

LIFE OF BLESSED JOACHIM OF SIENA

Introduction

The *Legenda* or *Life of Blessed Joachim of Siena* (1258-1306) describes the salient aspects of the sanctity of a lay friar (not ordained a priest), who entered the Servite Order at the age of fourteen in 1272 and who lived as a member of the Order for thirty-three years.

The author was a confrere who had known Blessed Joachim personally and had been an eyewitness of the simplicity of a contemplative soul in peace with all creation. Birds let themselves be easily caught by Blessed Joachim and he, when he let them go, praised the Creator of all things. "I myself", affirms the author of the *Life*, "who compile this story, affirm that I have seen it" (no. 15). It is not possible to say who the author is; certainly it is not Fra Christopher of Parma, the author of the *Legenda* of Blessed Francis of Siena, for it is written in a different style and has a different theological and spiritual orientation.

The *Life of Blessed Joachim* presents the life of a friar who is imbued with devotion to Mary. It is a devotion which is lived out in humility and obedience, constant prayer, profound sharing in the suffering of others, and an affectionate and delicate communion with the brothers of the community. Death is the final seal of a love which has transformed the holy friar into the suffering and glorious Christ. The day before he died, Holy Thursday, Joachim participated in the Lord's Supper and shared a little wine with his confreres; the wine was accepted as a help for his weakness but it became a memorial of the "love" whose source is the Eucharist (no. 18).

That his death occurred precisely on Good Friday (no. 18) is a commonplace found frequently in the medieval lives of saints. There is, however, a document which confirms the date as found in the *Legenda*. In a letter from the prior and friars of the Servite monastery in Siena addressed to the members of the Council della Campana of the Commune of Siena, to ask for the participation of the public authorities for the annual feast of Blessed Joachim, it is said that the feast is celebrated "each year, on the Monday after the resurrection of the Lord". That means that the liturgical celebration of the death of Blessed Joachim was not connected to a day of the month on which it occurred, but it was variable, based on the date of Easter. The feast of Blessed Joachim, which could not be celebrated during the Paschal Triduum, was postponed until Easter Monday, the first free day after Good Friday. Neither the *Legenda* nor other contemporary documents are concerned with specifying the exact day of Blessed Joachim's death, which thus remains connected with Good Friday.

Five years after his death, according to the *Legenda*, there began a series of miracles which increased his cult. Joachim's fame reached other Tuscan cities and, beyond the Apennines, to Bologna and Forlì.

The fourteen miracles after his death are listed in the appendix of the *Legenda* and must have formed an integral part of the *Legenda* from the very beginning. The redaction of the entire writing (*Legenda* and miracles) must be dated about the years 1330 to 1335.

Editions

The *Legenda of Blessed Joachim* is found in a single fourteenth-century copy in the Vatican Library (*Vat. Lat.* 10,187). In the eighteenth century the manuscript was found in the library of the monastery of Saint James in Foligno where a copy was made by Fra Callisto M. Palombella.

Two editions of the *Legenda* have been made by Fr. P. M. SOULIER: in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 12 (1894), p. 383-397, from the copy of Palombella; and in *Monumenta OSM*, 5 (1902), p. 7-18, from the Vatican manuscript.

An English translation, *The Life of Blessed Joachim of Siena*, is found in *Origins and Early Saints of the Order of Servants of Mary: Writings of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Friar Servants of Mary, Chicago 1984, p. 81-89.

Bibliography

A. M. DAL PINO, *Note iconografiche sul B. Giovacchino da Siena e la sua "Legenda"*, in *Studi Storici OSM*, 8 (1957-1958), p. 156-161. This is a description of a white marble slab, conserved in the Pinacoteca in Siena, with three episodes of the life of Blessed Joachim – his entrance into the priory, the miracle of the overturned table, and the miracle of the candle which remained upright. It is the remains of the sarcophagus in which Blessed Joachim's remains were kept in the church of Santa Maria dei Servi in Siena from the first quarter of the fourteenth century. The article was reprinted, with an updated bibliography, in F. A. DAL PINO, *Spazi e figure lungo la storia dei Servi di santa Maria (secoli XIII-XX)*, Rome 1997, p. 527-537.

P. M. SUÁREZ, *Spiritualità mariana dei frati servi di Maria nei documenti agiografici del secolo XIV*, in *Studi Storici OSM*, 9 (1959), p. 132-133, and *passim*, 10 (1960), p. 1-41.

