

"FOLLOW ME!"

Luke 9:23



Monthly Newsletter of The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE of St. Francis

May 2011

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter III—The Foundation of the Order—the Rule is approved



5. At this time, too, Father Silvester, a priest from Assisi and a good man, saw a vision which we cannot pass over in silence. At first when he saw the way Francis and his friars were behaving, he looked on it in a purely human fashion and he was disgusted, but then God visited him with his grace in order to save him from his rash

temerity. He had a dream in which he saw the whole of Assisi caught in the coils of a huge serpent, which threatened to devastate the entire area by its sheer size. Then he saw a cross of gold coming from Francis' mouth; the top of it reached up to heaven and its arms stretched far and wide and seemed to embrace the whole earth. The serpent was completely vanquished at the sight of it. Father Silvester realized that the vision was a revelation from God; and after he had seen it for the third time, he told St. Francis and his friars all about it. A short time afterwards he left the world and followed in the footsteps

of Christ with such perseverance that his life in the Order only served to confirm the vision which he had seen while in the world.

6. St. Francis refused to be carried away with worldly pride when he heard about the vision. He acknowledged God's goodness in the gifts he bestows and became more eager than ever to put the enemy of the human race to flight with all his cunning, and proclaim the glory of Christ's cross. One day when he was in a lonely place by himself, weeping for his misspent years in the bitterness of his heart, the joy of the Holy Spirit was infused into him and he was assured that all of his sins had been forgiven. He was rapt in ecstasy and completely absorbed in a wonderful light, so that the depths of his soul were enlightened and he saw what the future held in store for himself and his sons. Then he returned to the friars once again and told them, "Have courage, my dearly beloved, and rejoice in God. There is no need to be upset because there are only a few of us, nor any need to be afraid because we have no experience. God has shown me beyond all shadow of doubt that he will make us grow into a great multitude and the Order will spread far and wide, by the favor of his blessing."

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier: Prepare to Receive the Holy Spirit

Our Lord, in the Gospel, tells us that He is going to send another Advocate, a Paraclete, who is going to help us because He is

the Spirit of truth, and that He is going to lead us into all truth. The Lord promised that He would not leave us orphans, that He would give us His Holy Spirit. He told us that with the Holy Spirit we would come to understand

that He is in the Father, that He and the Father are one, that we are in Him and He is in us. We have been brought into the very intimacy in the unity of the Trinity to be one with Our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit, to do that in each one of us. The Holy Spirit is the forgotten person of the Trinity. He is very often not called upon or not understood - or in our day the way that some people call upon the Holy Spirit would make it such that most of us would not want to; it has become trite and even goofy and certainly is not in line with what the Catholic Church teaches regarding the Holy Spirit. We want to be about the truth because He is the Spirit of truth, and we need to understand that the Holy Spirit is God. He was poured out upon the disciples on Pentecost.

We live in extraordinary times, and we are going to see even more extraordinary things than this. In our day, the Holy Spirit is going to be poured out upon the earth in a most wonderful manner. We are going to see things in our day that have not been seen for nearly 2,000 years in the way that the Holy Spirit is going to work in the lives of individual Christian people. God wants to give that Holy Spirit to you in a profound way. He does not want to give you the Holy Spirit so you can show off some extraordinary power. He does not want to give you the Holy Spirit so you can run around doing all kinds of things so that people will think you are holy, or wonderful, or whatever it might be. He wants to give you the Holy Spirit, number one, so that you will be faithful to Him and, number two, so that you will glorify Him by the work you will do. That means you must be rooted firmly in the truth, because He is the Holy Spirit of truth.

He is a Holy Spirit, not an unholy spirit. There are plenty of those running around the world today. As St. Paul makes clear, the devil likes to disguise himself as an angel of light, so we must be very cautious. Just because, as they say, something glitters, it is not necessarily gold. We must be very careful. Just because there is some kind of spirit that is making people do some odd sorts of things or some extraordinary kinds of things does not mean it is the Holy Spirit. By your fruits you will be known. That is what we need to be looking at. We need to make sure we are rooted in prayer. We need to make sure we are seeking the Lord with our whole heart and soul and strength. I have known and seen the work of many people over the last number of years who claim to have the Holy Spirit, and it is very evident that they do not. They make lots of claims as to what they are doing and why they are doing it. Yet, when push comes to shove, it is very evident that this is not inspired by God. And if there is something extraordinary happening, it is obvious that they are not doing it themselves either—so there is only one other possibility. One must be very careful.

