

Saint Frances of Rome

1384 - 1440

Saint Frances of Rome is famous for her visions of Hell. The saint describes Lucifer as the most brilliant of the Seraphim; for this reason his sin was very serious. As we know, the Seraphim is the highest of the nine choirs of Angels. Lucifer consequently was the highest ranked among the angels who had rebelled, and for this he was cast into the deepest part of Hell. There were angels who chose to follow Lucifer with particular malice and of their own initiative. They were thrown into Hell and are tormented by him because he is more powerful than they, and – Saint Frances of Rome tells us – the Divine Justice delegated Lucifer the assignment of punishing for all eternity those whom he had one day convinced to follow him in the rebellion. Saint Frances tells us also that the principal demons who obey Lucifer are: Asmodeus, who represents the vice of lust; Mammon, who is at the top of the vice of avarice; and Beelzebub, who is the leader of all idolatries and obscure or hidden activities. We see here how, as the two principal fallen angels – Lucifer and Asmodeus – they are respectively the demons of pride and of sensuality. This saint did not see only demons. She also frequently saw her Guardian Angel, that is, an angel of rank relatively low in the celestial hierarchy. Well, this notwithstanding, the first time she saw her Guardian Angel, Saint Frances of Rome was so struck by his greatness that she mistook him for God Himself. She threw herself to the ground to adore him. The angel stopped her and explained who he was. This demonstrated the splendor of a simple guardian angel. How much more is the splendor of an archangel, of a cherubim, of a seraphim! The Devil always acts against us and the Guardian Angel always protects us, whether we ask him to do it or not. But we must ask more often our Guardian Angels to protect us, to teach us to discern the action of the Demon, to ask also for the protection of Our Lady. All of this is to be “vigilant



and to pray” in opposition to the action of demons. They are the themes upon which the visions of Saint Frances of Rome invite us to meditate.

Frances, born in 1384 to a noble family in Rome, was married at a very young age, in 1396, to Lawrence Ponziani, a very rich young lord. This union, which lasted forty years, was perfectly happy. Several children were born from it. When Frances reached middle age, she decided to lead a life of penance. She ate only once a day, which consisted only of bread, water and vegetables. She was very charitable to the poor. She joined her sister-in-law, Vannotia, to relieve them. Together they travelled through Rome, going from door to door searching for help for their poor.

One night, as the servant of God was in her room praying, she was violently seized by the devil and transported into a portico adjoining her room and overlooking the street. Her executioner grabbed her by the hair and held her hanging over the street, threatening to throw her in the street. One day when the saint was leaving with her sister-in-law, Vannotia, to visit the Church of St. John Lateran, and as she was passing through a side street called the Via Merolana, she found herself exhausted. She stopped to rest and sat on a stone. As she spoke with her sister-in-law, the filthy spirit appeared to her as an old man with a big beard and made dishonest proposals to her. One night the devil brought before her the body of a dead man. Maybe it was a real corpse; maybe it was another demon that had taken on this appearance. Whatever it was, this corpse smelled terrible and was full of worms. The infernal executioner took the blessed woman with violence, threw her on the rotting body and turned her around and redid it several more times for some time with extreme rage. Saint Frances had her face and her whole body rolled and embedded into this horror. After the departure of her persecutor, she remained so dreadfully soiled in her clothes and flesh that she could not get rid of this infection even after washed her clothes several times with great care. The terrible odor she had smelled during this horrible period had affected her stomach. When she took some food afterwards, she would remember that infernal stench and could only consume with the greatest difficulty the small amount of food that she took to support herself. Another night, the demon took her and placed her on a board of a wardrobe. This board was very thin. The blessed woman did not know how to get down and

the Evil One made fun of her embarrassment. She was praying when her enemy appeared before her in the guise of her confessor. He had some paper, a feather and ink. He sat next to her and said to her: - "I want to write these sublime visions and revelations that God has given you and write books about them." But the saint discovered the trick and replied: - "Tell instead, you, of the divine wonders that you saw, when you were in Heaven, the vision of which you lost through your pride and of which you are now deprived." The furious devil turned into a dragon that had an intolerable odor. He grabbed the blessed woman and sometimes he threw her against the wall, and at other times he threw her into the air. At times the messenger of hell threatened the servant of God with a spear with which he wanted to pierce her; he pretended to throw her into a well. One night that the saint wanted to indulge in her contemplations with more tranquility, she entered the kitchen, deserted at that time, and prayed. However, a large quantity of coals that had been used to prepare dinner remained. Her enemy took advantage of this circumstance and hung her over these coals for a while. Her toes were slightly burnt. In other circumstances, her persecutor would whip her with leather straps. Sometimes he tormented her in the form of a snake and sometimes he tried to deceive her after communion, in the form of an angel. Her spiritual father, surprised by this last audacity, asked his penitent how the evil spirit had left her.

"Under that of a monkey," she replied, "and he fled covered with great confusion. » All possible means were good for Satan to try to disturb the servant of God and to turn her away from prayer. If she read, a messenger from hell would approach her as a monkey and turn the pages of the book over and over. A messenger of Lucifer would then appear under the skin of a lion and fight with the monkey. Then, rushing together on the saint, they would lead her to the latrine to throw her from there. Put to flight by the guardian angel of Christ's handmaid, they soon returned to the charge, transforming heavy mallets into men and weapons from which he threatened her. Changes followed one another quickly in these apparitions, according to the results that the opponent of all good claimed to obtain. One night that the blessed woman was, as usual, meditating in her room, she saw a very sweet sheep come with great respect to stand under her feet as a testimony of humility. Saint Frances understood that the fallen angel was trying to inspire her with pride; she despised this trick. The tempter then changed his appearance. Like an angry wolf, he rushed at her with a great impulse to

devour her. From his open mouth came a stream of flames. The ardor of this home caused the servant of God a great inconvenience; she was about to fail. But the angel of light, standing by her side, nodded and suddenly the infernal spirit disappeared. Hell, no doubt noticing the powerlessness of its supporters, obtained permission from Heaven to raise Saint Frances of Rome. In the midst of the darkness, two evil spirits dressed in human form seized her and carried her to the top of a wardrobe upon which they had already placed her under a previous circumstance. But after having raised her in the air, they let her fall. The sound of this fall was very violent. Saint Frances of Rome's husband, who was sleeping in the same room, but not in the same bed, was awakened. Surprised and somewhat frightened, he called his wife by her name. After receiving this mistreatment, she knelt down again with great courage. Not wanting her husband to know about the supernatural manifestations she was subjected to, she replied by reassuring him. He stood satisfied, but then told his wife that he had heard a loud crash, as if the whole house was collapsing. In another circumstance, the demons, seeing the servant of God reading, attacked her in the number of three. The first took the books she was using and threw them to the other two standing outside the room. They turned and turned the pages of these books, giving signs of great anger. They ripped them out of their bindings, threw them here and there and scattered them. Then they entered the room, rushed to the blessed woman, grabbed her by the feet and dragged her into the room, overwhelming her with insults. They hit her with their feet and rolled her on the ground. There was a pile of ashes in the room; they threw her there, then again and taking some of the ashes, filled her mouth with them. Meanwhile the victim continued to pray.

