



St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Triangle Virginia

20240608

# On-Going Formation

Christ: Way, Truth, and Life  
Francis and Transforming Friendship

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# 2024 On-Going Formation Theme

- Living in Friendship with Jesus and Francis: Manifesting Our Savior and Our Seraphic Father in Our Daily Lives



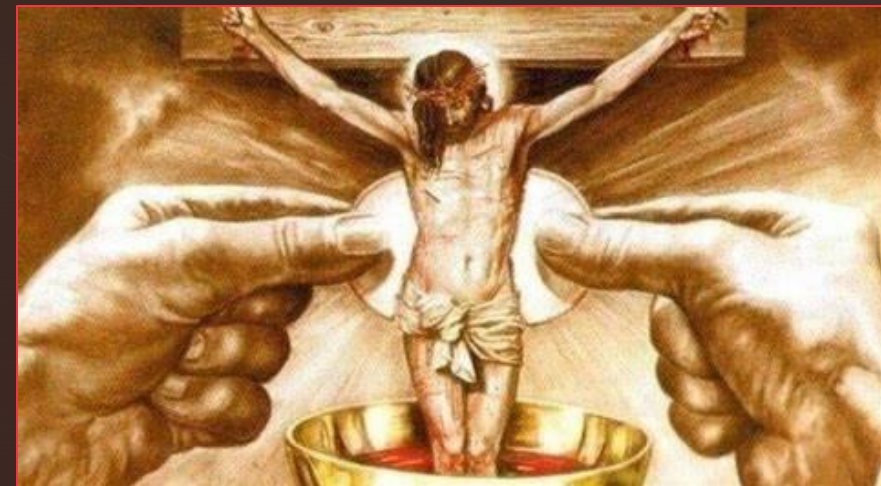
“Forgiveness is redemptive suffering.”





# The Unicity of Christ's Person

- Christ is one subject only (*hypostasis*) and one person only (*prosopon*).
- He who is God is also man, through a union of a divine *physis* (nature) & human nature.
- Therefore, Mary is truly the Mother of God because she gave birth according to the flesh to the Word of God made flesh.
- Christ is the Son of God, and it is wrong to say that Jesus the man is a divinized man and an adoptive son of God.
- Christ's flesh is life-giving (an implicit reference to the Eucharist), because it is the flesh of the Word.
- Christ should be worshipped with one adoration, and not worshipped as God and separately worshipped as man—one Person.



# Christ: Way, Truth, & Life

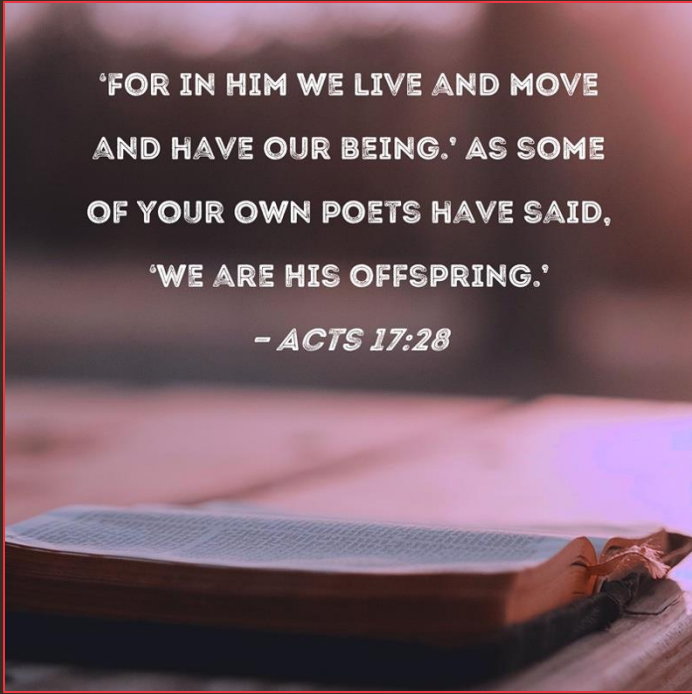


The Mystery of Jesus Christ (pages 139-161)