What we must do is prepare our hearts to be able to receive the Gift that God wants to give to us. Otherwise, God is going to do wonderful things in the world and we will not be part of it because we decided that we knew a different way and a better way. We decided that we could do it all by ourselves and we did not need the Lord. Look around in the world today and ask yourself, "Can I get to

heaven by myself? Can I resist all the temptations of the world all by myself? Can I frustrate the designs and the works of Satan all by myself?" I think we all know better than that. And if we cannot do it now, I guarantee that we will not be able to do it in the near future. As things get worse, we are going to need the Holy Spirit in a profound way to be able to help us, and it will become very clear those who are children of God and those who are not.

We need to make a radical choice. No more mediocre Catholicism. No more sitting on the back seat wondering which way we should turn. No more sticking our toe in the water and saying, "That is good enough. As long as I go to church on Sunday, I do not have to worry about anything else." You are going to be in or out. You are either going to jump into the pool headlong off the high dive, or you are going to be standing on the sideline. You are not going to have your toe in the water anymore. You have a choice to make. It is in or it is out. It is God or it is the devil. There are no alternatives. Anyone who wants to be lukewarm, Jesus speaks of them in the Book of Revelation and says, "I will spew you out of My mouth." There is no room for a lukewarm Catholic—you either have to be hot or cold. The choice is yours; God will not force it upon you. He is offering the gift of His Holy Spirit in an extraordinary and profound manner if each one of us will simply prepare our hearts to receive Him.

The Holy Spirit is the Spouse of Our Lady. When we see the holiness of Our Lady, when we see the holiness that took place in the lives of the apostles and the early Christians, we understand there is only one way that this can happen; that is, through the working of the Holy Spirit and His spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Those are the two to whom we must look. There is no growth in holiness apart from them. It is Our Lady who will form us to be like her Son, and it is the Holy Spirit who is going to give us the grace to do it. She will obtain for us the grace through her mediation and intercession, and He will work in our lives in that profound and supernatural way. We are going to see wonderful things if we are with the Holy Spirit. We are going to see horrifying things if we are not. The choice is ours.

We are going to see martyrs in our day - and you might be one of them. Do you think you will be able to stand before somebody and profess your faith in the face of death, and joyfully accept martyrdom without the help of the Holy Spirit? There is no way. How is it that the martyrs of the past have joyfully gone to their martyrdom? How is it that those who have suffered cruelty for the sake of the Name of Jesus Christ and for their faith have done so courageously and joyfully? It is by the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord has promised the Holy Spirit to us.

We can ask, then, why do we not see it at work? Why do we not see these extraordinary things happening the way they did 2,000 years ago? It is because God needs us to be able to learn in order to prepare ourselves for what is to come. The only way we are going to learn is by having to be submerged into the cesspool of this world to learn what sin is all about, to learn the working of the evil one,

so that when we see the Holy Spirit, He will be so recognizable to us—and the ways of sin and evil are so common to us and so well known—that once we choose for the Lord and for the Holy Spirit, no matter what temptations the devil throws at us, we will reject it. We have seen it. We have been there. We know what it is about, and we are not going to say "yes" to it again. The only way we will know that—tragically, for us—is if we have been submersed in it.

What great saints God can make out of people who have wallowed in the mire of the filth of this world. When they are pulled out of it, they will become great saints for God. If you are a mediocre sinner, you can only be a mediocre saint; but if you are a great sinner, you can

become a great saint. Now do not take that to think that you need to rush out and do some horrible things this afternoon just to become a great sinner. I think we all know that we are already there. What we need to do now is beg the Lord and beg Our Blessed Lady for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts in whatever way He needs to do. He will humble us; purify us through the suffering, to prepare us for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He will prepare us to receive the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that with her we can unite ourselves to her Son. We will be able to do the works that the Lord wants from each one of us: to remain faithful in the face of suffering and to become great saints through the power of the Holy Spirit, Who will be given to us if we are willing.

** This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier with minimal editing.*



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...LET US BEGIN...

