE THEIR SCORN...



I FEEL SO HAPPY, SO FREE. I HAVE NOTHING I NEED NOTHING, AND I WANT NOTHING. THIS IS HOW PEOPLE WERE MEANT TO BE!

THE NEXT DAY AS FRANCIS WORKS AT REBUILDING THE CHURCH...



FRANCIS, I SECRETLY WATCHED YOU LAST NIGHT... YOU PRAYED UNTIL YOU FELL ASLEEP, AND IN YOUR DREAMS, YOU STILL CRIED OUT TO GOD. WHAT'S IT LIKE TO FEEL THAT WAY?

IT'S GOOD, BERNARDO. IN ALL MY LIFE, I'VE NEVER FELT HALF AS GOOD AS I DO NOW.



DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO FIND NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS, AND I SAID I WANTED TO JOIN YOU?



BUT, BERNARDO, YOU CAN'T! YOU'RE A NOBLE... YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING. THINK OF WHAT YOU'D BE GIVING UP!

YES... WELL, NOW'S THE TIME, I DO WANT TO JOIN YOU.

COMPARED TO WHAT YOU'VE GOT HERE, MY "EVERYTHING" IS NOTHING! FRANCIS, I REALLY WANT THIS. COME ON... IF YOU AREN'T CONVINCED OF MY FAITH, AND MY FRIENDSHIP WON'T WIN YOU...



THEN, AS ONE WHO DREAMED OF KNIGHTHOOD TO ANOTHER, I HOLD YOU TO YOUR OATH. TURN ME AWAY, AND YOU'LL BE BREAKING ALL THE RULES OF CHIVALRY!

I WON'T TURN YOU AWAY, BERNARDO. I'M GLAD YOU'VE COME... VERY GLAD!



ONE DAY, BY CHANCE...

FRANCIS! I DON'T BELIEVE IT, MY FRIEND... IS IT REALLY YOU?

BERNARDO!

COME HOME WITH ME, AND WE CAN TALK OVER OLD TIMES!



BUT, OVER DINNER...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME THESE DAYS... LIFE JUST DOESN'T SUIT ME THE WAY IT USED TO... THINGS SEEM SO BORING... SO EMPTY. MAYBE YOU GAVE IT UP JUST IN TIME.

MAYBE I DID. ALL I KNOW IS I'M HAPPY... AND I WISH YOU WERE, TOO.



DURING THE NIGHT, BERNARDO IS AWAKENED BY HIS FRIENDS CRIES.

GOD! MY GOD AND MY ALL...



SOON...

LOOK... HERE COMES PETER CATANI.

FRANCIS, BERNARDO, THERE'S A GREAT EMPTINESS WITHIN ME. CAN YOU, WITH YOUR GOSPELS AND YOUR GOD, HELP ME FILL IT?

WE CAN TRY.



AND...

FRANCIS, MY NAME IS GILES. I'M ONLY A BERF, BUT I'D LIKE TO BE YOUR FOLLOWER, IF YOU'LL HAVE ME.

YOU BRING TO THE BROTHERHOOD WHAT ALL OF US HAVE... YOUR HEART, AND TWO STRONG HANDS THAT WE CAN USE TO REBUILD CHURCHES LIKE PORTUINCULA -- THE LITTLE PORTION. YOU'RE WELCOME HERE.



THAT EVENING...

SOON THERE WILL BE MORE THAN JUST THE FOUR OF US. WE'LL HAVE FOLLOWERS FROM FRANCE, SPAIN, GERMANY... FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.



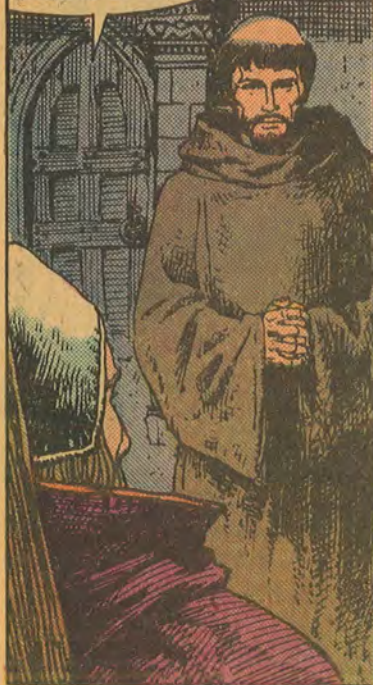
AND FINALLY, IN BISHOP GUIDO'S PALACE...

YOUR GROUP HAS GROWN, FRANCIS. THERE ARE ALMOST A DOZEN OF YOU. WHAT DO YOU CALL YOURSELVES?

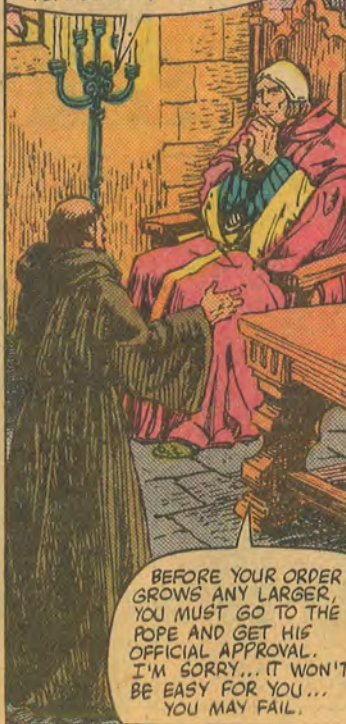


THE FRIARS MINOR-- OR "LITTLE BROTHERS." WE WANT TO IDENTIFY OURSELVES WITH THOSE WHO ARE SMALL, THE POOR AND OPPRESSED. OURS IS A SIMPLE ORDER, WITH NO DESIRE FOR POWER OR AUTHORITY.

I'VE HEARD NOTHING BUT EXCELLENT REPORTS ABOUT YOU. PEOPLE TRUST YOUR PREACHING AND THE EXAMPLE YOU SET, AND CERTAIN PRIESTS HAVE EVEN REFORMED BECAUSE OF YOU.



I THOUGHT THAT GOD WANTED ME TO REBUILD HIS CHURCHES... ONE STONE AT A TIME. NOW, I REALIZE THAT HE MEANT FOR ME TO REBUILD HIS CHURCH... ONE PERSON AT A TIME.



BEFORE YOUR ORDER GROWS ANY LARGER, YOU MUST GO TO THE POPE AND GET HIS OFFICIAL APPROVAL. I'M SORRY... IT WON'T BE EASY FOR YOU... YOU MAY FAIL.

THANK YOU, MY LORD, FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND YOUR ADVICE. WE'LL LEAVE FOR ROME AS SOON AS WE CAN.



ON THE ROAD TO ROME, THE FRIARS MINOR SING, LIKE HEAVENLY MINSTRELS... HOW GREAT IS THE WORLD... AND THE GLORY OF GOD!



DAYS LATER, IN THE PAPAL AUDIENCE ROOM...

WHO'S NEXT ON MY AGENDA?



A FELLOW FROM ASSISI... FRANCIS SOME-BODY-OR-OTHER. CARDINAL JOHN OF COLONNA RECOMMENDED THAT WE SEE HIM. HE AND A GROUP OF HIS SCRUFFY-LOOKING FRIENDS WANT TO FOUND A NEW ORDER.

MORE FANATICS? I SEE SO MANY OF THEM, THEY TIRE ME... OH, WELL, YOU MIGHT AS WELL SHOW HIM IN.



AND, AFTER FRANCIS AND HIS COMRADES HAVE ENTERED...

YOUR HOLINESS, MY BROTHERS AND I WOULD LIKE TO FOUND A NEW--!



BUT WE JUST--!

NO.

NO. ROME HAS SPOKEN. GO HOME.

HOLY FATHER, SUPPOSE THERE WAS A KING WHOSE SON HAD BEEN LOST AS A CHILD AND WAS RAISED BY SERFS...



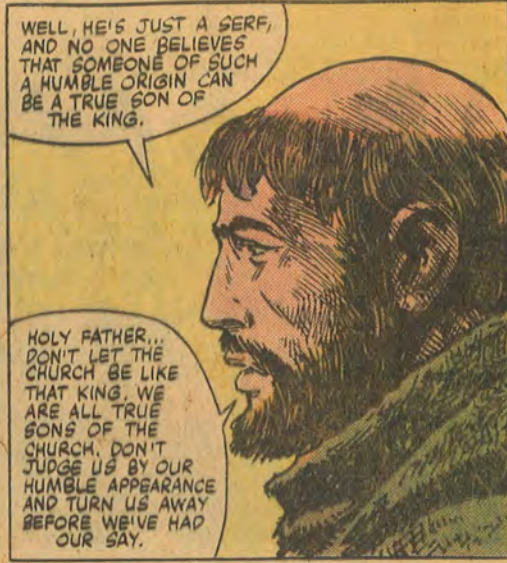




GO ON.

