



Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations
TMF RULE of LIFE

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Meditation – Franciscan Minority

On the feast of The Annunciation, two of my children and I attended a Holy Mass followed by a Lenten Healing service. Since only three of us came, and the youngest was 14 years old, we had to wait for the families with small children to receive their blessings first. Like a good Franciscan I patiently waited. We have a big parish, so I figured this first group would take about an hour, and I would get home by 9:30 PM.

After 45 minutes, the line was moving rather slowly. In fact, the family upon which I was gauging my hopes hadn't moved more than three feet. I am very good at math and began to panic. It was beginning to look like I might not get home until 11 PM. Since I get up at 4 AM, I wept...inside, ya know. After 10 more minutes, I just decided, that I couldn't take it anymore. We were leaving.

I found my daughter in the crowd outside of church, and told her to get her brother. She said that he was assisting the priests on the altar. I wept...inside, again. I had decided to go, like I told you, so I started saying how upset I was, mostly to myself. My daughter went to find someone to replace her brother. I exposed my frustration to some friends (lest anyone be tempted to think I was a good Franciscan).

Then a miracle happened. People from the parish hall, who had been there as part of the overflow, came into the church area. They had been told by the ushers that families with older children could get in line. This information combined with my daughter telling me that there was a "fast line" on the other side of church gave me hope. So I found and grabbed my children, shot a moved provided by an usher trying to make room for people to leave church (in other words I took cuts), and we on the move, much to the chagrin of the guy behind me in line.

Then we humbly received our Eucharistic Blessing, and I was home by 9:28 PM...according to plan. I was pleased with myself until I did my examination of conscious. I had not only displayed my childishness to my friends, but I had been a terrible example to my children. There is at least one angry individual in our Catholic community, thanks to me, and I kind of wonder if this was really the proper way to prepare for a "Lenten Healing." (I didn't really wonder at all.)

So, if you want to know about the negative effects of NOT living Franciscan Minority, let me tell you I know. I have had to shake off the twin temptation of self-loathing and self-justification all day. I will have to confront my children when I get home tonight and tell them, "Do not do what I did, ever." Yet, much of the damage is done. They have seen that I actually accomplished what "I" set out to do. It appears that we did well.

The funny thing is that all I had to do was sit in church, with many of my friends, wait my turn, and not listen to the committee in my head...the one with the plan.

I lit a candle for the man that I angered last night. I don't even know what he looks like, but my daughter does. Let us pray.



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You might think that I have never read our Rule of Life. It is clear.

36. *In all things we should “seek the lowest place” (Lk 14:10) as did our Seraphic Father who called his brothers “friars minor” (lesser brothers). The spirit of minority is central to our Charism. As Jesus taught us, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Lk 14:11)*

Last night I exalted myself, and have been rightfully suffering from it all day. I hope that by sharing this with others, that I can avoid this temptation. All of us have many examples of bad examples, and we all fall. I am just amazed at the simple fact that if I had only remembered who I am, I would not have fallen for this lie, that, “I” HAVE to get life moving at “my” speed.

Being Franciscan should be enough for me to know better, but I am a professed Tau Maria Franciscan. Every day, I pray the Holy Rosary, and pray...

*...Holy Immaculate Conception, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, taking you into our home, we consecrate and entrust ourselves and our fraternity totally and forever to your Immaculate Heart, as **your slaves and your property.***

That means I trust her with all of me, even what time I get home from church, and during Lent of all times. My failure has taught me that my greatest fault is that I am not living the TMF life as I should, particularly in the area of trusting Our Blessed Mother and her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. After all I have seen, I can only plead insanity and cowardice. But I know something. I know about love, mercy, compassion, patience, and courage. I know that I don't have, but I know where to get it.

I realize that I have done nothing good, and I begin again. I have a Rule to follow, a Mother who has unlimited graces at her disposal, a Church that has many ways to get them to me, a family that already knew that I was damaged, and a Lord who is ever willing to give me another try to...

54. *“Fear and honor, praise and bless,
give thanks to, and adore,
the Lord God Almighty, in Trinity and Unity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Creator of all.
Do penance! (Mt 3:2)
Bring forth worthy fruits of penance
for we shall soon die!
(St. Francis – Rule of 1221, C.XXI)*