Her executioners, seeing her perseverance, beat her with leather straps for three hours. Now it happened that a spiritual daughter of the blessed woman, named Rita, needed to see her for some reason and went up the stairs to her room. She heard the sound of the repeated blows that the devils applied to her with great force. Rita, wondering what was causing the noise, she came to the bedroom door and found it closed. She stopped to listen more carefully to what was happening inside. She then discerned more clearly both the sound of the straps and the voice of the tortured woman who continued to pray. She called the blessed woman through the door and asked her to open it for her. Saint Frances of Rome answered with great

effort: - "I can't open it for you!" A few moments passed and the servant of God finally came with great difficulty to open the door. The evil spirits had abandoned their victim when they heard the voice of the newcomer, as they always did when she was called by someone. Rita entered and saw the woman she was coming to get. She no longer had any of the veils on her head that she usually covered herself with. All her clothes and face were covered with ashes, so much so that she was completely unrecognizable. She also had her mouth full of it, so that her voice was unintelligible and barely perceptible. Moreover, her body was very cold. The demons also tried to throw their valiant opponent into the fire; they failed to do so. Later they came back to attack her, three of them. One had taken the form of a lion; the other, that of a dragon, and the third, that of a snake. They held open their mouths from which their tongues came out like burning torches. They rushed up and jumped up against their victim. She was experiencing great suffering in her body because of the heat, flames and bad smell emanating from them. Her pain was so intense that it was unraveling. Her guardian angel delivered her from these spirits. Later, there were two of them, and they scourged her with the bodies of dead snakes as whips. Satan, in his many battles against Christ's servant, sometimes used terror and at other times treacherous advice. The father of lies appeared to her as a rustic man with a stick in his hand, like a traveler. - "I am," he said to her in principal, "Saint Onuphrius. Since you have the desire to retire in solitude, I encourage you to come with me, because I have found a very beautiful place that will suit you perfectly." But the blessed woman discovered this new trickery and replied: - "Wretched, I want to remain where it pleases my Lord. I want nothing more than to do His Will. As for you, the vilest of all beings, withdraw in the blessed name of Jesus Christ crucified and go into the abyss which is your home." The demon, hearing the name of Jesus, suddenly fell and hit the earth with his mouth. He got up and wanted to hit his opponent, but he didn't have the strength. The threats of Lucifer's supporters remained ineffective, as they were exaggerated. This was the case when they wanted to suffocate her or hang her on a rope suspended from a pole. Sometimes they presented themselves to her in a common form, as they did in the form of a herd of pigs; sometimes they constituted a whole merchant's house. In one of their assaults, where they had gathered as twelve, Saint Frances of Rome counted two lions, two dogs, two deer, two other wild animals and four men. All these fierce-looking spirits stood in front of her with great respect and

stroked her like domestic animals. All she showed them was contempt. So, they all threw themselves against her. Some seized her on one side and others on the opposing side, and they fought among themselves. As they tormented her in this way, they threw a blazing fire out of their bodies. It seems that Satan's supporters, panicked by the resistance of God's servant, lost all common sense. Didn't they imagine themselves presenting themselves to her under the figure of lambs and saying to her: - "We are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost." As they should have expected, their bold statement only got Saint Frances' disdain. Irritated by her contempt, they turned into furious wolves and threw themselves at her to devour her. They were put to flight by her guardian angel. They came back to attack and, to prevent her from looking at the light of the heavenly messenger, they collected some dust from the house and threw it in her eyes. This dust made her suffer but did not prevent her from seeing the splendor of the glorious angel, as well as the evil spirits. During an illness that the blessed woman had, she was lying in a small bed in her son's room. One night, the demon dropped on her head the pieces of armor that were used to cover her son's war horse. The young man and the sister of St. Frances, called Perna, were awakened by the noise. They feared that she had suffered some serious injuries. But she reassured them by telling them that, thanks to Divine Protection, she had no wounds. However, she did not reveal her thoughts to them and did not tell them that the devil was the author of this annoyance. The demons appeared to the servant of God on every occasion, and even in circumstances, that seem to us, to motivate their interference, but very weakly. One evening, the blessed woman carried through her house a blessed lit candle. A devil in human form tried to make it fall. Not succeeding, he rushed with a great impulse onto the candle and made it fall from her hands. So, she took a second candle. It was not blessed. The Evil One put it out. She lit a third one, which had been blessed like the first one. The devil tore it off with rage from her hand, threw it on the ground and spat on it. Saint Frances was very surprised that her persecutor had shown his contempt in this way for the third candle and not for the second. She commanded him from God to explain this change in attitude. He replied that he had done so to testify his disdain and hatred for the blessings of the Church. This answer was for the blessed woman advice that she retained. Whenever storms broke out in the air, she lit blessed candles and sprayed her house with holy water. It is under the disguise of ferocious animals, and more particularly lions hurling

fire through their mouths and eyes, that the filthy spirits seem to have manifested themselves most often to Saint Frances of Rome. However, they also had fewer frightening appearances, although much less frequently.

One night, among other things, six of them presented themselves to her under the plumage of beautiful white doves, similar to those that the blessed woman often saw in her visions of celestial origin. Despite this disguise, these six demons were recognized by the saint for what they really were. They then turned into stags, mistreated her and finally were made to flee by an angel of light. The servant of God becomes a widow. One of her daughters in Christ, named Agnes, was sleeping in her cell. One night she woke up frightened, suddenly pulled out of sleep by the sound of the blows her superior was receiving. She ran to her rescue and found her in a sad position, for the devil had lifted her up in the air and let her fall to the floor of her room. Agnes, realizing that the victim of the diabolical mistreatments was very cold, recommended that she go and warm up by the fire. The blessed woman refused to do so, lest her enemies rejoice in her retirement. She knew that the demons, after attacking and hitting her, fled sad and confused when they saw her firm and unshakeable in her trust in God. Agnes having left Saint Frances, the Evil One struck her again with such force that another nun named Jacqueline, heard the blows and entered her cell to assist her. She found her on her knees, bending her shoulders under the hand of her executioner, but she did not see the one who was hitting her. Very often the spiritual daughters of the blessed woman found her thrown to the ground, cold, reduced almost to agony. Agnes especially, who was sleeping in her cell, often made these observations, but neither she nor any of her companions saw the demons. When they heard noise in her cell, they came running to help her; but she answered them with great serenity of mind: "Go away! Go away!" They also heard her sometimes invoking the name of Jesus and at other times giving Him thanks for the victories He had allowed her to win over her enemies. One time that Saint Frances was sick and lying down, the devil, in the presence of Sister Agnes and other witnesses, took off the blankets from the bed and opened and closed the window of the room. The nuns saw the movement of the window and blankets but could not see what caused these movements. For a long time, they searched in vain for the blankets and finally found them rolled under the bed. The blessed woman made no reflection, except that this event had occurred with God`s

permission. Sister Perna affirmed that she had seen Saint Frances of Rome raised in the air to a considerable height by the evil spirits, and that, being dropped by them, she fell noisily on the floor of her room and then gave praise and thanks to God. Sister Augustina assured that, for the use of her blessed mother in religion, who never drank wine, she had been accustomed to carefully washing a small vase, filling it every day with fresh, clear water and covering it carefully with a lid, lest some dirt fall into it. However, when the servant of God wanted to drink, she always found the vase full of flies.

As Sister Augustina was saddened to see that, despite all her care, she could not serve clean water to her superior, she said to her: - "Don't be troubled. It is the demon who does this so that I don't drink pure water from the fountain." Jean Mattiotti reports that after the death of the servant of God an odd Hungarian, agitated by three spirits, was brought by force to her tomb and he was delivered by spitting out three pieces of coal in front of everyone.

Chapter II Hell Visions of Saint Frances of Rome. - Entrance to hell.

Saint Frances of Rome had ninety-three visions. She dictated them herself to her confessor, John Mattiotti, who passed it on to us. The authority that attaches itself to the word of a saint whose acts and writings were severely examined and controlled during the canonization process, along with the claim granted to them by many theologians, does not allow them to be treated lightly. Above the door of the abyss is marked this inscription: **"This place is hell. Here there is no more hope, nor end; here there is no rest!"** As she approached the cursed threshold, Saint Frances of Rome was overcome by an infinite terror. The fear entered her through her eyes, ears, smell and touch. She experienced in her ecstasy a terror so great that she never could have imagined it. Then, close to her, she felt, although she did not see it, the presence of a companion who exhorted her to courage and determination. The entrance to the place of abomination was vast, but as the door was opened, it grew larger and larger. There was such a thick darkness that the human language is unable to express it. Hell, itself is divided into three parts or dwellings tiered one above the other. The second, which is the middle, contains greater penalties than the first, which is the superior one; and the third, the inferior, is the place of much more numerous and infinitely greater torments than the encounters in the other two. Between these different places lie immense spaces filled with obscure darkness and infinite torments. A dragon, of colossal size, occupies these three places. His head is placed in

the superior level, his body in the middle, and his tail in the deepest part of the abyss, the inferior. His head, placed at the door of the first dwelling, is immense, but his neck is of medium size. A dark fire, unbearable heat and an intolerable bad smell come out of his eyes and ears. His mouth is always open. His tongue comes out and spreads a burning fire that burns, but it does not shine. From this horrible mouth comes an incredible stench.

