



Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations
St. Louis (IX)—Patron of the Third Order of St. Francis

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Meditation – Community

Although, many dispute the fact that he was indeed a member of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, King St. Louis (IX) of France has long been held by the Secular Franciscan Order to be a member of our family and our patron. As with many Tau Maria Franciscans, his primary community was his family. Below is the advice he gave to his son, Phillip III, in order to protect and encourage the enrichment of that community.

My dearest son, my first instruction is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength. Without this there is no salvation. Keep yourself, my son, from everything that you know displeases God, that is to say, from every mortal sin. You should permit yourself to be tormented by every kind of martyrdom before you would allow yourself to commit a mortal sin.

If the Lord has permitted you to have some trial, bear it willingly and with gratitude, considering that it has happened for your good and that perhaps you well deserved it. If the Lord bestows upon you any kind of prosperity, thank him humbly and see that you become no worse for it, either through vain pride or anything else, because you ought not to oppose God or offend him in the matter of his gifts.

Listen to the divine office with pleasure and devotion. As long as you are in church, be careful not to let your eyes wander and not to speak empty words, but pray to the Lord devoutly, either aloud or with the interior prayer of the heart.

Be kindhearted to the poor, the unfortunate and the afflicted. Give them as much help and consolation as you can. Thank God for all the benefits he has bestowed upon you, that you may be worthy to receive greater. Be just to your subjects, swaying neither to right nor left, but holding the line of justice. Always side with the poor rather than with the rich, until you are certain of the truth. See that all your subjects live in justice and peace, but especially those who have ecclesiastical rank and who belong to religious orders.

Be devout and obedient to our mother the Church of Rome and the Supreme Pontiff as your spiritual father. Work to remove all sin from your land, particularly blasphemies and heresies.

In conclusion, dearest son, I give you every blessing that a loving father can give a son. May the three Persons of the Holy Trinity and all the saints protect you from every evil. And may the Lord give you the grace to do his will so that he may be served and honored through you, that in the next life we may together come to see him, love him and praise him unceasingly. Amen.

Source: The Liturgy of the Hours – *Office of Readings*



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St. Elizabeth of Hungary

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Meditation – Community

The Tau Maria Franciscan community is small. Often our meetings are poorly attended. We suffer from members in vows who seemed to have lost that early zeal, and few new members longing for the challenge of living our Rule of Life. Yet, our Franciscan community is quite large, our patrons and their families very zealous, and perhaps without seeing it yet, many will find the way of penance a sure and joyful path to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, if we do our part, as the saints in our community have done theirs.

Elizabeth was the daughter of the Hungarian King Andrew II. At the age of four (b. 1207), she was brought to the court of her future husband, Ludwig, landgrave of Thuringia. After her marriage in 1221, she very conscientiously fulfilled her duties both toward her husband and as a servant of God. During the night she would rise from bed and spend long periods in prayer. Zealously she performed all types of charitable acts; she put herself at the service of widows, orphans, the sick, the needy. During a famine she generously distributed all the grain from her stocks, cared for lepers in one of the hospitals she established, kissed their hands and feet. For the benefit of the indigent she provided suitable lodging.

After the early death of her husband (in 1227 while on a crusade led by Emperor Frederick II), Elizabeth laid aside all royal dignities in order to serve God more freely. She put on simple clothing, became a tertiary of St. Francis, and showed great patience and humility. Nor was she spared intense suffering - the goods belonging to her as a widow were withheld, she was forced to leave Wartburg. In Eisenach no one dared receive her out of fear of her enemies. Upon much pleading a shepherd of the landgrave permitted her to use an abandoned pig sty. No one was allowed to visit or aid her; with her three children, of whom the youngest was not more than a few months old, she was forced to wander about in the winter's cold.



In 1228, she took the veil of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis at Marburg and there built a hospital with some property still belonging to her. She retained for herself only a small mud house. All her strength and care were now devoted to the poor and the sick, while she obtained the few things she needed by spinning. Young in years but rich in good works, she slept in the Lord in 1231, only twenty-four years old.

Excerpted from *The Church's Year of Grace*, Pius Parsch