P. M. SUÁREZ, *Gioacchino da Siena*, in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. 6, Grattaferrata di Roma 1965, p. 476-478.

A. VAUCHEZ, *Ordini mendicanti e società italiana XII-XIV secolo*, Milan 1960, p. 194-205 (especially p. 195, 197-200).

TEXT

**HERE BEGINS THE LIFE AND THE LEGENDA OF THE BLESSED CONFESSOR
JOACHIM OF THE NOBLE CITY OF SIENA
OF THE ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY**

1. Joachim was born in the city of Siena; both of his parents were of noble blood¹. While still a child at school, he cultivated special devotion to the holy Mother of God. His devotion was so great that whatever he could secretly take from home he distributed in her name² to those who asked him for her sake. When he returned home at dinner time and climbed the stairs, he greeted the glorious Virgin on each step, so that he saluted her as many times as there were steps. From the very beginning this stripling of God³ revealed his goodness, a youth of such perfect character that gave clear signs of his love for the honor of the glorious Virgin above all things; he appeared to all already a saint, and looking into the future they said, “If this child lives, he will be a great saint!”.

2. When the devout boy reached the age of fourteen, he saw the Blessed Virgin in a dream, surrounded by choirs of angels and clothed in a splendid robe. She said to him, “Sweetest son, come to me; I know how much you love me, therefore I choose you for my service forever”. When the holy youth awoke, he was inspired by this vision of Our Lady and made up his mind to enter the Order of Servants of St. Mary the Virgin. His parents were more concerned with earthly things than those of heaven, and learning of his happy decision, they attempted to frustrate it. They intended to send him far away, hoping that distance would diminish his resolve⁴.

3. The boy discovered their intention and, moved by the Holy Spirit, sought refuge in the monastery of the Friar Servants of St. Mary⁵. He begged permission to enter the Order. At that time the illustrious confessor Philip, who was General of the Order⁶, was in the priory at Siena. He was a brilliant light and a father of truly great holiness. Philip received him into the Order and asked by what name he wished to be called. The boy, burning with devotion to the Virgin, asked to be called Joachim. By bearing her father’s name, he might always be close to her in mind and body. In the world he had been called Chiaramonte.

4. Once in the Order, Joachim, the servant of God, gave himself completely to a life of great humility. In spite of his noble origins and youth, he preferred the humblest and most distasteful tasks. He comforted the suffering⁷, served the sick, and with his own hands carried out with devotion those vile services which were repugnant to others.

5. He loved obedience especially and called it the food of the soul, in the words of the Savior: “My food is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven”⁸. One day some lay brothers, at blessed Philip’s command, were carrying dirt from the cloister in baskets on their shoulders and

¹ Up to the seventeenth century it was thought that Blessed Joachim was a member of the Pelacani family; but when they became extinct, he was said to be of the Piccolomini family.

² In the life of a Servant of Mary, in this case of a future Servant of Mary, every action acquires a Marian character, even a simple gesture of mercy.

³ Cf. *Ps* 92, 13-14.

⁴ Two terms of medieval law help to describe the meaning of the name “servant of Mary”: *obsequium* (the act of obedience to the lord or sovereign) and *mancipium* (juridical act which gives formal property rights over an object or a person). Cf. LO, numbers 18 and 21.

⁵ The Servite foundation in Siena dates from 1250.

⁶ St. Philip Benizi had been elected prior general in the chapter of 1267.

⁷ *Rm* 12, 25.

⁸ *Jn* 4, 34.

were met by noblemen in the company of Bernard, by grace of God Bishop of Siena⁹. The brothers were ashamed, threw down their baskets and withdrew. The holy youth, although he had not been asked to work, had joined the others. He alone remained. In the presence of the guests he continued to carry the baskets until he had finished the work of the other friars.

6. Blessed Philip later sent him to the priory in Arezzo¹⁰. When he had been there about a year, he and Fra Acquisto of Arezzo¹¹, a man of great fame, were passing through the countryside. It was night and rain was falling hard, so they took refuge in an inn. They found there a sick man who had been suffering for a long time. Blessed Joachim heard his lament with compassion and said to him, “Brother, have patience; this illness will be your salvation”. But the sick man replied, “Good friar, it is easier to praise infirmity than to bear it”. Joachim then said, “I beseech Almighty God to free you from this illness and give it to me, his servant. May death alone release me from this infirmity. So shall I bear continually the suffering of Christ in my body”¹². The sick man got up from his bed forthwith; he was completely healed. The friar remained in his place, a victim of epilepsy. This sickness afflicted him for the rest of his life and through it he won a crown of martyrdom.