Cries of rage and anguish, terrible howls, blasphemies against God, heartbreaking cries and sobs, echoes of superhuman pain, rose from the darkness of the abyss to the ears of St. Frances of Rome. These laments of the tortured were so appalling, and the contagion that escaped from the infernal prisons, were so intolerable, that the saint felt extreme pain and affliction when she told her spiritual Father about her vision. When she saw and heard these things, in ecstasy, the blessed woman felt so anxious that she thought she was going to faint. Then the invisible companion standing beside her comforted her and raised her courage. And the saint said repeatedly, in the course of her story, that without this assistance and encouragement, she would not have been able to see and hear what she saw and heard. She would have died of horror and dread. Satan, with his terrifying appearance, sits like a beam in the middle of hell. His head reaches the superior part, and his feet the inferior part. He thus occupies a part of these three places. He holds his feet apart and his hands apart. He extends one above and the other below. However, he does not have the attitude of a crucified person. His head is crowned with a kind of deer horn tiara. These horns have many horns on them and from each of them a high flame emerges. His face inspires incredible terror. It projects a blazing and foul-smelling fire through all the pores. He is bound by burning chains at the neck, hands, feet and center of the body, so that he is surrounded by them. These chains are attached to all the parts of hell, to the superior part, to the middle and to the deepest. However, one of them is an exception. It wraps itself around the dragon at one end, and Lucifer or Satan at the other. The angels who fell from heaven are divided into three parts. Some are in hell, others are in the air, and the last third are with us in this world and are given to us to test us. The spirits who followed Lucifer, obeying the inspiration of their own malice and their feelings of revolt in a radically perverted way, are locked in hell. These demons are the meanest and most iniquitous. They never leave the abyss, unless, by Divine Permission, there is some great catastrophe to be wrought in the world which is deserved by the sins of men. The spirits who

dwell in the regions of the air, and those who exist among us on this earth, are those who, during Lucifer's revolt against God, did not choose one or the other, but remained neutral. The prince and ruler of all the devils is Lucifer, the captive, the chained one. Now, in execution of the Divine Sentence, he is appointed in hell to the vice of pride, and is the master, the executioner and the tyrant of the demons and the damned. Just as he was the noblest of all angels, he became the most perverse of all the fallen spirits. Just as, in the glory of Heaven, three blessed spirits, of the three supreme choirs, super eminent in nobility, fidelity and beauty, are placed at the head of the three orders of the Heavenly Hierarchy, and communicate to them the wishes of the Most High, likewise, in the darkness of hell, three fallen spirits, more guilty than their companions in rebellion, are, by the decision of God's justice, committed to the leadership of the other demons, under the domination of Lucifer, and transmit to them the harsh commandments of the chained tyrant. The first, of these three infernal princes, is called Asmodeus. He was a member of the Choir of Cherubim. He is in charge of the vice of the flesh. The second, named Mammon, was from the Choir of Thrones. He is in charge of the vice of avarice. The third, Beelzebub, formerly of the Choir of Dominions, is the prince of idolatry and master of magical science and those who practice spells and incantations. He is the source of the night, the steward of the dark places of the abyss. His role, his function is to spread darkness on reasonable creatures. These three lieutenants of Lucifer, as well as their supreme leader, never leave hell; but when, by God's permission, some very great evil must be done in the world, they delegate this purpose to other demons who are subject to them and who usually reside with them in the darkness of the abyss. They send them especially when the devils who exist in the air, or those who are mixed with men, have neither the science nor the power to execute this extraordinary evil. It is only for this pernicious purpose that these messengers of misfortune, more learned and wicked than their colleagues in the superior regions, leave their prison for a time. However, they do not do so of their own free will, nor even by the authority of their leaders, but only by the express permission of God. The fallen spirits who, during the revolt of Lucifer, embraced his cause, driven by their own malice, part of them inhabit the third and deepest abode of hell; others, the second, the intermediary; the rest reside in the first, the superior. Those who are in the lowest abode are the demons who were part of the Highest Order of the Heavenly Hierarchy, the Choirs of the Cherubim, Seraphim and

Thrones. They endure the greatest torments, as they are the guiltiest, and are responsible for torturing the damned souls who have committed the greatest sins. They are submitted directly to Lucifer, the prince and principle of the vice of pride, who fell from the Choir of Seraphim. These demons, when they come out of hell, to come to the earth to commit some evil, come out mainly because of the crime of pride. The devils who belonged in Heaven to the Second Order of the Hierarchy, to the Choirs of the Dominions, the Principalities and the Powers, reside in the middle part of hell. They are tortured and they also torment the souls of the condemned who are there. They are subject to the supreme authority of Lucifer, but they obey directly to his lieutenant Asmodeus who fell from the Cherubim Choir and is the prince and principle of the vice of the flesh. Finally, the fallen spirits of the third Angelic Order, who were once Virtues, Archangels and Angels, inhabit the superior abode of the infernal kingdom. They suffer there themselves and are the executioners of the souls of the condemned who are there. Subjected, like their companions in pain, to the yoke of Lucifer in general, they are more especially so to that of Mammon, who was once a Thrones, and is mainly the prince of avarice. These demons, when they come out of hell, tempt men in so many ways that it is impossible to imagine it. Lucifer's third lieutenant, called Beelzebub, who fell from the Choir of Dominions, was constituted by Divine Justice as the prince and head of the darkness and of obscure places. These demons, which are innumerable, are thus hierarchical among themselves. Beelzebub is condemned to be tortured by the same darkness and to torment the souls who are in darkness and who adhere to the incantations, curses and spells of demons. These 15 practices spread darkness in the minds of men and divert them from the light of the truth, knowledge and integrity of Catholic doctrine in so many ways that it is difficult to believe and imagine. Just as the fallen angels who sinned by their own malice are distributed among the various parts of hell, so are those who, during Lucifer's revolt against God, remained mute and inactive and kept neutrality between the Creator and His creature, also remain divided in the execution of the sentence of God's justice. The demons who reside in the regions of the air and who were part of the supreme order of the Celestial Militia remain together. The same is true for those who fell from the second order and for those who fell from the third. But they have no hierarchy among themselves. Finally, the evil spirits who dwell on earth among men, like those who reside

in the air, retain the distinctions that divided them in Heaven into three orders, but they are not hierarchical among themselves either.

Chapter III The tactics of temptation. - Immediately after death. - The name of Jesus.

