



Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis  
Consilium Internationale

Prot. 3895

Rome, April 05, 2026

To all Brothers and Sisters of the  
Secular Franciscan Order

**Object:** Letter for Easter 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you his peace!

*“He who had fought valiantly in the Church militant entered the Church triumphant.” (TM 38)*

This year, 2026 is very special for all of us, Franciscans, seculars and religious alike. This is a Jubilee year, the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transitus of saint Francis, or in other words we can call it the Easter of saint Francis. On the occasion of Easter, I would like to invite you to a special journey, because the death of Saint Francis is by far not only the corporal death of a holy man, but an inspiration for us to look further. We celebrate Easter, the great deeds of God, who did not only let his beloved Son die for our sins, but secured for us his victory over death, victory over the sins.

I would like to invite you to think about the last moments of the life of Saint Francis here on earth and the first moments of him after his transitus, through the eyes and witness of someone, who was really close to saint Francis, who was a secular friend of the Saint. What Jacoba of the Settesoli did do and what she experienced, can give us an example and inspiration. We can read about this in the **Treatise of the Miracles of Saint Francis** by Thomas of Celano, and I would like to invite you to have a closer look at some moments of what Thomas of Celano tells us. Though most probably formally she was not a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, in her spirit she was Franciscan, in some senses more than any of us. Five instants, five moments invite us to stop for a short while and think about the goodness of God and about a loving relationship between a simple man, a great saint, and a devoted woman, a secular friend of the little poor man of Assisi. I invite you to learn from her example, what she, a secular follower of Saint Francis did.

**First moment**

*Blessed be God, who has brought our Brother Lady Jacoba to us!*

Though we can read that Jacoba of the Settesoli appears, it was not by accident, not out of the blue. A friend visits her friend, because God has inspired her to do so, already weeks before. She knew that most probably this would be her last visit. She started it long before, she had to prepare, prepare herself, her sons, prepare the whole escort, prepare the things she had to bring. God’s inspiration came before the desire was born in the heart of Saint Francis. She had the ears for what she should do. Saint Francis and brother Jacoba were friends, brothers in Christ. They were united in thoughts and prayers. What one was thinking about, the other heard it. How wonderfully God has prepared this visit! How open was brother Jacoba to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit!

**First invitation:** Let us always be open in our ears and in our hearts to the inspirations of God! Let us

remember, that *“the Holy Spirit is ... the animator of fraternal life and mission”*<sup>1</sup>, and let us be guided by *“the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity”*<sup>2</sup>.

### **Second moment**

*The holy woman had brought with her everything that the letter just written had requested for the father's burial.*

The Holy Spirit gave her precise instructions of what to bring with her. It was not an arbitrary collection of things, neither her own mere ideas. *God had supplied everything that the spirit of this man wanted: she brought some ash-colored cloth to cover the little body of the one who was departing; many candles; a cloth for his face; a cushion for his head; and a special dish the saint had a longing for.* The list is complete, in every sense. There are things for the body and things for the soul. There are things for the last moment before the transitus, and also things for the first moments after the death of the body. There are things for the practical needs and other things for the saint's liturgy. She has brought everything that was necessary. On one side these are a few things, on the other side there is everything. The attention of brother Jacoba and her fraternal affection made her bring those things that *the spirit of this man wanted*, because she focused on Francis and not on her ideas.

**Second invitation:** God does not want a lot of things from us. Let us consider: what are those few essential things in our life which are really necessary to express our care, our friendship, our fraternal spirit? Using the things that God has entrusted to us *“as good stewards and not as owners”*<sup>3</sup> should mean to be attentive to the real needs of those to whom we are being sent.

### **Third moment**

*Everyone expected the saint's birth through death very shortly. But he seemed to be strengthened by the arrival of the devout Roman lady.*

Look, a miracle can be provoked by simple fraternal gesture! Everyone has already this same experience or a similar one, when visiting the sick, the elderly. Love and care are really giving life. When one feels loved, he feels stronger, feels healthier, feels joyful and happy. Brother Jacoba was a true instrument of God in making Francis feel loved, and this became a miracle for him!

**Third invitation:** If whatever we do, we do with a great love to God and to our brothers, we can make miracles, we will be givers of life! When we meet those who have *“to accept illness and increasing difficulties and have to find a deeper meaning to their life”*<sup>4</sup>, we have to *“bring joy and hope to others”*<sup>5</sup>. Let us go, let us give life!

### **Fourth moment**

*All wet with tears, she was brought in private and alone, and the body of her friend was placed in her arms. "Here," said his vicar, "hold, even in death, the one you loved when alive!"*

What a privilege! Death cannot end love. Whom we really love we love in life and in death as well. This moment may remind us to the one when the body of Christ was taken from the cross and given to Mary. It is so hard to have someone dead in our arms. It is not obvious for us, that we only encounter physical death, but the soul lives and will live. Faith in eternal life is a gift from God. The body may be dead, but the soul is living and love continues to be true and real. This is why the death of Christ on the cross and his resurrection, the great gift of Easter is not only the greatest mystery but the center of our life, for which we can give thanks only through this faith.

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<sup>1</sup> GG.CC. 11

<sup>2</sup> RB 10.8

<sup>3</sup> GG.CC. 15.3

<sup>4</sup> GG.CC. 27

<sup>5</sup> Reg. 19

**Fourth invitation:** Let us not stop giving thanks for the gift of life and for the gift of faith. Feeling loss and sorrow can turn into hope and peace in a heart which is grateful for the gift of life and faith.