7. On the feast of St. Mary’s Assumption at Arezzo, Joachim was serving as subdeacon¹³ at the altar. All the friars and the bishop of the city were present. At the elevation of the Most Sacred Body of the Lord, he was struck by an epileptic seizure, lost hold of the lighted candle in his hand and fell to the floor. An angel of the Lord came (as one may piously presume) and held the candle until someone else took hold of it. The candle remained upright and lit until the Most Sacred Body was placed on the altar.

8. When the friars of his priory in Siena learned that he was suffering from this disease, they asked the General that he be returned to his native city to be better cared for. He then came back to the priory in Siena. One day while he was praying before the altar some friars in choir saw fire above his head, and were afraid that the flame from the large lamp, or from a lighted candle may have fallen on him. They ran to his assistance, but as they watched, an unheard-of miracle took place before their eyes. The flame was transformed into a ball of fire. It rose upwards and disappeared from sight. Astounded by this unusual event, they praised Almighty God.

9. Another time, at dinner with his brothers in the refectory, he was seized by a convulsion. The table was not fixed to the floor and it fell over with all the plates and cutlery. Once again an unprecedented miracle occurred: no plate was broken, the food was not scattered, and neither wine nor water was spilt. From that time on the friars considered him very holy indeed.

10. Still another time, he passed the whole day walking and praying the psalms, near the coal pit beyond the city wall. The gatekeeper, not knowing he was there, locked him out and he remained there the entire night. It was December and snow fell all night, but he remained on his knees with his hands lifted to heaven. He was unable to move or raise himself from the ground, for his knees were frozen to the soil. When morning came, his brothers lifted him up. He regained the use of his legs and suffered no harm whatsoever.

11. There was at that time a man possessed, tormented by such frenzy that even ropes could

⁹ Bernard became bishop of Siena on 24 May or 2 June 1273.

¹⁰ The foundation of the priory in Arezzo dates from the years 1263 to 1265.

¹¹ He might have been still been living in 1320.

¹² *2Thes* 3, 5; *2Cor* 4, 10; *Col* 1, 24.

¹³ This should be understood as a minister (acolyte) who held a lighted candle in his right hand at the elevation of the Host. The custom of elevating the consecrated Host, and of holding a lighted candle, and even of ringing a bell was introduced into the liturgy toward the end of the twelfth century.

not restrain him, but when seized with rage, he broke through everything¹⁴. A group of men brought him, with great difficulty, to the priory. The possessed man cried out, “I will not leave for any of you”. The prior, Fra Hadrian¹⁵, was present with many friars. He sent for blessed Joachim and begged him to cast out the devil in the name of God. But Joachim refused saying, “I too am a great sinner”. Finally, in obedience to the prior, he approached the possessed man and said, “I command you, demon, in the name of God: leave and never again torment this creature of God”. And at that moment, with a great howl the demon went out of him and left the man apparently dead¹⁶. The man remained on the ground for an hour; he then got up, healed and free, and from that time on the devil never troubled him again.

12. Again, there was a devout layman named Pagno¹⁷, whose groin was so strained that almost all of his intestines had fallen through. He came to Joachim and begged him to pray for him. But Joachim refused, thinking himself unworthy of this trust. In the end, moved by the man’s pleading, he traced a sign of the cross over him. That same day Pagno was healed.

13. A friar of our Order, a good religious named Andrew of Castel della Pieve¹⁸, was often tormented by an acute pain in his side. He came, by chance, to Siena, and while there was struck by this pain. He implored blessed Joachim to pray for him. Moved by charity and compassion, Joachim prayed, and immediately the pain left the friar, and he never again suffered this affliction although he lived another thirty years.

14. A devout aunt of his brought to him one day a very beautiful little girl who suffered a swelling in the throat which deformed her. His aunt asked him to trace the sign of the cross on the child’s throat. At her request, he made the sign of the cross, and the child returned home perfectly healed.