WELL, ONE DAY, THE PRINCE LEARNS HIS TRUE ORIGINS AND GOES TO SEE HIS FATHER, BUT HE'S NOT EVEN ADMITTED TO THE PALACE.

WHY NOT?

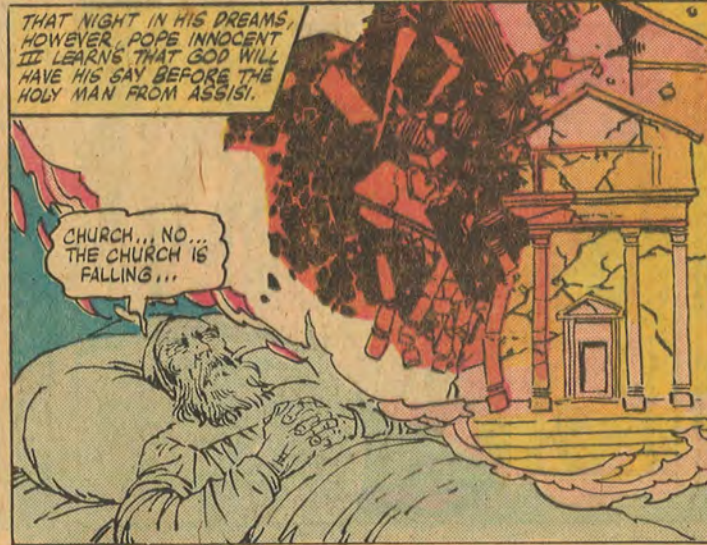


WELL, HE'S JUST A SERF, AND NO ONE BELIEVES THAT SOMEONE OF SUCH A HUMBLE ORIGIN CAN BE A TRUE SON OF THE KING.

HOLY FATHER... DON'T LET THE CHURCH BE LIKE THAT KING. WE ARE ALL TRUE SONS OF THE CHURCH. DON'T JUDGE US BY OUR HUMBLE APPEARANCE AND TURN US AWAY BEFORE WE'VE HAD OUR SAY.



EHMM... VERY CLEVER. YOU'VE CONVINCED ME. COME BACK TOMORROW, AND AFTER I'VE LISTENED TO YOU, I'LL MAKE MY DECISION.

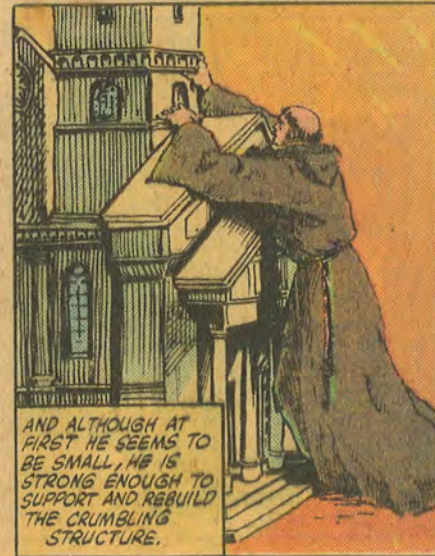


THAT NIGHT IN HIS DREAMS, HOWEVER, POPE INNOCENT III LEARNS THAT GOD WILL HAVE HIS SAY BEFORE THE HOLY MAN FROM ASSISI.

CHURCH... NO... THE CHURCH IS FALLING...



SUDDENLY, FROM OUT OF NOWHERE, DARTS A HUMBLE, HAUNTINGLY FAMILIAR FIGURE.



AND ALTHOUGH AT FIRST HE SEEMS TO BE SMALL, HE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT AND REBUILD THE CRUMBLING STRUCTURE.



HIS HOLINESS AWAKENS WITH A JERK, AND...

THAT MAN IN MY DREAM... THE ONE WHO REPAIRED THE CHURCH...

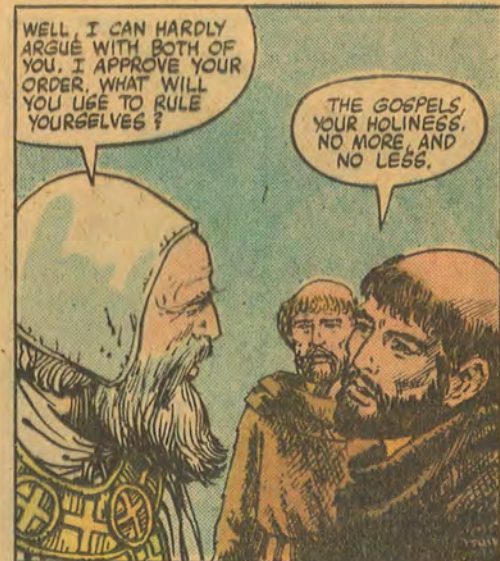
HE LOOKED LIKE... COULD HE HAVE BEEN...?



IN THE MORNING, IT IS A SUBDUED AND ALTOGETHER MORE OPEN-MINDED PONTIFF WHO GREET'S THE FRIARS MINOR.

FRANCIS, I BELIEVE I'VE HAD A SIGN FROM GOD. HE'S SHOWN ME THAT YOU ARE THE MAN TO REBUILD HIS CHURCH!

BUT... THAT'S WONDERFUL! HE'S SHOWN ME THE SAME THING!



WELL, I CAN HARDLY ARGUE WITH BOTH OF YOU. I APPROVE YOUR ORDER. WHAT WILL YOU USE TO RULE YOURSELVES?

THE GOSPELS, YOUR HOLINESS. NO MORE, AND NO LESS.



IT'S FUNNY... I THOUGHT YOU'D BE LIKE MOST OF THESE FANATICAL REFORMERS, THINKING YOU HAD TO TEAR DOWN THE CHURCH BEFORE YOU CAN REBUILD IT. INSTEAD, YOU'RE EMBRACING THE BEST PARTS OF IT.

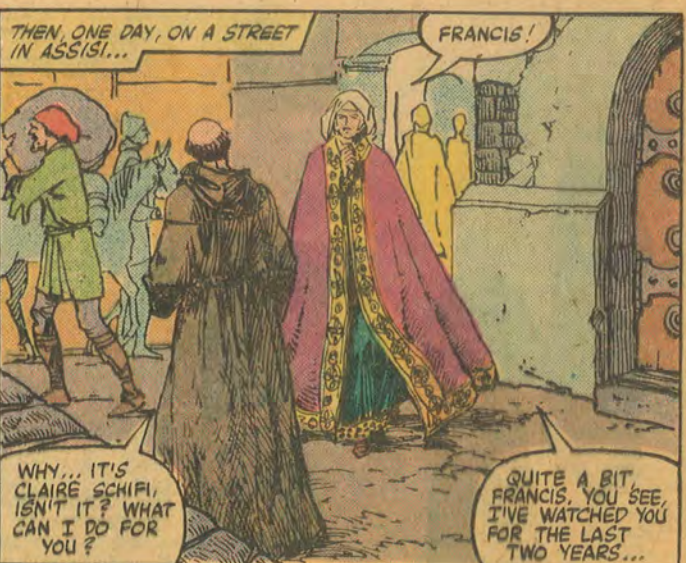


"GOOD LUCK, FRANCIS. YOU'VE SET YOURSELVES A DIFFICULT TASK... MAYBE AN IMPOSSIBLE ONE, BUT IF ANYONE CAN DO IT, I THINK YOU CAN."

NOW WE MUST GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND BEGIN OUR REAL WORK... TEACHING PEOPLE TO LOOK ON GOD AS THEIR FATHER, AND ON CHRIST AND EACH OTHER AS BROTHERS...



... TO SEE THE CHURCH AS THEIR MOTHER AND TO STOP SPOILING THIS BEAUTIFUL WORLD, WHICH IS THEIR HOME. WE'LL CARRY THIS MESSAGE INTO ALL LANDS.



