

La Verna

*Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things,
who has not sworn so as to deceive his neighbor.
He shall receive blessings from the Lord,
and reward from God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob.*

Psalm 24:3-6

This sanctuary is called Franciscan Calvary, since it was here that Francis received the stigmata.



A view of the Stigmata Chapel from the precipice. We celebrated Eucharist in the Stigmata Chapel.

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In 1213 Francis and Brother Leo were traveling through Montefeltro in Romagna on their way to Morocco. They stopped at the castle of San Leo. A great feast was going on in honor of a new knight. Taking advantage of the situation, Francis began to sing and preach. Count Orlando was so impressed, he sought a private audience with Francis. It was an intense encounter. The count was so moved that he offered Francis a mountain that he owned in Tuscany since he knew of Francis' need for solitude. Francis accepted the mountain with great joy pending the confirmation of the Count's description by two of the brothers. The brothers found it to be everything they hoped for, so they found a suitable place and built some small cells and, in the name of Francis took possession of the mountain.

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Francis and the brothers prayed here in front of a crude cross.



Another of Francis' caves.

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Francis bed. The iron grate was put into place to protect it, because people believing it to be miraculous were carrying off pieces of it.

Mt. La Verna is about 71 miles from Assisi. Francis came to this mountain six times for solitude: 1213, 1216, 1218, 1220, 1223, and 1224.

This chapel was built in 1216. The della Robbia altar was put in about 500 years ago.



Every Franciscan friary has a chapel dedicated to Mary Magdalen, who was the perfect penitent in Francis' eyes. She exemplifies penance and love for the Lord.

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There is a piece of rock, now in the altar. It was the table on which Francis took his poor meal. One day as he prayed, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and remained seated on it as he spoke with him. when the vision ceased, Francis called Leo and said to him, "Wash this stone first with water and then with wine, oil and milk, and last of all with balsam...because Jesus Christ was seated upon it..." (*De Conformitate*, AF IV, 190). It

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was venerated for centuries. In 1719, it was put into the altar.

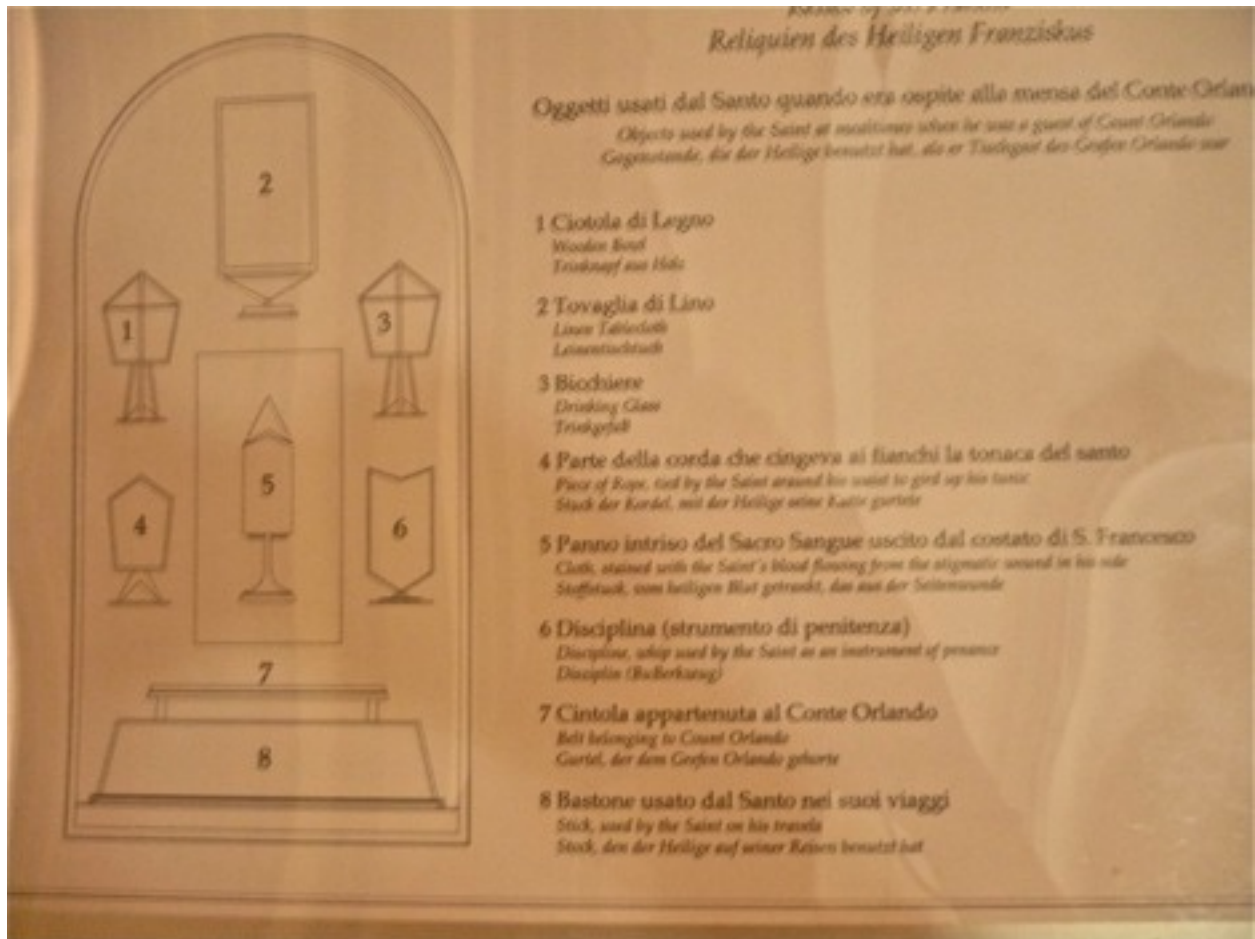


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St. Francis' habit.



Other relics



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The tomb of Count Orlando Catani



Every day at 3pm, there is the Procession of the Stigmata. It starts in the Basilica with the chanting of the Office. Then the friars process behind the cross to the Chapel of the Stigmata with the faithful following. Prayers are continued in the Chapel and then the procession continues through the mountain crevices back to the Basilica for the closing prayers. the friars used to go every day and every night to make a pious visit to the place where Francis received the stigmata. The legend says that one winter night, the friars were forced to give up because of a blizzard. In the morning they found in the snow the tracks of animals of the forest which had made the pilgrimage in their place. That led to the building of the corridor of the stigmata between 1578 and 1582.