"If you live like a madman, know that you will have to die senseless": instructions for a good death in Eighteenth Century Portuguese Christian literature

"Se viveres como louco, sabes que hás de morrer sem juízo": as orientações para o bem morrer na literatura cristã portuguesa do século XVIII

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Resumo

Orientar os fiéis para uma vida santificada e instruí-los para uma *boa morte* foram objetivos muito comuns na literatura religiosa portuguesa do período moderno, especialmente aquela divulgada no século XVIII e que se propunha a definir e propagar virtudes morais e comportamentos que garantissem o *bem morrer*. Nosso objetivo, neste artigo, é o de analisar as orientações que todo fiel católico deveria observar como preparação prévia para a morte nas obras *Sermão da Missão da quarta tarde da quaresma* (1734), *Terceiro Instruído na Virtude* (1742) e *Mestre da Virtude* (1745), produzidas pelo padre dominicano português João Franco.

Palavras-chave: morte; manual de devoção; leitura.

Abstract

Guiding believers to a holy life and instructing them for a *good death* were very common objectives in Portuguese religious literature in the modern period, especially during the 18th century. This literature proposed to define and propagate moral virtues and behaviors that would guarantee a *good death*. The goal in this article is to analyze the instructions that every Catholic was expected to follow as an early preparation for death in the works *Sermão da Missão da quarta tarde da quaresma* (1734), *Terceiro Instruído na Virtude* (1742) and *Mestre da Virtude* (1745), produced by the Portuguese Dominican Fr. João Franco.

Keywords: death; devotion manual; reading.

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In the Early Modern period, especially between the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, following the strengthening of the press, Portugal witnessed the consolidation of the expansion of religious discourse about a good death associated with the liturgy and the doctrine and morals of the Catholic Church, heir of the reformed Catholic principles of the sixteenth century.

Among the objectives of the various religious books published during the 1700s in the strikingly Catholic Portuguese kingdom was facing the drama of death, its absolute certainty, the irreversibility of life, in order to lead the believer/reader to reflect on how they had led their life, to consciousness of their acts, their personal choices, and the possibility of guaranteeing the future salvation of their soul (Araújo, 1997, p. 147).

In the sixteenth century the Catholic Counter-Reformation[3] represented in the religious sphere a Catholic spiritual impulse, a new movement of mysticism, evangelism, and charity which stimulated the foundation of regular orders,[4] the vast propaganda of positive actions of the Church, the consolidation of more elaborate adoration of saints, and finally, the instruction of the laity, including the publication, by the clergy, of manuals of a moral, doctrinaire, and devotional nature (Trevor-Roper, 1972, p. 35). According to Federico Palomo (2006, pp. 57-70) this literature should be understood as a resource for doctrinaire dissemination capable of 'directing conduct,' and of spreading religious debate that could impress believers. Both the offering of these books in the publishing market and the increase in reading significantly favored the dissemination of the directives of Trent, thereby guaranteeing Catholic doctrinal homogenization (Palomo, 2006, pp. 57-82).

In eighteenth century Portugal, João Franco was one of these members of the clergy who, in the reformist wake of spreading Catholic moral discourses, preached and published numerous works of instruction for the holy and devote life, as well as the propagation of behavior which could guarantee a *good death*. This literature, heir of the *ars moriendi* of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, was characterized, according to Roger Chartier, by the presentation of "a text and a series of images" in xylographs, which "spread throughout all of the West, constituting a stock of common representations centered on agony." In the following century, some translation and adaptations of *Ars* ended up, according to the French historian, becoming "a program for living well" (2004, p. 143).

According to Cláudia Rodrigues (2005, p. 53), eighteenth century religious literature should be understood as a second phase of these publications of the 'arts of dying well.' While the *ars moriendi* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries valorized the proximity of death as the proper occasion for the preparation of the believer, in the years between the Council of Trent and the eighteenth century, salvation came to be seen in these publication through the incentive of a pious life, "with the daily thought of death, in detriment to the valorization of the moment of agony" (Rodrigues, 2005, p. 53), although the idea of 'living well' was already present in the sixteenth century.

It was the Catholic and Protestant reformations that, according to Chartier (2004, p. 133), accentuated some changes in the forms of representation of dying *well*, which attenuated the emphasis on the final moments, appearing in a "more dispersed [manner] and with less weight on the collective conscience." The manuals published in Portugal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Figure 1) presented, as highlighted by Ana Cristina Araújo (1997, p. 148), a philosophy of life and practical knowledge in relation to death. In other words, *living well* and *dying well* were prerogatives intertwined in the Christian-Catholic discourse, since in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries "the idea that a good death was something which had to be conquered throughout life" (Serafim, 2008, p. 38) was very present in the daily life of Catholics. For this reason the "arts of dying well" came to assume "forms of the 'arts of living well,' and were situated in the areas of meditation, penitence, and asceticism, thereby approximating the baroque literature of spirituality" (Serafim, 2008, p. 38).

João Franco, author of the manual *Mestre da Vida* (1731),[5] which we will analyze in this article, was a Friar from the Dominican Order[6] in Lisbon, a Master in Theology, consultant of the Holy Office, and Prior of the Convent of the Order of Preachers in the same city.[7] He was possibly born in the second half of the seventeenth century, since it is known that he professed in the order in 1704 and during the first half of the eighteenth century he gained intellectual renown among the clergy and laypersons of Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian society. As well as *Mestre da Vida*, he published other devotional manuals – such as *Mestre da Virtude* (1745)[8] – which circulated in Portuguese America, having also given numerous sermons in various churches, convents, and seminars in various Portuguese cities, which were published in ten large volumes in the 1730s.