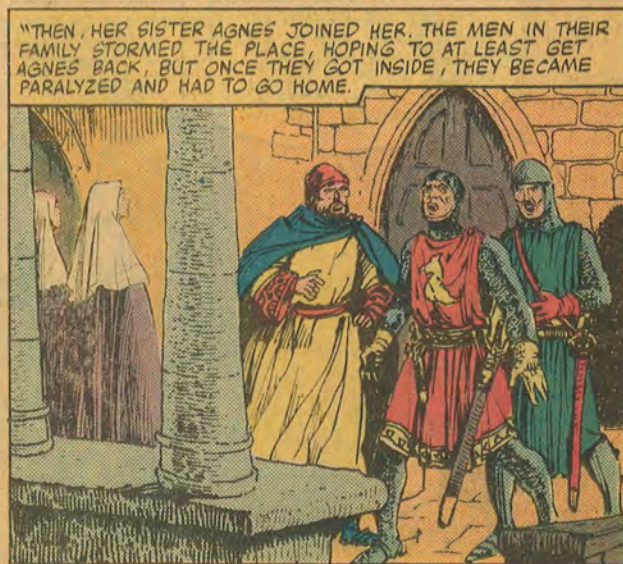
THEN, ONE DAY, ON A STREET IN ASSISI...

FRANCIS!

WHY... IT'S CLAIRE SCHIFI, ISN'T IT? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

QUITE A BIT, FRANCIS. YOU SEE, I'VE WATCHED YOU FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS...









WHAT A DISGRACE IT IS, YOU KILLING PEOPLE FOR FOOD. OF COURSE, I DO UNDERSTAND YOUR PROBLEM. A WOLF HAS TO EAT SOMETHING TO LIVE...

AND SO, BROTHER WOLF, I OFFER YOU THIS BARGAIN. THE PEOPLE OF GUBBIO WILL BRING FOOD TO YOU EVERY DAY. IN RETURN, YOU MUST STOP KILLING PEOPLE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY? DO I HAVE YOUR WORD?



THE WOLF OF COURSE SAYS NOTHING. HOWEVER, HE NEVER ATTACKS ANOTHER PERSON.



NOT TOO LONG AFTERWARD, FRANCIS MUST AGAIN TURN TO ANIMALS FOR HELP IN REACHING PEOPLE...

THIS IS HOPELESS. HOW CAN I REACH THESE PEOPLE'S HEARTS WHEN THEY WON'T EVEN STOP AND LISTEN TO ME SPEAK?



SURELY ALL OF GOD'S CREATURES ARE NOT SO UNGRATEFUL.



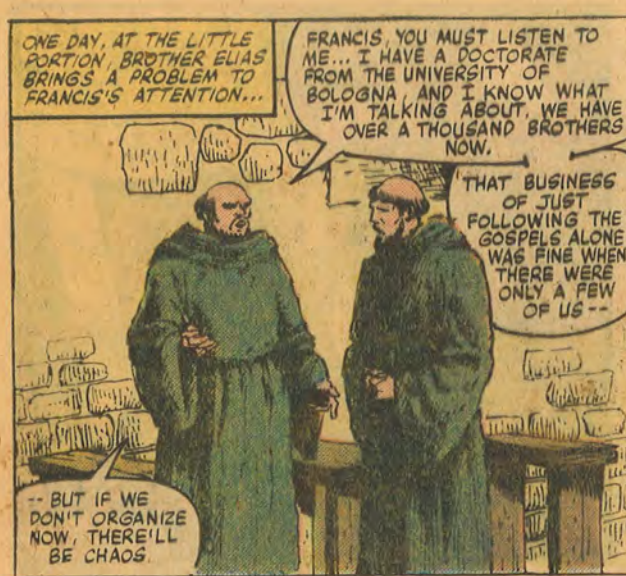
MY LITTLE SISTERS, THE BIRDS, COME DOWN FROM THE SKIES AND LISTEN TO ME. SING YOUR SONGS OF PRAISE TO THE LORD, WHO MADE US ALL.

REMEMBER THAT IT WAS HE WHO GAVE YOU LIFE, WHO GIVES YOU THE POWER OF FLIGHT, AND THE FOOD YOU EAT!



DON'T BE AS UNGRATEFUL AS THE PEOPLE AROUND US!

THAT DAY, SPURRED ON BY THE DRAMATIC AND BEAUTIFUL SERMON TO THE LISTENING BIRDS, MANY HUMANS LISTENED AND WERE CONVERTED TO FRANCIS' TEACHINGS...

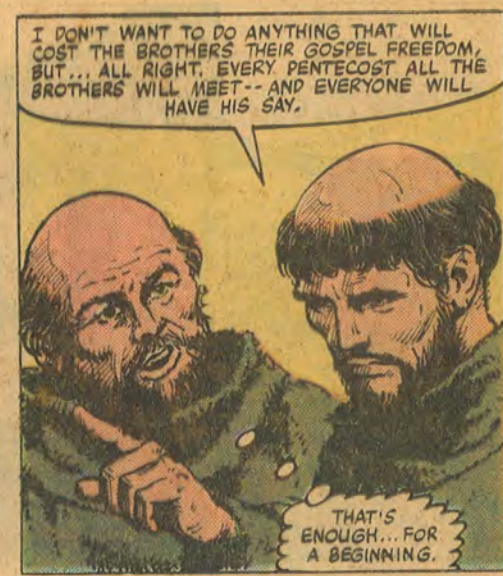


ONE DAY, AT THE LITTLE PORTION, BROTHER ELIAS BRINGS A PROBLEM TO FRANCIS'S ATTENTION...

FRANCIS, YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME... I HAVE A DOCTORATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA, AND I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. WE HAVE OVER A THOUSAND BROTHERS NOW.

THAT BUSINESS OF JUST FOLLOWING THE GOSPELS ALONE WAS FINE WHEN THERE WERE ONLY A FEW OF US --

-- BUT IF WE DON'T ORGANIZE NOW, THERE'LL BE CHAOS.



I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT WILL COST THE BROTHERS THEIR GOSPEL FREEDOM, BUT... ALL RIGHT, EVERY PENTECOST ALL THE BROTHERS WILL MEET-- AND EVERYONE WILL HAVE HIS SAY.

THAT'S ENOUGH... FOR A BEGINNING.



DURING HIS NEXT AUDIENCE WITH THE POPE, A NEW PROBLEM ARISES...

FRANCIS, I NEVER EXPECTED ANYTHING LIKE THIS TO OCCUR DURING MY LIFETIME... IN FACT, I'M PLEASSED, AS YOU SHOULD BE...

... BUT THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH THESE ORDERS OF YOURS ARE PERHAPS TOO SUCCESSFUL.

SO MANY YOUNG MEN ARE JOINING YOUR BROTHERS... AND THE WOMEN ARE JOINING SISTER CLARE'S POOR LADIES...

WELL, FRANCIS, THESE ARE CELIBATE ORDERS. IN A GENERATION OR SO, IF NO ONE IS LEFT TO HAVE CHILDREN...



DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT SEE YOUR WAY CLEAR TO FOUNDING A THIRD ORDER... AN ORDER FOR MARRIED PEOPLE?

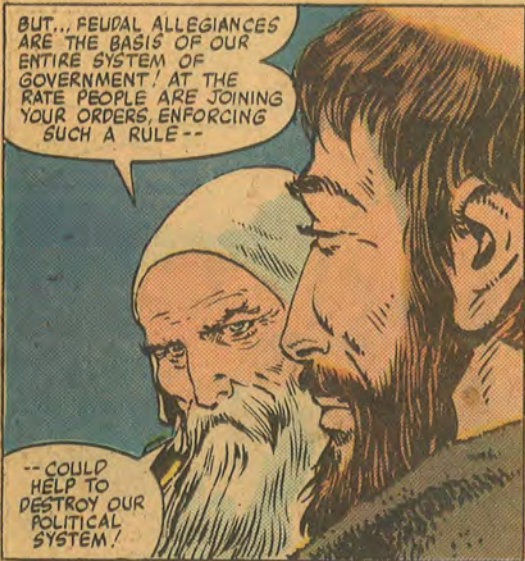
VERY WELL, YOUR HOLINESS...



THE SAME RULES SHALL BE APPLIED TO THEM AS TO THE REST OF MY FOLLOWERS. THEY MUST FOLLOW THE GOSPEL'S TEACHING AND EMBRACE POVERTY...

... AND NONE OF THEM SHALL BE ALLOWED TO BEAR ARMS -- OR TO SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO ANY NOBLE.





BUT... FEUDAL ALLEGIANCES ARE THE BASIS OF OUR ENTIRE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT! AT THE RATE PEOPLE ARE JOINING YOUR ORDERS, ENFORCING SUCH A RULE--

-- COULD HELP TO DESTROY OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM!



WELL, I NEVER SAID THAT'S WHAT I WANTED...

... BUT IF IT DID HAPPEN, WOULD THAT BE SUCH A BAD THING?

HHMMMM...