St. Francis had the habit of telling his brothers: **"Let us begin, for until now we have done nothing."** It seems when looking over this issue of the newsletter, that is a good theme for our message. The words of

St. Francis were preceded with Our Lord's message to us all. **"When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"** (Lk 17:10)

This month we can begin by considering our relationship to Mary, our heavenly Queen and Mother. No human being was as humble or pure as this woman. She was born out of God's love, without sin or the propensity to sin, and she devoted herself always most faithfully to her service of God. In the Gospels, she is mentioned seldom. Yet in the life of her Son there can be little doubt that she walked almost at His side, all the time. She did not want to be in the Gospel, we have read. She told this to a seer in a recent apparition. In her immense humility she wanted the focus of the Gospels to be on her Son. So, we should pray to her always and ask her intercession and help to make Jesus the central focus of our lives too.

The simple fact is that we need to be like our Mother. We need to be willing to do all we can for God, and the good of souls, without seeking fanfare. The fanfare we want resides in heaven when we get there. When we get there may the Lord say to us all: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Mary was the spouse of the Holy Spirit too. She conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the central theme in this month's newsletter is the Holy

Spirit. Not because we asked our contributors to bring forth the Holy Spirit in what they gave us. It just happened that way! Praise God!

In the Holy Spirit we will grow into faithful followers of Jesus, close to God and advanced in our spirituality. What is of the flesh belongs to the flesh, and what is of the spirit belongs to the spirit, we have been told. So, we need to cling to the Holy Spirit, as did our Lady, and ask the Holy Spirit to be all we are in us before God.

Some time ago we received a prayer to the Holy Spirit from one of our Visitors, Fr. Tony Cirignani O.F.M.. It is a good prayer to remember and say often, if not daily. It follows.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
That I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
To defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
That I always may be holy.

St. Augustine

We are all busy, and busy is good, especially if it is aimed at furthering our journey to God. May it always be so with us who are His Servants, for the greater honor and glory of God, in the Holy Spirit and with Jesus, our Lord.

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators - Morning Star Chapter - Minnesota



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery BSP

"Jesus cried out in a loud voice and gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'"
(Mt 27:50-54)

I would like to combine several postulant lessons with reflections from Holy Week. Living the Rule, which leads to living the "regular life," is a blueprint for holiness given us directly by our holy father, St. Francis of Assisi. He should know. Postulant lesson five is: "The Person of Jesus." The most important question in the world is asked by Jesus: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" The centurion and those who were with him certainly understood, though it took great calamities to produce and proclaim that faith.

In preparation to join the BSP, each of us is specifically asked by Jesus: "And you, who do **you** say the Son of Man is?" The future course of our life hinges on the answer to that question. Surely we will say with Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who has come into the world." It is good to agree with Peter in this respect, for he gave the correct answer. But do we stand with the Peter from before the Crucifixion of Jesus, or the one after Pentecost?

During Holy Week we witnessed the distress of the people at the time of Jesus, who couldn't quite figure out the answer to that question. On Palm Sunday they praised and proclaimed Him King: "**Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory on earth. Hosanna in the highest!**" That was a wonderful moment of triumph for our Savior.

On Good Friday it was very different. "**But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus crucified.**" (Mt 27:20) How can you persuade a crowd of people to contradict themselves in five short days? Praise Jesus as King, then call for His crucifixion? It is easy.

Many times I heard these words of wisdom from my mother: "**Never follow the crowd!**" "If they jump in the lake, will you go jump in the lake?" That's very good advice! How many follow "the crowd" today, accepting worldly standards even though they completely contradict the Word of God and the teachings of our faith? The words of Jesus still ring true today: "**Broad is the road that leads to destruction... but narrow is the gate that leads to life, and how few there are who find it.**" (Mt 7:13)

Not everyone in the crowd is persuaded, however. The few, the faithful remnant has the backbone to stand firmly for God and His plan of salvation. And that's where the mystery comes in. It **was** God's will that Judas and then the crowd turn against Jesus. But that doesn't lessen the personal responsibility of the individuals involved, as Jesus said of Judas: "**Woe to the man by whom the Son of Man will be betrayed! It would be better for him if he had not been born.**" (Mk 14:21)

On the Cross Jesus asked: "**Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.**" Some receive mercy, others do not. A cursory reading of the 23rd chapter of Mathew tells one the objects of the wrath of God are not likely to be among those who "know not what they do." But that is for the good Lord to decide.