### **Fifth moment**

*She beheld those markings that the hand of the Almighty alone had produced for the whole world to admire. ... Right then she counseled that such an unheard-of miracle should not be disguised or hidden any further. Rather, she wisely advised it should be displayed for all to see with their own eyes.*

The gifts she (and those companions present at the time) received from God could not be disguised nor hidden, they have to be shared. She has experienced such an unusual joy, such a consolation, that made her say this. We can be more or less sure, that this moment had determined the whole rest of her life. Whoever had the privilege this February-March to visit Assisi and see the remains of Saint Francis might have had this same experience. But moreover, in addition to this, we can be sure, that sharing such a joy can enrich and renew in faith those who could not be present in person. Such a fraternal sharing strengthens fraternity and helps our brothers and sisters to renew their vocational journey.

**Fifth invitation:** Let us be aware that the gifts of God are not only for ourselves but also to be shared, for the good of our brothers and sisters. Let us therefore share them, so that every brother and sister may joyfully live *“united by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance.” and be motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel”*.<sup>6</sup>

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I kindly ask you all to look at brother Jacoba as an example for all of us, how we should love Saint Francis and our brothers and sisters. I kindly ask you all to learn from this moment of the life of Saint Francis and hers, how should we live fraternal love, how should we turn to each other, with attention, with care.

Let us learn from brother Jacoba, let us be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, let us look for what is necessary, as good stewards, let us fill our actions with love so that we may bring joy and hope, make miracles and give life, let us be always grateful for our life and for our faith, and let us not hide those treasures what we have received from God not only for ourselves but for the benefit of our brothers and sisters.

May this be an opportunity to renew and be renewed during this Easter. May the transitus of Saint Francis, that happened 800 years ago be remembered this year in a special way, that it inspires us to renew our vocational commitment, to renew our decisions to live a more fraternal life in our fraternities, and to turn more devotedly to those to whom God is leading us.

I wish all of you a blessed Easter time, live this period with a joyful heart, with a grateful heart! Let us give thanks to God for the life of Saint Francis and for our vocation. Let us go together on our precious vocational journey, following the risen Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis!

Your brother and your minister

Tibor Kauser  
Ministro General



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<sup>6</sup> Reg. 7.

Excerpt from the Treatise on the Miracles of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano

CHAPTER VI

LADY JACOBA DE' SETTESOLI

860 37. Jacoba of the Settesoli, equal in fame and holiness in the city of Rome, earned the privilege of special love from the saint. It is not for me to repeat, in praise of her, her noble lineage, family honor, and ample wealth, nor the great perfection of her virtues and long, chaste widowhood.

The saint was bedridden with that illness by which, putting off all his weariness, he was about to *complete* the *race* with a blessed ending. A few days before his death he decided to send for Lady Jacoba in Rome, telling her that if she wanted to see the one whom she so loved so warmly as an exile, she should come with all haste, because he was about to return to his homeland.

A letter was written; a messenger noted for his swiftness was sought and, once found, was outfitted for the journey. Just then there was heard at the door the sound of horses, the commotion of knights, the crowd of an escort. One of the companions, the one who had given instructions to the messenger, went to the door and found there present the one whom he sought because absent. He was struck with wonder and ran very quickly to the saint. Unable to restrain himself for joy, said, "*I have good news for you, father.*" Without a pause the saint immediately replied, "*Blessed be God, who has brought our Brother Lady Jacoba to us! Open the doors and bring her in. The decree about women is not to be observed for Brother Jacoba!*"

38. There was great rejoicing among the noble guests, but their spiritual delight was mingled with flowing tears. To make the miracle complete, it was discovered that the holy woman had brought with her everything that the letter just written had requested for the father's burial. God had supplied everything that the spirit of this man wanted: she brought some ash-colored cloth to cover the little body of the one who was departing; many candles; a cloth for his face; a cushion for his head; and a special dish the saint had a longing for.

861 But I want to narrate the outcome of this pilgrimage, so that I do not leave the noble pilgrim without consolation. A great crowd of people, especially the devout inhabitants of the city, expected the saint's birth through death very shortly. But he seemed to be strengthened by the arrival of the devout Roman lady, and there was a glimmer of hope that he would recover.

So, the lady gave orders that the rest of her escort should leave: she alone with her children and a few attendants would remain. But the saint said to her, "*No, don't! I will depart on Saturday, and on Sunday you and all the others will return.*" And so, it happened. At the predicted time, he who had fought valiantly in the Church militant entered the Church triumphant. I omit here the crowds of people, the shouts of rejoicing, the ringing of bells, the streams of tears. Likewise, I leave out the mourning of his sons, the sobbing of those dear to him, the lament of his companions. I want to recount only how this pilgrim, deprived of the solace of her father, was consoled.

862 39. All wet with tears, she was brought in private and alone, and the body of her friend was placed in her arms. "*Here,*" said his vicar, "*hold, even in death, the one you loved when alive!*" Her warm tears bathed his body, and with sobs and sighs she kept hugging and kissing him, and pulled back the veil to see him unveiled. What did she see? She gazed on that *precious vessel* that hid a precious treasure adorned with five pearls. She beheld those engravings that the hand of the Almighty alone had produced for the whole world to admire. Then she was refreshed with unusual joy over the death of her friend.

Right then she counselled that such an unheard-of miracle should not be disguised or hidden any further. Rather, she wisely advised it should be displayed for all to see with their own eyes. All ran eagerly to see this sight. They were able to verify for themselves that God *had not done thus for any other nation* and stood in awe.

Here I will put down my pen rather than stammer over something I cannot explain. Giovanni Frigia Pennate, who was then a boy, and afterwards a Roman proconsul and Count of the Sacred Palace, freely swears and declares, against all doubts, that at that time he was with his mother, and that he *saw with his own eyes* and *touched it with his hands*. The lady pilgrim may now return to her homeland, comforted by this privilege of grace and we, after having narrated the death of the Saint, move on to something else.