THEN, ONE DAY... I'VE SENT MANY OF THE BROTHERS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES... NOW IT'S MY TURN, I'M GOING TO SEE THE CRUSADE-- THE "HOLY WAR!"

BUT... WHAT IF YOU'RE KILLED? THINK OF THE DANGER! AND THINK OF THE ORDER! IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU--!



I DON'T FEAR DEATH. MY SOUL IS READY TO MEET THE LORD, WHENEVER HE DECIDES TO CALL ME.



AS FOR THE FRIARS MINOR... WELL, BROTHER ELIAS LIKES TO ORGANIZE. HE CAN RUN THINGS UNTIL I RETURN.



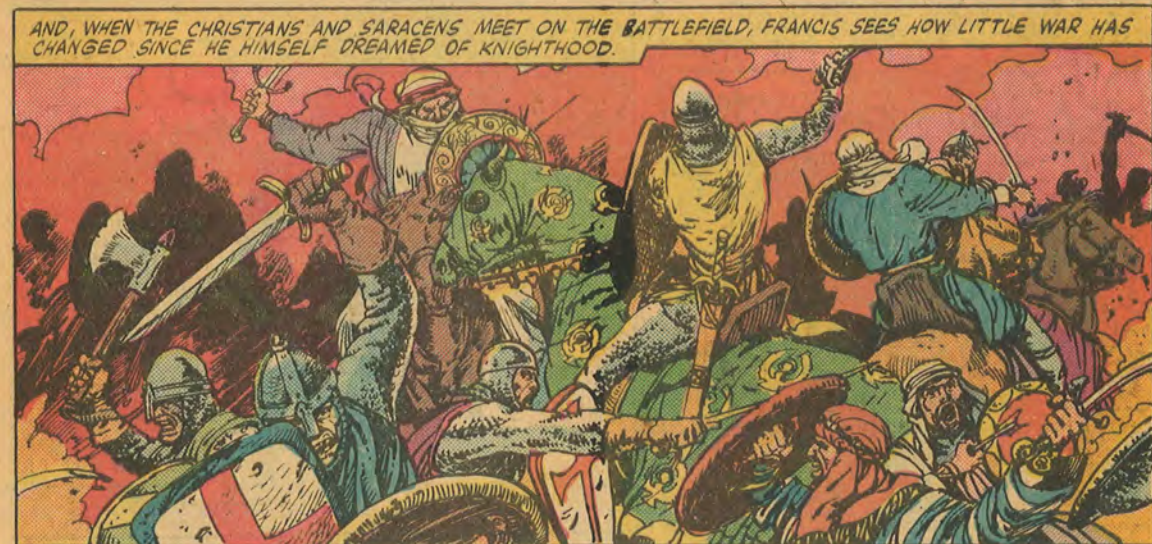
ELIAS? BUT HE'S...

ELIAS IS HUMAN, AS WE ALL ARE. I'LL HAVE TO TRUST HIM.



IN DAMIETTA, EGYPT...

LOOK AT THEM, BROTHERS, MARCHING OFF FOR GLORY AND FOR GOD, JUST AS I DID WHEN I WAS YOUNG. WILL PEOPLE NEVER LEARN?



AND, WHEN THE CHRISTIANS AND SARACENS MEET ON THE BATTLEFIELD, FRANCIS SEES HOW LITTLE WAR HAS CHANGED SINCE HE HIMSELF DREAMED OF KNIGHTHOOD.



IN MANY WAYS, THE CRUSADES ARE WORSE THAN THE BATTLES OF HIS YOUTH!

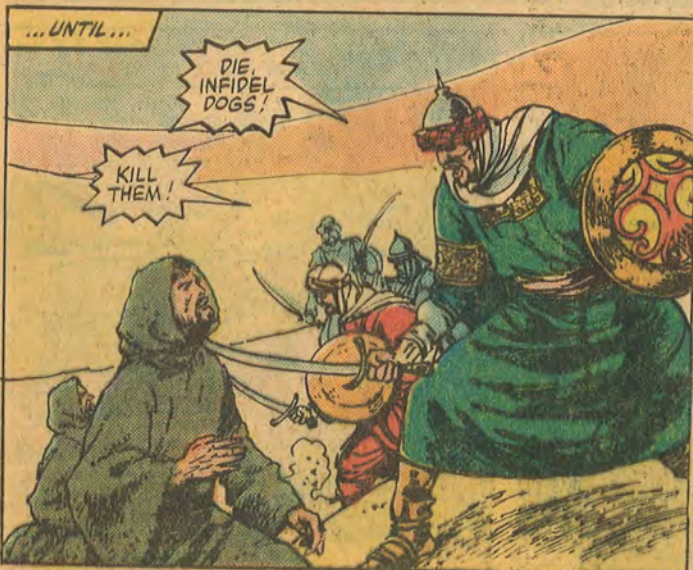
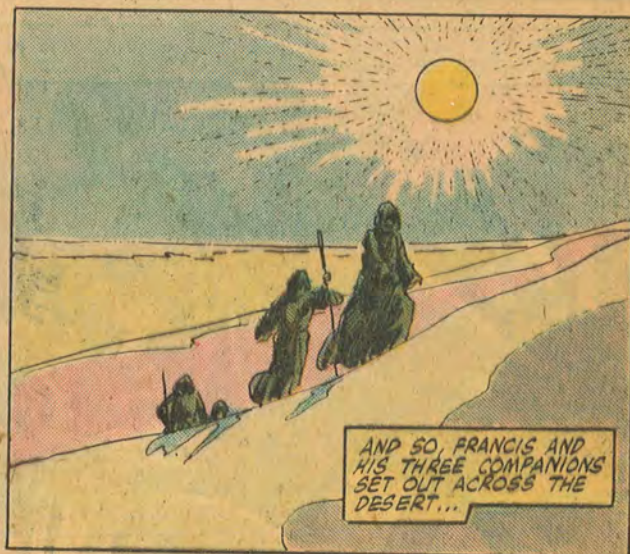
THIS IS MADNESS! THEY'RE SLAUGHTERING EACH OTHER LIKE SO MANY ANIMALS, AND EACH OF THEM BELIEVES THAT HE IS DOING IT FOR GOD!



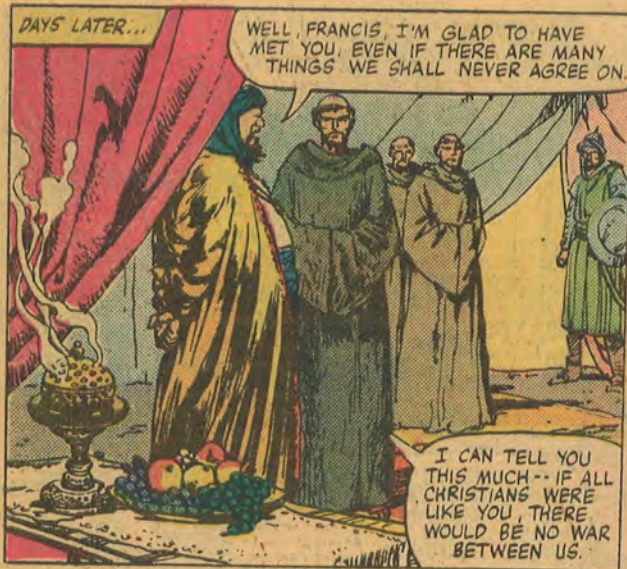
SOON, FRANCIS FINDS HIS SKILLS AS A HEALER ARE NEEDED ONCE MORE.

SO MANY MEN... YOUNG MEN... GOOD MEN, CRIPPLED FOR LIFE, AND DYING IN THIS SENSELESS WAR.

