

ST. FRANCIS' THREE LOVES - THE EUCHARIST

Have on hand: O.F.S. Rule

In the course of history, analyzers of St. Francis began to collect many aspects of his life around three themes: the **Crib**, the **Cross**, and the **Eucharist**.

Our Opening Prayer:

“We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the whole world and we bless You because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.”¹

Thomas of Celano says this about St. Francis' devotion to the Eucharist: “Toward the sacrament of the Lord's Body he [Francis] burned with fervor to his very marrow, and with unbounded wonder of that loving condescension and condescending love.”²

St. Francis himself concentrates our attention on this great Sacrament: “As He revealed Himself to the holy apostles in true flesh, so He reveals Himself to us now in sacred bread. And as they saw only His flesh by an insight of their flesh, yet believed that He was God as they contemplated Him with their spiritual eyes, let us, as we see bread and wine with our bodily eyes, see and firmly believe that they are His most holy Body and Blood living and true. And in this way the Lord is always with His faithful, as He Himself says: Behold I am with you until the end of the age.”³



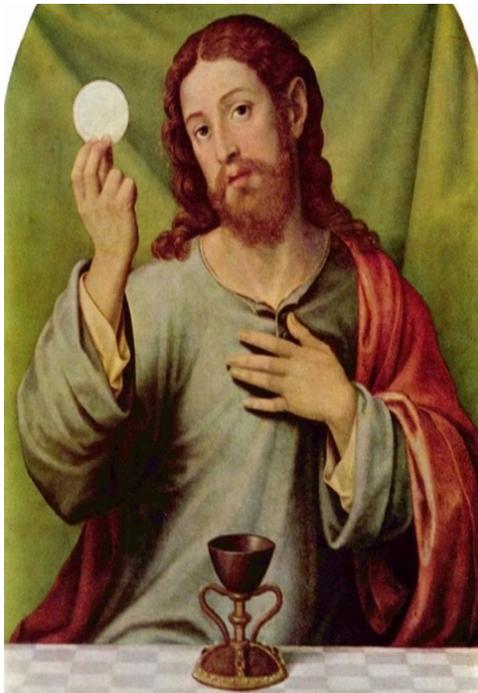
Isidoro Arredondo: St. Clare Driving Away the Infidels with the Eucharist, 1693

St. Francis wrote in *A Letter to the Entire Order*:

“Let everyone be struck with fear,
let the whole world tremble,
and let the heavens exult
when Christ, the Son of the living God,
is present on the altar in the hands of a priest!
O wonderful loftiness and stupendous dignity!
O sublime humility!
O humble sublimity!
The Lord of the universe,
God and the Son of God,
so humbles Himself
that for our salvation
He hides Himself
under an ordinary piece of bread!
Brothers, look at the humility of God,
and pour out your hearts before Him!
Humble yourselves
that you may be exalted by Him!
Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves,
that He Who gives Himself totally to you
may receive you totally!”⁴

Someone should read from our *Rule*, Article #5, so that we can review it.

- Q1. What two loves of St. Francis are expressed in *Our Opening Prayer* which Francis prayed on entering a church?
- Q2. What kind of nourishment do I seek when I receive Christ in the Eucharist?
- Q3. How does Holy Communion assist me in my pledge to sacrifice for the Body of Christ?
- Q4. How does Holy Communion assist me in my pledge to accept the Body of Christ, with all the Church's human limitations and weaknesses?
- Q5. While we speak of receiving the Consecrated Bread and Wine, how do I include adoration of the Divinity in my prayers before, during and after Holy Communion?
- Q6. In what way(s) is the Eucharist for healing?



Juan de Juanes: Christ as Eucharistic Redeemer,
3rd quarter of 16th century

Catholic teaching reminds us that we encounter a dual reality in receiving Holy Communion. First, that we believe in the Real Presence of the Living God under the appearances of Bread and Wine; and second, that when we receive the Eucharist, we are proclaiming that we are one in our commitment and profession of faith.⁵

Q7. Do I ever give public witness to my neighborhood that I believe in the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament by stopping by for a brief visit when driving near the church? Would this be something I could build into my busy schedule?

Q8. How does my parish encourage devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Can I help bring this about, or help with it? Weekly? Monthly? On Holy Thursday evening?

Q9. Have I ever prayed over (meditated on) the rich understanding of the Eucharist as found in the *Catechism*, §1322 – §1419? Might I benefit from this?

¹ FA:ED, *The Testament*, 1226, Francis of Assisi, Vol. I, pp. 124-125, v.5; there are other sources that include this same prayer: FA:ED, *The Life of Saint Francis: First Book*, 1228-1229, Celano, Vol. I, p. 222, Chapter XVII, v. 45; FA:ED, *The Legend of the Three Companions*, 1241-1247, Vol. II, p. 90. Chapter X, v.37 and FA:ED, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, 1260-1263, Bonaventure, Vol. II, p. 551, Chapter Four, v. 3

² FA:ED, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul: Second Book*, 1245-1247, Vol. II, p. 375, Chapter CLII: His devotion to the Body of the Lord, v. 201

³ FA:ED, *The Undated Writings: The Admonitions*, Vol. I, p. 129, [I: The Body of Christ], vs. 19-22

⁴ FA:ED, *A Letter to the Entire Order*, 1225-1226, Vol. I, p. 118, vs. 26-29

⁵ See the November 14, 1996 *Guidelines for the Reception of Communion* on the USCCB website for the explanation why non-Catholics normally do not receive Holy Communion with us, since they are not united with us in one profession of faith; these *Guidelines* are also reprinted in any missalette