God has given us the grace to seek eternal salvation through the divine grace gained for us by Jesus Christ through His acceptance of the Father's plan, Good Friday's death on the Cross. Like Peter we proclaim Jesus as Savior, but what is our level of commitment? Will we deny Him as soon as we are confronted by the crowd? Will we slink away saying, "Oh no, I'm not one of those right-wing extremist Catholic/Christians." Or will we stand firm and proudly proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ who died on the Cross to redeem us from our sins? "I know Jesus is the divine Son of God who for love of us became one of us to show us the Way to eternal salvation! There is **no greater love** than to lay down your life for your friends. And there is no greater adventure in life than to participate in this divine love affair!"

I have often wondered about those who are not part of the crowd, about those who do not know Jesus. Pope Pius IX tells us the necessary disposition of heart required of them for their salvation in his encyclical: "Quanto Conficiamur Moerore," "On Promotion of False Doctrines." (August 10, 1863)

"There are, of course, those who are struggling with invincible ignorance about our most holy religion. Sincerely observing the natural law and its precepts inscribed by God on all hearts and ready to obey God, they live honest lives and are able to attain eternal life by the efficacious virtue of divine light and grace. Because God knows, searches and

clearly understands the minds, hearts, thoughts, and nature of all, his supreme kindness and clemency do not permit anyone at all who is not guilty of deliberate sin to suffer eternal punishments.” (Paragraph 7)

Our greatest thanks should be given to God because we are privileged to be counted among His friends. But to whom more is given, more will be required. In return for receiving the greatest gift any person born into the world could receive, we have a special responsibility to respond to the love of God freely bestowed upon us. We cannot be among those who reject His personal invitation, or even be among the mediocre, the indifferent muddled middle. I think that’s why Jesus said He would vomit the lukewarm out of His mouth. There is nothing quite as painful as unrequited love. And when the Creator of Love offers that gift to us, it is not to be taken and trampled underfoot. It’s hard to imagine how many snubs God has received from His recalcitrant children. Jesus reveals to St. Faustina the effects of lukewarm souls on His Sacred Heart, the intention for the ninth day of the Divine Mercy novena:

“Today bring to me the souls who have become lukewarm, and immerse them in the abyss of my mercy. These souls wound my heart most painfully. My soul suffered the most dreadful loathing in the garden of Olives because of lukewarm souls. They were the reason I cried out: ‘Father, take this cup away from me, if it be your will.’ For them, the last hope of salvation is to run to my mercy.”

Jesus gives us a glimpse into the power of His Love when He said to the Pharisees who were alarmed at the praise given to Him by His disciples on His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem: **“I tell you, if they kept quiet, even the stones would cry out!”**

Knowing who Jesus is, and the power of His Love for us, our response is contained in lesson six: “The secret of

sanctity,” which is: **complete surrender to the will of God.** Even Peter and the Apostles knew who Jesus was, but before the coming of the Holy Spirit, they did not or could not put that knowledge into action. We must learn how to ‘activate’ our slothful hearts, and that is by complete surrender to the will of God. The process is long and painful, and it might take a lifetime.

We are close to a wonderful Franciscan family. Jerry and Heidi have eight children, the oldest just becoming a teenager. They make parenting look easy, for they are always teaching their children, who chafe—as all children do—at the discipline. Someday I would like to tell the children: “Do you understand how fortunate you are to have parents who are teaching you the most important lesson in the world: turning self-centered, self-will into other-oriented fulfillment of the will of God? One day you will thank them profusely because they loved you enough to teach you at an early age to seek the Lord through the habitual practice of efficacious virtue. That allows you to avoid the horror of deliberate sin which cuts you off from eternal salvation. Fear of the Lord is the **beginning** of wisdom. The **end** is to live in the grace and love of God—which means surrender to the will of God now manifested to you through your parents.” That’s what parents are supposed to do, break the self-centered willfulness of their children. All of us who had parents like that can thank the Lord! Otherwise, the inmates are running the asylum.

When I was discussing these ideas with my dear wife, Donna, she said: “We need more honest and virtuous people.” She succinctly summarized the message of Pope Pius IX, that all who seek salvation: “live honest lives and are able to attain eternal life by the efficacious virtue of divine light and grace.” Pope John Paul II has made it much easier to do that by highlighting the Divine Mercy of the Heart of Jesus. That clearly defines the Person of Jesus: His Divine Mercy! “Surely He is the Son of God!” Let us rejoice in that, alleluia, and always fly to the shelter of His Merciful Love!