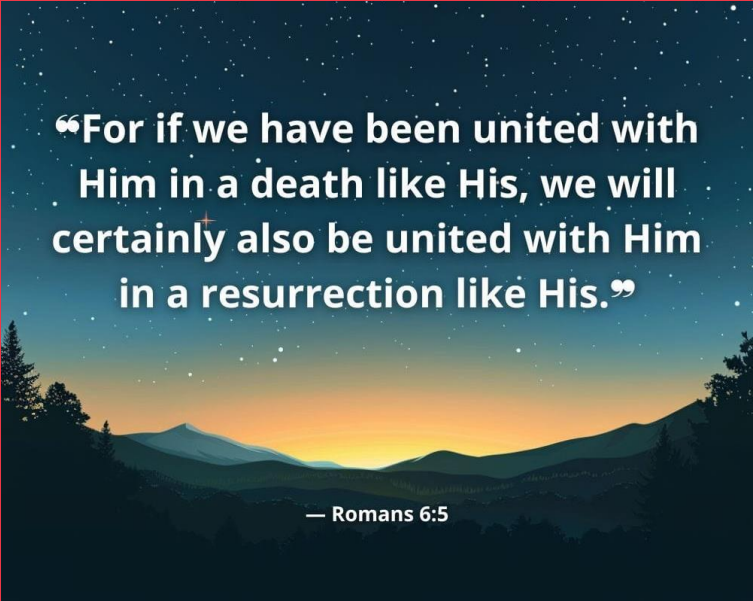
# Christ: Way, Truth, and Life

- Our Lord works our salvation; He *is* our salvation.
- Salvation comes to us through incorporation into Christ,
  - through our participating in the mysteries of His life,
  - through becoming intimately attached to Him, the way parts of the body participate in the life of the head.
- For this very reason that Christ is Life, He saves us by incorporating us into Himself, passing on His life to us, as the vine does to the branches. (John 15:1-8)
- St. Bernard said, “not only will I give you my conception, Jesus replies to me, but also my life and that in all the degrees of age, of infancy, of childhood, of adolescence and of youth; I will give you everything, he goes on, give you my death as well, my resurrection, my ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. ***And all this so that my conception may purify yours, my life instruct yours, my death destroy yours, my resurrection precede yours.***”



‘FOR IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE  
AND HAVE OUR BEING.’ AS SOME  
OF YOUR OWN POETS HAVE SAID,  
‘WE ARE HIS OFFSPRING.’

– ACTS 17:28

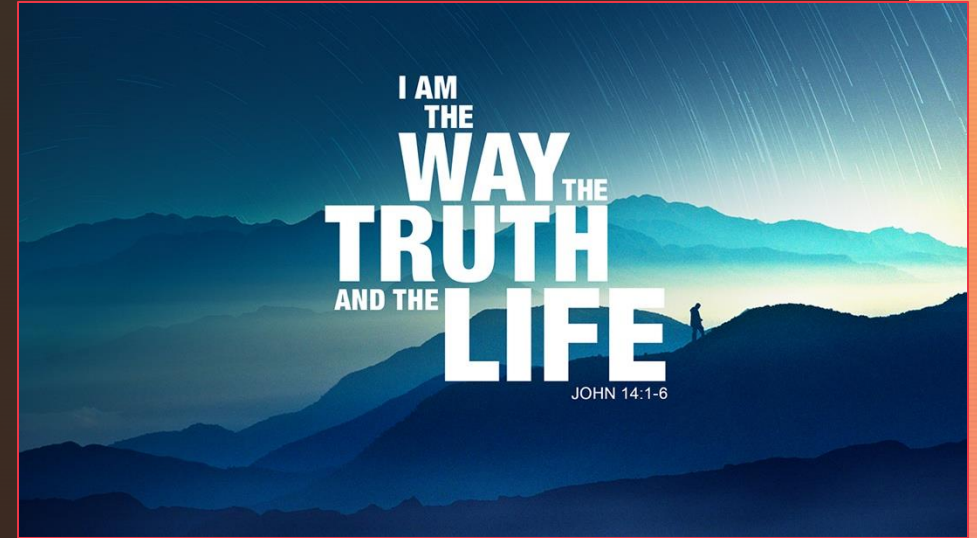


“For if we have been united with  
Him in a death like His, we will  
certainly also be united with Him  
in a resurrection like His.”

— Romans 6:5

# Christ: Way, Truth, and Life (continued)

- The work of Christ is much wider than the holy “model” of His life; it covers everything.
- “Our Lord not only enlightens our minds by His preaching the truth and attracting us by the wonderful example of His life:
  - He redeems us by atoning for our sins.
  - He heals our hearts with His grace.
  - He sanctifies us by His power.
  - He glorifies His saints.
- Christ’s work, then, is so rich and all-embracing that it recreates us.
  - This is why the notion of Christ as “mediator” is such a key idea in both Christology and soteriology (study of salvation).
- Christ: Way, Truth, and Life
  - These three words taken from John 14:6 express Christ’s mediation and the manner in which He chose to do it.



