

Chiesa Nuova

After having morning prayer on the high roof garden of our pensione, we made our way to Chiesa Nuova. This reputed to be Francis' family home, where Francis spent his first twenty-five years. In 1615, King Philip III of Spain offered the friars of the Observant tradition money to purchase the property and build a Church there. It is in the form of a Greek Cross with an octagonal center.



The back altar is supposed to be built over Francis' room.

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This is considered to be the actual cellar where Francis' father may have imprisoned his son in a moment of anger or merely a later dramatic representation of the event.

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Going down a staircase you can see an old wooden door that is said to have been the entrance to the family home. In those days you entered using a removable set of steps, a ladder or a rope. these things were pulled in at night for safety. This is a door about 3 feet over from the original and was added much later.

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Continuing to descend down you reach a room that was said to be the fabric shop. Now it is a chapel.

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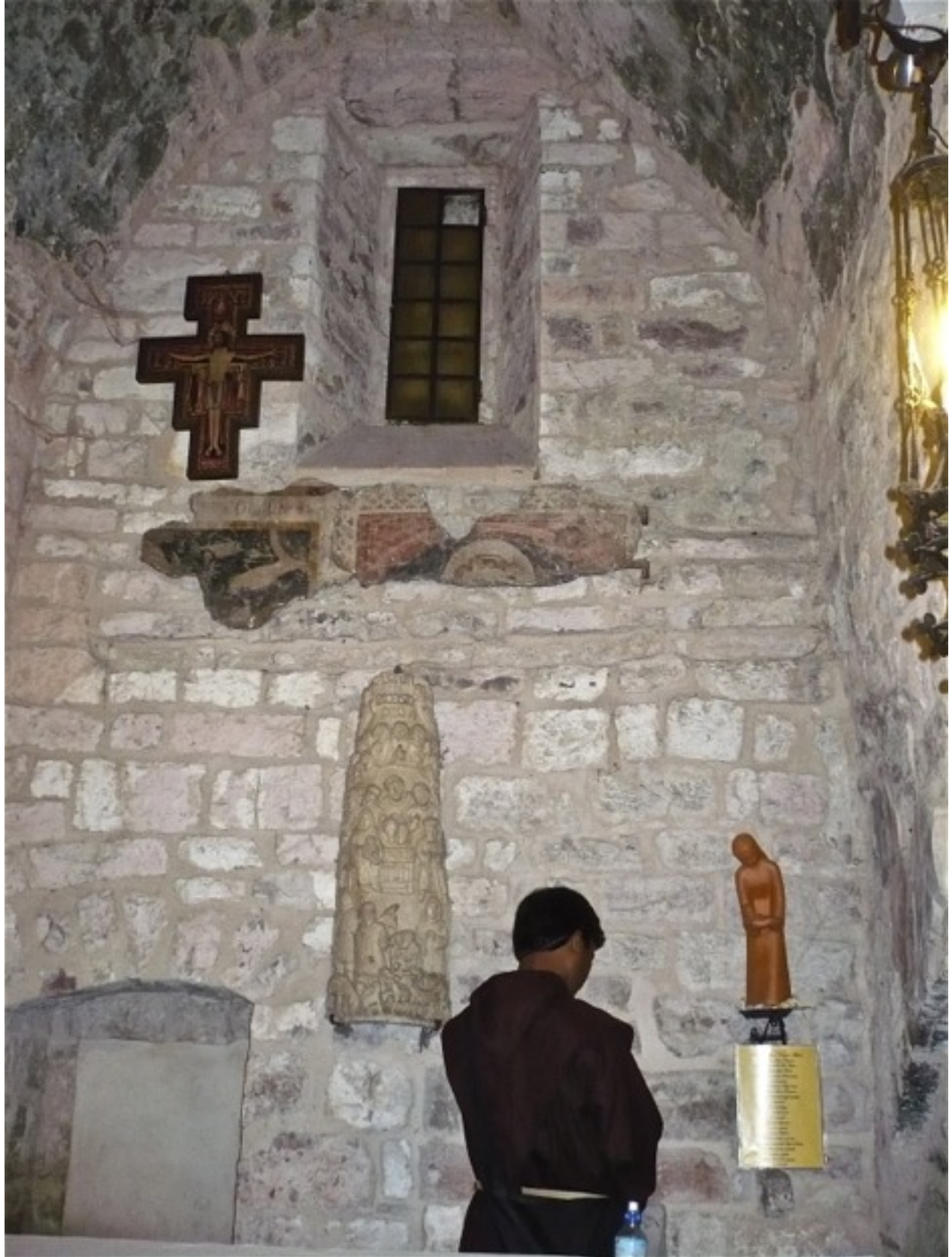
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San Francesco Piccolino: The “little Francis” is the name given to a little stable a few steps away from the Chiesa Nuova. This room is said to have been the birthplace of Francis. Unable to give birth, Lady Pica was told that she would give birth easily if she went to a stable. See the parallel with Jesus’ birth story. This chapel has become a place where local people will pray for the needs of children or a healthy pregnancy.

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This is the apartment of Bernard of Quintevalle.



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Reflection

Some claim that Francis was an adult child of an abusive father. Are there elements in our family history that are in need of reconciliation? Can we be motivated to consider it, if possible?

How would you describe Francis' youth? Using your imagination, try to put Francis; youthful parties and antics in the Assisi setting?

What kind of relationship existed between Francis and his father? His mother? Why did Francis hide from them?

Read carefully *The Legend of Three Companions* 4-6. Note the process of Francis' conversion: asleep-half asleep-awake.