MESTRE
DA
VIRTUDE,
SEGUNDA PARTE
DO
MESTRE DA VIDA,
QUE PERSUADE A TODAS AS CREATURAS
de qualquer eſtado, que ſejão, o que he neceſſa-
rio para ſe ſalvarem, e o que hão de fazer
para ſerem Santas.
OFFERECIDA
A
JESUS
CRUCIFICADO,
Primeira Impreſſão,
PELO PADRE
Fr. JOAÕ FRANCO,
Meſtre em Theologia, Conſultor do Santo Offi-
cio, da Segrauta Ordem dos Prégadores.
LISBOA:
Na Officina dos herd.s de Antonio Pedrozo Galrão.
anno de M. DCC. XLV.
Vende-ſe na Portaria de S. Domingos.

Figure 1 – Frontispiece of *Mestre da Virtude*.
Source: Biblioteca Joanina – Coimbra, Portugal.

The works of the Dominican João Franco evidentially contained the 'theoretical' influences of his time and, as was very common, were based both on biblical passages and the doctors of the Church – St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, St. John Chrysostom – and of ancient philosophy – Seneca, Plutarch, and Aristotle.[9] Although he overly cited in his texts the 'classics' of the doctors of the Church, who were certainly sources of inspiration for reflection about the 'truths of the faith' and of the doctrine, it is possible to think that other socially recognized clergy, authors of 'successful' manuals in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, also served as the basis for the coherent construction of Franco's argument.[10] Amongst other works, the *Imitation of Christ* (1441) should be mentioned. This was written by the German Thomas à Kempis (1379-1471) and was republished numerous times in the following centuries, and even in the present time, being one of the most translated books after the Bible. Peter Burke (2009, p. 27) highlighted that, even before 1700,

Kempis' work had been translated at least 52 times, including into Breton, Catalan, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Swedish.[11] Chapter 23 of Kempis' manual, with the title "Meditation about Death" and divided into nine brief reflections, refers in the first item to the need for anticipated preparation: "your end in this world will arrive very quickly; see then how you prepare" (Kempis, 2011[1441], p. 73), announcing in the fifteenth century the need for the preparation for death with similar arguments to those which João Franco used in the middle of the eighteenth century. Another author recognized by Franco and who certainly inspired him in many moments was the Dominican Luís de Granada (1505-1588), especially two of his works: *Compêndio da doutrina Cristã* (1559) and *Guia de pecadores e exortação à virtude* (1572) (Fleck; Dillmann, 2013, p. 297). According to Célia Borges, Fr. Granada's *Compêndio* collected sermons which served as models for Christian preaching, intended to be read "in churches when the qualified priests are unable to prepare their own sermons" (Borges, 2009, p. 146). Another author of great influence on modern Christian thought was Fr. Manuel Bernardes (1644-1710) who, among many works, wrote the two volume *Exercícios Espirituais e Meditações da Via Purgativa: sobre a malícia do pecado, vaidade do mundo, misérias da vida humana e quatro novíssimos do homem* (1686), highlighting as the purpose of the work living with "the hatred of sin, contempt for the world, patience with the miseries of this life, prevention for death, fear of judgment, horror of hell, and a longing hope for eternal glory" (Sartin, 2013, p. 81). Bernardes reflected on the "uncertainty of death," emphasizing "when I will die, I do not know; it could be today; it could be now; to how many does death arrive when they least expect it?" (Sartin, 2013, p. 84). Another author who possibly occupied space in Franco's reading was Francisco Sales (1567-1622), especially his work *Introdução à vida devota* (1609), which as well as teaching the basics of this type of life, presented the 'meditation of death,' with various considerations to be 'imagined' by the reader: "imagine that you are in bed, seriously ill, without hope of escape," so they should consider the "uncertainty of the day" of death, since "we will only be certain that we have to die and ordinarily faster than we would want" (Sales, 1883[1609], p. 77). These authors – Kempis, Granada, Bernardes, Sales – were very probably read by João Franco, although they were not greatly concerned with the question of death itself, but the spiritual life, devotion, prayer, and meditation. However, other authors, as we will see in this article, were writing and publishing in the seventeenth century works with the same content.

In this article we will analyze three texts by the Dominican João Franco, published in Portugal, at different moments, between 1730-1740. These are *Sermão da Missão da quarta tarde da quaresma* (1734), published in the first volume, out of a total of ten, as mentioned previously, which contained all the sermons of this cleric until that moment, and two more devotional manuals entitled *Terceiro Instruído na Virtude* (1742) and *Mestre da Virtude* (1745). The titles of the manuals and the sermon are not easily or quickly related to the question of preparation for death, although they give great emphasis to death and the condition of the soul in relation to immortality.[12]

João Franco's publications persisted in Portugal during the second half of the eighteenth century, a moment when according to Ana Cristina Araújo (1997, p. 170) there was a decline in publishing and an exhaustion of thanatological production – of devotional manuals – due to the saturation of the market and the loss of influences of the Jesuit, Dominican, and Varantojan religious masters. Franco's works were the publishing success of his time, but we do not know the print-run of the works analyzed here,[13] except the best-seller *Mestre da Vida*, of which 16,000 copies were printed in eight editions between 1731 and 1747 (Loureiro, 1994, p. 33).

Devotional manuals provided Christian instructions of a doctrinaire, moral, and devotional nature, warning about norms of behavior through examples of saints' lives which were to be imitated; including precepts of conduct, meditation exercises to inspire good thoughts, the recognition of guilt, regrets, and honesty with oneself in moments of confession; it also presented basic rules for a good preparation for death.[14] Widely published in the Iberian Peninsula in the Early Modern period by subjects from different religious orders, by members of different religious orders, there were numerous editions, large print-runs, and considerable circulation. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Portugal, Araújo (1997, p. 149) counted 129 titles dedicated to dying well, with 261 different editions, in other words, an average of two editions per work. In general, they had a small size, facilitating handling and transport, since they could serve as efficient means of religious instruction at different moments of the day, independent of the place where people found themselves.[15] The short chapters and the subdivision into multiple items were also elements facilitating the possibility of dynamic and reflexive reading.[16] The public at whom these manuals were aimed – and for whom they were written – was quite wide-ranging, covering other members of the clergy (regular and secular), devote laypersons, laypersons in processes of conversion, the

educated and illiterate, whether they were nobles, burghers, or poor, farmers, artisans, or merchants.

