

Padre Francesco Gonzaga

PURGATORY

Father Francesco Gonzaga, Franciscan and Bishop of Mantua, recounts a story regarding the Souls of Purgatory in his book on the origin of the Franciscan Order.

“Brother Giovanni de Via became sick and died in a convent of the Canary Islands. His nurse, who was called Brother Ascensio and who lived in austerity, was one day praying in supplication for that soul, when suddenly he saw appearing before him a religious of his Order, surrounded by luminous rays, which illuminated the entire cell with a unique brightness. The friar caught by surprise did not recognize who that soul was and didn't even ask him his name. The apparitions repeated themselves again and on the third time, having taken courage, he asked him, in the name of God, who he was and why did he come. ‘I am – then answered the deceased – the soul of Brother Giovanni de Via, and I

come to thank you sincerely for the prayers that you raise up to God for my benefit and to announce to you that, thanks to the divine mercy, I am in a place of salvation, among the predestined to glory; may these rays which go out of my body be proof to you. Nevertheless since I was not yet judged worthy to contemplate my God face to face, because during my life I guiltily forgot to recite several Offices for the deceased, as I was required by the rule, I implore you in the name of the friendship that you always offered me, actually in the name of the love that you nourish for Jesus, to make sure that these Offices are recited in my place with the greatest promptness, in order that I would enjoy the sight of my Lord soon? Brother Ascensio ran to recount the vision to the Father Guardian, who ordered that the Offices be recited immediately. After that was completed, the soul of Brother



Giovanni reappeared, surrounded by a light more brilliant than the previous time, and informed Brother Ascensio that he had ascended to Heaven.”