15. He was so given to contemplation that he sometimes fixed his eyes on heaven as though he were there already, and did not see those who were standing near him, nor hear them when they called. Birds obeyed him and frequently permitted him to hold them. When he let them go, he praised the Creator of all things¹⁹. What I have recounted about the birds was often seen by many people. I myself, who compile this story, affirm that I have seen it. No one ever saw him idle.

16. Once in a seizure he fell down the stairs. He seriously wounded his head and lost much blood. The friars immediately sent for the doctor to care for him. When the doctor came, the friars went to his cell to get him, but they found him with arms extended and face radiant as he praised the Lord. Unaware that he had already been healed by Divine Grace, they brought him to the doctor. The doctor found no sign of the wound and said, “This man is suffering no injuries whatsoever.” The friars then thanked God.

17. It pleased the Most High to adorn him with yet another crown. Another illness struck him: the flesh was eaten away to the bone in some parts of his body and worms appeared. He hid it from the friars as long as he could, but when they learned of it they were very saddened. They entreated him to pray for himself, that he be freed from this affliction. He replied, Beloved brothers, it is not fitting for me to do so, because this ailment is to purge my sins and strengthen my soul; as

¹⁴ *Mk* 5, 3-4; *Lk* 8, 29

¹⁵ A Fra Hadrian appears in the register of income and expenses of the prior general Fra Lotaringo of Florence in 1290 (*Monumenta OSM*, II, p. 141). Fra Hadrian was prior of the priory in Siena in 1297 (*Monumenta OSM*, V, p. 10, note 1).

¹⁶ *Mk* 9, 26.

¹⁷ A Pagno Bruni appears in a document in Siena on 3 December 1298 (*Monumenta OSM*, V, p. 10, note 2).

¹⁸ Today Città della Pieve.

¹⁹ Influence of Franciscan hagiography. Cf. for example Thomas of Celano, *Vita seconda*, chap. 126 (in *Fonti francescane*, p. 687).

the Apostle said, “When I am weak, then am I strong”²⁰.

18. The Lord revealed to him that his death was near, and he begged God to call him on the same day the Savior left the world. On the eve of his departure from earth, the day of the Lord’s Supper, he spoke to the assembled friars: “Beloved brothers, I have lived with you thirty-three years, the length of Our Lord’s life on earth. I have received many services from you, and you have assisted me in my every need. I am not capable of thanking you sufficiently for all you have done. May the Lord Jesus Christ thank you and repay you for what you have done for me. Tomorrow I shall leave you, and I pray you to entreat the Lord to receive me, a sinner, into his dwelling. I desire to renew our fraternal love before departing.” He then drank a little wine with them²¹.

19. Most of the friars thought he was beside himself when he said these things. But on Good Friday, just before the Passion was sung, he sent for the prior and said to him, “Reverend Father, in a little while the Lord will call me from this earth. Call the friars to my bedside and give me the sacraments of the Church, even though I received the Sacred Body with all of you yesterday. I don’t want to leave you while all alone.”

The prior was not entirely convinced, but he couldn’t ignore his words either, so he left four friars with him. Joachim continued praying while the Passion of the Lord was being sung. At the words, “*inclinato capite, emisit spiritum*” (He bowed his head and yielded up his spirit)²², he raised his eyes and, while the four friars stood around, gave his spirit back to the Creator²³.

20. When the friars who were in the church heard what had happened, they finished the service and went together to his cell. But they found him already dead. They kissed his holy body and prayed for him. On the second day they reverently buried him in the church. Leaving to God the revelation of his holy life and of the miracles he had performed, they said nothing about them. The Lord in his good time was to reveal the treasure hidden in the field²⁴, and favors would be granted to the needy through the mediation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory forever and ever.

[Miracles]

21. Blessed Joachim died in the year of the Lord 1305, and the Lord began to work miracles through him in the year 1310.

The first of these miracles took place five years after his death. Many people had come together in the month of May for the indulgence of San Galgano²⁵. Near the fire, for it was rather cold, they began to talk about the life and miracles of Blessed Ambrose of Siena²⁶ and of Blessed Peter Pettinario²⁷ and of other good men whom the people had known while they were alive. One of them then began to praise Blessed Joachim and extol him more than the others. He expressed his great astonishment that the Lord had not worked any miracles through him. A lay brother²⁸ of their Order was seated with them. He had a most serious illness of the groin. The groin was swollen and had formed a large abscess. He was very afraid, for the doctor was to lance the abscess the following

²⁰ *2Cor* 12, 10.