Paul Beery BSP - Morning Star Chapter - Minnesota



WE MUST LIVE BY THE SPIRIT... A MEDITATION by Janet Klasson BSP

“I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want.” (Galatians 5:16-17)

My, oh my! How I need to hear these words right now! Are there not times of great temptation, when the world is pushing in on you, pursuing you relentlessly with its bangles and charms? There are times when it seems all I can manage just to keep to my prayer schedule, while

every day the pure desires of my spirit are betrayed by the words of my mouth and the actions of my flesh. Like St. Paul, I can only cry out, **“What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate...I do not do the good I want, but I do**

the evil I do not want.” (Romans 7: 15, 19)

But is not this tension part of God’s design for us? Does it not exemplify the life of Christ in the world, the Body of which we are a part? Was not the death of Christ himself, a result of the opposition of flesh against spirit?

The following paragraph is taken from a letter to Diognetus and explains the conflict of being a Christian in the world and the divine purpose behind it.

“Christians love those who hate them just as the soul loves the body and all its members despite the body’s hatred. It is by the soul, enclosed within the body, that the body is held together, and similarly, **it is by the Christians, detained in the world as in a prison, that the world is held together.** The soul, though immortal, has a mortal dwelling place; and Christians also live for a time amidst perishable things, while awaiting the freedom from change and decay that will be theirs in heaven. **As the soul benefits from the deprivation of food and drink, so Christians flourish under persecution.** Such is the Christian’s lofty and divinely appointed function, from which **he is not permitted to excuse himself.”**

The church has shown its most tremendous growth in times of struggle and persecution. What the enemy means for destruction, the Lord uses to build up the kingdom. Like a beautiful garden grown on manure, eventually the manure is transformed and no longer resembles the putrid mass it once was. The garden is victorious, and always will be. In the same way, the world is transformed by the sufferings of members of the Body of Christ.

The same transformation takes place in a body that is disciplined by the Spirit. The soul shows the most growth when it denies the body its desires for the sake of Christ. **“Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.”** (Mt 10:39) What seems to the body to be meant for its destruction, is the foundation for growth in the Spirit, which will result in its total glorification at the end of

time.

But the body fights this! Like a little child that wants to play with matches, it does not know that it will be burned up by its desires. We can see this very clearly in the world today. Many, many people, in worshiping the desires of the flesh, cause death not just to their spirits, but to their bodies as well. This is evident in the increasing incidence of such afflictions as STD’s, addictions, obesity and abortion to name just a few.

But there is hope for the world. We read: *“It is by the Christians...that the world is held together.”* This statement echoes Colossians 1:17 which tells us that **“in (Christ) all things hold together.”** Since we are the Body of Christ on earth this becomes **our** divinely appointed function. As Christians we endure persecution knowing that God is using it to transform, not just us, not just the church, but the entire world.

Let us remember this as we take up our cross daily, most especially the cross of persecution by today’s popular culture. God will transform the world through our pain as we turn the other cheek, as we do good to those who hurt us, as we bless those who curse us, all for the sake of Jesus Christ whose Body we are. These are the beautiful seeds God wants us to plant in the manure of the world.

The excerpt goes on to say that *“we are not permitted to excuse ourselves from this function.”* No fence-sitting please. You are either with me or against me. To accomplish this task, we need extraordinary strength of spirit, which the exercise of bodily discipline gives us. *“The soul benefits from the deprivation of food and drink.”* Bodily discipline frees us of the weakness of our flesh that we might live in the strength of the Spirit.

To find discipline, we need look no further than the Rule of 1221. It gives us the tools we need to strengthen our spirits to accomplish our divinely appointed function in the midst of suffering and persecution. Let us praise God for leading us to this Rule, for the sake of our souls, of the church, and of the whole world.

(Reprinted from a previous newsletter.)

From www.pelianito.stblogs.com October 27, 2010

For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. (2 Cor 5:1)

“My child, esteem nothing that does not lead to Christ. You are earthly vessels, it is true, but you house a spirit that will never die. Decide today how you wish to spend eternity. Whatever ties you to this earth will weigh you down. Your spirit was made to soar. Then detach yourself from all that will perish. Love without clinging; use the things of this world without becoming a slave to them yourself. Child, the time is upon you, and you see the beginnings already. What once felt firm beneath your feet is now becoming unstable. Be sure your feet are firmly planted on the rock—which is Christ—and the Church, against which the gates of hell will never prevail. My child, cultivate a spirit of holy detachment, trusting that all you need will be provided in this life and in the next.”

Jesus I trust in you. Help us to cultivate a spirit of holy detachment so that we may be free to cling to you—with both hands!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...