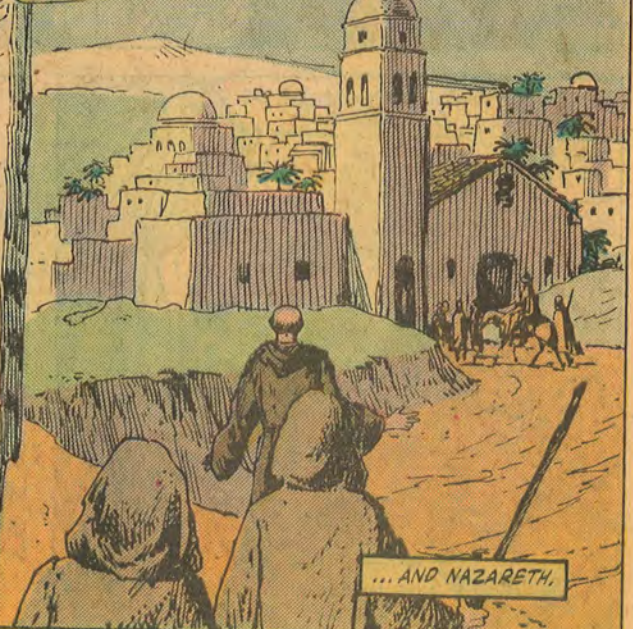
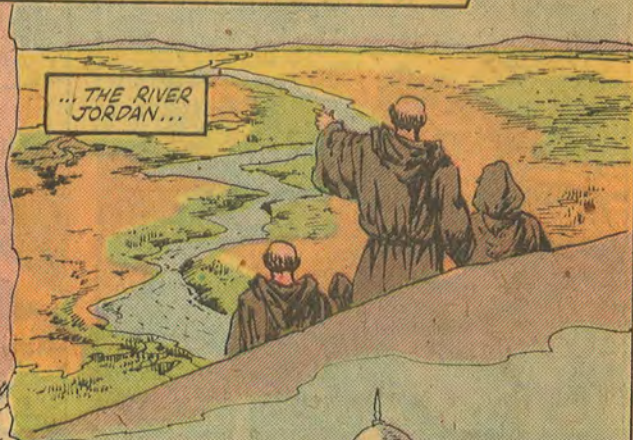




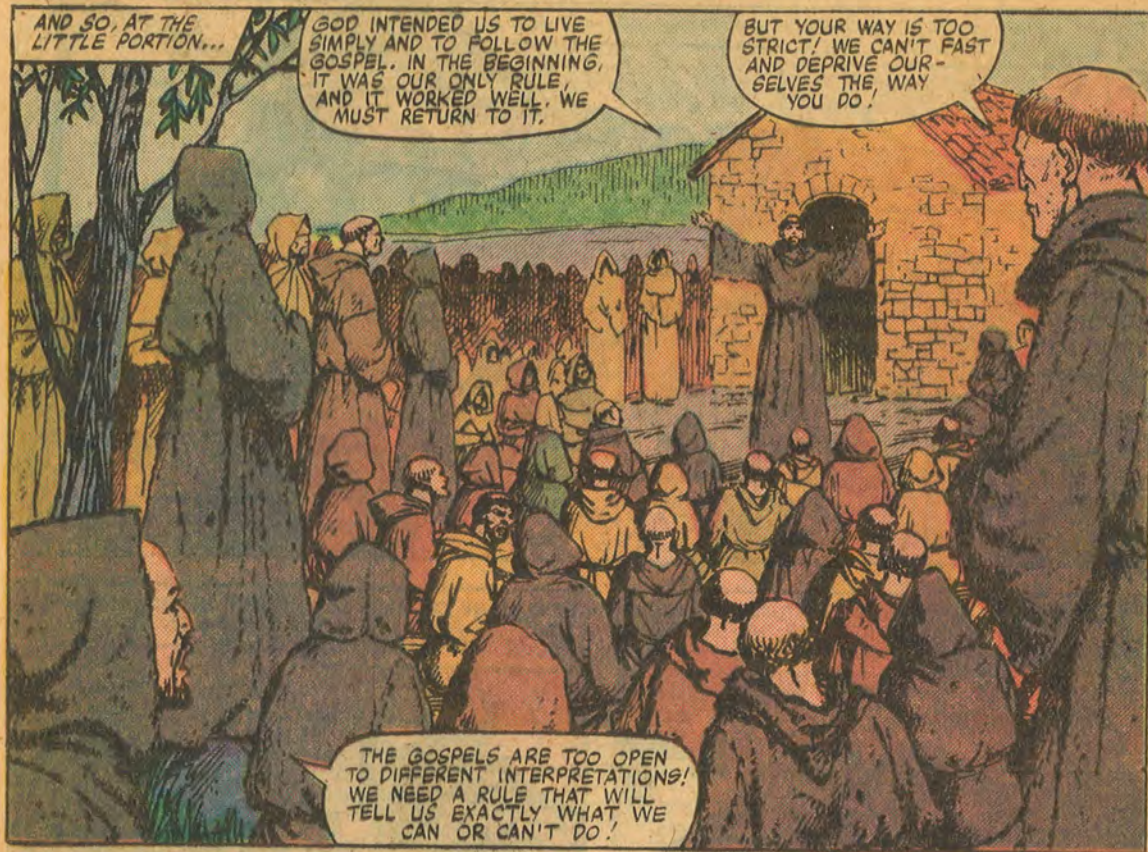




AND SO FRANCIS, WITH HIS WORDS OF PEACE, HAS WON A VICTORY THAT HAS ELUDED ALL THE ARMIES OF EUROPE. HE AND HIS FRIENDS ARE ABLE TO DO WHAT NO ARMED CRUSADER EVER COULD--







AND SO, AT THE LITTLE PORTION...

GOD INTENDED US TO LIVE SIMPLY AND TO FOLLOW THE GOSPEL. IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS OUR ONLY RULE, AND IT WORKED WELL. WE MUST RETURN TO IT.

BUT YOUR WAY IS TOO STRICT! WE CAN'T FAST AND DEPRIVE OURSELVES THE WAY YOU DO!

THE GOSPELS ARE TOO OPEN TO DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS! WE NEED A RULE THAT WILL TELL US EXACTLY WHAT WE CAN OR CAN'T DO!



IT WASN'T BAD, WITH ELIAS RUNNING THINGS. YOUR WAY IS TOO HARD, WE'RE ONLY HUMAN!

DON'T LISTEN TO THEM, FRANCIS!

SOME OF US ARE STILL WITH YOU.



SOME...? BUT NOT ALL? I SEE.

I'LL HAVE TO THINK-- AND PRAY-- BEFORE I REACH ANY DECISION.



FRANCIS GOES ALONE TO THE CAVES TO PRAY, AS HE DID DURING THE TORMENTS AND UNCERTAINTIES OF HIS YOUTH.

DEAR GOD... YOU KNOW HOW HARD I'VE WORKED, HOW HARD I'VE TRIED, IS THIS TO BE MY REWARD? THE BROTHERS TURNING AWAY FROM ME, THE ORDER DIVIDED...?



SOON...

LEO, I NEED SISTER CLARE'S ADVICE, GO TO HER FOR ME.

ASK HER IF I SHOULD ABANDON MY MINISTRIES AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ORDER AND SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN CONTEMPLATION AND PRAYER.



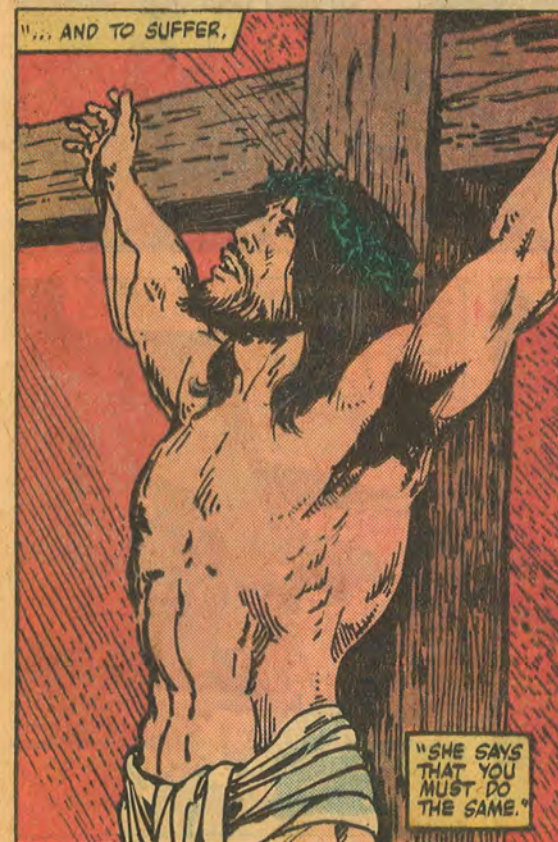
AFTER LEO HAS RETURNED FROM SAN DAMIANO...

WHAT WAS HER REPLY?

SHE SAID THAT CHRIST CAME TO EARTH TO WALK AMONG THE PEOPLE...