In general, the religious literature published in Portugal was read and used by ecclesiastics in training, in schools and seminaries, and also by laypersons in search of edifying reading and religious instruction in the private and family sphere. Considering the reading practices of the Early Modern period, it is plausible to suppose that, given the limitation of the works available, many of them were reread by readers, recited and memorized.[17] Rereading in this case has to be understood not only as a practice, but also a means to read which submitted the reader to the 'authority of the text' (Chartier, 2002, p. 108). The same aspect is highlighted by D. Julia, for whom the devotional manuals were produced to be constantly re-read, since they had the function of serving as guides for believers to follow the path to salvation (1999, p. 100). Nor should the various appropriations and interpretations made by those who had access to these manuals be ignored (Certeau, 1994, pp. 269-270).

While, on the one hand, Ana Cristina Araújo (1997, p. 174) highlights that books became "knowledge relics", with their pages worn by so much handling, dotted with wax, denouncing a silent and nocturnal readership, on the other, Roger Chartier (2002, p. 13) warns that the texts do not suppose a solitary and silent reader, since they were written to be spoken, read out loud, shared with a listening public. It is opportune to note that the potential readers of these manuals were not only found in Europe, as shown by the examples found in Brazilian libraries and research of Laura de Mello e Souza (2009[1986], p. 158), who found these manuals used, including *Mestre da Vida*, in the practice of exorcisms in colonial Bahia.[18]

Many titles from this type of literature, widely produced in France, were translated to Spanish and Portuguese, as can be seen in *Guia para tirar as almas do caminho espaçoso da perdição e dirigi-las pelo estreito da salvação*, by the French writer Julião Hayneufe, translated to Portuguese by Francisco de Mattos and published in Lisbon in 1695; the work *As verdades principais e mais importantes da fé*, also written by a Frenchman, this time called Luis Albelly, published in Portugal in 1729, and also *Sentimentos afetuosos da alma para com Deus*, by another French writer Le Chevalier, translated and published in Lisbon in 1782.[19] In Portugal, as aptly noted by Araújo (1997), even after the end of the Iberian Union (1640), the publication of these works continued in Spanish, significantly favoring the diffusion of this type of literature.

It should be highlighted that meticulous analyses of the discourse contained in *dying well* manuals have already been carried out by Portuguese historians.[20] João Carlos Serafim (2008, p. 40), for example, presented an interesting analysis of the work *Satisfaçam de Agravos e confusam de vingativos,* written by Fr. João da Fonseca and published in 1700 in Évora, in which he observed that this book had "as a motivation the exercise of moral and religious edification," in such a way that led to "reflection on death and about the manner of living well." What was specific about this work, which had "death and the art of preparation as an object," was its "literary artifice" with its capacities to convince and mobilize in a simple manner, in the same form as situating "eschatological drama" in a "precise form."

The analysis of instructions about dying well present in the texts of the Dominican João Franco, which we will present below, will consider the following questions: why should Christians prepare for death? What after all is a good death? What conduct and practices were ideal to achieve a good death?

The need to prepare for dying

For both João Franco and other members of the clergy from the same period, the believer – devote or sinner – did not think enough or satisfactorily about their own death, and for this reason, they had to be convinced to recognize the importance of thinking of it throughout their existence, in order to guarantee a good passing. "How many live in forgetfulness!" (Justiniano, 1672, n.p.) exclaimed the Jesuit priest Jorge Justiniano in his 1672 work *Regra para viver & morrer cristamente*, de 1672, whose first edition, in Italian, dated from 20 years before. Dying, having forgotten about death was dying unnoticed – "I do not want, my God, to be one of these" (Justiniano, 1672, n.p.). Thinking about one's own death was an effective way of avoiding a sudden and abrupt death – in general, a result achieved by those who in life did not take care of their own dying, forgetting that death was waiting for them – without the receipt of the sacraments. Preparation for death was fundamentally a construction for the future of the soul in eternity and a means of guaranteeing one's own salvation.[21]

In his 1742 work *Terceiro instruído na virtude*, João Franco presented an item called "Instructions about the consideration of death," in which he highlights the uncertain aspects about death, such as *when*, *how,* and *where*. What

was certain, according to the Dominican, was "that all men have to die" and, for this reason, everyone should be waiting for it, prepared and thinking about it constantly:

> The greedy one loses his sleep to guard his wealth. The ambitious one loses his sleep to guard his position. The vain one loses his sleep to guard his honor. The dishonest one loses his sleep to hide the occasion of delight: and the man of faith knowing that death certainly will come, only to guard against death he will not lose his sleep … and because this is ignored, for this reason nowadays the world is full of sin … when least we imagine it, it is then death will come. (Franco, 1742, p. 391)

According to Franco, some Christians, as they did not think about their final moment, died without being up-to-date with their religious obligations, without being able to count on the purification of their soul and a peaceful conscience. It was therefore recommended to frequently be concerned with confession, the restitution of honor, the abandonment of scandals, the pardon of the 'other,' and also the writing of wills.[22] When death arrived, there would not be enough time to get the confessor, to ask forgiveness for sins, to make penance, to do all the cilices, fasting, prayers, alms, etc. Therefore, being attentive and prepared was the recommendation of João Franco, since "when death arrived... there is no place for anything," since what someone did not "do in life, in life would not be done" (Franco, 1742, p. 391, 392). According to the Dominican, death occurred in the *when of God*, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> So, not only do men ignore the when of death, but also the brevity of the when. They believe death will come in the when of men and that it will not come in the when of God. The when of men is apprehended. The when of God is true. The when of man will come within many years, the when of God will come when men are not aware of it ... and for this, often the when of God comes when men are not prepared for Death, and here come men to die as brutes, who die without preparation. (Franco, 1742, p. 392)