²¹ This wine, shared with the community, is an allusion to the Eucharist, which is a way of “renewing our fraternal love”. In the following paragraph this Eucharist of Holy Thursday is explicitly remembered: “even though I received the Sacred Body with all of you yesterday”.

²² *Jn* 19, 30; *Mt* 27, 50.

²³ For Blessed Joachim’s death on Good Friday, see the Introduction.

²⁴ *Mt* 13, 44.

²⁵ St. Galgano of Chiusdino, a hermit from Montesiepi, died 3 December 1181. The Cistercian Abbey of San Galgano, about thirty-three kilometers (twenty miles) southwest of Siena, was dedicated to him.

²⁶ Ambrose Sansedoni (1220-1286), a famous Dominican preacher of Siena

²⁷ Peter Pettinaio, born in Campi in the Chianti region of Tuscany, was a married Franciscan tertiary who had a shop for combs in Siena. He died in 1289. For Blessed Ambrose and Blessed Peter see A. VAUCHEZ, *Ordini mendicanti e società italiana XIII-XIV secolo*, p. 194-201

²⁸ Lay brothers were lay religious, bound to all the fundamental obligations of religious life, except that of the liturgical office; or also conventual oblates, for which see the index

day. As he was listening to the account of Blessed Joachim's holy life and miracles, he turned to him in his thoughts and prayers and made this promise: "O Father, holy Joachim, if it is true what I hear about you, pray to the almighty God that he may begin in me to show your miracles; and I promise you to make this miracle known and to offer to you a wax image with my image". When the doctor arrived the next day to lance the abscess, he removed the bandage and discovered that the sick brother had been healed in such a perfect manner it was as if the illness had never happened. Then the lay brother, carrying in his own hands the wax image, went to the monastery and proclaimed that a miracle had happened.

22. After this, on the day of Pentecost²⁹, while Fra Nicholas of Siena was preaching in the cloister after the liturgical office of None, a woman who was possessed by the devil was brought in. The preacher was speaking about the miracle recorded above, when through the mouth of the woman the devil began to shout and say: "It is now time for my exit and the liberation of Christianella". At the end of the sermon a great crowd ran to the place, for this possessed woman was well known. The friars entreated the evil spirit to tell them why the other saints, at whose tombs she had gone, had not been able to expel him. He replied: "Because the Lord has reserved such a miracle to this saint and thus it has pleased the divine wisdom". They asked him also to tell what the sign of his departure would be. He said: "When I leave, I will break the lamp and leave Christianella as if she were dead". And thus it happened. In an absolutely prodigious way the woman, who was simple and illiterate, spoke perfectly without grammatical errors. The devil also added: "Take away the cloth and cut her hair and place it, as a sign of the miracle, before his tomb; otherwise I have the power to reenter into her". And thus it was done.

23. A man, who was quietly passing down a street was struck by a rock which fell from above him and he was seriously injured. His hat and hair were mixed with the blood which flowed abundantly. The pain of the rock hitting him was very severe. He invoked Blessed Joachim with all the devotion he was capable of. The doctor was called for right away, but when he arrived he could find no sign of the injury. He saw only that the man's head and hat were covered with blood. Then the man had the hat and the stone attached to the tomb and also carried a wax image of his height.

24. In the district of Panteneto in Siena, a six-year old boy with a piece of bread in his hand was eating it as he was walking, as children do. There was a dog on this same street, and it snatched the bread from the boy's hand. As the boy withdrew his hand, the dog bit him and took away not only the bread but also one of the boy's fingers. The boy's father and mother had watched this occur and, after dressing the wound, prayed to Blessed Joachim with all the devotion of their heart. The next day, when the doctor came to look at the wound, he found that a new finger had appeared. The first in fact had been completely cut off. Then the parents, in tears, brought the child to the tomb of the Blessed and attached there a silver finger.

25. In the parish of San Salvatore in Siena a certain man had a cask of pure and excellent wine which he intended to sell for his needs. When his friends invited him to go to the feast of Blessed Joachim, he said: "I'm not going. I don't want to go to the feast of a fool whom the friars, in order to make money, say is a saint; rather, tomorrow I will put my hand to the cask and begin to sell my wine". But when he began to draw the wine from the cask, there came forth a wine muddy as feces and with an acid and disagreeable taste. Then the man, greatly confused because the cask was large and of great value, remembered the stupid words he had said against the saint. He offered the wine to Blessed Joachim: if it would return to its original clarity and taste he would give the friars a bottle of two liters and to a saint a small jar of wax. And behold a miracle! The next day the wine returned to a greater clarity and taste than before. Then the man, completely happy, thanked God and fulfilled his vow.