The evil spirits who live in the regions of the air often produce rains, wind, storms and hail storms. They use it to frighten the souls of men, to disturb them and finally to weaken them. They take this opportunity to diminish their trust in Divine Providence and make them fail in their faith. When these souls are so weakened by the maneuvers of the demons of the air, the fallen spirits that are on earth, mixed with men, lead them more easily and quickly to commit sins of pride. Then the devils, who fell from the second order of the Angelic Hierarchy and submitted to the demon Asmodeus, prince of the carnal vice, and who dwell in this world among us, finding these souls weakened by the spirits of the air and tempted with pride, attack them and make them fall more quickly into faults against chastity. In turn, the fallen spirits of the last three choirs of the Heavenly Militia and subjected to Mammon, prince of avarice, whose function is to tempt humans and remain among them, attack these weakened souls and sink them into the disorders of pride and of the flesh. They are more commonly right and inspire them with greed and the exaggerated love of money. Then comes Beelzebub, prince of darkness. He spreads the veils of error on those souls who have left the practice of virtue and distance themselves from the truth. Thus, these unhappy souls, not resisting the suggestions of the devils, fall from one sin into another. Each devil, designated to attack one man, occupies himself with only that person and does not try to tempt others, but he applies all his study and all his efforts to pervert him, without taking care of anything else. But after he has succeeded in defeating this man, he persuades him to commit faults against his neighbor, in order to provide this neighbor with opportunities of temptation, scandal and sin. By this way, this devil attacks other souls and hurts them. Although the infernal princes and spirits, who are subject to them, perform distinct functions according to the different vices, nevertheless, in their evil work, they agree among themselves and help each other in order to bring souls to their downfall. Indeed, after a man has fallen into a fault, if he does not withdraw promptly, he runs the risk of being dragged more quickly into others. God, in His justice, has imposed on the demons in hell the same order as He established among the angels in eternal

glory. Lucifer indeed dominates in his kingdom of iniquity and pain. Just as the glorious angels obey the precepts of their Creator, so do the evil spirits, each in his role, obey Lucifer's orders, because God has so decided. It is not only those who dwell in hell, who are thus subjected to him, but also those who inhabit the air and the earth. Thus, all the acts of temptation are accomplished in one moment. No demon would dare tempt souls without Lucifer's order, and he can only attack men with his perverse suggestions, as far as God allows it and permits him, in His solicitude, for the perfection of His saints. 17 Lucifer with one look sees all the devils of hell, air and earth. For their part, they understand the will of their king, each in the performance of his role. They also see each other without any obstacles. And this happens with the permission and order of the Divine Justice. The fallen spirits who populate the air do not feel the effects of the infernal fire, however, without this torment, they suffer very great sorrows. They hit each other in general and feel very sharp pain due to the good deeds they see virtuous men do. Moreover, all the other demons are also tormented and punished by this same view. The fate of the devils who dwell on earth among us is similar to that of their companions of misfortune, who exist in the superior regions, in terms of the sorrows they endure. But the fallen angels who continually dwell in hell always remain in the eternal fires and suffer its pain. It should be added that the demons of the air and earth who were part of the first or second order of the Celestial Hierarchy suffer greater torments than the others who have fallen from a lower rank. The same is true for the prisoners of the infernal abyss. The higher they once stood in Heaven, the more cruelly they are now tormented, because they were more guilty than their inferiors. Blessed Frances of Rome, when violent storms broke out, acknowledged that they were produced by the mischief of the demons of the air, used to light blessed candles and sprinkle the house with holy water. She assured that this was the most effective remedy against the natural turmoil caused by this. She also said that the evil spirits who dwell among us and are given to us to test us have fallen from the last Heavenly choir, that of the Angels. Likewise, according to her, the Angels who are granted to us by Divine Goodness, to keep us, are all also part of the last choir. The demons charged with tempting us are working tirelessly to destroy us. They attack in so many ways, with such powerful means, with so much astuteness, malice and skill, that the man who can escape such a number of traps and pitfalls must consider himself truly happy; for the soul, unless it is extraordinarily strong and

courageous, is perpetually bothered and attacked by the army of perverse spirits either in one way or another. When the virile souls do not let themselves be defeated by these temptations, but resist them with constancy, the devils, fallen from the last choir of angels, acknowledge their powerlessness and call upon other spirits who are smarter and more malicious to help them. These newcomers then teach the devils in charge of testing us how to tempt and torment souls who defend themselves with extraordinary courage and perseverance, by attacking them with extreme violence. Thus it happened to Blessed Frances of Rome, as she declared to her confessor; for not only was she tempted and tormented by the iniquitous spirit charged with this role over her, but she was still continually tormented by the demons of the air, fallen from the choir of Seraphim, and by other devils of the earth; and she was under attack not only from one of them but from several. Indeed, Christ's handmaid understood and knew, by a special favor of Divine grace, what rank each of the enemies who fought her had fallen from. When these evil spirits come to tempt a soul that defends itself courageously, some of them attack it head-on and others from behind, like traitors. This often happened to Saint Frances of Rome. She saw the devils behind her waving at those who were standing in front of her, and at their companion who was especially charged with testing her. She saw them, in different ways, performing this merry-go-round, and she understood it. It was then in its natural sense and not in ecstasy. The blessed woman was questioned by her spiritual Father, in the name of obedience, as to whether she distinguished these demons from each other, both those who fell from the last angelic choir and those who fell from other ranks of the heavenly army. She replied that she distinguished them perfectly because of their trickery and malice, the degree of which made them easily recognizable from each other. She saw and understood it in the devils themselves and in their temptations and struggles against herself and others. When souls harden themselves in mortal sin, evil spirits settle on them, as if on a throne, and dominate them in various aspects and by various means, according to the number and gravity of their sins. But when these souls repent of their faults and confess them, the demons lose their power over them and see themselves overthrown from the seat they had established there; then they prowl all around them, tempt them, trying to penetrate again by some perfidious suggestion, and cause them great concern. However, after a good confession they can no longer torment them so much, because they have

been weakened by the power and preventive effectiveness of the sacrament of penance. However, the soul which, during its earthly life, failed in winning victory over the evil spirits, comes to leave the body which it had been granted to it to win eternal bliss in battle. The devil who had been given to it, to test it, rushes upon it with great thrust and fury, and drags it to hell. Saint Frances of Rome saw these wretched souls, led with unheard-of rage and cruelty, bear their sins inscribed on their foreheads. She read these characters of shame and thus understood the causes of their damnation; but each of these wretches knew the faults of their companions of misfortune by a simple operation of the spirit. The other demons who dwell on earth among men also accompany the condemned soul. They torment it cruelly and tear it apart fiercely until they have cast it into hell. Then the evil spirit that was victorious over this human creature, and his companions of iniquity who united with him to make him suffer, rejoice and celebrate their triumph with great joy, while their victim falls into the abyss. But the guardian angel who, throughout the earthly life of this soul, had constantly stood by it and had constantly suggested to it good advice that it rejected, does not leave it immediately after death. After it has left the body, he accompanies it to the moment where it is thrown into hell that it justly deserves by its sins, then he ascends to the place that has been fixed for him in eternal glory. But when, by an operation of Divine grace, the soul is sent to purgatory, and when it is placed in the lower abode of that place of purification, the demon who, during his time on earth, had been given to this soul to test it, stands before its eyes outside purgatory. There it is cruelly tormented by Lucifer's order, because he had not succeeded in winning a new recruit for the infernal kingdom. The torment he endures for this reason is distinct and separate from the general punishments he suffers for not having taken the side of God during the great revolt, and it is added as an increase in torment. For its part, the soul, placed in the lower part of purgatory, suffers particular punishments because of the partial victories it allowed the evil spirit to have over it, and also because of the fear it feels to see the devil so horrible, and the pain it feels, to hear his reproaches. Its former tempter, indeed, makes it feel ashamed of the torments it endures, and repeats to it that it has earned them by obeying his perverse suggestions and offending its Creator. After this soul has been purified from its faults in the lower abode of purgatory and has been released, the devil returns to the earth and is mocked by the other evil spirits, because he has lost this soul through his softness and neglect. When

