



Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations
Rule of Life
Tau Maria Franciscans

M Meditation – St. Francis and the Eucharist

#2. ...Tau Maria is a private association of Christ's faithful (cf. canons 298-311 and 321-326) called to live a life of penance, prayer, poverty and service reflective of the original Charism given to St. Francis of Assisi.

“Who are we?” How often have we heard this question in relation to our association since its founding in 2008? For many of us, this is a silly question. The answer is clearly stated in the Rule. “Read it. Live it.” No questions. Yet, the question persists. It is not a sign of disloyalty, ignorance, or a demand that we return to our past. The mystery of our little group is not yet fully revealed.

Everyday we pray, “ *Holy Father, remember all your sons and daughters who, surrounded by inextricable dangers, follow your footsteps, though from so great a distance....*” All of our imperfections notwithstanding are we not Francis. If our Holy Father St. Francis answers our prayers, are we not his sons, daughters, mothers, brothers and sisters? By simply living out Rule of Life we are truly “*reflective of the original Charism given to St. Francis of Assisi.*”

Those of us who live the Rule can look in amazement on our own lives. Remember when we couldn't even fumble our way through the Divine Office. Remember when we thought saying grace after meals was not ever going to happen. Remember when we did not believe that we could actually get to Holy Mass EVERY DAY, and now the vow we took is our life. Where did this miracle of grace originate? Who determined that we should succeed? Yet, even when we can witness that the mechanics of the Rule have become second nature, we know that the spirit may not be right. Instead of awakening our humility and gratitude we can treat it like an accomplishment or source of pride.

Who can save us from this fate? The answer has not change in so many years. At least every week, and with a few of us every day, the answer is the “*humble sublimity, and sublime humility*” of the Most Holy Eucharist. Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is and has always been the reason people like us can take on a vow to “*live a life of penance, prayer, poverty, and service.*” He is the source, strength, and goal of our striving to live as our Holy Father St. Francis taught us to live.

“The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in Heaven, and will help bring about everlasting peace on earth,”

- Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta



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#14. *...Behold my brothers, the humility of God and 'pour out your hearts before Him' (Ps 61:9). Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by Him (cf. 1 Pt 5:6, Jas 4:10). Hold back nothing, therefore, of yourselves for yourselves, that He may receive you wholly Who gives Himself entirely to you!" (St. Francis- Letter to the Whole Order)*

How can we ever hope to give what Jesus or St. Francis gave? Is it likely that we will be called upon to offer up our lives for Christ? Will we be asked to cast off our garments at the feet of our earthly father and put on the clothes of the poor? The truth is that the answer to these questions is the same, "Perhaps, but probably not." Then how do I, "Hold back nothing?" Even within the Tau Maria Franciscan family the answer looks different on the surface. Our Friends, Chord Bearers, and those of us in perpetual vows live out our vocations differently. Those of us bound by the Rule of Life live in states of life that are as varied as our number. This does not make our choices more difficult, in fact, it reveals the way to freedom in loving God more obvious.

#18. *...True penance purifies and makes reparation, but in the end is an act of love, participating in the ultimate heroic sacrifice of the Lamb of God. So generous is our Heavenly Father that He does not disdain even our smallest sacrifices, but has deigned to make them, united to the Cross of His Son, the very price of souls.*

Through Holy Communion we see, taste, feel, and smell that we are physically joined to the Lamb of God. His blood flows through our veins. He grants us Communion with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our meager sacrifices, in living the Franciscan life, or otherwise are joined to Jesus and He loves and redeems through us. We are His sons, daughters, mothers, brothers, and sisters. That is who we are!

If our pride does not allow us to see past our shortcomings and sins, we will miss out on who we are, and who we are to become. If our fear does not allow us to see past the demands the Franciscan life puts on us, we will miss out on what Jesus and His Mother wish to accomplish through us. After all He is the one who has made our penance "the very price of souls."

"Neither theological knowledge nor social action alone is enough to keep us in love with Christ unless both are preceded by a personal encounter with Him. Theological insights are gained not only from between two covers of a book, but from two bent knees before an altar. The Holy Hour becomes like an oxygen tank to revive the breath of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the foul and fetid atmosphere of the world,"

- Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen