



## ***Tau Maria Franciscan Formation Meditations***

### ***Francis and the Vicars of Christ***

#### **M Meditation – Life of St. Francis**

Original quote translated from *Discorsi, Messaggi, Colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII, della Poliglotta Vaticana, Vol III: 1960-1961, p. 538.*

Francis was called "another Christ", in the sense that he showed in his life and conduct the very pith and kernel of Our Lord's teaching.

We all have to fight against the lusts of the flesh. Many people also desire material wealth and dream of money, but St. Francis teaches every one of us, whatever our social condition may be, to fight against "the lust of the eyes", which is full of deceit and vanity. The wealth of Christian life does not consist in money and all its cares and demands. To some extent it is necessary for our very existence, but we must not lose our hearts to it. In the presence of his father and of the Bishop, Francis gave up everything, even the clothes he was wearing -- such was his love for poverty.

...Therefore, whoever has more abundant wealth must give more generously, giving also for those who are unable to do so. The precept applies not only to two brothers, two families or two towns, but to the whole world. Sometimes a rich man may feel powerful, and boast of his resources, and shut his eyes and ears to the poverty of others who are condemned to live in want -- whereas true brotherly feeling would see to it that the poor had at least what he needed to live. If we wish to find a little spiritual joy on this earth we must follow after St. Francis, who imitated the example of Christ, who even worked miracles in order to feed the hungry.

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**BENEDICT XVI GENERAL AUDIENCE** *Paul VI Audience Hall*

*Wednesday, 27 January 2010*

It is also true that Francis had no intention of creating a new Order, but solely that of renewing the People of God for the Lord who comes. He understood, however, through suffering and pain that everything must have its own order and that the law of the Church is necessary to give shape to renewal. Thus he placed himself fully, with his heart, in communion with the Church, with the Pope and with the Bishops. He always knew that the centre of the Church is the Eucharist, where the Body of Christ and his Blood are made present through the priesthood, the Eucharist and the communion of the Church. Wherever the priesthood and the Eucharist and the Church come together, it is there alone that the word of God also dwells. The real historical Francis was the Francis of the Church, and precisely in this way he continues to speak to non-believers and believers of other confessions and religions as well.



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**M**

**Meditation – Life of St. Francis**

#### ***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II IN THE BASILICA OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI***

*Assisi, Italy, Sunday, 5 November 1978*

...I cannot pass over in silence the fact that just here, in Assisi, in this Basilica, in the year 1253, Pope Innocent IV proclaimed saint the Bishop of Krakow, the Martyr Stanislaus, now the Patron Saint of Poland, whose unworthy successor I was until a short time ago.

Today, therefore, setting foot here for the first time as Pope, at the sources of this great breath of the Spirit, of this marvelous revival of the Church and of Christianity in the thirteenth century, linked with the figure of St Francis of Assisi, my heart opens to our Patron Saint and cries:

*You, who brought Christ so close to your age, help us to bring Christ close to our age, to our difficult and critical times. Help us! These times are waiting for Christ with great anxiety, although many men of our age are not aware of it. We are approaching the year A.D. 2000. Will they not be times that will prepare us for a rebirth of Christ, for a new Coming? Every day, we express in the Eucharistic prayer our expectation, addressed to him alone, our Redeemer and Savior, to him who is the fulfillment of the history of man and of the world.*

*Help us, St Francis of Assisi, to bring Christ closer to the Church and to the world of today.*

*From: [Pray for Me, the Life and Spiritual Vision of Pope Francis, First Pope from the Americas](#)  
By Robert Moynihan, Image, N.Y., 2013*

...The final “spiritual guide” for Pope Francis is the man whose name he chose: St. Francis of Assisi.

Why did he choose the name of the one among all the saints who may have least wanted to be pope—St. Francis? It would seem to be because of both Francis’ humility and burning love for Jesus and the reality that the figure of Francis conveys to untold millions. Certainly anyone looking more closely will quickly see that the “Franciscan spirit” was already to a large extent present in the life of Father, Bishop, Archbishop, and Cardinal Bergoglio.

In Chapter 4 of volume I *Jesus of Nazareth*, Ratzinger writes on the Sermon on the Mount, and the Beatitudes, and puts Francis’s total dedication to following Jesus in a line he traces from the Old Testament to the apostles, especially St. Paul....He adds, “Francis of Assisi was gripped in an utterly radical way by the promise of the first Beatitude, to the point that he even gave away his garments and let himself be clothed anew by the bishop, the representative of God’s fatherly goodness...”

If Pope John Paul II’s unflinching charge to all believers was: “Be not afraid...Be not afraid to open your hearts to the inexpressible love of Christ,” Pope Francis’s call to all seekers of the highest spirituality may well urge his listeners to strive to imitate the kind of love the little poor man of Assisi showed for Jesus and his neighbor.