



***Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations  
The Saints Guide to Making Peace...  
Paul Thigpen, Ph.D. / Charis Ann Arbor, MI 2001***

**M Meditation – Life of St. Francis – Instrument of God’s Peace  
Maintaining Peace With God**

***Pope St. Leo (d.461) earned the title “the Great” for his highly successful, energetic administration of the Church in troubled political times, as well as his crucial role in clarifying authentic Christian teaching in times of doctrinal controversy...***

Peace is what brings forth the sons of God; it’s the nurse of love and the mother of unity; the rest of the blessed and our eternal home. The proper function and special mission of peace is to join to God those whom it removes from the disorder of the world. That’s why the Apostle Paul encourages us toward this goal saying, “Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God” [see Rom 5:1]. In this brief sentence nearly all of the commandments are summed up...

But what is it, dearly beloved, to have peace with God, except to desire what he bids us to do, and not to desire what he forbids us to do? In human friendships we seek those with souls like our own whose desires are similar to ours, and differences in habits keep people from ever attaining full harmony with each other. If that’s the case, then how can someone be a partaker of God’s peace if he’s pleased with what displeases God and delights in what he knows offends God?

... Those who have peace with God, who are always saying to the Father with their whole hearts, “Thy will be done,” can never be overcome in battles with the devil, can never be hurt by his assaults. For in accusing ourselves in our confessions, and refusing to let our spirit consent to our fleshly desires, we stir up against us the enmity of him who is the author of sin, but secure a peace with God that nothing can destroy.

***Sermons***

**Forgiving Ourselves**

***To keep us humble, God may allow us to recall the failures of the past. Yet because of his grace, St. Augustine shouts in this joyful prayer, that past now has no power over us. Our sins have melted away.***

“What shall I render to the Lord?” [Ps 116:12] – for even though he recalls to my memory the sins of my past, my soul isn’t made fearful by them! Lord, I will love you, and thank you, and confess to your name, because you have put away from me so many evils and so many deeds. To your grace I attribute it, and to your mercy, because you have melted my sins as if they were ice.

***Confessions***



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**M**

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**Forgiving Ourselves**

*Faith in God’s mercy, then, allows us to let go of the past, to forgive ourselves and to make peace with ourselves. St. Gemma Galgani (1878-1903) was a young Italian mystic who endured considerable adversity in her brief life: consumption by spinal tuberculosis, demonic assaults, and the scorn of family and neighbors who jeered at her visions of Christ. Her heroic life of faith modeled this prayer of confidence in God’s grace: “If I saw the gates of hell open and I stood on the brink of the abyss, I would not despair, I would not lose my hope of mercy, because I would trust in you, my God.”*

*Pardon one another so that later on you will not remember the injury. The recollection of an injury is itself wrong. It adds to our anger, nurtures our sin, and hates what is good. It is a rusty arrow and poison for the soul. It puts all virtue to flight.*

St. Francis de Paola (c.1416-1507)

...the tragic account of Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God is followed immediately by the record of Cain’s murder of Abel. So it should. The two episodes, after all, form a single story: From the root of our revolt against heaven grows the bitter fruit of our conflict with one another.

No peace with God, then, means no peace with ourselves and no peace with others. Yet once our relationship with God has been restored, our gracious Lord has provided a way to restore our relationships with others as well. Just as forgiveness is the key to renewed friendship with our Father in heaven, it’s the key also to reconciliation with our brothers and sisters on earth.

Even so, for most of us, asking for and granting forgiveness is no easy task. When we suffer injuries, our anger clamors for justice rather than mercy. When we inflict injuries, our pride keeps us from admitting the wrong. Indignation ripens into bitterness, when long fermented, turns into hatred.

The saints have struggled like the rest of us with the challenge of forgiveness, gaining valuable insights into the dynamics of reconciliation. To those who, for whatever reasons, find themselves reluctant, they offer a number of persuasive reasons why we should forgive.

***Lord make me a channel of your Peace***

***Like my Holy Father Francis***