



burned with desire to join the missionaries, and give his life for the Faith ! Seeing no chances of martyrdom in the Order to which he belonged, he asked and received permission to join the Order of St. Francis.

He spent some time in a convent of Friars Minors, and having at length received the much wished for appointment to accompany a band of Missionaries to the East, he set sail with a serene and joyous heart. But God's ways are not our ways ; He had other work for this zealous apostle at home. There were numberless jews, heretics, and sinners of all kinds who needed his ministrations. Scarcely had he put to sea, when he was attacked by a violent malady, and his companions were forced to send him back. They transferred him to a ship bound for Portugal ; a storm drove it towards Sicily, and they disembarked at Messina. His illness being sent by God to prevent him going away, vanished as soon as he landed, so that he saw the hand of God in it, and sacrificed his own wishes.

The Seraphic St. Francis was holding a Chapter of his Order in Messina, and the young Anthony had the happiness of seeing him and receiving his blessing. He prayed St. Francis that he might remain in, Italy (secretly desiring to model his life on that of the angelic Father,) and his request was approved. He was now sent to a small convent near Bologna. The solitude and poverty of this convent filled him with joy. Here he was quite unknown ; he concealed through humility his education and great natural gifts, begging to be allowed do the most menial offices ; the Prior, thinking he was fit for nothing else, placed him in the kitchen, a servant of servants. Every moment that he had to spare from his humble duties, he spent in prayer and penitential exercises.

But such a gem could not long remain hidden. The Bishop of Forli came to the convent to administer the sacrament of Holy Orders. Besides the Franciscans, there were present many Dominicans. After the ceremony the Prior requested of their visitors, the Dominicans that one of their number should preach a sermon, as preaching was the special function of their Order. They excused themselves, saying that they had nothing prepared.