these hell-bearers, charged with the role of tempters, have not succeeded in the mission entrusted to them by Satan, they are no longer delegated to other men to tempt them; but they wander the earth, sad and miserable, and commit other wrongdoings, as they can. Sometimes, by divine permission, they are sent, for their confusion, into the bodies of brute beasts. At other times they possess living men and women and claim to be the spirits of the deceased. They even frequently take the names of the deceased in order to defame their memory. But the demons who won the souls that they were in charge of tempting, after leading their victims to hell, come back to earth and remain among us with the reputation of valiant and victorious champions of Lucifer's cause. Their leader then entrusts them with similar new missions with men. These evil spirits become more malicious, more learned and iniquitous in their undertakings against souls whom they could not defeat by their own strength and personal science, they were instructed with more treacherous tricks by their companions, fallen from a higher heavenly choir, and who are more astute and more powerful than they. All the demons on earth who have fallen from the last rank of the Angelic Militia are not busy tempting us. Those who do not perform this function do not, however, remain inactive. Their role is to torment their companions of misfortune charged with tempting men, when they cannot defeat them and make them obey their suggestions. Divine Justice has so ordered, whenever a tempting spirit fails to overcome the soul it has been charged with inducing to evil, whenever it cannot, despite its efforts, incline it towards sin, is itself struck by other devils. This torment is in addition to the other general punishments he suffers. All the sins we commit makes hell rejoice, but also all the acts of virtue we perform, all the prayers we say, are occasions of humiliation and suffering for the rebel and his slaves. When the Holy Name of Jesus is pronounced by a man with devotion, all demons, both those in the darkness of the abyss and those who fly in the air or inhabit the earth, are forced to genuflect. They do not do so of their own free will, but they are compelled to do so by the divine power of this Most Holy Name. It happened once, recounts St. Frances of Rome, that, speaking with her spiritual director about spiritual matters and pronouncing the name of Jesus. Immediately demons, whom the blessed woman saw in various aspects, struck the earth with their mouths with great fear. The more the person who says this Blessed Name excels in charity and Christian perfection, the more pain and suffering the fallen spirits experience. On the other hand, when sinners transform this

Name into a blasphemy or a vain formula, the devils, although forced to genuflect despite themselves, do not mourn, but are happy and rejoice because of the sin that is committed. In this way, sometimes they feel sad and sometimes they feel satisfied, but in either case, they are forced to show respect to their Creator. Likewise, whenever the Name of Jesus is pronounced either in vain, blasphemy or perjury, all the glorious spirits who inhabit the Heavenly Homeland, whether of an angelic nature or of human nature, genuflect with great respect. They do not feel the same joy as when they hear Him praised and blessed, but they greet Him with extreme reverence. But when this Holy Name is invoked and exalted, especially by persons consecrated entirely to God, the inhabitants of Heaven manifest a deep veneration and an unspeakable joy. Likewise, when men pronounce the other names of God and the Virgin Mother, glorious spirits, angels and saints, experience joy and exultation in proportion to the merits of those who are saying them. Saint Frances of Rome said that whenever she uttered the name of Jesus, or someone pronounced it before her, her angel, whom she saw continuously, bowed with a face bursting with happiness and a movement full of joy. He brought to this action such dignity, such grace, that the blessed woman, in her sight, felt all inflamed with the love for God.

Chapter IV Limbo

Near the gate of hell, in a place called "Limbo", stands an angel.

It was in this place that the saints of the Old Testament were placed for a time. This residence is separated from the prisons of the abyss where the demons are tormented. It is placed above the area where the dragon and Lucifer, the chained tyrant, and all the infernales stay. There are no evil spirits, no snakes, no fire, no cold, no unpleasant smell; there is no screaming, no blasphemy; there is no punishment other than darkness. This is where the little children who have died without being baptized are sent. There they experience no suffering other than that which results from the darkness. Limbo is divided into three parts, one above the other. In the highest are placed the little children begotten by Christians who died without baptism. In the middle one, remains the children of the Jews, who died at an early age, and who have not yet committed any fault. However, their stay is filled with a thicker darkness than that of the children born to Christians. Finally, in the lower part are enclosed the little children who died without baptism and who came from illegitimate unions of godparents, monks, nuns

and other persons, both men and women, engaged in the bonds of the priesthood or under the vow of chastity. In this place the darkness is deeper than that in the other two parts of Limbo.

Chapter VI

The torments for each sin and for each category of damnation Saint Frances of Rome was not only aware of the evils endured by all the reprobates, she saw in particular the sorrows suffered by each of them, as punishment for the vice to which they were more especially attached. In recounting her visions, the blessed woman repeated more than fifty times that, if she had not been supported and encouraged by the angel who accompanied her, she would not have had the constancy or even the strength to endure the sight of the spectacles that were shown to her. She would have died of pain and dread.

Laziness

The souls of the lazy are sitting in a furnace. The flame completely covers them. They each hold their heads inclined and their arms are bent. The seat on which they sit is a square stone, sculpted and carved with stripes, like a fluted column. These dug lines are full of burning coals, and the stone itself is on fire. The demons have in their hands hooked and flaming instruments with which, they pull these souls in one direction, then pull them out in another, from one end of the stone to the other. They bring extreme determination to this back and forth work. The corners of the stone dig deep furrows in the flesh of the tormented; the coals that fill the hollows burn them; and the fangs handled by their executioners tear them to pieces. The torturers also turn them, sometimes on their backs and at other times on their stomachs. This punishment is applied to them to punish them for the time they lost on earth. Then one of the two demons, specially attached to each of these damned souls, stands behind him. He masters him with his left hand placed on his heart; with the other, armed with a sword, he opens his whole chest on his right side, then pours boiling oil into the wound. This punishment is inflicted upon them because of the false idea that they formed of God's mercy when they were in the world, and especially because they produced in the open the faults of their neighbor. Moreover, the same devil places in the wound of their chest a large number of worms of various kinds. This torment punishes them for the thoughts of all kinds of which they were agitated on earth, especially when they remained idle. As a result of this spectacle, Saint

Frances of Rome was surprised to see the damned suffering from corporal punishments, since the souls have no flesh; she was also very surprised to see the demons using iron instruments in the middle of a fire that melted metals. She was answered by the Angel Raphael, her companion. - "Currently," he explained, "and until the end of the world, the souls of the reprobates (are evidently) will be deprived of their bodies. "However, although they lack flesh, they are materially punished according to the senses of their bodies, because, although the soul is of its spiritual essence, it takes on the material nature to suffer in hell. This will be so until the last judgment comes; but then the souls of the reprobates will return to their bodies and suffer in their bodies similar torments to those you see represented." The Angel added that, moreover, all these things were represented to her, not in their exact reality, as they happen in the depths of the abyss, but in the form of sensible images, so that they could be understood by her human intelligence. As for the instruments of torture, the same Angel explained to her that there exists nothing similar in the darkness of hell, but that those she saw were shown to her so that she would realize the torture that the damned suffer. They are indeed subjected to penalties similar to those they would feel if these instruments were in the hands of their executioners.

Gluttony

The ordeal suffered by the gluttonous is frightening. One of the two demons, specially charged with tormenting each soul guilty of this vice, grabs it by the head and drags it over burning coals. The other devil, meanwhile, jumps on it and clings to its chest by sticking the claws of his feet into its ribs. He ties its hands and ankles to itself, then throws it into a tank full of molten pitch and pushes it in completely, submerging it. He takes it out of this torment and plunges it back into another tank filled with ice; then, while he keeps it in this bath, he pours boiling wine between its lips and introduces a large number of snakes into its mouth. This torture is the punishment for the excess of food and drink that the gluttonous committed on earth. And its executioners repeat to it during this time: - "O you who, during your stay on earth, loved eating and drinking so much, and who enjoyed all the delights of the table, now bear these sufferings and pains: you justly deserve them. From now on, snakes will be your food and fire your drink." Then this reprobate is tied to a big red iron post. He is subjected to this torture for the sins of immorality of which he is guilty, because very often the excesses of the table generate

misconduct. While this damned is thus tied up, one of his two executioners approach him and licks him from top to bottom with a long tongue of fire. He thus causes him cruel suffering. His second torturer advances towards him in turn, armed with a curved sword and tears him apart in the parts that his companion has burned. This torture is the particular punishment for the vice of vain glory. Rich lovers of the pleasures of the table are in fact accustomed to show off their luxury in their banquets and to take pride in the large number of dishes they offer to their guests, and the beauty of their dishes. Under the red iron post is a harrow bristling with very sharp nails. The demons untie the tormented and drop it on these points. There a furious snake bites it fiercely in the mouth, hits it with its tail like a whip and tears it apart as punishment for the crimes of adultery it committed. Because this kind of sin often accompanies or follows the luxurious magnificence of banquets. The executioners then place the glutton's soul on a black cable, and pull it here and there, then drop it into the fire. They have iron piles and tie it to it. They lift it up by stabbing it in the Jaws with flaming metal pliers, then they hold it suspended and make it endure various other torments during this time. These punishments are inflicted on it because of the thefts it may have committed to satisfy its gluttony. And yet these torments are not enough to punish this vice, which is the source of such disorder. The demons drag their victims into a well that contains three pits. They plunge it into the first one filled with water which is frozen by the cold. They then remove it and throw it into the second pit which is full of liquid lead. They open its mouth by force and introduce to it a drink composed of pitch, sulphur and gall melted together. From the second pit they then precipitate it into the third where snakes and toads swarm. These filthy animals enter the mouth of the damned and enter its body. The two executioners then grabbed red iron fangs and extract these infernal beasts from the bowels of the tormented. Then they dragged it on beds of burning coals, insulting it and overwhelming it with reproaches. And the wretched, through so many cruel tortures, shouts and blasphemes with an inexpressible rage.