BSP Retreat 2011



Plans are proceeding for our retreat this year. If you can make it we would love to have you there! The announcement for the retreat follows.

BSP Retreat: July 29-31, 2011

Father Randal Kasel – Retreat Master

THEME: "Imitating Our Lord in prayer and penance."

Fr. Kasel serves as Parochial Administrator at the Church of St. Charles in Bayport, MN. He is also the Archdiocesan Director of the Legion of Mary. Father will speak on imitating Our Lord Jesus in the practice of prayer and penance. Emphasis will be given to the meaning of redemptive suffering as practiced by St. Francis of Assisi, and other Franciscan Saints. Sunday Mass at the retreat will be celebrated by Bishop Lee A. Piché of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Franciscan Retreat Center—Prior Lake, Minnesota

Cost: \$150.00. Donation for stipend. To reserve a place send \$25 to:

BSP Retreat, c/o Paul Beery BSP, 2108 Pleasant Ave, #114, Minneapolis, MN 55404

For further information call: 612-871-2852 (Home); 612-730-4500 (Cell)

BSP CHAPTERS: A REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

We thought this month we would feature information on some very active Chapters in the BSP.

The 'Little Flower' Chapter is located in the Federal Penitentiary in Butner, North Carolina, the Escondido Chapter (as yet not otherwise named) is located in Escondido, California, and the BSP Chapter is located in Canada. These chapters are making exciting progress and are worthy of our consideration. They show the value of having a BSP family with whom to associate. It is up to each of us, wherever we live, to bring a Chapter to life. It is a primary ministry in the BSP, and in our lives. If you would like to contact someone in any of these Chapters let us know and we will try to make that happen. May the Lord bless and lead us all!

Bruce and Shelley

THE LITTLE FLOWER CHAPTER...Butner, North Carolina

Patrick Legan, BSP Postulant, and Bob Hall, BSP, professed member, met in 2008. Both being Roman Catholics and both having Fathers who were officers in the U.S. Navy and both being raised on Navy bases, they became friends.

Due to the Navy backgrounds both were born overseas. Pat was born in Madrid, Spain, while Bob was born in Saipan, Mariana Islands. Pat recently started his postulant year while Bob professed to live the BSP Rule for life in 2005.

Bob has an extended history of living the Franciscan lifestyle which started with the SFO in 1982 and has

belonged to other Franciscan communities before finally professing to the BSP. He has served as a sacristan and Eucharistic Minister for several years in some of the Dioceses of the U.S.

In 1988, and as outreach to his Franciscan walk, Bob started his Sparrow Ministry which included a monthly newsletter. The Sparrow ministry continues today as a BSP outreach ministry with a weekly e-mail version of Franciscan spirituality and insights which is sent electronically to hundreds of people outside the prison.

Patrick became interested in the BSP Franciscan lifestyle by talking with Bob and observing the Sparrow ministry.

From that Pat learned the Devotions to the Sacred Heart, the Divine Mercy and to St. Francis of Assisi and St. Therese, the Little Flower. Pat has also elected to use the Divine Office for his BSP prayer option and is learning and praying this daily at this time.

As part of the Little Flower Chapter's ministry there has now been added the St. Therese's Prayer and Study Group which meets weekly after Communion services for prayer and Scripture study. Setting up the altar for the Mass and supplying a music ministry is part of this

ministry in further support to a Catholic Community of about 400 Catholic men. Bob being a professed BSP member was elected as the Volunteer Representative who represents Catholic interests there with the Chaplain's office. This requires Bob to make out commercial orders for all the Catholic books, tapes, CD's and other material needs of the Catholic community.

Pat and myself are not letting any grass grow under our feet!! Please keep us in prayer!

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter

THE ESCONDIDO CHAPTER...Escondido, California



We received this picture of the members of the BSP Chapter in Escondido, California. The following is the story they submitted with their picture. What a smart looking group of brother and sisters they are! Praise God!

Their story: "Greetings from the BSP Chapter in Escondido, California. We are now a group of 21, with over four years of history since we started our community. We are all still in formation as either Postulants or Novices. Our members also include two that are discerning and they join us for our Chapter meetings. Following in the footsteps of our Father Francis our primary focus at the present is prayer, and visits to members that have fallen ill. Each novice is joyfully involved in this ministry. As many of you that have more than one in your chapter, we meet monthly to discuss the lessons. Quarterly we attempt to meet for a general Franciscan lecture by our minister, Chris O'Donnell,

and/or our Spiritual Advisor. We are appreciative of the support of our priests in the parishes of Escondido. In 2009 we sponsored the celebration of the Transitus of St. Francis at St. Timothy parish, which was well attended to our delight.

