

Svätý František z Assisi krátko pred svojou smrťou zhromaždil svoje Deti a varoval ich pred budúci útrapami hovoriac:

Konajte odvážne, bratia, buďte pevní a dôverujte Pánovi. Rýchlo sa blíži čas, keď nastanú veľké súženia a skúšky; rozhojnia sa nejasnosti a nezhody v duchovných i svetských záležitostiach; milosrdná láska bude čoraz chladnejšia a zloba hriešnikov bude stále viac narastať. Diabli budú mať neobvyklú moc, nepoškvrnená čistota nášho i ostatných Rádov sa natolko poškvrní, že bude len málo Kresťanov budú poslúchať pravého Sv. Otca a Rímsku Cirkev s úprimným srdcom a dokonalou láskou.

V čase tohto prenasledovania jeden, ktorý nebude zvolený kánonicky, dosiahne Pápežstvo, ktoré sa bude rafinovane snažiť dotiahnuť do bludov a k smrti. Škandály sa potom veľmi znásobia, náš Rád bude rozdelený, a mnohé ďalšie Rády budú úplne zničené, lebo budú súhlasiť s bludom namiesto toho, aby proti nemu bojovali.

Bude tak veľa rozličných názorov a rozkolov medzi ľuďmi, rehoľníkmi a kňazmi, že keby výnimočne tieto dni neboli skrátené, podľa slov Evanjelia, aj vyvolení by upadli do bludov, i keby neboli výnimočne vedení uprostred takého veľkého zmätku nesmiernou Božou milosťou.

Potom niektorí budú prudko napádať naše Pravidlá a spôsob života, a prídu na nás hrozné skúšky. Tí, ktorí si zachovajú vieru, dostanú korunu Života, ale beda tým, ktorí dôverujúc len v ich Rád sa stanú vlašnými, lebo nebudú schopní prejsť cez pokušenia dopustených na skúšanie vyvolených.

Tí, ktorí si zachovajú horlivosť a dodržiavanie čností s láskou a nadšením pre pravdu, budú trpieť zraneniami a prenasledovaním ako rebeli a rozkolníci.

Ich prenasledovatelia poháňaní zlými duchmi budú tvrdiť, že poskytujú Bohu veľkú službu tým, že vyničia týchto ľudí ako morovú nákazu z povrchu zeme. Ale Pán bude útočiskom ubiedených a zachráni tých, ktorí v neho dúfali. A v snahe podobať sa svojej Hlave, budú títo vyvolení konať s dôverou a pri smrti získajú večný život. Tí, ktorí sa rozhodnú poslúchať radšej Boha ako človeka, nebudú sa ničoho báť a radšej budú

uprednostňovať dočasnú skazu, ako by mali dať súhlas k lži a zrade.

Niektorí kazatelia budú pravdu zamlčovať, ostatní ju pošliapu a poprú.

Svätosť života bude zosmiešňovaná i tými, ktorí sa navonok hrajú na veriacich. Preto v tých dňoch im Ježiš Kristus nepošle pravého Pastiera, ale Ničiteľa.

WORKS

THE SERAPHIC FATHER

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI,

TRANSLATED BY

A RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER.



R. WASHBOURNE,
18 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.
1882.

Order; but take care, if thou shouldst again cast off the habit and forsake the religious life, thou wilt be hanged on these gallows.' The apostate returned to the Order, but he did not remain long in it. A few days after he had left it the second time he committed some crime, on account of which he was hanged on that very gibbet, according to the Saint's prediction, and thus miserably and infamously ended his life.

XIII.

The Saint Prophesies great Schisms and Tribulations in the Church.

A SHORT time before the holy Father's death, he called together his Children and warned them of the coming troubles, saying: 'Act bravely, my Brethren; take courage, and trust in the Lord. The time is fast approaching in which there will be great trials and afflictions; perplexities and dissensions, both spiritual and temporal, will abound; the charity of many will grow cold, and the malice of the wicked will increase. The devils will have unusual power, the immaculate purity of our Order, and of others, will be so much obscured that there will be very few Christians who will obey the true Sovereign Pontiff and the Roman Church with loyal hearts and perfect charity. At the time of this tribulation a man, not canonically elected, will be raised to the Pontificate, who, by his cunning, will endeavour to draw many

into error and death. Then scandals will be multiplied, our Order will be divided, and many others will be entirely destroyed, because they will consent to error instead of opposing it. There will be such diversity of opinions and schisms among the people, the religious and the clergy, that, except those days were shortened, according to the words of the Gospel, even the elect would be led into error, were they not specially guided, amid such great confusion, by the immense mercy of God. Then our Rule and manner of life will be violently opposed by some, and terrible trials will come upon us. Those who are found faithful will receive the crown of life; but woe to those who, trusting solely in their Order, shall fall into tepidity, for they will not be able to support the temptations permitted for the proving of the elect. Those who preserve their fervour and adhere to virtue with love and zeal for the truth, will suffer injuries and persecutions as rebels and schismatics; for their persecutors, urged on by the evil spirits, will say they are rendering a great service to God by destroying such pestilent men from the face of the earth. But the Lord will be the refuge of the afflicted, and will save all who trust in Him. And in order to be like their Head, these, the elect, will act with confidence, and by their death will purchase for themselves eternal life; choosing to obey God rather than man, they will fear nothing, and they will prefer to perish rather than consent to falsehood and perfidy. Some preachers will keep silence about the truth, and others will trample it under foot and deny it. Sanctity of life will be held in derision even by those

who outwardly profess it, for in those days Our Lord Jesus Christ will send them not a true Pastor, but a destroyer.*

XIV.

*That Pride and Ostentation are Pernicious to Religious,
and that Brother Elias will Die out of the Order.*

BROTHER ELIAS of Cortona, or as some say of Piedmont, who was appointed Vicar-General on the death of Blessed Peter of Catania, and who was afterwards elected fourth General of the Order, was a man of such great worldly prudence, that he seemed made for important enterprises, and there was no one in Italy equal to him in such matters; therefore he was much esteemed and honoured by princes and nobles. When he saw St. Francis inviting some simple and humble Brothers to sit by him at table, and leaving him and other wise and learned men at a distance, he took it very ill, and could not refrain from saying within himself: 'Alas! Francis, thou simple and illiterate man, why art thou so foolish and indiscreet? Thou puttest to shame the great men who are the pillars of thy Order, and through this foolish conduct thou wilt ruin us.' But the blessed Father, knowing the secret murmurs of his heart, said to him: 'Indeed, Brother Elias, thou wilt ruin thyself and the Order through thy pompous ostentation and worldly

* Mark of Lisbon and others think that this prophecy received its accomplishment in the great schism which desolated the Church after the election of Urban VI. in the year 1378. But it may also partially refer to other calamities which have befallen the Church in the latter ages.