Dancers

Very different from the pains endured by the gluttonous are those endured by the dancer. The damned who has taken guilty pleasure in these amusements is placed on a large burning iron pole and is attached to it. The demons pierce him cruelly with arrows. They do so with discernment and

strike him with their traits according to the different ways in which he succumbed, dancing, to the temptations of the spirit and the flesh. Then they remove him from the pole, beat him with their feet and break his head with appalling cruelty. Then they make him stand up and, to make fun of him, they dance around him. Each executioner holds in his hand a whip made of straps and red iron grapples mixed with one and another. With these instruments they strike their victim in the places of the body where he has taken the most pleasure in his amusements; the ears, if it is by hearing; on the tongue, if it is by singing; so that the dancer is punished in that of his senses with the help of which he had committed some fault. By torturing him, the demons add insult and mockery to the blows. - "O painful soul," they tell him, "in another century you were charmed by worldly vanity; but here you suffer with us. Know well that you will remain in these deep dwellings, amid torments throughout all eternity."

Vanity

Women who during their lives have taken excessive care of themselves, adorned themselves and made themselves more beautiful by toiletries and luxurious clothes, expiate their vanity in the other world in a very particular way. Their hair, which they arranged with such care, has disappeared. Instead, ugly snakes are wrapped around their naked skulls which bite their heads with ferocity. The demons charged with torturing each of them, hold small vases full of very sharp nails, reddened with the flame of the infernal fires. To punish the care, she once took to decorate herself, they put these burning nails in her flesh, throughout her whole body. And the snakes stretch the head and bit it cruelly in the wounds dug by the tips. Meanwhile, the two executioners insult her and tell her: - "O sorrowful soul, who was so vain, now wash yourself and make yourself beautiful in the midst of this fire that devours you. You're in the custody of these snakes. You are subjected to their bites. Behold, you have fallen into hell: it is justice. When you lived on earth, you were like a demon; from now on you will remain in the company of demons; you are immersed in the fury of the abyss and will never, ever know any rest." And blown away by this mockery, the wretched vain soul curses her Creator with accents of senseless rage.

Procuring Parents

In a no less horrible place are held the souls of parents who have delivered their own daughters to immorality. Each of them is enclosed in a kind of cabin with walls of flames. Four demons in the form of dogs, full of rage, cruelly tear them with their teeth and one of them throws his debris at the other and this one sends them back to the third. The soul who committed this monstrous sin by depravity, sees its heart torn away by the devils. They throw it at each other while thrilling each other. Everyone bites it in one place, then bites on its own waste. The damned one who was guilty of this infamy for love of money, is forced to open his mouth, and the demons pour into his throat molten gold and silver. Snakes tie themselves all around the body of these immoral people and make them suffer especially in those senses by which they have sinned. Their torturers, meanwhile, address these accusations to them: - "O providers of vice, you are in the fire that never goes out, and you endure a thousand evils and a thousand outrages. You have destroyed the honor of God and, for a reward, you endure boundless torment." And these wretched respond with shouts of pain and curses against their Creator. Their executioners, in order to increase their torment, push these souls against each other in a terrible tumult. Parents curse their daughters, and daughters curse their parents who were the cause of such great evils and torments, and they fight each other horribly.

Religious Who are Unfaithful to the Vow of Chastity

The souls of religious who have not kept the vow chastity that they had promised to God, remain in an intense fire and suffer many torments. Each of them is immersed in a tank filled with molten pitch and sulphur. The demons take them out with fangs and throw them into another full of ice. Then, despite their blasphemies and frightful howls, they extract them and place them between two basins of red iron, on which are planted, the points outside, very sharp nails also reddened by fire. They nail them to it. The devils then place themselves all around, armed with iron forks with which they pierce them on all sides by addressing these outrages to them: - "Wretches, it is because you have committed sacrileges, that you are plunged into the infernal fires for eternity. You had the audacity, on earth, to take part in the sacraments in the state of mortal sin. You ate your judgment and drank your condemnation. For this reason, we will make you suffer without pauses or rest."

Ungrateful Children

If the torments of the parents who have subjected their daughters to immorality are frightening, the torments of the children who have not honored their father and mother, who have despised and neglected them, are no less frightening. The ungrateful son is locked in a barrel full of boiling pitch and is forced to drink it as one drinks water. Many snakes are his fellow prisoners, in his narrow prison, and the walls of his prison are bristling with extremely sharp and burning razors. Demons roll this barrel here and there. The prisoner is cut and sliced in all directions and the snakes locked up with him bite him in the wounds made by the razor blades.

Envy

The envious are covered with an immense flame that completely covers them. Each of them carries within them a very long, very large and very poisonous worm, which gnaws at their heart and climbs to their throat. When one of the two demons, especially assigned to each condemned person to be his torturer, sees this worm reaching the mouth, about to leave, he grabs the damned person by the throat with one hand and tightens it tightly, to force the worm to go down. With the other hand the devil holds a sword and slices open the heart of the tormented. But this heart closes and immediately reforms itself to be able to suffer again and again. The second executioner, armed with iron fangs reddened with fire, rips off this already reconstituted heart, makes his excrements on it and rolls it in rot; then, when he has thus soiled it, he moves it on the face of his victim while insulting and hurting him.

Haters

Just as the envious, those who have let themselves be guided in this life by hatred sit in the midst of the flames in the lower abode of the abyss. Demons tear them apart with burning iron combs. This is their particular punishment, in addition to the general punishments that all the souls in hell suffer.

Anger

The angry souls are punished in different ways, according to the different circumstances in which they had let themselves be driven to their vice, but the torture that is especially their punishment is this: they are placed in a location in which there is a huge and scary snake made of a flaming metal.

This monster has a huge belly, which is completely open. Its neck bends like an arch and its head is tilted over its belly. Its open mouth shows inside reddened iron instruments, in the shape of a crescent, sharp and strident. Its open belly is also bristled inside with similar crescents. The demons hold in their hands small burning iron wheels, all bristled with very long and very sharp burning nails. With the help of these wheels they throw the souls of the angry into the open mouth of the snake among the instruments of flaming iron with which it is armed. Other demons, carrying fire fangs, are waiting to grab these souls as they appear in the belly of the monster while passing through it. As soon as they see them, they grab them and tear them away with extreme violence, then they carry them away, tear them apart and to shreds with unheard-of ferocity.

Homicides

In the depths of the abyss are placed two huge tanks: one full of boiling blood, the other of ice. They're prepared for the murderers. The demons drag them with great violence and throw them sometimes into the first tank and at other times into the second. They also torment them in other ways. In particular, they have flaming iron weapons with which they strike them in the heart and on the tongue. The murderers never see this torture stop, even during the one-second interval. This does not prevent them from suffering from the other sorrows common to all the inhabitants of hell. Kept in the same place as the murderers are those miserable women who did not want to be mothers and killed their children before they were born. Their iniquity, their cunning and their perverse maneuvers to hide their faults have earned them the same torments that murderers endure. They suffer with them torments proportionate to the number and seriousness of their crimes.

