

A TIME LINE

ST. FRANCIS AND ST. CLARE OF ASSISI

- 1182 Born in 1182 to Pica and Pietro di Bernardone in Assisi, Italy. Pietro was a wealthy cloth merchant and Pica was from a wealthy French family.
- 1193 or 1194 Clare (Chiara) di Favarone of the Offreducio family is born in Assisi. Clare's parents are of the wealthy class. Clare's mother's name was Ortulana and her father's name was Favarone.
- 1199-1200 Francis "participates in the struggle between the *maiores* and *minores* of the city."
- 1202 Francis joins the army and was taken prisoner following his involvement in the war against Perugia. Francis spent several months as a POW. Francis becomes very sick in prison with an unknown illness.
- 1205 Francis leaves Assisi to join the military campaign of the famous knight, Walter of Brienne. However, as he is on his way with the other young men, He hears a voice asking, "Is it better to serve the lord or the servant?" Francis turns around and returns to Assisi.
- 1205 Clare's family returns to Assisi. Caught in the difficulties of the time resulting from the rise of the merchant class in Assisi, Clare's family fled to Perugia when she was still a child, and returned to Assisi in 1205, when she was about twelve years old. That was the same year in which Francis of Assisi renounced his father and received official recognition of his life as a penitent.
- 1205 Francis experiences the invitation of Jesus on the San Damiano crucifix to "Rebuild his church."
- 1206 Francis has a significant conversion experience by embracing a leper.
- 1206 Francis renounced his father and officially was recognized as a *penitent*.
- 1209 Francis gains his first followers.
- 1208 After Francis heard a sermon on Matthew 10:7-9 (the Mission Discourse), he responded: " 'This is what I wish; this is what I seek with my whole heart.' He removed his sandals and tunic right there and embarked on a life of total poverty and preaching."
- 1209 Band of twelve Brothers travel to Rome to seek approval for their way of life.

- 1211-1212 Secret meetings between Francis and Clare preparing her to join Francis.
- 1212 On Palm Sunday, Clare, with the blessing of Bishop Guido, was taken to meet Francis and his brothers. She left her home at night and Francis cut her hair and dressed her in a plain tunic, marking her as being a *penitent* and under the protection of the Church.”
- 1215 Clare is named *Abbess* of the monastery at San Damiano.
- 1219 Clare and her community received the *Rule of St. Benedict* as the *Rule* they were to follow. For Clare and her sisters at San Damiano “two central points were missing from [this] *Form of Life*: the pursuit of the Gospel poverty inspired by Francis and dependence on the Lesser Brothers. And so a struggle began for Clare that was to continue throughout the remainder of her life.”
- 1219 Francis visits Sultan Malik al-Kamil near Damietta in Egypt
- 1223 Official recognition of the *Rule* for the Friars Minor by Pope Honorius III
- 1223 First Christmas Crib at Greccio started by St. Francis
- 1224 Francis receives the Sacred Stigmata
- 1224 Clare “fell victim to a long illness from which she never fully recovered.”
- 1225 Francis composed the *Canticle of Brother Sun*
- 1226 Francis dies on the evening of October 3.
- 1226 Clare’s mother, Ortolana, joined the Poor Clares at San Damiano
- 1228 Francis is canonized by Pope Gregory IX on July 16.
- 1229 Clare’s sister, Beatrice, joined the women at San Damiano
- 1240 Clare saves the Sisters and the surrounding area from the Saracens. “Even as Clare is speaking, the Saracen bowmen suddenly turn and leap back over the wall more quickly than they had entered, leaving the courtyard to the morning sunlight and the cooing of the doves. Gradually, the sisters recover from their shock and realize that they have been miraculously preserved from a fate worse than death.”
- 1247 Pope Innocent IV replaced the *Rule* of St. Benedict with that of Francis as the basis for the life of Clare and her sisters. But Clare still wants her own *Form of Life* that allows her and her sisters to live in absolute poverty.

1253 All the sisters could see that while Clare's own physical strength was weakening, she seemed to draw renewed strength from the springs of prayer, a joyous strength which she shared with all of them. Biographer Thomas of Celano summarized their feelings:

When Clare returned with joy from holy prayer, she brought with her burning words from the fire of the altar of the Lord, which enkindled the hearts of the sisters. They marveled indeed that such sweetness came from her lips while her face shone more radiantly than usual. For "God in his kindness provided for the poor one" and let her soul, which had been filled with his true light in prayer, be reflected out-wardly in her body. Thus in this changing world Clare was joined unchangingly to her noble Spouse and found her constant delight in the things that are above. Thus in the turning wheel of time she stood fast in solid virtue and, though hiding the treasure of glory in a vessel of clay and remaining here below in body, in mind she dwelt on high.

1253 In April, Pope Innocent IV visits Clare at San Damiano.

1253 First week in August, Clare prays,
Our Lord bless you and keep you.
May he show his face to you and be merciful to you.
May he turn his countenance to you and give you peace . . .
On earth, may he increase [his] grace and virtues among [you] . . .
In heaven, may he exalt and glorify you . . . among all his saints.
I bless you in my life and after my death as much as I can and more
than I can with all the blessings with which the Father of mercies has
and will have blessed his sons and daughters in heaven and earth . . .
May the Lord be with you always, and where you are, may you be
with him always.

1253 On August 10, Clare finally received papal approval of the *Rule of Clare* that she had been trying to receive since 1219. Hers was the first approved *Rule* written by a woman. To date, the Poor Clares are the only order of women to be so encompassed by papal protection.

1253 Clare dies on August 11, twenty-seven years after Francis' death. "Imperceptibly, as the eastern sky begins to brighten behind Monte Subasio, a last sigh escapes Clare's lips. Thus Clare passed from this life to God shining indeed without a shadow, without any stain of sin, entering into the eternal light.

1255 Clare is canonized.