***“It is not the kind of mediation that would correspond to an intermediate entity positioned between two extremes (like a step, which leads one to the top when one goes beyond it); it is the mediation exercised by one who, being perfect God and perfect man, unites God and man in Himself...Christ’s mediation is entirely a function of His being.” (pg.139)***



# Christ: Mediator Between God and Men

- “There is only one God, and there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5, Gal 3:19-20, Heb 8:6).
- A mediator is one who brings about union between people who are separated from one another.
- In a sense there is no separation between God and men, because God’s presence in man is so intimate that (as St. Paul says) “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).
- In another sense, *sin completely cuts man off from that intimacy with God to which He was raised by grace.*
- God could have restored this union in a direct way, without the intervention of a mediator, but He chose to repair the damage done by sin and re-establish man as a son of God, through the Incarnation of His Only-Begotten Son.



# Christ: Mediator Between God and Men (continued)

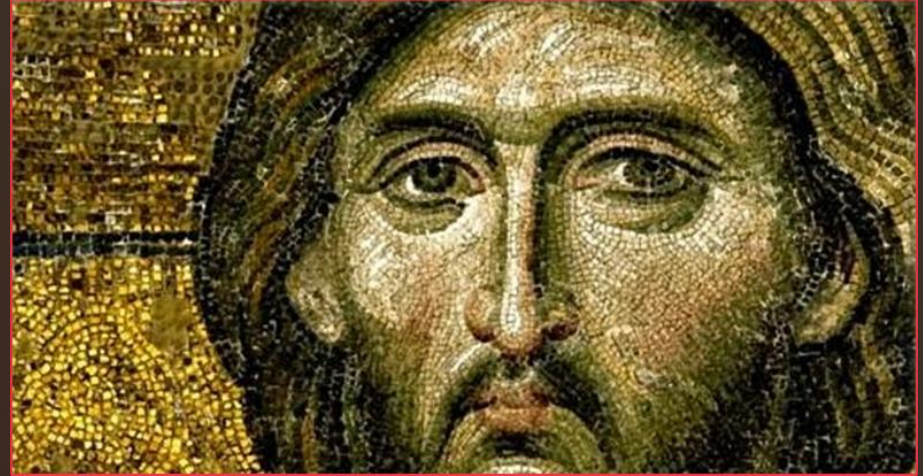
- Christ SAID He was the only mediator between God and men: “**No one comes to the Father, but by Me**” (Jn 14:6)
  - Jesus therefore is not only the Pontifex (the bridge builder between God and men): He is the Bridge itself;
    - A bridge that is both the journey and the goal.
- The fact that Jesus is the only mediator between God and men does not mean that there are no other subordinate mediators.
  - The angels
  - The saints
  - Above all, Mary, cooperate with Christ in leading men to union with God. (**Mediatrice of all graces**)
- **Indeed, any Christian in this world should be a mediator between God and other men.**
- Every Christian can and should cooperate with Christ in His work of uniting men to God.
- Christ's mediation is grounded on the hypostatic union.
  - **Jesus is able to bring about reconciliation of men with God because He is God and man.**





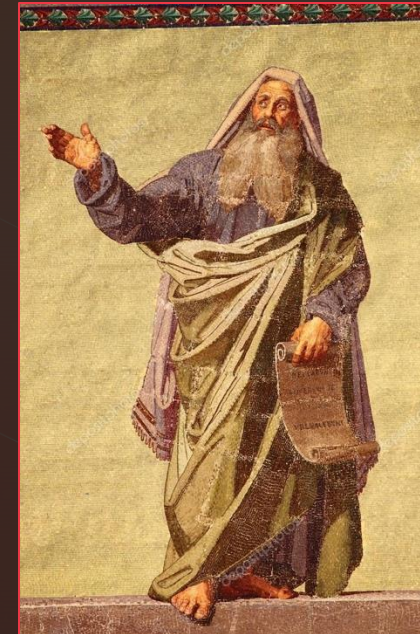
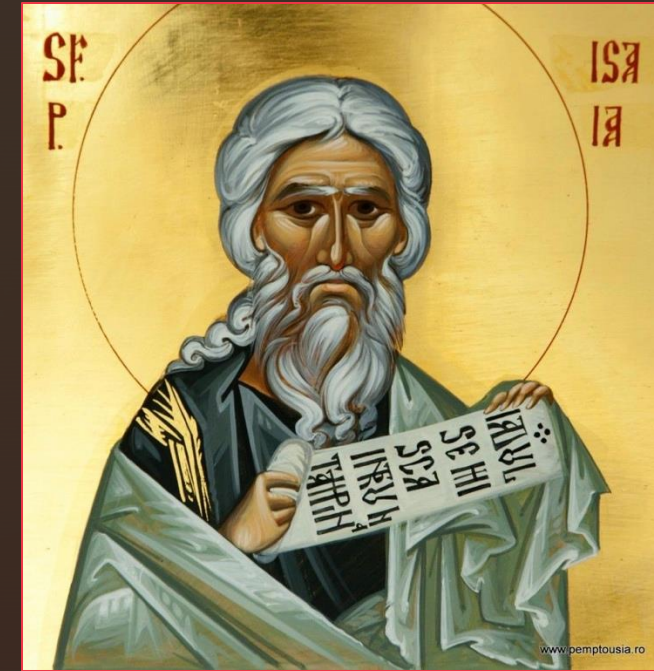
# Christ, King and Shepherd