Avarice

The avaricious are kept in a place full of gigantic crocodiles. Each of these reptiles grabs a reprobate, keeps him still with its front legs, bites him in the heart with its teeth and hits him in the mouth with its tail. Other demons, meanwhile, tear the damned with burning combs, then tear him away from the crocodile with violence. In the dwelling of the avaricious is dug a deep cellar filled with liquid gold and silver. The executioners throw their victims into the air, who fall into this pit, where they drown them. Then they retake

them and tear them apart again with their combs; then they pour liquid gold and silver into their throats and overwhelm them with all kinds of shame.

Usurers

The usurers also endure many hardships. They are placed on a table of fire, on which they are nailed, their hands stretched out. However, they are not arranged in the shape of a cross. It was explained to Saint Frances of Rome by the Angel Raphael who accompanied her and supported her during her vision of hell, that the august sign of salvation cannot be used in the kingdom of Satan, in the abode of the outcasts. On the head of each usurer thus stretched out and nailed down is placed a crown of fire. The demons have stoves containing molten gold and silver. They pour these frightfully hot metals into the mouth of the damned; then they hasten to pierce his chest with a hole, above his heart, and in that hole, they pour liquid gold and silver again, saying to their victim: - "O miserable soul, remember your past life!" Then the executioners tear the patient off of its bed of pain and throw it into a tank that is filled with the same precious metals melted by the dreadful ardor of the infernal fire. Thus, the usurers remain in continuous torments that follow one another without interruption. They move from one to the other and do not know what rest is.

Gamblers

In the kingdom of Lucifer, all vices meet. The gamblers are not far from the usurers of whom they were often the victims of. The gamblers who played dices suffer the special pain of being thrown and rolled on bones crushed into small pieces, divided and mixed with burning coals. The demons take red iron dices and place them in the palm of the gamblers and in their mouths. They also sit them down on reddened iron tables and beat them with whips armed with burning iron pallets. The gamblers are also tormented by various particular tortures, depending on the faults they were dragged in by their master passion. If they went all the way to murder, they are beheaded. In this way, everyone is punished according to the sin in which he fell because of the game. Moreover, their executioners pour gold and silver into their throats, as they do to the avaricious and usurers, to punish them for their immoderate desire for wealth. And other demons hurl these outrages at them: -
"Wretched gamblers who let yourselves be deceived and brought to this

place, you have given us victory over you of your own free will. Now we have you in our power. You will always be subject to our domination now and in eternity." And these souls blaspheme in despair and curse the name of God.

The Prideful

The men who on earth were proud and presumptuous descend into the last degree of abjection in hell. Because of the different circumstances in which they have sinned, they are divided into different places, but all of these dwellings are closed in themselves as if they were in a common enclosure. It is, so to speak, a prison of pride divided into many sections. The ambitious are placed apart and face the worst oppositions of the demons; as much as they have desired honors in this world, so much so, they are, in the other, covered with confusion by the subordinates of the chained prince. The same is true for all kinds of proud people. They are divided into separate groups according to the circumstances in which their vice had given itself a career, and they are punished according to the type and degree of their guilt. But the general punishment they suffer is this: in their prison stands a gigantic lion made of flaming metal. It opens its mouth and is hollow inside. In his throat are placed sharp razors which are reddened with fire. On his sides are swarming snakes and toads or, to put it more accurately, - as it should be understood from all the animals seen in hell by Saint Frances of Rome, - demons under the aspects of these filthy beasts. On the rear part of this lion, as on the front, there are razors with burning blades. The devils in charge of this function throw the proud into the air, so that they fall into the mouth of the metal monster on the razors. The wretched is cut and divided to such an extent that they appear dead. After that, they pass through the lion's belly and find themselves immersed in the disgusting clusters of ugly, dirty and poisonous beasts. They seem crushed, but they do not take long to revive, to regain new strength, because the wretched cannot, alas! die, and are always ready to suffer new torments. Demons stand at the lower part of the lion, armed with long fangs. They use it to reach the damn inside the monster and pull them out through the razor-sharp blades. At the end of this narrow passage, the victims are torn into strips, cut into small pieces. But their flesh reunites, their limbs reform and, thrown into the air, they fall back into the lion's mouth to cross it again. And this torment repeats over and over again. These painful souls, in a terrible rage, caused by such terrible and atrocious tortures, scream in pain and throw horrible curses towards God. The demons

increase their sufferings by their mockery and reproaches. - "O cursed proud ones," they repeat to them, "for many years you have struggled on earth to be the greatest and to eclipse other men; you have drawn vanity from your advantages and successes; now you are thrown into the sides of this metal monster, instrument of your punishment. From now on, and for eternity, you will only know pain and suffering..."

Blasphemers

Blasphemy, one of the forms of pride, is punished in the infernal depths by many torments. The miserable man who, during his life, has persistently insulted God and His saints, is handed over to demons armed with sharp fangs, who rip out his tongue and burn it over a blazing fire. Then, in its place, they put burning coals. Then they grab their victim in their arms and throw him into a tank full of boiling, hot oil, and pour this oil into his throat. As they do so, they reprimand this soul: - "Why," they said to him, "did you blaspheme the One Who had created you?" And this wretched, hearing these reproaches, curses the name of God with even greater rage, with more furious emphases. These blasphemers, who are placed in the deepest part of hell, who suffer more torments than their neighbors in the same place, are the Christians who, out of fear of being tortured, denied the holy Catholic faith. These numerous torments are added, like the particular punishments of each kind of fault, to the general punishments endured by all the reprobates: darkness, fire, foul odor, etc.

Traitors

Among other equally cruel torments, traitors suffer this particular torment: their infernal executioners introduce into their mouths iron instruments, which are finished with fangs and push them into their bodies right to their hearts. Then, with violence and, trying to make them suffer as much as possible, the torturers tear out their hearts and throat walls and throw the panting flesh onto burning coals, where they drag them along. This torture is constantly repeated and will never end. In addition, the devils plunge these wretched traitors into a tank filled with burning pitch and keep them submerged by repeating to them: "O traitors, liars and damned, you have reveled in the iniquity in the secret of your thoughts; you have failed in the fidelity you owe to your masters; you have renounced the promises you made at Holy Baptism by renouncing Satan and all his works... Why have you

not kept them? You wretched fools, remember the oaths you betrayed! Liars with false hearts, traitors to your God, to the commitments of your baptism and to your neighbor, now receive the punishments you have earned." These wretched souls shout and curse their baptism and all the other sacraments they have received, and the One who instituted them. And these curses are never appeased. In the abyss the damned are punished, not only according to their vices in general, but also according to the faults they committed in the exercise of their professions on earth. Saint Frances of Rome, guided and comforted by the Angel Raphael, saw the outcasts who on earth had belonged to all sorts of social categories, from the most common to the rarest, from the lowest to the highest.

Doctors Without a Conscience

Doctors who have sinned in the exercise of their profession are kept in the lower part of hell where they are tormented by Lucifer enchained, or more precisely by his satellites. They have their heads placed upside down and their feet in the air and, in this position, are cruelly torn apart by demons armed with fangs and pieces of iron that have been reddened by fire. This is the punishment for their misuse of prohibited books, and for their negligent or malicious homicides. It is also the punishment for the faults they committed by violating the Church's orders and caring for the sick without inciting them to go to confession and be reconciled with God. Those who have neglected to educate themselves in their art have their eyes gouged out. Those who, having deceived themselves about their science, shared with their clients a misleading hope for a cure, and did not advise them to receive the last rites in time, see their hearts torn out and thrown at demons in the shape of dogs that tear them apart. As a punishment for the luxury and display they had exhibited in the way they dress, they are covered with a mantle of flame. But this flame, like any hellish fire, does not shine. On the contrary, it is dark and generates darkness. To those who have shown themselves to be greedy for money, the demons pour into their mouth molten gold and silver. Continually, these miserable doctors blaspheme the name of God and are subjected to the reproaches of their torturers. - "O miserable souls, who despite your knowledge, allowed yourselves to be blinded and deceived by your love of the goods of the earth, now that you are plunged into torments, no one will pity you."