²⁹ That is, 7 June 1310.

26. A peasant, who was passing through the forest of Lecceto, came across a large black serpent. It was in the middle of summer and the serpent advanced without fear with its head raised. The peasant then struck the serpent on the back with a club which he had in his hand. But the serpent rushed at him, and bit him severely on his leg, and it then injected poison into the wound. The peasant returned home and the leg began to swell. He had a great devotion to Blessed Joachim, because one of his relatives had been cured of a fever through the merits of Blessed Joachim. And so he promised the Blessed Joachim that, if he would cure him, he would offer him a wax leg according to his ability, since he was poor. He fell asleep and saw a friar in the habit of the Servants who said to him: "Let me see your leg and I will heal it, because I am Saint Joachim to whom you have prayed". And as he was touching him, he awoke and found that while he was sick when he fell asleep, he was now perfectly well. He thanked God and fulfilled his vow.

27. A woman had an only son, who was three years old, and she loved him very much. When she had to go to church, she left the son in bed asleep. The boy awoke and seeing that he was alone began to cry. He wanted to get out of bed, and fell, breaking his right arm. When the mother returned from church and heard the boy's crying, she ran to him, finding him on the floor half dead. She picked him up from the floor and put him to bed; and then she sent for a doctor. She was afraid that when her husband returned from a trip he was on, he would find the boy in such a state that he would become upset about the poor care he had received. So she promised Blessed Joachim that, if he would heal her son before his father returned, she would offer a wax image of the size of the boy. The next day, when the doctor came, the arm was healed as if there had never been a fracture.

28. A knight, by the name of William, was in Siena when Blessed Joachim began to work miracles. With his companions he was banished from the Commune of Siena and went to Bologna. There he had a large horse which would not wear a bridle and would defend itself by kicking and biting. One day, when the squire was not able to hold him, he took the bit himself and approached the horse to put the bit in his mouth. Then with a kick the horse struck William in the chest and he fell to the ground as if dead. When the doctor came, he said that most of his ribs had been broken. The knight then remembered the miracles of Blessed Joachim that he had seen when he was in Siena. Im mediately with great devotion he promised that, if he were healed, he would offer at Blessed Joachim's altar a wax statue portraying a horse and himself on the horse. He immediately began to improve and in a few days he had returned to perfect health. He then faithfully fulfilled all that he had promised the saint.

29. In the city of Forli one of our friars had preached to the people about the miracles of Saint Joachim and the people began to feel a great devotion toward him. A few days later in the square of the commune there was a great show of giochi all'asta. A five-year old boy, grandson of Signor James della Porta, was watching at the window with many other children. Carelessly he leaned over too far, as children do, and fell head first from the window. The window was about thirty *bracci*³⁰ from the ground. The crowd rushed to help the child, but found that he had landed feet first, as light as a feather. The mother of the boy, in fact, was standing at another window and, when she saw the boy fall, she prayed to Blessed Joachim, because she had been at the sermon in which our friar had spoken of his miracles. They asked the child how he felt and he replied: "Well, because a friar of the Order of Servants, who wore a splendid crown on his head, caught me while I was falling and placed me gently on the ground". Then the grandfather of the child, Signor James, a religious man of good reputation, wished to have Blessed Joachim solemnly portrayed in three places in the city and had an image of wax placed before his altar in Siena. With his whole family, he was always devoted to Blessed Joachim.

³⁰ A "*braccio*" is about a half a meter or a foot and a half.

30. In the district of Arezzo there was a man named Bartolo, who in those days had been in Siena. He had heard of the miracles and life of Blessed Joachim. One day he decided to cut down a tree. He carelessly raised the axe and it fell on his left foot. The wound was very deep and it pierced the foot for its entire length even to the ground. Feeling the shooting pain from the blow he had received, he cried out: "Saint Joachim, help me!" And while he was preparing the donkey to go into the city to have the wound tended to, he felt that the pain in the foot had completely ceased. Putting the foot on the ground, he saw that he could support himself on the foot. He then took off the large bandage which his wife had applied with tow and egg white. He found the wound completely healed. But a scar had remained on both sides, I believe, as a sign of the miracle. Then with many others from his district he went to Siena and told the friars about the miracle and the friars had a public document drawn up. In front of the tomb he attached a large wax image of the leg with the foot.