According to Franco, a brief life would be followed by death, which would occur at the moment defined by God, in an instant of human neglect, when subjects, imbued with the brutality of the soul, found themselves absorbed in their material and carnal attachments.[23] As well as the *when*, there was also the

how of death, an unknown which had to be taken into consideration to maintain constant thinking about death. According to the Dominican, Christians in general ignored *how* they would die, a perception which is shown in this passage: "Man, do you know how you will die? Do you know if you will die with speech, to call on God, or without it? Do you know if you will die with your senses or without them? Do you know if you will die with knowledge of your sins or in ignorance of them? I suppose you will tell me you do not know" (Franco, 1742, p. 392).

But even the certainty of death was accompanied by numerous uncertainties, especially in relation to the conditions in which the subject found himself when death occurred: if they were with or without their senses, aware or in ignorance. *How* death would occur, as well as *when*, were questions without an answer, since they would occur according to the will of God and not in accordance with the sinner, since "to die as God wanted, you also have to live how He wanted, and not as you wanted" (Franco, 1742, p. 395).

But the Dominican appeared to have the response – "with all certainty" – for the questionings of *how* the Christian should die. He argued that the death of the sinner would be like his life, and based on St. Bernard he stated: "if you live like a madman, know that you will die without your senses." Life with an absence of judgment, animalistic brutality, blind passions in the 'flames of lust' would lead individuals to a death without good profit for the spirit, since the way life was, so would be the manner of dying (Franco, 1742, p. 393, 394).

Finally, preparation for death was justified by the ignorance of *where* it would occur, and it would be harvested on the steps and paths tread by believers. This *where* could be both a place, as well as practices, thoughts, and feelings which the believer cultivated in life. Death could thus occur during trips, games, thefts, murders, and treats, amongst others (Franco, 1742, p. 395).

Life and death were not separate and distinct for the religious of the eighteenth century, and João Franco, in his manuals, made efforts to instruct the believers/readers about the relationship of proximity between one and the other. Being prepared for death signified thinking about the fragility and fugacity of life, seeking to following the commandments of God and leading a sanctified life.

In the next topic, we will look at the understandings of the good death, afterwards analyzing the instructions which, according to the Dominican Franco, had to be observed for the Christian to achieve the *good death*.

The meaning of the good death

In the eighteenth century, the good death – beautiful and edifying – was the one achieved after a long and constant preparation of the believer, which took place throughout life (Ariès, 1977, p. 26). Achieving a good death was, thus, directly related to the choices made in life, according to how the individual had conducted themselves. In the mission sermon (1734), João Franco, drawing on Saints Gregory, Anselm, and Paul, as well as Cardinal Hugh of Saint Victor, stated that God despised "at the hour of death," the "prayers of those who despised him" in life. Only those who had taken care of their own dying would escape the terrible possibility of dying suddenly, so that "as it is not possible for those who were never part of Rome to die in Rome, it is also not possible to die in friendship with God for those who have not live in friendship with God." Using numerous metaphors, Franco emphasized the need to observe these conditions, by stating: "Have you ever seen a Lion with a sheep's tail? So do not expect a man who in the evils of life was a Lion to have the death of the Lamb and the innocent (Franco, 1734, p. 506).[24]

Drawing on various doctors from the Church and classical philosophers, João Franco repeatedly highlighted the correlation between a holy life and a good death. St. Jerome is invoked, with his 'infallible truth' achieved by experience, since he had altered: "those who live badly, do not die well; and for this reason, if you want to die well, live well," as well as St. Ambrose who stated that "death is the testimony of life" and the "testimony of life is death" (Franco, 1734, p. 505). Philippe Ariès (2000, p. 128), citing the manual *Espelho da alma do pecador e do justo durante a vida e à hora da morte,* de 1736 – with no indication of authorship or place of publication –, highlighted that the good death was the one in which in the final moment the guardian angel presented the dying person with a book containing his virtues, good works, fasts, prayers, mortifications, and penances, in other words, the subject was shown upon the imminence of death aspects of their own conduct in life, considered morally positive, constructed during life to guarantee salvation.

In *Mestre da Virtude* (1745), João Franco returned to this prerogative – of death like life –, presenting the death of animals, such as donkeys, foxes, pigs, dogs, and horses, as a brutal death, irrational, bad, fruit of a life guided by passions (Franco, 1745, pp. 18-20).

> Do they want to live dishonest and die chaste? Do they want to live vengefully and dies charitably? Live by robbing and die in retribution? Live badly and die

> well? Live as enemies of God and die as friends of God? Live lawless and die lawfully? Live as a Turk and die a Catholic? Live as a demon and die as an angel? This absolute power God can well do, but if he does it, certainly it will be a great miracle… because only by miracle can it happen that the death be good when life was not. (Franco, 1745, p. 24)

While in the manual *Terceiro Instruído na Virtude* (1742), João Franco responded to the questions of those who said it would be possible to have a good death without a good life, "I do not deny this" – stating that this would only occur "by a miracle," "because only by a miracle can it happen that the life of one be chaste, and the death be of another," in *Mestre da Virtude* (1745) he does not deny "that may live badly and die well," but these should not be examples to abandon the idea of the good death and starting to "live bad," because "dying well after living badly is a miracle in which not every step is successful" (Franco, 1745, p. 22). However, a decade before, in a 1734 sermon, Franco had been even more rigid and more inflexible, saying that it was "false," "very false" that someone who "lived badly" could achieve the death of a saint, since the Holy Scriptures and the doctors of the Church "do not lie." And, at the end, he highlights that "it is Faith that saves a man, it is necessary to have spent one's life in the Law of God. This is a truth spoken, no less, by the mouth of Christ." (Franco, 1734, p. 508).