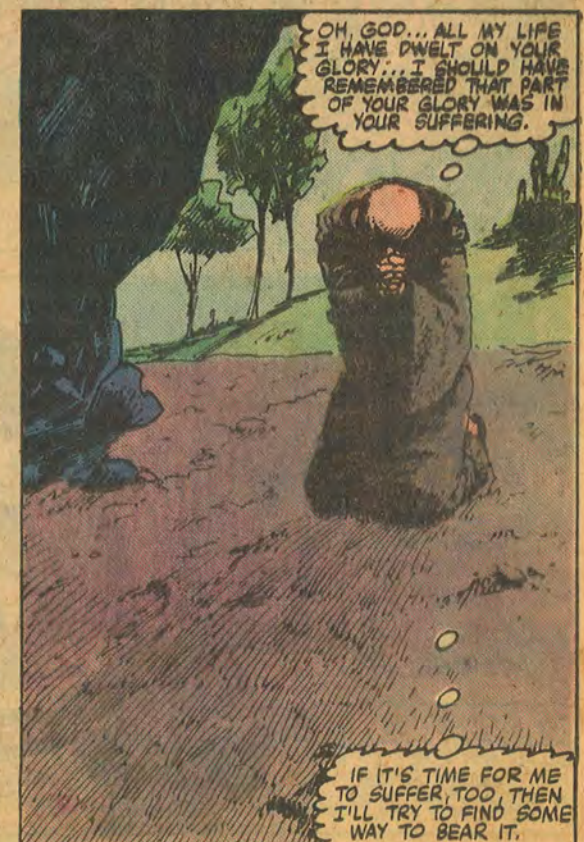


"... TO SPREAD THE WORD OF GOD..."



"... AND TO SUFFER."

"SHE SAYS THAT YOU MUST DO THE SAME."



OH, GOD... ALL MY LIFE I HAVE DWELT ON YOUR GLORY... I SHOULD HAVE REMEMBERED THAT PART OF YOUR GLORY WAS IN YOUR SUFFERING.

IF IT'S TIME FOR ME TO SUFFER, TOO, THEN I'LL TRY TO FIND SOME WAY TO BEAR IT.





ULTIMATELY, FRANCIS GOES TO THE POPE FOR ADVICE...

FRANCIS, I SUFFER WITH YOU. YOUR IDEALS ARE SOME OF THE FINEST EVER CONCEIVED, AND IT GRIEVES ME TO SEE THEM SO WATERED DOWN AND TAMPERED WITH...

BUT ARE YOU REALLY SURPRISED? YOUR FOLLOWERS ARE GOOD PEOPLE WITH GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT THEY ARE ONLY HUMAN.



FEW PEOPLE CAN FOLLOW THE GOSPELS AS PRECISELY AS YOU DO.

YOU'RE ASKING ME TO... COMPROMISE, YOUR HOLINESS?



IN SMALL WAYS, YES. YOU CAN STILL PRESERVE ALL THAT'S BEST ABOUT THE FRIARS MINOR, IF YOU'RE ONLY STRICT ABOUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT. GO EASY ON THE REST.

IF YOU WANT TO SAVE THE ORDER, NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO QUIBBLE.



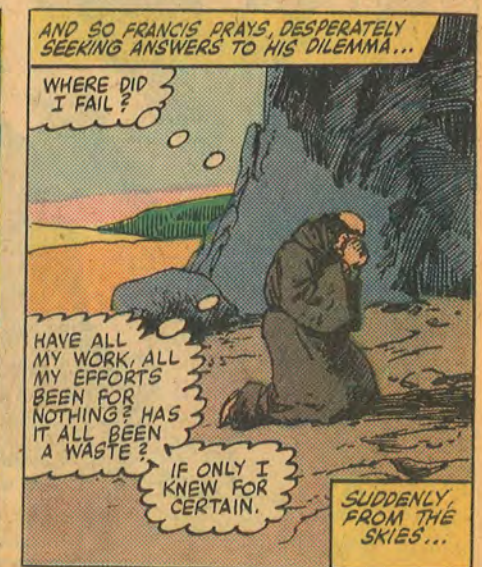
FRANCIS ACCEPTS THE WISDOM OF THE POPE'S WORDS, BUT THE COMPROMISES HE MUST MAKE IN THE ORDER WEIGH HEAVILY ON HIS MIND AND HEART. HE GOES TO MOUNT LA VERNA TO BE ALONE AND THINK.

WELCOME, FRANCIS! STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.

THANK YOU, COUNT ORLANDO.



THE BROTHERS WHO HAVE ACCOMPANIED FRANCIS BUILD HIM A HUT OF PINE BOUGHS BENEATH A BEECH TREE. THEN THEY LEAVE HIM.



AND SO FRANCIS PRAYS, DESPERATELY SEEKING ANSWERS TO HIS DILEMMA...

WHERE DID I FAIL?

HAVE ALL MY WORK, ALL MY EFFORTS BEEN FOR NOTHING? HAS IT ALL BEEN A WASTE?

IF ONLY I KNEW FOR CERTAIN.

SUDDENLY, FROM THE SKIES...



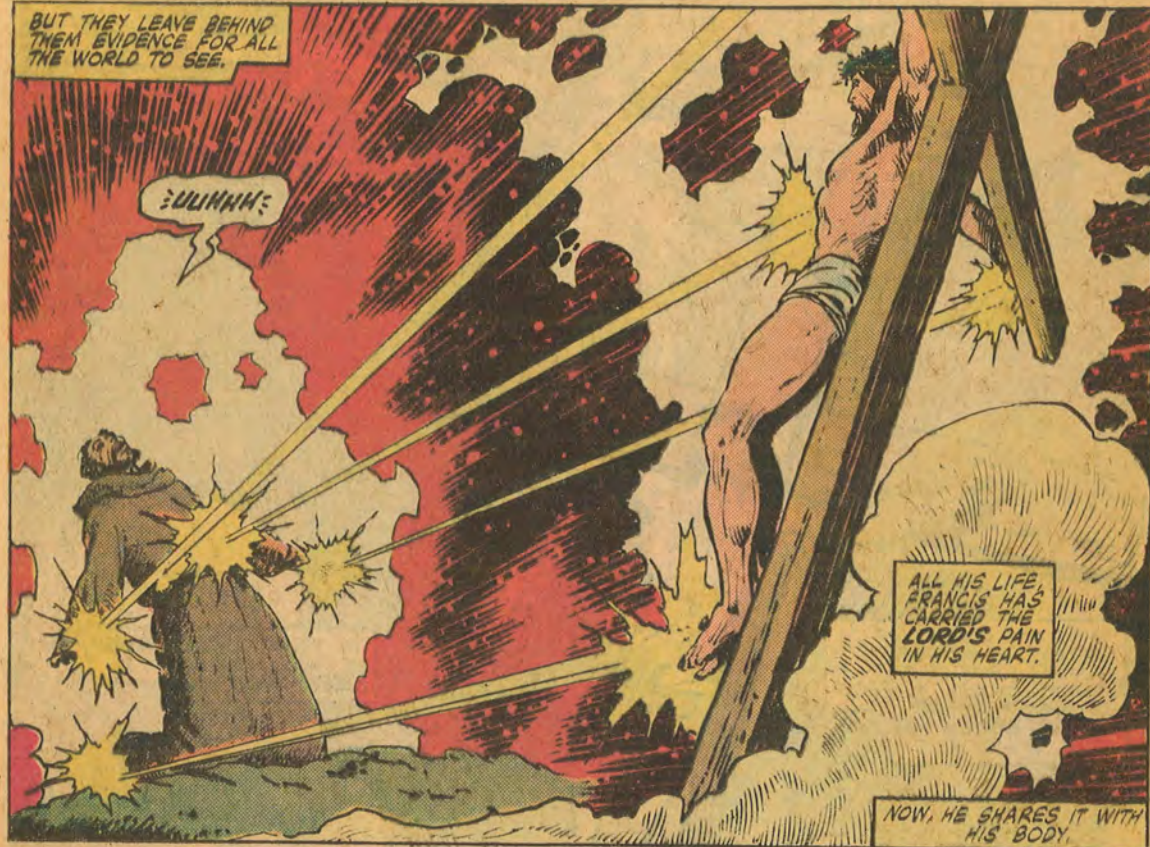
FRANCIS' PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED IN A WAY HE NEVER DREAMED OF!

IN HIS OWN MOMENT OF TORMENT, HE HAS BEEN SHOWN A VISION OF THE GREATER TORMENT SUFFERED BY CHRIST, WHOSE MEMORY FRANCIS HAS TRIED TO LIVE BY.

THE VISION IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE FLIGHT OF A SERAPHIM.

FRANCIS IS THE ONLY ONE WHO IS HERE ON MOUNT LA VERNA TO WITNESS THESE HEAVENLY SIGHTS...





BUT THEY LEAVE BEHIND THEM EVIDENCE FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE.

¡ULIHAN!

ALL HIS LIFE, FRANCIS HAS CARRIED THE LORD'S PAIN IN HIS HEART.

NOW, HE SHARES IT WITH HIS BODY.



