

THE MAJOR LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS (1263)



V.7 Although [Francis] energetically urged the brothers to lead an austere life, he was not pleased by an intransigent severity that did not put on a [heart desiring right relationship]¹ and was not seasoned with the salt of [discretion]².

One night, when one of the brothers was tormented with hunger because of his excessive fasting, he was unable to get any rest. The [affectionate concern of Francis] understood the danger threatening one of his [brother's],³ called the brother, put some bread before him, and, to take away his embarrassment, [Francis] started eating first and gently invited him to eat. The brother put aside his embarrassment, took the food, overjoyed that, through the discerning condescension of his [brother Francis], he had avoided both harm to his body, and received an edifying example of no small proportion.

When morning came, after the man of God had called the brothers together and recounted had happened during the night, [Francis] added this reminder: "Brothers, in this incident let the charity, not the food, be an example to you." He taught them, moreover, to follow discretion as the [guide for] the virtues, not that which the flesh recommends, but that taught by Christ, whose most sacred life expressed for us the exemplar of perfection.

¹ The translation of the Latin *pietatis* has been rendered a "heart desiring right relationship" to better render the sense of Bonaventure's meaning in contemporary English. See Col 3:12 the Scripture reference.

² Discretion (*discretio*) has been substituted for the FA:ED discernment in two instances to render the Latin more closely and to emphasize the virtue associated with good judgment.

³ The pastoral image of the "*pius/pastor*" in Latin has been adjusted to better render the sense of Francis's affectionate and personal concern for his brother.