The good death was planned, thought of, reflected on throughout life, and it was a question of disillusion, since the sinner needed to be disillusioned of the pleasures of the world to achieve it in its plenitude. Dying in the grace of God required living far from sin, since it was impossible to live in sin and die in grace. The greatest disillusion to die "as God wills" was the need to live "as He wants" (Franco, 1742, p. 394).

Therefore, if the good death was the one accompanied by prior preparation, the exact moment of death, the "hour of death," possessed various particular characteristics.[25] The blessed death was the one in which the sacraments of the Church were successfully applied, in which the confessor was present at the bedside of the dying person, who embraced an image of Christ "crying and shouting for mercy" (Franco, 1734, p. 509).

To illustrate how necessary it was learn to die well, João Franco described in great detail a scene of someone close to death. Present here are both the agitation of family members given the near death of a loved one, and the care provided by doctors, who took the pulse of the dying person and informed the

family of their condition. Some relatives came close to the sick person, consoling them with the last remedies of salvation, other hurry to summon the confessor, others seek out the notary for the last testament, while other call the parish priest for the sacraments "at that time" (Franco, 1734, p. 509). Surgeons also appeared for the "final remedies of art," while others went to and come from pharmacists with prescriptions. However, while "in a short time the house was full of people, some ordering, some obeying, some carrying messages, others bringing them, others with answers, the wife crying, the children moaning, creditors asking, in short the whole house in mutiny," the dead person, aware of the proximity of death, should keep "the heart," "understanding," and the "entire soul" in God (Franco, 1734, p. 510). Manuel de Deus, author of *Pecador convertido ao caminho da verdade*, from 1728, approximating the perspective of João Franco, stated that the anxieties, pains, and fainting, indicative of the proximity of death, should be understood by the believer as expressions of divine love and piety (Deus, 1728, p. 253).

For the living, the time of death was, undoubtedly, a moment of affliction and jitters, tears and of reckoning, but for the dying person it had to be the instant of loving God "with all their soul," "with all understanding," and "with all the heart."[26] Sheltered and protected by so many, the dying person had to wait for the good, full, and edifying death, prepared for during their life. However, according to Franco (1734, p. 511), the good death and consequently salvation would only be achieved by those who had not converted to God only "at that time when it is raining floods of tribulation," since even "embracing as many images of Christ as there are in the world, they know that they cannot find God" (Franco, 1734, p. 512). This was, according to him, a bad death,[27] as it was necessary to cultivate God throughout life. In the next section we will analyze the discourses which seek to encourage good conduct in life to guarantee a good death.

Ideal conduct for the good death

In *Mestre da Virtude* (1745), in the section "Instructing everyone to prepare for a good death," João Franco repeatedly highlights the idea that to die well it is necessary to have lived well, filling one's life with perfect attitudes and duties, in accordance with the teachings of Christian doctrine. Virtuous death, the salvation of the soul, the effective help of grace at the moment of death

were natural consequences of a life far from vice, from the capital sins, from the abuse of living, contempt and mocking of the divine and the Scriptures. At the moment of death there would not be enough time for regret and the cries for mercy, the calling of Jesus and the invocation of the saints to answer than it was no good, since God would not hear these clamors (Franco, 1745, p. 355).

The conduct considered ideal for the believer/reader to have a good death was related to a series of 'considerations' which had to be taken into account during life, from 'today onwards,' from the moment of reading the manual. 'Today' had to be seen as 'the last day,' important to start fulfilling the various considerations, which we will now analyze.

Christians had to bear in mind the quick passage of life on earth, which "had to end," converting the body on earth and sending the soul "to the place it deserved." The vanity of life had to "stay buried under a stone," the transitory nature of life would only leave "the good works for the reward and the guilt offenses for punishment" (Franco, 1745, p. 357).

As previously highlighted, the certainty of death and the uncertainty of how it would arrive had to be the motive of immediate warning, care, and preparation, as it could arrive "when you were eating, or sleeping, reading, writing, laughing, crying, in the grace or disgrace of God."[28] After death, the eternity of the soul could be experienced in the "sight of God" or in the "company of the demon," with the believer/reader choosing – without wasting any time – how to live their life, in order to ensure salvation. Life and death were 'just one,' and thus the opportunity of the Christian to guarantee a good path to a good death and good destiny for the soul was unique, since "you will not return to the world to amend the past" (Franco, 1745, p. 357). It was necessary for believers to be aware that they were on their deathbed, ready to die, they did not have any more time to correct their errors. The incapacity to cry for their sins and to do penance would inevitably bring "anguish" at the final hour, "cravings" in the heart, and in the "apartment of the soul," in such a way that the Christian could have their soul condemned (Franco, 1745, p. 358).

For a sinner, the hour of death would arrived with a useless repentance and for this reason the "screams of conscience" at that moment would confuse, deafen, stun the dying person – in the terms used by Franco –, who perceived the "horror" of "misspent time." Added to these manifestations of conscience were the words for disillusionment, emitted by those who accompanied the sinner in his final hour. The demon was also present at the hour of death, untiring, vigilant, and committed to provoking the sinner in his greatest

weaknesses. Like a lion disposed to "snatch the soul," he would resort to all types of wiles to win; including appearing before the dying person to frighten them, for which he counted on the help "of all his companions" in this enterprise (Franco, 1745, p. 358).

For the sinner not to have a "misfortunate death," it was necessary that all possible efforts be made to live in accordance with the commandments of the Law of God, to carry out mortifications, and be attentive to the "roads to perdition," offenses, passions, and dissolute life. Observance of this conduct in life approximated the death of the faithful with the day of the "just and saints," which in general were terrible. And to reinforce the comparison, João Franco asks: "How many who lived saintly lives hesitated at that time?" (Franco, 1745, p. 359).