THE STIGMATA-- THE PIERCED WOUNDS CHRIST RECEIVED WHEN HE WAS CRUCIFIED-- THEY'VE BEEN DUPLICATED ON MY BODY...



... MY HANDS AND FEET...



VERY WELL, FATHER. IF IT IS MY LOT TO SUFFER, AS JESUS DID, THEN I WILL ACCEPT IT. AND NOW...

... I NEED NEVER DOUBT MY DESTINY AGAIN...



SOON AFTER, BROTHER LEO TAKES FRANCIS BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.



IN THE FIRST TOWN THEY REACH, IT BECOMES PLAIN THAT WORD OF THE MIRACLE ON MOUNT LA VERNA HAS SPREAD...

HE BEARS THE STIGMATA!

IT'S HIM-- THE SAINT-- THE HOLY MAN FROM ASSISI.

MAYBE IF WE'RE FORTUNATE, HE'LL BLESS US!



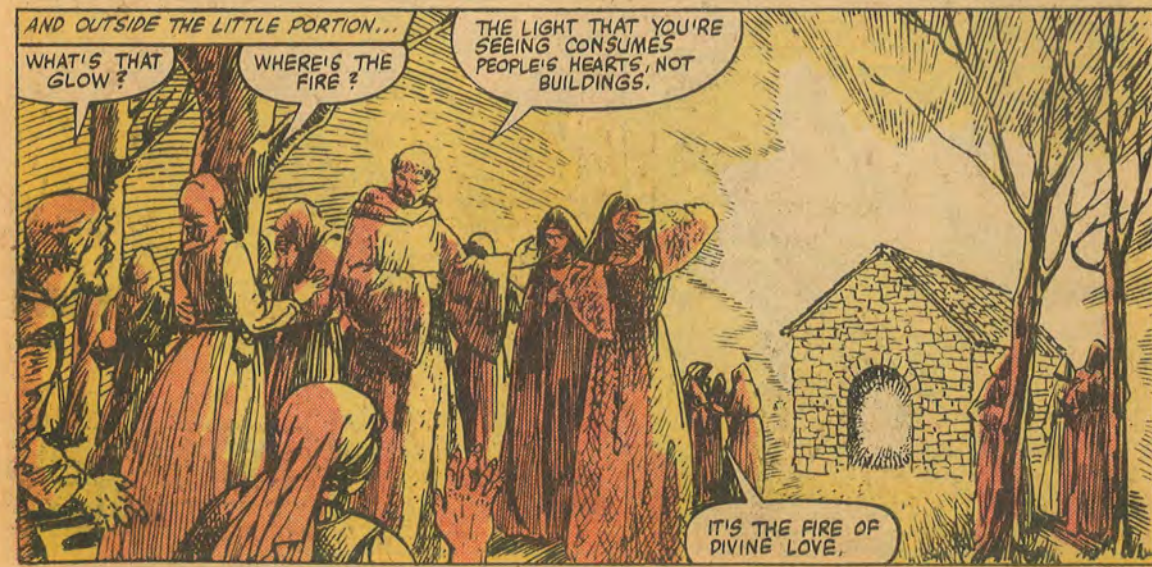
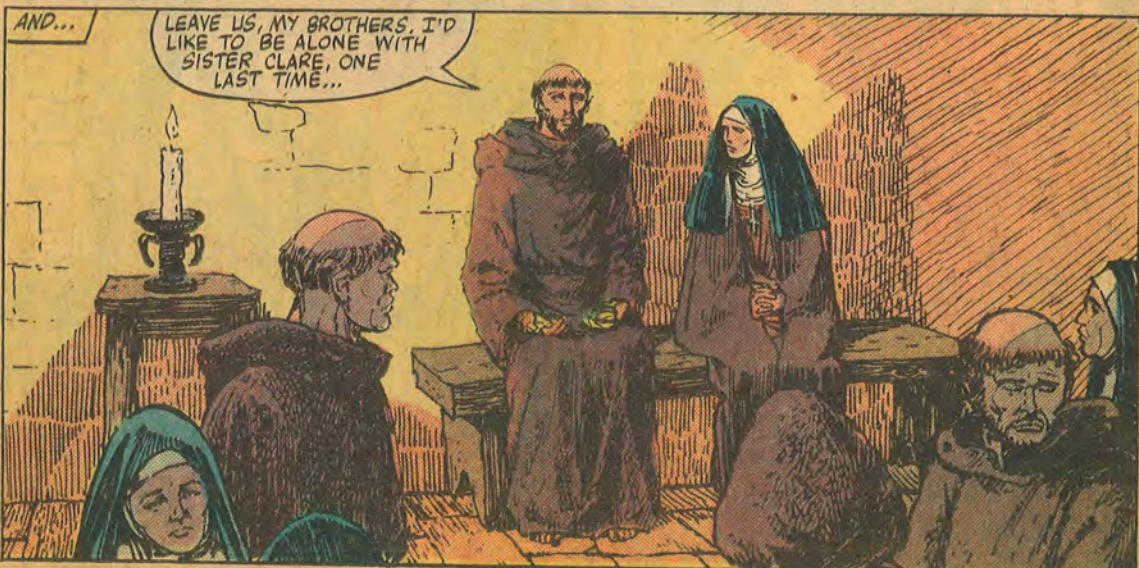
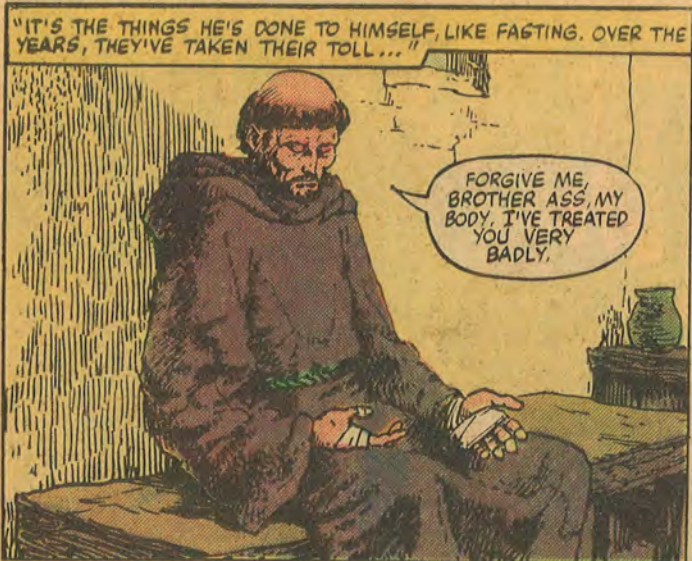
HOWEVER, IN THE TWO YEARS THAT FOLLOW, THE FRIARS MINOR AND THE POOR LADIES FIND LITTLE CAUSE FOR REJOICING ABOUT FRANCIS.

CLARE, I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT FRANCIS. HE'S VERY ILL.

