



Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations

Francis and the Great Minds

M Meditation – Life of St. Francis

– G.K. Chesterton, [*Saint Francis of Assisi*](#)

“The vision which has been so faintly suggested in these pages has never been confined to monks or even to friars. It has been an inspiration to innumerable crowds of ordinary married men and women; living lives like our own, only entirely different. That morning glory which St. Francis spread over the earth and sky has lingered as a secret sunshine under a multitude of roots and in a multitude of rooms.

In societies like ours nothing is known of such a Franciscan following. Nothing is known of such obscure followers; and if possible less is known of the well-known followers. If we imagine passing us in the street a pageant of the Third Order of St. Francis, the famous figures would surprise us more than the strange ones. For us it would be like the unmasking of some mighty secret society. There rides St. Louis, the great king, lord of the higher justice whose scales hang crooked in favor of the poor. There is Dante crowned with laurel, the poet who in his life of passions sang the praises of Lady Poverty, whose grey garment is lined with purple and all glorious within. All sorts of great names from the most recent and rationalistic centuries would stand revealed; the great Galvani, for instance, the father of all electricity, the magician who has made so many modern systems of stars and sounds. So various a following would alone be enough to prove that St. Francis had no lack of sympathy with normal men, if the whole of his own life did not prove it.”

Bonaventure and the Sixth Seal—Robert Moynihan, PhD. (founder of Inside the Vatican)

...Pope Benedict, Francis, Bonaventure, and the Angel of the Sixth Seal

...Pope Benedict XVI is very familiar with all this. He studied Bonaventure in depth for his dissertation in the 1950s. And he is still making references to these matters today.

...“The six wings of the seraphim thus became ***the symbol of six stages that lead man progressively to the knowledge of God*** through observation of the world and of creatures and through the exploration of the soul itself with its faculties, up to the satisfying union with the Trinity through Christ, in imitation of St. Francis of Assisi.

... “Dear friends,” Benedict concluded, “let us take up the invitation addressed to us by St. Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor, and let us enter the school of the divine Teacher: We listen to his Word of life and truth, which resounds in the depth of our soul. *Let us purify our thoughts and actions, so that he can dwell in us, and we can hear his divine voice, which draws us toward true happiness.*” If we would seek God, then, and if we are to imitate Christ, and Francis, and pass through the apocalyptic events unfolding around us — always unfolding, until the end of the world — we must “ask grace, not doctrine, desire, not the intellect; the groaning of prayer, not the study of the letter.”

This is the path of poverty which is indicated to us on this great feast day.



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Paradiso Canto XI:43-117 The Life of Saint Francis—Dante

‘A fertile slope falls from a high mountain, between the Tupino and the Chiascio, the stream that drops from the hill chosen by the blessed [Ubaldo](#), a slope from which Perugia feels the cold and heat, through the eastern gate of Porta Sole, and behind it the towns of Nocera and Gualdo bemoan the Angevin’s heavy yoke. From this slope, where it becomes least steep, a Sun was born into this world, even as our sun rises from the Ganges. So that whoever speaks of that place, let him not say *Ascesi, I have ascended*, which is inadequate, but *Oriente*, if he wants to name it correctly.

He was not far from rising when he began to make the earth feel a certain comfort from his great virtue, since in his youth, he rushed to oppose his father, for such a Lady, to whom, like Death, no one opens the gate of his pleasure, and he was united to her in the spiritual court that had jurisdiction over him, and in his father’s presence, and then loved her more deeply, from day to day.

She, deprived of her first husband for eleven hundred years and more, was obscure, despised, until he stood in front of her, uninvited. And the tale that she was found safe with [Amyclas](#), the fisherman, when [Caesar](#)’s voice sounded to terrify the world, had not helped her, nor to have been so faithful and unafraid that She mounted the Cross with Christ, when [Mary](#) remained below.

But lest I proceed too darkly, accept, in plain speech, that Francis and Poverty were these two lovers. Their harmony and their delighted appearance made love, wonder, and tender looks, the cause of sacred thought, so that the venerable [Bernard](#) first cast off his sandals, and ran to chase after so great a peacefulness, and thought himself all too slow, while he ran. O unnoted riches, O fertile Good! [Egidius](#) casts off his sandals, and [Sylvester](#), following the Bridegroom, as the Bride delights to do.

This Master and this Father went his way, together with his Lady, and with that family already wearing the humble cord, nor did lowliness of heart weigh down his forehead, because he was [Pietro Bernardino](#)’s son, nor that he seemed to be so greatly despised. But he revealed his serious intention to Pope [Innocent](#), and took the seal of his Order from him. When the people of poverty, who followed his path, increased, his miraculous life sung more sweetly in Heaven’s glory, then was this master shepherd’s sacred will encircled with a second crown, from [Honorius](#)’s hands, by the Eternal Spirit.

And when, thirsting for martyrdom, he had preached Christ and his followers’ message, in the proud Soldan’s presence; and, finding the people bitterly against conversion, had returned, to avoid a useless stay, to gather fruit from the Italian branches; then, on the harsh rock, between the Tiber and the Arno, he received the final wounds, from [Christ](#), that his limbs showed for two years.

When it pleased Him, who ordained him to such good effect, to raise him to the reward, which he had earned by humbling himself, he commended his Lady to his brotherhood, his rightful heirs, and asked that they should love her faithfully, and the illustrious spirit willed himself to leave her breast, turning to his own kingdom, yet wished for no other deathbed for his body.’