- The kingly divinity of Christ was already proclaimed in the Old Testament (Ps 2:6, Is 9:16,; 11:1-9, Dan 7:14, Mic 4:7) and equated to the status of a Shepherd of the people, a people who are regarded as His flock.
- It was precisely because so many Jews had such a material and earthbound idea of the messianic Kingdom, that Jesus did not make much reference to His kingship.
  - To Pilate – “You say that I am a king.” (Jn 18:37)
- The Kingdom of Christ is universal
  - It covers all creation.
  - It was brought about in a gradual way.
  - It began with the Incarnation.
  - It will reach its fullness only at the end of time.
- **Christ is not only the author of our salvation, but *is* our very salvation**, by analogy Christ not only establishes the Kingdom, but in a certain sense is the kingdom, because **the Church *is* the whole Christ of which Jesus is the Head.**



# Christ, Prophet and Teacher

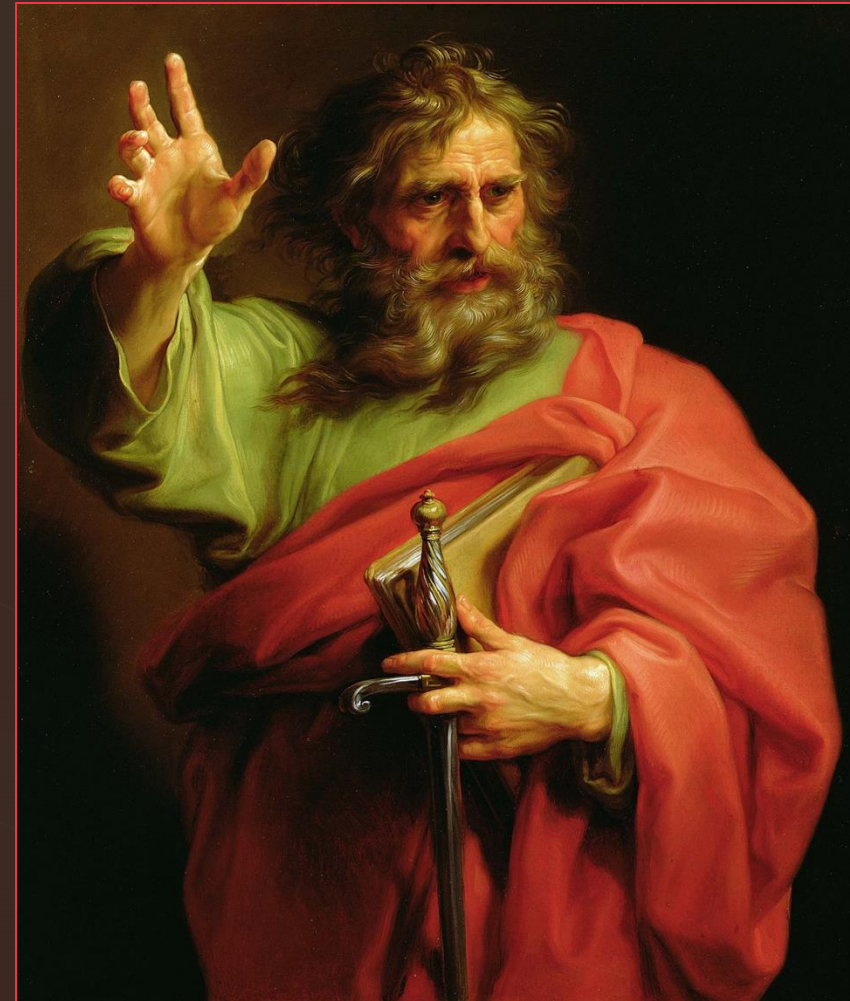
- A prophet is someone who speaks to men words which God has personally revealed to him for passing on to others.
- *When Jesus quotes passages from the Old Testament, not only does he expound His teaching in the light of the sacred text but he also, and in a particular way, explains the sacred text in the light of Himself.*
- Only Jesus Christ is the perfect revealer of God: “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.” (Mt 11:27)
- Christ’s teaching is the fullness of divine revelation.
- Whereas prophets reveal what has been revealed to them, *Christ speaks of what He sees and knows.*





