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FRANCIS NOW ! Celebrating the Journey, Living the Dream

HANDOUT: Friday Night Quiet Reflection

The First Franciscan Fraternity: The Little Flowers

Francis received his first brothers or friars at the Porziuncola. The first among them was Bernardo da Quintavalle, a rich young man from Assisi. He invited Francis to his house for supper. At night Francis slept in his friend's house, and Bernardo noticed that Francis was praying all along. The following morning he took a bold decision. Together with Francis he went to the church of San Nicolò in the town square, and together they consulted the book of the Gospels. For three times they opened the book:

> "If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Matthew 19,21);
>
> "Take nothing for your journey" (Luke 9,3);
>
> "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me" (Luke 9,23).

These Scripture verses were to constitute the basis of the life and Rule initiated by Francis. In April of the same year 1208 two other men joined Francis and Bernardo. They were Pietro Cattani, a canon of the cathedral church, and Egidio or Giles, who joined Francis on 23 April. As soon as they joined forces they left in pairs on a preaching expedition.

- Extracted from **St. Francis of Assisi** by Fr. Noel Muscat OFM

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