31. A six-year old boy, who wanted to gather flowers by a ditch of water, leaned over the edge too far, as children do, and fell into the ditch. Since he could not help himself, he sank to the bottom of the water and remained there for a good hour. The boy's mother passed by and was surprised to see the water was unusually muddied. She remained to watch for a short time, when the body began to rise, as happens with a drowning victim. She saw that it was her own son, and gave a loud cry. The boy's father, who was working in the garden, ran and pulled the boy out of the water, but everyone said that the boy was dead. Then he and his wife offered the boy to Blessed Joachim. For more than an hour the boy remained without breath or life. Then he began to move his head a little, and his father placed him on the ground with his head down. He let out much water and that day he regained his health as before. Then his father and mother carried the boy to the priory of the friars and gave thanks to Blessed Joachim.

32. In the city of Florence there was a man whose name was Lippo, a member of the Servite confraternity³¹. He had been injured in his lower parts and there was a lowering of his intestines. And since he was suffering greatly, he promised Blessed Joachim that he would go barefoot from Florence to Siena if he were cured through the intercession of Blessed Joachim. Furthermore he would place there a wax image of his size and offer a lamp for the Body of Christ. When he arose in the morning, he was completely healed and no longer suffered from that illness, though he lived for another twenty years. He then went by foot to Siena and faithfully fulfilled his promise.

33. In the city of Massa Marittima there was a man who had been arrested because of false accusations against him and he was condemned to be beheaded. While he was in prison, he was deeply saddened because of the unjust condemnation and Blessed Joachim came to mind and the many things that he had heard in Siena. On the days of the feast of Blessed Joachim he had in fact been in Siena, in a hotel in the district of S. Maurizio. Thus as he recalled the miracles he had heard of and devoutly promised that, if through the merits of Blessed Joachim he were freed from death and prison, he would carry his chains to the Blessed Joachim's altar and he would have a wax prison made with his own image within. And it happened that the guards became very sleepy and left the prison open; and by the will of God they went to sleep. The prisoners became aware of this and without difficulty they escaped. Not only this man, but all the others as well. He then went barefoot to Siena, carrying in his hands his chains through the middle of the city to the monastery of the friars, and he had made a small prison of wax as he had promised.

34. In the parish run by the friars of the Temple of Camollia³², a woman suffered from

³¹ Lippo belonged to a Marian confraternity of Laudesi, connected with the Servite monastery in Florence. This Marian confraternity received a letter of participation in the spiritual goods of the Order from St. Philip Benizi on 4 June 1273. Cf. A. M. DAL PINO, *Madonna santa Maria e l'Ordine dei suoi Servi nel I secolo di storia (1233-1317 ca.)*, in *Studi Storici OSM*, 17 (1967), p. 53-55.

³² These "friars of the Temple" were members of the Order of the Knights of the Temple, founded in 1118 by Hugh of Payens and eight French knights for the purpose of defending pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem from attacks by brigands. The name of Templates

cataracts in the eyes.

Her condition worsened, in spite of help she had received from various doctors³³. She had made vows to many saints, but she had received no relief. Finally she made a vow to Blessed Joachim: in fact, up to that time she had laughed at him. At midnight Blessed Joachim appeared to her and asked: “Do you recognize me?” She replied, “No, sir”. And he said, “I am Saint Joachim, he whom until today you have ridiculed. To tell the truth, you are not worthy to receive this grace from God, but, so that you may know that I am in heaven and so that you may not laugh any more at any saint, I have obtained your health for you from the Lord. Get up now, for you are cured and from this moment live well”. She awoke and saw that she was cured. She thanked God and was sorry for the evil she had done. She went to the monastery of the friars and told them her story.

35. Many things have been told and many could be written about our venerable father Joachim. These have been written for our information and learning, so that we may believe and, believing we might have life through the merits of the Virgin and of Him with whom God lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

comes from their first residence in a wing of the church-mosque of Al Aqsa on the site of the Temple of Solomon. They pledged themselves to the practice of chastity, personal poverty, and obedience and also to fight the infidels. The Order was suppressed by the Council of Vienne in 1312.

³³ *Mk* 5, 26.