

Name: _____

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Francis Spends a Night in Prayer

Bernard of Quintavalle was the first brother to follow Francis and his simple way of life. A wealthy Assisian, Bernard sold all his possessions and gave the money to the poor. He was ready to throw in his lot with Francis, but first he wanted to test Francis' holiness. One evening, Bernard invited Francis to join him for supper at his home. After a pleasant meal, Bernard invited him to stay overnight.

Bernard had a bed prepared for Francis in his own room. Shortly after Francis entered the room, he threw himself down and pretended to fall asleep. A short time later, Bernard went to bed and also pretended to sleep—with snores and all. His plan was to watch Francis carefully during the night.

With Bernard secretly observing him, Francis got onto his knees and raised his hands in prayer. Then Bernard was amazed to hear Francis earnestly repeating throughout the night “My God and my all!” The Little Flowers of Saint Francis informs us that Saint Francis repeated the words while marveling at and contemplating the goodness of Almighty God (Omnibus of Sources, p. 1303).

Time and again, God's goodness and love amazed Francis. In a prayer from his Praises Before the Office, Saint Francis suddenly begins repeating the word good, almost as if intoxicated by it: “All powerful, all holy, most high and supreme God, sovereign good, all good, every good, you who alone are good, it is to you we must give all praise, all glory, all thanks, all honor, all blessing; to you we must refer all good always. Amen.”

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