

## 27 FRIAR ANSELMO (A MEDIEVAL LEGEND)

Friar Anselmo (God's grace may he win!)  
Committed one sad day a deadly sin;

Which being done he drew back, self-aborred,  
From the rebuking presence of the Lord,

And, kneeling down, besought, with bitter cry,  
Since life was worthless grown, that he might die.

All night he knelt, and, when the morning broke,  
In patience still he waits death's fatal stroke.

When all at once a cry of sharp distress  
Aroused Anselmo from his wretchedness;

And, looking from the convent window high,  
He saw a wounded traveller gasping lie

Just underneath, who, bruised and stricken sore,  
Had crawled for aid unto the convent door.

The friar's heart with deep compassion stirred,  
When the poor wretch's groans for help were heard

With gentle hands, and touched with love divine,  
He bathed his wounds, and poured in oil and wine.

With tender foresight cared for all his needs, --  
A blessed ministry of noble deeds.

In such devotion passed seven days. At length  
The poor wayfarer gained his wonted strength.

With grateful thanks he left the convent walls,  
And once again on death Anselmos calls.

When, lo! his cell was filled with sudden light,  
And on the wall he saw an angel write,

(An angel in whose likeness he could trace,  
More noble grown, the traveller's form and face),

"Courage, Anselmo, though thy sin be great,  
God grants thee life that thou may'st expiate.

"Thy guilty stains shall be washed white again,  
By noble service done they fellow-men.

"His soul draws nearest unto God above,  
Who to his brother ministers in love."

Meekly Anselmo rose, and, after prayer,  
His soul was lighted of its past despair.

Henceforth he strove, obeying God's high-will,  
His heaven-appointed mission to fulfill.

And many a soul, oppressed with pain and grief,  
Owed to the friar solace and relief.

**Sources:**

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