

**Saved in Hope (*Spe Salvi*) – Pope Benedict XVI – Paragraph 47**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20071130\\_spe-salvi.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html)

47. Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation “as through fire”. But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God. In this way the inter-relation between justice and grace also becomes clear: the way we live our lives is not immaterial, but our defilement does not stain us for ever if we have at least continued to reach out towards Christ, towards truth and towards love. Indeed, it has already been burned away through Christ's Passion. At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy. It is clear that we cannot calculate the “duration” of this transforming burning in terms of the chronological measurements of this world. The transforming “moment” of this encounter eludes earthly time-reckoning—it is the heart's time, it is the time of “passage” to communion with God in the Body of Christ[39]. The judgement of God is hope, both because it is justice and because it is grace. If it were merely grace, making all earthly things cease to matter, God would still owe us an answer to the question about justice—the crucial question that we ask of history and of God. If it were merely justice, in the end it could bring only fear

to us all. The incarnation of God in Christ has so closely linked the two together—judgement and grace—that justice is firmly established: we all work out our salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12). Nevertheless grace allows us all to hope, and to go trustfully to meet the Judge whom we know as our “advocate”, or parakletos (cf. 1 Jn 2:1).

**Prayer Before the Crucifix (1205/06) – Francis of Assisi – The Saint – Page 40**

While Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventure characterize the early years of Francis' life as a struggle to discern God's will, the author of *The Legend of the Three Companions*, according to two manuscripts, summarizes Francis' yearnings in this simple prayer and places it on his lips as he kneels before the Crucifix of the crumbling church of San Damiano in Assisi. The prayer may have been influenced by the liturgical opening pray of the Eucharistic liturgy. This version of the prayer is based on the simple text found in the majority of Latin manuscripts. As it became more popular, the prayer was embellished and lost some of its simplicity.

*Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command.*

**Imitation: Becoming what we love – Franciscan Prayer – Ilia Delio -- Page 147-(first 2 paragraphs)**

One of the most popular works in the history of Christian spirituality is *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas `a Kempis. This book provides a set of directives that appeal to the imagination and senses on following Jesus in this life and gaining the merits of eternal life. More recently the WWJD (“what would Jesus do”) movement, a revival of the nineteenth-century Protestant movement, has gained popularity, as people strive to live the gospel life by following the examples of Jesus Christ. While these imitations of Christ (*imitatio Christi*) paths may be helpful, the notion of imitation as described in the Franciscan path of

prayer does not follow the logic of these other movements. The difference between the Franciscan *imitatio Christi* and the Thomas `a Kempis/WWJD movements is that, in the latter, the Incarnation is extrinsic to the believer. When I ask, “what would Jesus do?” I am looking to the example of Jesus as a moral guide to make the right decision or perform the right action. Jesus leads and I follow.

The Franciscan path is different because it does not ask, “what would Jesus do?” but “how does Jesus live in me?” For the Franciscans, the Incarnation is intrinsic to human personhood. What we are about as humans and what we are to become as children of God is integrally related to the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is not merely a person we follow, as if following John of Jim, nor is salvation about the “dos and don’ts” of being saved. Rather Christ, the Word incarnate, is the person in whom each person finds his or her unique meaning and origin. The logic of the Franciscan *imitatio Christi* is God’s self-emptying love which is incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. To say that Jesus is the theophany or manifestation of God means, that in the form of Jesus’ life, God has been fully revealed. Jesus Christ is the image of God because Christ is the “Word” or perfect self-expression of the Father. Therefore, it is Christ who is the perfect image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

### Scripture Isaiah 55:1-11

<sup>1</sup>All you who are thirsty,\* come to the water!  
You who have no money, come, buy grain  
and eat;

Come, buy grain without money, wine and  
milk without cost!

<sup>2</sup>Why spend your money for what is not  
bread; your wages for what does not satisfy?  
Only listen to me, and you shall eat well, you  
shall delight in rich fare.

<sup>3</sup>Pay attention and come to me; listen, that  
you may have life.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
the steadfast loyalty promised to David.

<sup>4</sup>As I made him a witness to peoples, a leader  
and commander of peoples,

<sup>5</sup>So shall you summon a nation you knew not,  
and a nation\* that knew you not shall run to  
you,

Because of the LORD, your God, the Holy  
One of Israel, who has glorified you.

<sup>6</sup>\* Seek the LORD while he may be found, call  
upon him while he is near.

<sup>7</sup>Let the wicked forsake their way, and sinners  
their thoughts;

Let them turn to the LORD to find mercy; to  
our God, who is generous in forgiving.

<sup>8</sup>For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor  
are your ways my ways—oracle of the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the  
earth, so are my ways higher than your ways,  
my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup>\* Yet just as from the heavens the rain and  
snow come down

And do not return there till they have  
watered the earth, making it fertile and  
fruitful,

Giving seed to the one who sows and bread  
to the one who eats,

<sup>11</sup>So shall my word be that goes forth from my  
mouth;

It shall not return to me empty, but shall do  
what pleases me, achieving the end for  
which I sent it.