

prayer been offered in vain, as Bernard with three brothers, and relatives to the number of thirty, embraced the Cistercian order in the year 1113, and of his age the 22d. Hence the order is also called Bernardine from St. Bernard, whose sanctity and fame adorned the church of God.

The noble military orders of Calatrava, instituted by Saint Raymund, of Alcantara and Montreza, in Spain, and those of Christ and of Avis, in Portugal, were also subject to this rule, and adopted from it their rules of piety. Of the other military orders, the most famous was that of the Knights Templar, which was instituted by nine French knights, A. D. 1158, Gelasius II. being supreme Pastor.

The fourth great institute of the religious life is the Franciscan, of which Saint Francis, of Assisium, was the executor, as he received it immediately from God, a fact which he himself has acknowledged, and which has been attested by many Pontiffs, Nicholas III. among the number. The religion of St. Francis began in the year 1208, Innocent III. being Pontiff, and who confirmed it A. D. 1210, and who again, in the general council of Lateran, held in 1215, publicly declared that the Franciscan order had his approval; but whereas at this period there existed no written instrument of its confirmation, the successor of Innocent, Honorius III., approved the religious order of St. Francis, A. D. 1223, and confirmed the rule thereof, consisting of twelve chapters.

In the history of the Franciscan institute, we find many branches of families, but all engrafted on the parent stock. Some are called "Recollects" as in France and Belgium. Others "Discalced," of the more strict observance. Others "Minors" of the regular observance. In the government of the entire body only one general succeeds as the representative of St. Francis, who alone uses the seal of the order, and who alone is empowered to declare himself general of the whole order, in accordance with a special Bull to that effect issued by the sovereign Pontiff Leo X.

The religious family of the Capuchins belongs to the Franciscan institute. Though they profess to the letter the rule of the order, still they constitute a distinct congregation, having also a general who is distinct from the one of the whole order, but who styles himself general of the Minors of the Capuchin Franciscans. There are other brethren of the order known as the "Conventuals," to distinguish them from those who lived in solitude, observing literally the rule of the executor of St. Francis. St. Anthony, of Padua, was a Conventual Franciscan.

The Nuns of St. Clare observe the rule of Saint Francis: but the weakness of their sex taken into account, the Pontiffs, Gregory XI., Innocent IV., Alexander IV. and Urban VI., allowed them to hold property in common, though they observe in the strictest manner the rule of the order, and keep within their cloisters. The Tertiaries, so called because they observe the third rule of St. Francis. The saint instituted three orders under three distinct constitutions.

The first was the order of Minors, who observe the rule which was dictated by the Redeemer, whose stigmas were impressed on the body of Saint Francis, an event which the Church celebrates in the divine office on the 17th of September.