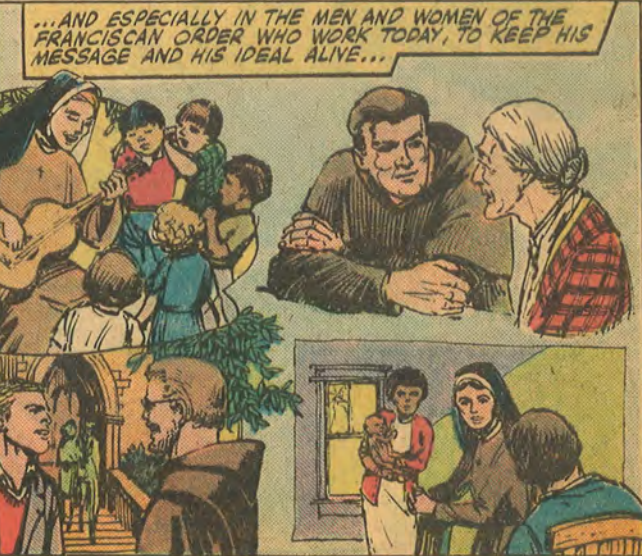
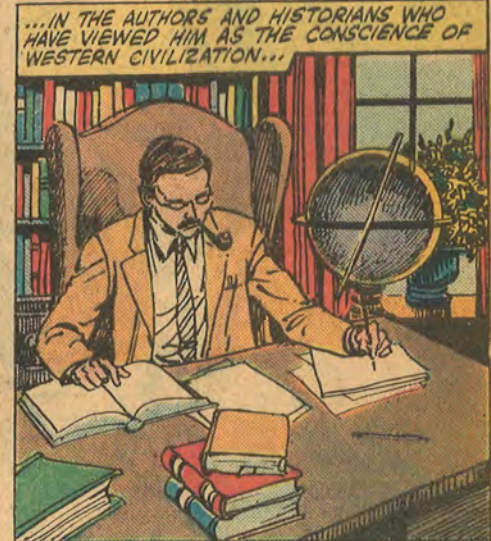
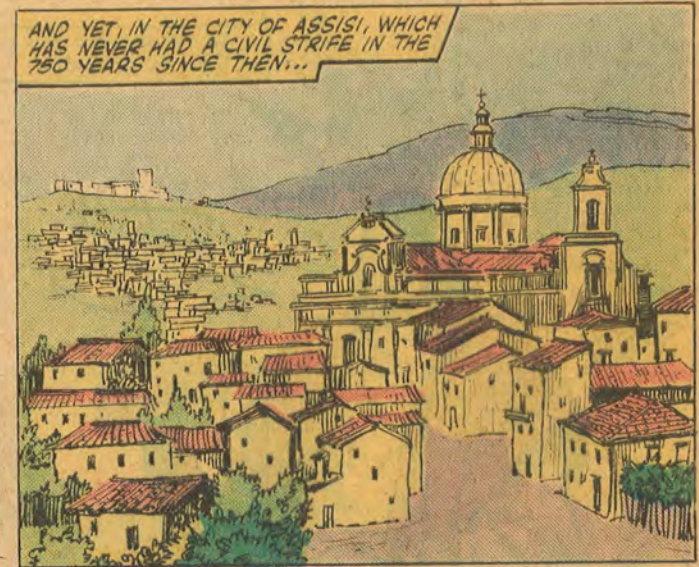
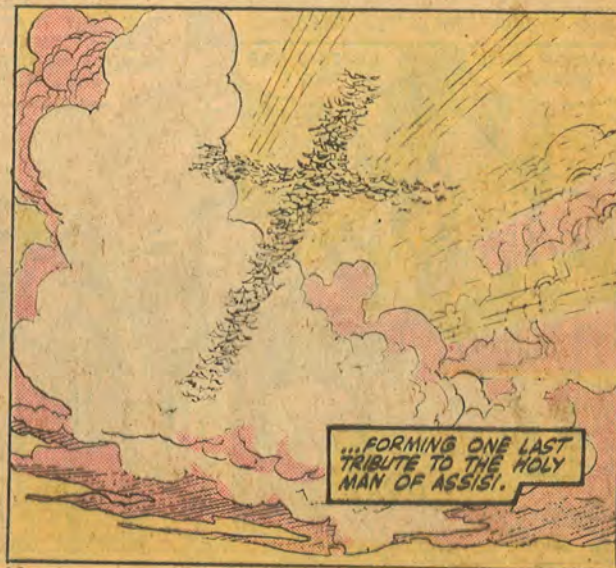
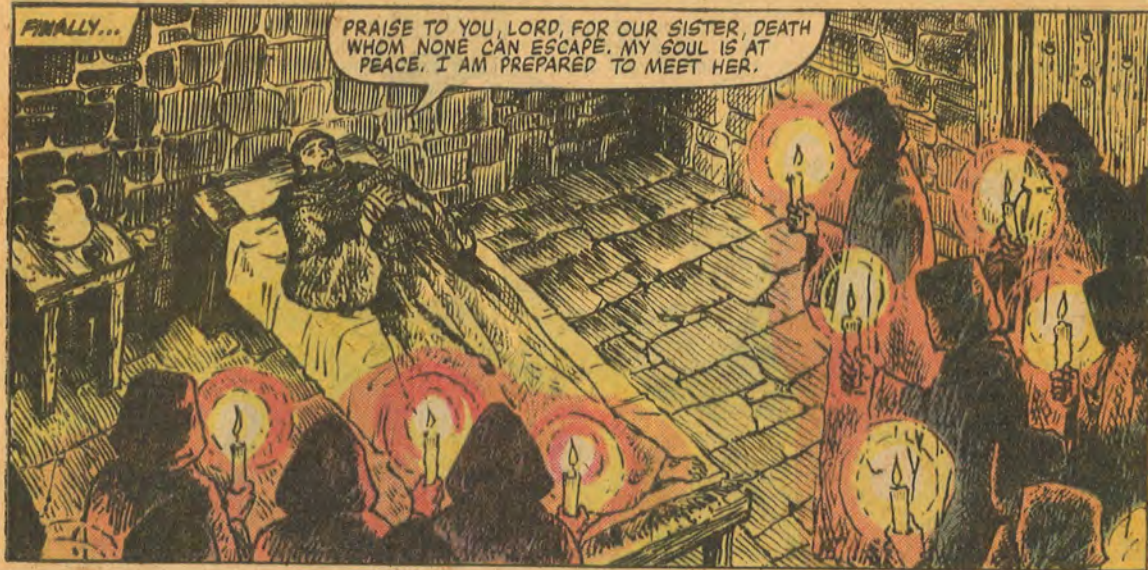
THEY SAY THE STIGMATA HAVE NEVER HEALED.

IT'S TRUE, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT'S WRONG.













## CANTICLE OF THE SUN

As adapted by Ken Ford and Richard Duprey for the off-Broadway musical *Francis*, originally produced and directed by Frank A. Martin.

Praise be to You, O Lord and Father  
Praise be to You and You alone  
We praise you, O Lord, for all of Your creatures,  
Especially Brother Sun

For Brother Sun, he is strong and bright  
And he gives us light as we live each day

Praise also Sister Moon  
And the sparkling stars  
Which Thy Hand made

Praise Thee, O Lord, for our Brother the Wind  
For weather that's cloudy and weather that's clear  
Praise Thee, O Lord, for sweet Sister Water  
Helpful to all Thy children here

Praise Thee, O Lord, for our Brother Fire  
Praise how he warms and lights the night

Praise Thee, O Lord, for the Earth our Mother  
She who sustains us that we might  
Be led to a love of all creatures great and small  
As they show Thy grace

Lord, help us each to learn  
Everywhere we turn  
We can see Thy Face

Praise Thee, O Lord, for all those who suffer  
Injuries in Thy Holy Name  
Blessed are they who merit to suffer  
You will reward them for their pains

Praise be to You, O Lord of all seasons  
Praise be to You, O Lord, for all reasons

Glory to You, O God!  
Glory to You, O God!  
Glory to You, O God, and You alone!







## SAINT FRANCIS AND THE CUSTOMS OF CHRISTMAS

Although it is not widely known, two of the most popular Christmas traditions originated with Francis of Assisi. In the city of GRECCIO, he commemorated the birth of the Christ child by recreating the Nativity with a Christmas crib, or *creche*.



To this day, Christians use china figurines of the Holy Family and wooden mangers at Christmas, setting up the seasonal dioramas in their churches and homes.

It was also Francis who began the custom of singing popular music at the Christmas season, in addition to the weightier Latin music performed in the churches.



CHRISTMAS CAROLLING, As it is called, has been popular in many countries ever since.

## SOME OTHER FACTS ABOUT ST. FRANCIS AND HIS FOLLOWERS

More books have been written about St. Francis than about any other saint.

He is the patron saint of peace, the patron saint of ecology, the patron saint of Italy and the patron saint of animals.

His "Canticle of Brother Sun" was the first major poem written in Italian.

Many historians trace the origins of Renaissance (hence, modern) poetry, art and drama back to St. Francis.

By forbidding the laymen in his Third Order from bearing weapons and from taking the oath of fealty, St. Francis became partially responsible for the downfall of the feudal system. Serfs (semi-slaves) were freed and the number of petty wars were reduced.

His followers were the first missionaries to reach China and the far east as well as both North and South America. Franciscans were with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the New World.

The New World's first printing press was set up by St. Francis' followers in Mexico City in 1539.

Franciscans established the first college in the New World in Mexico City, 1536.

Because the Franciscan Missions in California became the foundation for the growth of the state, St. Francis has been called the "first of the first Californians."

The City of San Francisco is named after him in Spanish.

Los Angeles takes its name from the Little Portion, St. Francis' main church and headquarters in Assisi. The full name was "Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de Los Angeles de Portiuncula" --Town of Our Lady of the Angels of the Little Portion.

The full name of Sante Fe, New Mexico is "La Villa de Sante Fe de San Francisco" --City of the holy faith of St. Francis.

Arizona's highest mountains are called the San Francisco peaks.

There is a mountain range in Missouri called the St. Francois (French) Mountains and one of Missouri's counties is also named for St. Francis.

In Arkansas, both a river and a town bear the name St. Francis.

Besides Roman Catholic Franciscans, there are also Anglican, Episcopalian and Lutheran Franciscans.



