



Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations
<http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/article/let-the-whole-world-tremble-st-francis-of-assis-fiery-love-of-jesus-in-the-eucharist-5321711440363520>

M Meditation – St. Francis and the Eucharist

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“Let the Whole World Tremble”: St. Francis of Assisi’s Fiery Love of Jesus in the Eucharist [BRANTLY MILLEGAN \(187\)](#)

Today is the feast of the great St. Francis of Assisi, the saint after whom our Pontiff takes his name. Though he lived eight centuries ago, St. Francis still inspires people today with his radical embrace of “Lady Poverty” and his love for all of God’s creatures. Yet, it is his zeal for something else that comes out most strongly in his writings: his great love of Christ in the Eucharist and concern that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass be offered properly.

“I conjure you all to show all reverence and all honor possible to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,” St. Francis wrote in his [Letter to All the Friars](#), “in whom the things that are in heaven and the things that are on earth are pacified and reconciled to Almighty God.”

In his [Letter to All the Faithful](#), he exhorts Christians to reverence priests, not on account of their own holiness (or lack thereof), but because they offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: “We ought...to visit Churches frequently and to reverence clerics not only for themselves, if they are sinners, but on account of their office and administration of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they sacrifice on the altar and receive and administer to others.”

He addressed priests as well, and wrote [On Reverence for the Lord's Body and on the Cleanliness of the Altar](#) in which he exhorts them to take seriously their sacred duties at the altar. “Let us all consider, O clerics, the great sin and ignorance of which some are guilty regarding the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy Name and the written words of consecration.”



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He continues: “[L]et all those who administer such most holy mysteries, especially those who do so indifferently, consider among themselves how poor the chalices, corporals, and linens may be where the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is sacrificed. And by many it is left in wretched places and carried by the way disrespectfully, received unworthily and administered to others indiscriminately.

“Shall we not by all these things be moved with a sense of duty when the good Lord Himself places Himself in our hands and we handle Him and receive Him daily? Are we unmindful that we must needs fall into His hands? Let us then at once and resolutely correct these faults and others; and wheresoever the most holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ may be improperly reserved and abandoned, let It be removed thence and let It be put and enclosed in a precious place.”

He solemnly warns priests that they will be judged by how they perform their sacred duties: “[W]e know that we are bound above all to observe all these things by the commandments of the Lord and the constitutions of holy Mother Church. And let him who does not act thus know that he shall have to render an account therefore before our Lord Jesus Christ on the day of judgment.”

But his ardent belief of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is expressed most clearly in his [*Letter to All the Friars*](#) with this poetic exclamation: “Let the entire man be seized with fear; let the whole world tremble; let heaven exult when Christ, the Son of the Living God, is on the altar in the hands of the priest. O admirable height and stupendous condescension! O humble sublimity! O sublime humility! that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under a morsel of bread.”

May we have a similar love of Christ in the Eucharist and reverence of Holy Mass! St. Francis of Assisi, please pray for us.