This past summer we started an Inquiry group for those who were interested in the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. We provided them with a six session inquiry on and about St. Francis, the traditions, and generally the life as a lay person wanting to live the Rule of St. Francis. Surprisingly, we were astounded at the growth and Franciscan spirituality of this group of people. Of the fourteen that originally started

the Inquiry process seven have moved to the rite of Admission as postulants. We continue to have a couple of inquirers still in the process of discerning who join us for the monthly meeting of the community.

In the near future we will be providing a step-by-step guide on praying the Liturgy of Hours since most of our novices have adopted this form for their prayer life. Our postulants are excited and ready, so they say, to begin on the new prayer journey. It will be a fun time together, for as many of you know, it is a challenge to keep all those ribbons in sequence!

Please continue to pray for our chapter, as we do for all the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. We are community, even if we are spread all over the continent.

Rose Ann Rypka BSP, Escondido Chapter

DIVINE MERCY CHAPTER...Canada

The Divine Mercy chapter formed in 2006 when two of the Canadian members, Janet and Irene met for Divine Mercy weekend at Ephphatha House in Alberta. It seemed a natural fit to name the chapter after the feast.

The Divine Mercy chapter is made up almost exclusively of members at large. There is one professed member in British Columbia, one in Alberta, and the rest are in formation or in discernment. Those in active formation include Patrick in Ontario who has just completed his Postulancy, and Diane in British Columbia who has also completed her Postulancy. We congratulate Patrick and Diane and ask the blessings of the Holy Spirit on them as

they continue into their Novitiate.

Once a month Janet, Irene, and Sherry (a member in discernment) hold a phone meeting where they pray and discuss an ongoing reading from the *Omnibus of Sources*.

Being separated by such vast distances makes it impractical to hold even annual meetings. However, we are connected in the Heart of Divine Mercy. All our brothers and sisters in the Association are in our hearts and our prayers.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter

OUR HANDBOOK

We are awaiting the Imprimatur on our Handbook. Please keep this project in your prayers.

Thank you, and May the Lord bless us all!

Bruce and Shelley



FROM THE 'SPARROW'...Trust in God

Dear Little Sparrows,

The peace of Jesus be yours!
Just a thought or two...

J. D. Salinger wrote a story called
Teddy. It's about a young person

who finds it next to impossible to live a spiritual life in today's world.

Teddy says:

"I mean it's very hard to meditate and love a spiritual life in America. People think you're a freak...My father thinks I'm a freak, in a way. And my mother—well, she doesn't think it's good for me to think about God all the time. Jesus had

the same problem with many of his friends and relatives."

As a little sparrow have you ever asked yourself how people react to your efforts to live a Gospel centered spiritual life in today's world? How do you feel about that answer? Why not share it with the Lord? If you did--what was his answer??

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority it is time to pause and reflect."

Mark Twain

May Divine Mercy be yours!

Bob Hall BSP. Little Flower Chapter



And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:4)

The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE OF ST. FRANCIS

A.k.a. BSP, is a non-profit Private Association of the Faithful, which is dedicated to renewing the ancient way of penance as contained in the First Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis of 1221 for lay people in our modern world. We have the blessing of the Catholic Church to do this through several of its Archbishops, Bishops, and priests. If you are bound by another Rule of life in another profession of the way of St. Francis that does not permit you to enter other religious families you are nonetheless invited to add the elements of this beautiful way of life that Saint Francis of Assisi gave us to the lifestyle of your profession.

All members, and Franciscans, are welcome to submit articles for consideration for inclusion in this newsletter if they are directed towards the spiritual formation of members or are the outgrowth of the lifestyle of the Association. Just send them to the BSP at minncc@aol.com. Feel free to share this newsletter with your friends or neighbors. It is intended to be the primary monthly communication of the Association, and ongoing formation for all members and friends. And if you can find it in your heart and in your budget remember that donations to the BSP are used strictly to promote the lifestyle and are tax deductible.

We remain, always, sincerely yours in the love of Jesus Christ!

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP, Editors

Welcome to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance!



In the world, but not of it, for Christ!



[Website: www.bspenance.org](http://www.bspenance.org)