# Christ, Prophet and Teacher (continued)

- Not only must one learn what He teaches, that is, accept His message, but one must identify with Him to the point of being able to say with St. Paul,
  - “...*it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*” (Gal 2:2)
- Only through this personal identification can one come to full knowledge of the truth.
- Revelation and salvation are two interchangeable terms, when understood in all their richness:
  - “...to know does not mean just a mere act of the reason; it is an existential action which affects a person’s entire being, an action which requires commitment from a person in the area of his love and his freedom and which fills him with joy. That is why seeing God face-to-face is called the ‘beatific vision’—and why our Lord describes eternal life as ‘knowledge’.”





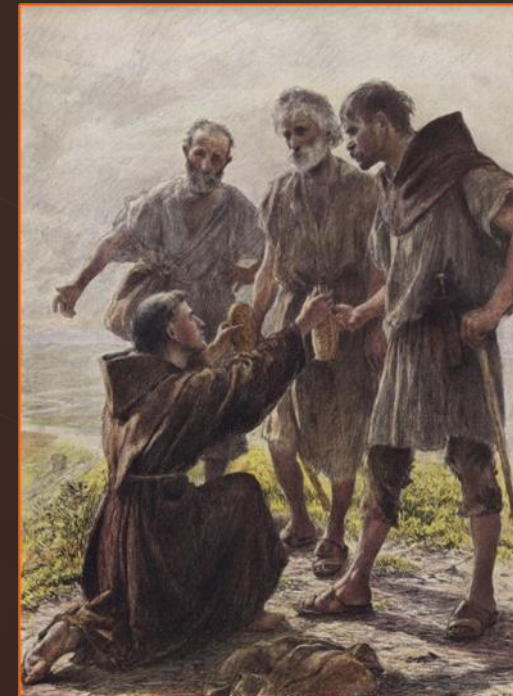
# Francis and Transforming Friendship

St. Francis and the Foolishness of God (pages 64-82)



# Francis and Transforming Friendship

- John 12:1-3
- Mark 14:3-9 – “...**The poor you will always have with you**, and whenever you wish you could do good to them, but **you will not always have me**. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial...”
- Thomas of Celano tells a story about Francis’ availability for and generosity in friendship.
  - The story illustrates the importance and gratuitousness of true friendship.
  - **Brother Riccerio imagines himself unworthy of Francis’ love** but discovers not only that he is already loved deeply by the Poverello, but, also that such love is neither reward nor recompense, but rather pure gift.
  - See pg. 65.





# Francis and Transforming Friendship (cont.)

- Story of Francis and Clare sharing a meal.
  - See pg 66.
- Jesus and Intimacy
  - Consider Jesus' relationship with his cousin, John the Baptist - "**Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**" (Jn 1:29)
  - Given the characters of these two men, their histories, and the vocations God gave each, this moment has special significance for Jesus.
  - **John is the one selected by God to "prepare the way of the Lord."**
  - John announces the coming of the Messiah.
  - John → last prophet of the Hebrew Scriptures.
  - Jesus is being told by a man he admires and respects that Jesus is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 53). This revelation stuns Him.
  - **After this, Jesus fasts in the desert for 40 days.**





# Francis and Transforming Friendship (cont.)

- Jesus and Intimacy (continued)
  - Jesus' visits to Bethany to see Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.
  - This was Jesus' "safe house" where he went:
    - **to enjoy deep friendship**
    - **to explore the implications of His message.**
    - **to rest and to be renewed – encouraged – to continue His own prophetic mission.**
    - **to invite and challenge them to walk with Him on His journey.**
  - Mary's "better part," that of total absorption in the balm of deep friendship, may amuse or even irk those of us who find ourselves so often setting the stage for life to move on gracefully.



# Francis and Transforming Friendship (cont.)

- Francis and Intimacy
  - Francis used the word “brother” more than any other word in his writings (242 times) accompanied by an adjective of affection: “my most beloved brothers,” “my blessed brothers,” etc.
  - See pg. 71.
- What do we gain from friendship / intimacy?
  - Intimacy as a source of renewal and joy
  - Particularity in friendship
  - Intimacy as a source of courage
  - Intimacy as a source of revolutionary accompaniment
  - Friendship as a place of accountability
  - Intimate friendship = a place to meet God