Finally, the sinner was assured of the certainty of the justice of God and of punishment, since the Lord would turn his back at the hour of death, as the Christian had turned his in life. At the moment of distress, craving, the sinner would find themselves helpless and stuck "in the middle of the wolves of hell," who would approach in a rush, intending to snatch them. Franco also made a final warning, emphasizing the need to take care of "time," crying out in the "presence of the Lord your sins" and proposing to "change your life" (Franco, 1745, p. 359).[29]

Final considerations

In the eighteenth century, achieving a good death implied an apprenticeship to which Catholics needed to be motivated and committed to acquiring and applying, considering that one died in accordance with how they lived. This motivation and commitment were very evident in the mission sermon proffered by the Dominican João Franco, in which he stated that "all my listeners know well that they have to die, what matters to all is learning to die well" (Franco, 1734, p. 502).

Both the sermons and the instructions which would be disseminated in the eighteenth century manuals about how to 'live and die well' imposed the model of spirituality inherited from the reformist Christian current, based on the moralization of customs, the exhortation of sin and punishment, the repression of offenses, and the exploitation of the image of death, with the

purpose of impressing the continual fight against earthly temptations and the forces of evil (Araújo, 1997, p. 152).[30]

Undoubtedly the publication of devotion manuals was one of the most efficient means for the dissemination of this model, and above all the diffusion of images of the good death, considering the existence, at the time, of the public which read and consumed this literature. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the reader – not necessarily or exclusively those who poured over religions texts – was an *intensive* reader according to Chartier (1994, p. 189), since they reread, memorize, recited, heard, and transmitted the moral and doctrinal learning.[31] Learning about dying well was thus related to reading or listening to religious instructions, which aimed to guide laypersons and the clergy in the preparation of the passage to eternity. Some authors of manuals even counselled that they be read to others and that they ask for its reading at moments of infirmity, as can be found in this advice given by Friar Manuel de Deus (1728, p. 258): "While you are not in your final moment, I ask that you read, if you do not have another, this book … but do not read much at any time, but what is enough to move you either to pain for sins, thanks for God, or other pious affection."

Notwithstanding all these efforts and orientations, the instructions which appeared in the texts written by João Franco effectively appear to point to what was not followed and fulfilled by Christians in Portuguese society in the first half of the eighteenth century, in other words, conduct with the Dominican expected would be returned to or introduced, as can be seen in the passage from the 1734 Sermon in which he says that "there is no one in the world who considers" death (Franco, 1734, p. 504). Considering and thinking about death during life forced Christians to necessarily reflect on their longevity and about the intrinsic relationship between living well and dying well. According to Ana Cristina Araújo (1997, p. 147), for Franco, "the most effective means for awakening men sleeping in sin with confidence in life, is to bring them to the tombs of the dead," so that more than making them retreat from 'vanities,' orientate them to not fear death, but rather that possibility of non-salvation of the soul in its immortal condition.

Those willing to learn to die well had to keep in mind the great difficulties to be faced, since "this business is so difficult that it is necessary to study and learn throughout life to do it well" (Franco, 1734, p. 505). According to the Dominican, a good death gained the dimension of a construction, of something which could be prepared and done by the Christian himself, it was

enough to live morally well and thinking about death all the time. By reflecting on their own death, the individual/reader would rethink their own life and adopt a pious posture aimed at salvation. While death was considered "the echo of life," the good death, the precious death, required preparation,[32] since it would occur upon conformity. If life was marked by giving in to vices and to affluence, death would respond with the echo 'fire,' if life was characterized by injustice, death would respond with the echo 'justice.' In life sins were silent, mute, without answering, but upon the arrival of death, they would scream loudly and in echo would respond with pain, fire, and justice to all those who were far from the vigilance of faith and charity.

Both in the text of *Sermão da Missão da quarta tarde da quaresma* (1734), and in the two manuals, *Terceiro Instruído na Virtude* (1742) and *Mestre da Virtude* (1745), which we have analyzed in this article, João Franco instructed his readers about the responsibility they had to assure the salvation of their souls and about the close relations existing between compliance with Christian precepts and the good death. He also stressed the importance of being aware of the effects of their actions and choices made in life, since they would accompany the soul after death and its condition of purgation, salvation, or condemnation.

The reiterated relationship established between life and death by João Franco aimed at calling Catholic believers to adopt chastity, charity, goodness, and righteousness – recommendable moral conduct –, and to avoid the bad conduct, such as dishonesty, vengeance, robbery, and infidelity, in order to guarantee a good death (Franco, 1745, p. 24). The recommendation of living well to die well was loaded with the intentions of molding the profile of the good Catholic, a devote and feverous subject, who obeyed the commandments, respected the sacraments, and the doctrines preached by the Catholic Church.

The need to always be ready for death, due to the uncertainty of its arrival, and the ignorance of when one would die – with or without one's senses, with or without deceit (ignorance of guilt) – reinforced the argument of the indispensable anticipated preparation and the necessary change of conduct aimed at a good death and the saving of the soul which the Dominican proposed in his texts. While for individual Catholics from the eighteenth century death caused doubts, and even fear, for João Franco there was the certainty that 'living like a madman' was the equivalent of 'dying without senses' (1742, p. 394).

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NOTES

[1] Doctorate in History from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC--RS), CNPq Research Productivity Grant Holder (PQ 2) and member of the CNPq Research Group "Jesuits in the Americas" and "Images of Death: death and dying in the Ibero--American world."