Dishonest Pharmacists

The ignorant and greedy pharmacists suffer very severe penalties like the guilty doctors. They are plunged into a tank full of filth that suffocates them in punishment for the medicines they did not compose according to the prescriptions. The demons lift them out of this tank with fangs and water them with insults. Other devils in the shape of dogs rip their hearts out, dispute it among themselves with their teeth and tear them apart. Then they insult them and blame them for their lack of foresight in their misdeeds.

Briable Judges

After those who have harmed their neighbor through their dishonest merchant frauds, and those who have attacked him in his health and existence, come those who have committed evil against their fellow men in even higher social situations. The judge who sold his sentences for money and made false judgments wears a miter of fire. First thrown into a vast tank filled with liquid gold and silver, is then removed by the demons with the help of inflamed fangs and is then thrown at devils, who are in the shape of lions, to serve as their victim. The latter plow him with their teeth and hit him with their claws and tear him to pieces.

Liars and False Witnesses

Liars, and mainly false witnesses, suffer similar punishments to those of prevaricating judges. Their tongues are ripped out, their hands are cut off. They are tormented in every way by the demons, who lick them with a horrible tongue of fire. After that they are thrown into the same tank as the judges and hear the demons tell them: - "You are cursed by God because of your lies and you are plunged into the eternal fires because of your deeds. The love of money deceived you and lions are tearing you to pieces." And the incessant concert of blasphemies shouted by the damn, responds to the insults of their torturers.

Slanderers

In the middle of a furnace are placed the slanderers. Each of them has as an executioner an evil spirit in the form of a seven-headed snake. With the first, the monster pulls out the patient's tongue; with the second, he eats it; he spits it out into the fire through the mouth of the third; then, with the help of

the fourth, he picks up the burning tongue and puts it back in the mouth of the damned. From his fifth head he rips out his eyes, from his sixth he pulls the brain out of his head through the ear holes, and from the last one tears it to pieces throughout his body. Then he throws him into the fire and covers him with a kind of red iron garment. Other demons also tear the members of the miserable to pieces by telling him at the same time: - "Desolate soul, who allowed yourself be deceived by your sensuality and lost by lies of which you made truths, who rejoiced in calumnies, you now suffer in eternal fire, you are tormented by the serpent and visited by Lucifer's followers. In eternity you will be punished in the same way."

Bad Preachers

The torments endured by the bad priests are particularly terrible. The preachers who did not dare, by flattery, to rebuke what was wrong, or who, by mixing the false with the true, misled their listeners in some error, are held prisoner in a furnace full of darkness, snakes and filth, bitten and trampled by reptiles with cruelty. Those who have tried to please people by refusing to blame them for their vices, suffer an infamous punishment. Demons in the shape of dogs make their waste in front of them and this waste is then placed in their mouths. Afterwards, their tongues are torn off by these same executioners and their throats are filled with fire. Those who have mixed heretical proposals with the truth have their tongues, ears and heart ripped out by these same devils who look like dogs. After that they are laid in a bath of burning stones and are covered with them. While they are in this position, their torturers fill their mouths with lead, sulphur and liquid pitch mixed with several other materials. Those who are guilty of the sin of simony bear the same penalties, but in addition to them the demons pour between their lips molten gold and silver and address these bloody reproaches to them: - "Cursed souls, who during your earthly lives were charged with the righteous mission of preaching the heavenly truths, and who by your words of error, have cast so many souls into eternal torment, behold, you too are plunged into it as punishment for your perverse teachings. You are suffering from terrible torments. They will never stop..." These preachers, who have not known how to lead others or themselves into the ways of salvation, cry out in pain and curse the God whom they have misunderstood.

Unworthy Confessors

The confessors who sold the sacraments, have their mouths filled with molten gold and silver and carry a heavy instrument of torture around their necks. Thus, they are thrown into a pit where there is deep darkness and where mounds of filth are piled up. The demons remove them from this pit by lifting them up at the end of iron fangs reddened by fire, the tips of which cruelly hurt the flesh. In this place is arranged a kind of staircase under which the devils light a fire, and whose steps are bristled with blades of burning razors. A demon stands to the right of the damned and one of his companions to the left. They push hooks into their shoulders and pull them along the steps on the sharp blades of the burning razors. These tortures are inflicted on these miserable confessors because they had excited their penitents to evil. The fallen angels constantly remind them of their faults in these terms: - "You have been raised to a high dignity and, through your crimes, you have fallen into the abyss of perdition and into the furnaces of hell to suffer infinite sorrows. You have despised the sacraments and Satan punishes you by our hands."

Sovereign Pontiffs

It is not even to the sovereign Pontiffs, some of whom have fallen from their throne of glory in such desolation. They are degraded in a way similar to the way in which priests and clerics who have committed serious offenses are degraded in this life. 39 The skin of their tonsure is torn off and the fingers of their consecrated hands are cut off. But this skin and these fingers are placed in a less despised place. The demons take burning pieces of iron resembling miters and place them on the heads of these reprobates. These miserable souls are then locked up in a prison that is more obscure, darker than the other places of hell. These dungeons are filled with waste and filth. They are thrown into it and pushed upside down. This punishment is inflicted on them to punish them for the unworthy way in which they held the most august episcopal chair in the world. From this soiled and filthy place, they are torn away with rage by the demons and thrown into a raging blaze. Although they are still in the fire, like all the other damned, they still experience in this blaze a special torture in addition to the general pain suffered by the condemned. If they have committed the sin of simony, they suffer the particular torment for those who have loved money too much, the devils pour molten gold and silver into their mouths. Those who, despite the sanctity of their character,

had bad morals, are placed between two iron tables armed with very sharp burning nails and are cruelly nailed to them. Evil spirits, in the form of ravenous wolves, tear them from these huge pliers and insult them by tearing them apart with their teeth. - "O Sovereign Pontiffs," they tell them, "who in another century, occupied the highest position on earth and have been blessed with so many honors, how you are miserable and despised now! In the midst of the flames, you are devoured by furious wolves. You will endure this pain and many others, and you will never rest again." The demons always mock these wretched people and those criminals who have abused grace so much, curse the name of God and His saints.

Magicians

Those who have deviated from the Christian faith in one way or another are punished in a different way. Those who practiced magic, spells and incantations are placed in the middle part of the abyss, with those souls who added faith to their practices and used them. They dwell in darkness and torments. The demons stone them with iron pucks reddened with fire. In addition, they are placed in a kind of cage, similar to the ones in which the slaves offered for sale were once exhibited in Rome. This cage is square and bristling with burning iron instruments. In the middle there are fierce fires. The souls trapped there are pressed from all sides and it is as if they are crushed by these iron instruments.

Renegades and Apostates

Renegades and apostates are cut in the middle with red iron saws on which drops of molten lead fall. But as soon as these damned are cut in half, their flesh merges together to be able to suffer again, and the demons pour this molten lead into their throat and inflict a great number of other tortures on them.

The Excommunicated

Finally, the excommunicated are thrown into the dragon's mouth. They do not come out of the monster's belly like the other damned, but they descend into the tail of the infernal beast. This tail, placed in the deepest part of the abyss, is filled with pitch, brimstone, boiling oil and iron that an ardent and terrible fire, beyond all expression, keeps in a liquid state. The demons who stand around this part of the dragon's body, but not inside, overwhelm these

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souls with insults and reproaches and shout at them: - " Wretched souls, who allowed yourselves to be blinded by your passions and lead by the desires of your senses, your sins have bound you and immobilized you in this place, because you did not fear excommunication. Suffer this harsh and cruel punishment and stay forever in the dragon's tail to be devoured by fires that will never be extinguished." And these souls answer: - "Alas! Alas! What torments, what pain and shame we suffer!..."