



# LA CARTA

June 2024

Dear Brothers,

Peace and goodness, greetings we are all familiar and this will give you a hint where I am writing this letter to you. I want to share some reflections that deeply moved me during my recent visit to the USG conference in Assisi, a place enriched with the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, whom our own Saint Francis Caracciolo revered. On his deathbed, Caracciolo's thoughts were fixed on God, with fervent prayers to Mary Most Holy, St. Michael, and St. Francis of Assisi.

At the conference, we delved into the mission of embracing poverty and simplicity, hallmarks of the Franciscan tradition. This experience inspired me profoundly, and I hope it resonates with you too.

Our discussions spanned various religious traditions, each offering insights on living out poverty. As Clerics Regular Minor, our spiritual richness outshines material wealth, reminding us that poverty is about freeing ourselves from material attachments to follow Christ.

Poverty, as lived by different religious orders, teaches us humility and unity. It simplifies our lives, allowing us to live as true brothers, focused on preaching the kingdom of God. Our vow of poverty is not an end but a means to live obediently to God's will, giving up comforts for a higher purpose. As noted in *Il cammino spirituale dei Chierici Regolari Minori*, we imitate Christ by leaving everything to find the ALL.

Saint Augustine of Hippo wisely said, "God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them." Let us empty our hands of material possessions to receive God's spiritual blessings. Saint John Chrysostom warned that while riches are not forbidden, the pride they bring can hinder our relationship with God.

The Society of Jesus and St. Ignatius of Loyola remind us to embrace simplicity. Our work sustains our mission, not personal gain. We aim for transparency and accountability, committing to our communal life and apostolic works.

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Living in poverty is counter cultural. It opposes the world's measure of success, which values possessions over people. We renounce these worldly values to walk humbly with the Lord.

Materialism can lead to grave sins, creating a false sense of stability and comfort. Saint Francis Caracciolo lived this virtue by being an enemy of comfort and a friend of poverty. Materialism limits our potential, but with faith, we see boundless possibilities through God.

Reflect on how we practice poverty in our communities. Are we free from material influence, or do possessions create conflict and division among us? Are we transparent and generous with our resources? Our funds should enhance our community, not define our identity.

I challenge you to free yourselves from materialism, which constrains us and prevents us from reflecting God's image. Embrace freedom, for Christ has triumphed over death, offering us eternal life free from material concerns.

Remember, we must also avoid hoarding emotional burdens like anger and unforgiveness, which can lead to spiritual death and division. These poisons hinder our core mission as religious.

"The vow of poverty is an act of faith, trusting in God's care," as stated in *Il cammino spirituale dei Chierici Regolari Minori*. Jesus said, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head" (Mt. 8:18-20).

Our Constitutions guide us to live simply, focusing on the poor and fulfilling our duties without seeking compensation. Living outside poverty leads to grave sins and stunts our spiritual growth.

Love makes all things possible. When you love, you are ready to be free and even empty, for God's love is abundant and fearless. Embrace this lifestyle, which defines our way of living.

Saint Francis Caracciolo prayed to possess no other good than God, the eternal treasure, wishing to give up all for love of Him. Let us be worthy to follow this path of evangelical poverty and Christian perfection.

In love and brotherhood,

*fr. Ted Kalan, crm*