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[3] It should be emphasized that there are two more contemporary historic interpretations of the Catholic Reformation. One of them, from the historian Po-Chia HSIA (1998), refers to 'Catholic Renewal' after Trent and the consequent doctrinaire expansion in various parts of the world, such as the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Another interpretation is proposed by the Portuguese historian José Pedro PAIVA (2009, p. 388), who reinforces the idea of a 'process of confessionalization,' in which relations between Church and state were mutually dependent, ambiguous, had undefined frontiers, and overlapped: "monarchs interfered profoundly in the life of the Church and the latter had a notable influence in the political administration of Portugal." In other words, in Portugal, Church and state did not have antagonistic interests in the modern period, possessing similar areas of intervention and jurisdiction, in an interpenetration in various sectors, amongst which I want to highlight here for the interest of this article, the "doctrinaire principles that inspired action." Religious literature was one of the mechanisms for spreading these principles which by forming good Christians, formed good subjects.

[4] The importance of the achievements of religious orders in conversions, has to be emphasized, especially the work of the Company of Jesus, which carried out mission in the Americas against the 'armies of Satan and the effects of his works, with the aim of modifying moral conduct and sensitivities (FLECK, 2004, p. 262).

[5] On other occasions we have analyzed, from different perspectives, this devotion manual. FLECK; DILLMANN, 2012 and 2013. Other analyses of this manual and João Franco can be found in: LOUREIRO, 1994, and ARAÚJO, 1997.

[6] The Dominicans or preachers constituted a Catholic religious order, founded at the beginning of the thirteen century in France by the Spaniard St. Dominic de Guzmán. Concerned with preaching and evangelization since the beginning, and present in numerous

Portuguese convents, the Dominicans were present in the Portuguese overseas expansion, spreading brotherhoods dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary (*Nossa Senhora do Rosário*) (ARAÚJO, 2009, pp. 12-18).

[7] The sparse 'biographical' information existing about João Franco can be found in SILVA, 1859, p. 378.

[8] The *Mestre da Virtude* manual was presented as the second part of *Mestre da Vida*. We have located other editions in a brief survey carried out in the archives of the Joanina Library (1745 edition), in the Nacional Library of Portugal (1759 and 1775 editions) and the Nacional Library of Rio de Janeiro (1749 edition), which shows that this text circulated for at least a thirty year period.

[9] Since the Middle Ages, the Dominicans had been profoundly influenced by the thought of St. Augustine. The order was committed to 'affective spirituality,' with an emphasis on the journey of the soul in the direction of God, in heaven, to enjoy together these blessings and full spiritual joy after death (POTKAY, 2010, p. 79).

[10] In the early modern period, the absence of mentions of the texts consulted – to provide a foundation for the arguments defended by the authors of religious texts – was common. In João Franco's manual, analysed in this article, the same can be found, for which reason we can only speculate about the authors he had read. St. Francisco Sales, bishop of Geneva, in his work *Introdução à vida devota*, highlighted in the "warning from the author to the reader" of the 1609 first edition, that he always wrote "without citations, because the educated do not need them and the others do not think of this" (SALES, 1883[1609], p. 19).

[11] Jean Delumeau highlighted that the *Imitação* was printed around sixty times in various languages before 1500. In relation to the publication of devotional works, he calculated that "the proportion of religious works in typographic production between 1445 and 1520 was at least 75%"; published during this period were "The *Imitação*, the *Bíblias dos pobres*,*Espelho da humana salvação*, *Ars moriendi*, *Vita Christi* by Rudolfo Cartusiano and numerous other works of piety, previously released in manuscript," which "soon had experienced an extraordinary diffusion" (DELUMEAU, 1989, p. 77).

[12] In the survey and analysis done by Ana Cristina Araújo in the 1990s, the titles of the manuals and even their tables of contents did not easily reveal the theme of death, but generically pointed to practical questions of spirituality (ARAÚJO, 1997, p. 151).

[13] In order to establish a parameter of what was seen as – especially in the first half of the eighteenth century – a large print run, we have the example of the prayer manual printed by the Bishop of Leyria, D. Álvaro de Abranches, which deserved the printing of "four thousand booklets" to be shared in his bishopric (DEUS, 1728, p. 260).

[14] It is interesting to briefly highlight the principal points of Catholic soteriology: *Ars vivendi* (the art of living) determined that the subject passed into eternity in the same way that he lived; *non posse non peccare* (sin is inevitable), determining the inexorability of sin, but also the possibility of all being forgiven; *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* (everything is my fault, my well-deserved punishment), determining human responsibility

for their actions and for punishments to be received in life or after death; *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (there is no salvation outside of the Church), determining trust in the Church and its sacraments as the inevitable means to guarantee salvation; *caelum, purgatorium, infernus* (heaven, purgatory, hell), determining the place of the soul after death, depending on its state; *ars moriendi* (art of dying), highlighting the need to seek help to die well; *ora pro nobis* (pray for us), highlighting the need for the living to pray for the dead (EIRE, 2013, pp. 145-146).

[15] The texts for the manuals certainly received different modes of transmission. Considering Roger Chartier's studies about the practice of reading, and the circulation and reception of printed material in early modern Europe, it can be argued that devotional books could have been read out loud at home, in moments of prayer, in church, in the convent; they could have be recited by priests, especially some passages, to the faithful in masses and/or the confessional; they could have been read to the elderly or the sick as a means of consolation or terror; they could also have been read silently and alone at dawn, before sleeping, or at moments of the day dedicated to reading (CHARTIER, 2002; 2004).

[16] See, for example, ARAÚJO, 1997; RODRIGUES, 2005; JULIA, 1999; SANTOS, 1997. It also has to be highlighted that in the eighteenth century, not only did devotional manuals instruct readers to live and die well, but also manuals of conduct, civility, rules of living well, such as the work of the English Earl of Chesterfield, who stressed: "a good death is better than a bad life; consequently, fight to live as much as you should, not as much as you can; for so long as your life is most valuable to others than your death, it is your duty to preserve it" (CHESTERFIELD, 2012, p. 119).

[17] "Study this chapter in your memory" was the recommendation of Friar Manuel de Deus, a missionary from Varatojo, in his work *Pecador convertido ao caminho da verdade*, from 1728. Memorizing was important to maintain a constant reminder of the arrival of death: "rehearse yourself many times in life because it is complete madness not to prepare for this occasion, with all diligence (DEUS, 1728, p. 259).

[18] Among the works of Brazilian historians concerned with the theme of the circulation of books in the Luso-American space, of special importance are those of VILLALTA (2015) and ALGRANTI (2004).

[19] In Early Modern Europe, devotional works were among those who most translated; generally religious writers translated the works of other devout works, as was the case of Luís de Granada and Emmanuel Nieremberg who translated Thomas à Kempis. Translation implied 'negotiation,' referring to the exchange of ideas and the modification of meanings, with it thereby being a cultural practice involving the search for the understanding of the other, to the extent that it converted the concepts and experiences of the other into their equivalents in their own 'vocabulary' (BURKE, 2009, pp. 14-18).

[20] In 2008, the journal *Via Spiritus* published the dossier "The art of dying: reports, forms, and circumstances," in which important researchers collaborated on the theme of 'death'."

[21] It is interesting to perceive that it was not only Catholics who were concerned with death and who published manuals instructing their believers about the best way to prepare for

this moment. Protestants did the same, especially in relation to consolation about the inevitable proximity of death. Mara Regina do Nascimento has analyzed the work *Pequeno livreto com poderoso conforto que podemos contrapor à morte e às tentações na angústia da morte*, by the Lutheran theologian John Gerhard, in the seventeenth century, "a manual to help any Christian who needs to console a brother in spiritual suffering and fearful of death. Written originally in Latin, in 1611, translated into German in 1877 and afterwards to English, the pamphlet and its lessons in comfort consisted of advice and responses which a pastor or layperson could give to the sick in situations of doubt, anguish, weakness, and affliction which the sick, those who could need consolation or comfort at the time of death, were undergoing" (NASCIMENTO, 2013, pp. 137-138).

[22] Cláudia Rodrigues pointed to the transformation in the Early Modern of testamentary practice as the "road *par excellence* of preparation to a 'good death'," with the presence of the confessor at the bedside of the dying person a reinforcement for the "dissemination of the practice of testifying" (RODRIGUES, 2013, p. 110).

[23] This interpretation of João Franco could be related to the prerogative of the Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC[?]-65 AD), who, on writing *On the Shortness of Life*, stated: "You have been engrossed, life hastens by; meanwhile death will be at hand, for which, willy nilly, you must find leisure." (SENECA, 2013, p. 45).

[24] The metaphor of the sheep and the lion has to be understood based on biblical passages which announced Jesus as the lamb of God, the one who dies quietly, like a sheep; while the lion was seen as a synonym of anger and the fury of the demon who sought to snatch the soul of the sinner. In relation to the lion, see DEUS, 1728.

[25] Cláudia Rodrigues has analyzed *ars moriendi* using the texts of Michel Vovelle and Philippe Ariès, stating that the xylographed images reproduce the theme of agony, the room of the dying person, the bed, the sacramental ritualization, and the drama of the struggle between angles and demons. In Portugal, it was in the eighteenth century when many manuals would be published aiming to instruct the devote about the 'good death,' in other words, about the valorization of life with the thought of death (RODRIGUES, 2005, pp. 54-57). A good theoretical analysis about the approaches which the French *Annales* historiographical school conferred on the theme 'death' can be read in the chapter "Death as a problem of historical anthropology,", by GURIÊVITCH (2003).

[26] The time of death was the moment of greatest affliction, but consolation would be obtained through the rejection of "mundane pleasures." The Virgin Mary was one of the most invoked members of the Heavenly Court and would help the soul, with "power and gentleness" for a peaceful and painless passing, also reducing the fear which the faithful had of death (FLECK; DILLMANN, 2012, pp. 97-98).

[27] Bad death came "awkwardly," "in the mouths of gurnards," in drownings at sea or in the "burrows" (DEUS, 1728, p. 253).

[28] It should be emphasized that the identical or very similar passages we find in the devotional manuals consulted, rather than configuring plagiary, show the acceptable appropria-

tion and imitation of discourse, with a discussion about originality not being apt, as noted by CHARTIER (2014, p. 34).

[29] The use of the same expressions and even the same phrases can be found in this passage: "Consider the tremendous punishment that there will be for the sinner at that hour, the Lord turned his back on him, because he turned his back on Him in life; what anguish to see oneself alone and without aid in the middle of the wolves of hell thundering towards you, to grab you! And if only considering this makes you afraid, what will it be to find yourself in this despair? Oh how little you remember through your whole life of this tremendous hour! Take care in the presence of your Lord; weep for your past errors, and you should propose to amend your life," (DEUS, 1728, p. 283).

[30] Enlightened ideas only entered Portuguese Catholic thought in the second half of the eighteenth century, influencing theologians and the Holy Office, who, despite not being skeptical, came to rationalize religion more, attenuating, for example, the gravity attributed to magical practices and pacts with demons (SALES SOUZA, 2012, p. 57). Similarly, the philosophic rationalism of the second half of the 1700s contributed to the decline, not of the belief in salvation/condemnation, but the constant concern with preparing for death, at least when we consider the gradual reduction in the religious publications of manuals with these instructions.

[31] CHARTIER (2002, p. 109) does not consider as rigid this separation and opposition between 'intensive' and 'extensive' reading, but to the contrary, suggests that there was coexistence between the two styles of reading, "absorbed or flippant, scholarly or fun," with possibilities of using different modes of reading.

[32] The *Dicionário portuguez*, by Raphael Bluteau (1638-1734), defines the verb '*aparelhar*' (preparation in English) as "prepare, get ready, make ready, use in the convenient way ... to intend with the pertinent instruments to do something." BLUTEAU, 1712, p. 92.

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