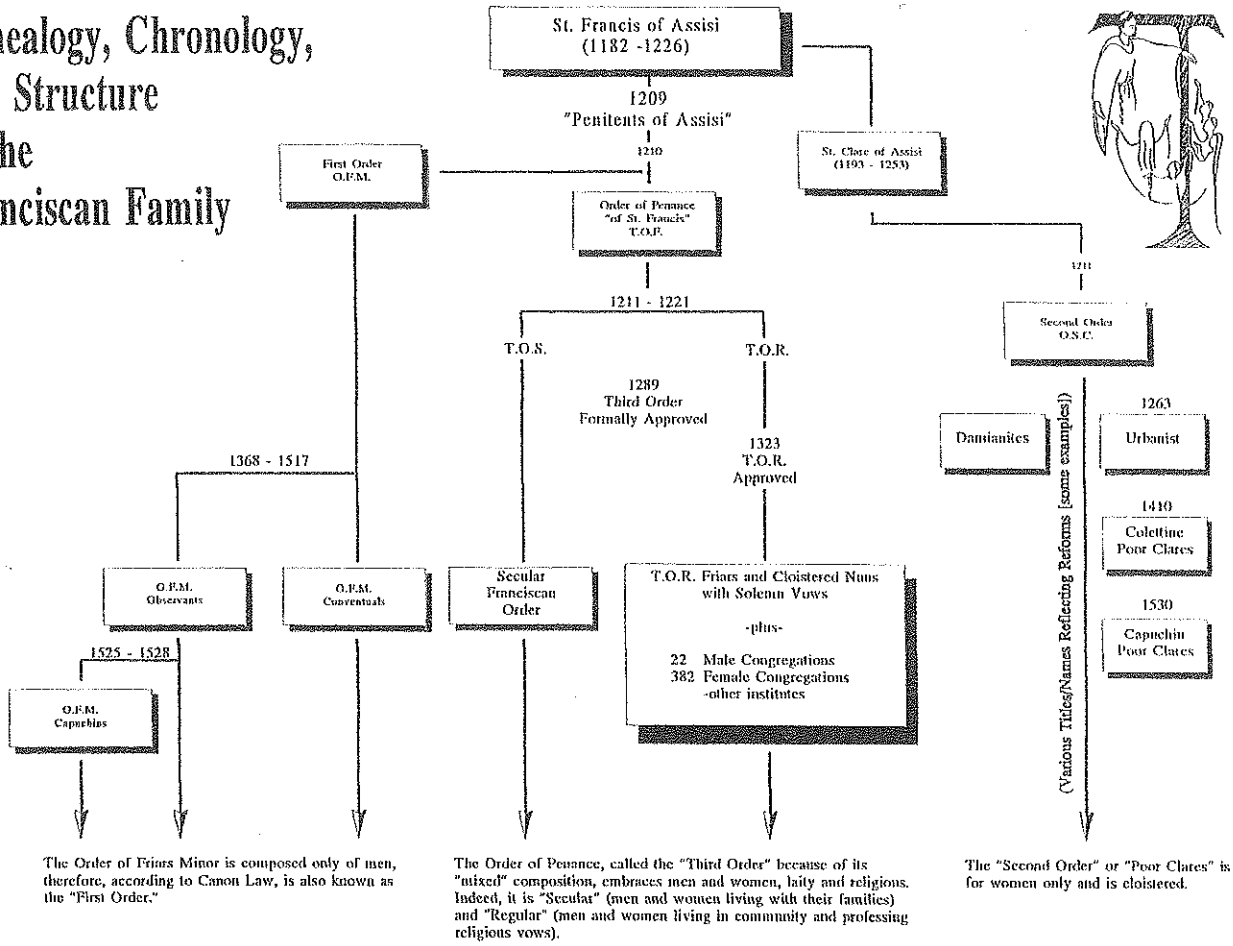
Genealogy, Chronology, and Structure of the Franciscan Family



The Order of Friars Minor is composed only of men, therefore, according to Canon Law, is also known as the "First Order."

The Order of Penance, called the "Third Order" because of its "mixed" composition, embraces men and women, laity and religious. Indeed, it is "Secular" (men and women living with their families) and "Regular" (men and women living in community and professing religious vows).

The "Second Order" or "Poor Clares" is for women only and is cloistered.

Chronology of the Third Order of St. Francis

T In 1209, St. Francis and his first companions constituted the primitive community of "Penitents of Assisi."

T In 1211, a popular movement began among those "Brothers and Sisters of Penance" who wanted to follow St. Francis (TOF).

T By 1215 there existed numerous examples of community life (in hospitals, hospices, hermitages, etc).

T About the middle of the 13th century there appeared throughout Europe the first confederations and foundations from which would spring the male and female Congregations of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis.

T From the start of the Franciscan era the Third Order (known as the Franciscan Order of Penance) was formed as an institution distinct and different from the First and Second Orders. It has always been characterized by the presence of men and women, namely of "brothers and sisters".

T In 1289, Nicholas IV approved the Franciscan"Third Order"(TOF in fact already delineated by two important orientations TOS and TOR).

T In 1323 John XXII formally approved a community or "regular" life in the Franciscan Third Order (Bull: *Altissimo in divinis* of November 18th).

T In 1397, the first approval is granted to a Congregation of TOR Nuns (the Religious Institute founded by Bl. Angeline of Marsciano).

T Other male and female Congregations, obtained their approvals at different times, in different nations and were independent of one another.

In the course of centuries many Congregations have disappeared and many more have come into existence. Present statistics list:

58 Cloistered Monasteries
22 Male Congregations
382 Female Congregations.

Initials

OFM =	Order of Friar Minors	OFM Conventual	(OFM Conv)
		OFM Observant	(OFM)
		OFM Capuchin	(OFM Cap)
OSC =	Order of St. Clare of Assisi or "Clares" (various subdivisions)		
TOF =	Third Order Franciscan	SFO:	Secular Franciscan Order (Third Order Secular or TOS, until 1978).
		TOR:	Third Order Regular (friars and sisters), in different Congregations with proper initials. (ex.: OSF)