

...IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT, FOR CHRIST!

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter IV—The Progress of the Order under Francis' Guidance and the Confirmation of the Rule

1. With God's grace and the pope's approval to support him, Francis now felt completely confident and he took the road towards the valley of Spoleto, where he determined to preach Christ's Gospel and live according to it. As he made the journey with his companions, they fell to discussing how they might keep the rule they had been given with all sincerity and live before God in holiness and with approval in his sight. They debated, too, how they might better themselves and give others good example, so that it was already late while they continued their long conversation. They were tired with all they had done and began to feel hungry, so that they eventually halted on a lonely stretch of the road. There



seemed to be no hope of getting anything to eat, but God provided for them unexpectedly; a man came on the scene unannounced, carrying some bread which he gave to them and then immediately disappeared, leaving them with no idea whence he came or where he went. For all their poverty, the friars realized that in Francis' company they could be sure of God's help and the thought of his generosity did more to strengthen them than the food which they ate. They were filled with spiritual encouragement and they made a firm resolution never to go back on the promise which they had made to Holy Poverty, no matter how much privation or suffering they had to endure.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE
Homily by Fr. Robert Altier: Luke 21:1-4

We hear in the first reading about the Lamb standing on Mount Zion and the hundred and forty-four thousand with Him, those who are unblemished. No deceit is on their lips and they are the ones from all of humanity who are chosen because of their righteousness. They have on their foreheads the name of God and the name of the Lamb, and they are the ones who have been faithful to Him completely. Now we can ask ourselves, “What exactly is that going to require? (Not that we are going to be among the small group, but nonetheless, we should certainly be striving to be counted among the greater group that is going to be in Heaven) And how is it to be done?”

I think we have a little inkling of how that is going to be done in the Gospel reading today. Having absolutely nothing to do with money, but rather, having to do with the giving of the self, we hear about how the wealthy people were putting into the treasury from their surplus wealth, whereas the little widow put in all that she had, everything that was her livelihood. What the Lord is asking of us is to look at what we are giving to Him. Do we give Him what is left over? Do we give Him our surplus of all of our talent, of all of our ability, of our own self? Or are we really digging in and giving the Lord our very selves?

Now we have to understand that in the way we are created the self is simply the most precious gift that we

have and we protect it with everything that we have got. So what happens is when it comes to giving the self to God, we tend to give to God what is peripheral. Even when it is the things that kind of hurt, when we are giving to God something even deeper, I think most of us would have to admit that it is not the very essence of who we are. It is maybe a little bit deeper than the peripheral things but it is still things that are more to the outside. This little widow, if we would look at it from a human perspective, basically gave to God her whole being, everything that she had. Not just what she sized up and figured she could live without, not just the little bit on the edge that might be a little bit of an inconvenience but was not going to cause too much difficulty for her, but she gave it all. If we want to put that into very practical terms, it is everything: her heart, her soul, her mind, her body, all of her works, all of her actions, all of her thoughts - every single thing was given by her to God.

That is what He is asking of us: that we would really give our entire being to Him. Now that goes against our nature, but, at the same time (if we really think about it and pray about it), because it is giving the entire self to God, it is actually fulfilling our nature; it fulfills what we were created for. But because of sin, what has happened is that we have become so focused on the self that we do not want to give it up; and so we fight to protect it to make sure it does not get taken away. Under normal circumstances, that would be proper because if the self is violated in that way it is a total sin against the person. But in this case, it is a free choice to give oneself as an act of love and there is no violation at all because it is giving to Love in love. That is, in the love of our hearts,

we are giving ourselves to God, Who is Love, and He will not violate us. He will not violate the gift that we offer, but instead what He will do is when we can give ourselves entirely to Him then we can receive the gift of Him to ourselves, which is an entire gift of self to us. What a beautiful exchange is being offered! We give our piddly little self to God and He gives His glorious self to us. We can actually live in such a way that it is the Lord who lives in us and through us. But that requires our choice; God will never force that on us. He will never require it of us, but rather, what He will do is ask us as a gift of love to give ourselves to Him, and as a gift of love He will give Himself to us. That is what that poor widow did with her two little copper coins, if we want to see it in an external way.

Now God is asking us to do the same, not with our money but with ourselves. Are we willing to give Him everything - absolutely everything in our entire lives, bar none? He wants us to give it all and He is going to give it all in return. That is what is being offered to us. That is how we will be among that group of people who will be without blemish, the ones who will be united with the Lamb, with the Father's Name and the Name of the Lamb written upon the forehead. If people would see us - if we are in that way—they are going to see God and they are going to see Jesus, which is why Their names would be written right on the forehead because that is Who is going to be operating within. That is what God is offering. So we need to really pray and look very seriously at our generosity toward God and ask ourselves, "Am I simply giving of my surplus, or am I giving to God everything that I am and everything that I have?"

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... All Saints, All Souls and Thanksgiving

In this month we reflect always on the fact that we are all called to be saints, and on what that means and should mean in our individual lives. The call to sanctity is for all of us. That is why we celebrate the great

Solemnities of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. We do well to consider what the Church is saying on these days, and what these celebrations mean to us. It is a most worthwhile meditation.

We still recall the first meeting with Bishop Roger Schwietz (now Archbishop of Alaska). It was on the Eve of All Saints day, 1995. We were discerning how it was that God wanted us to continue to bring people together who lived by the First Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis and if we could even do it in the Church? At this time the Stella Matutina Movement had come to a

standstill. It is with a certain joy that we remember what he said that day, "today is the perfect day, all hallowed eve, to consider the task the Lord had put in your hearts of creating an Association to promote and live this Rule of 1221". Thank you Archbishop Schwietz for helping to pave the way!

We all have been created by the loving hand of God Himself and are all 'called' to become saints. On All Saints Day we honor the Saints because by their exemplary lives they have revealed the way to Sainthood. St. Francis not only lived an exemplary life but he also gave the laity a Rule of Life as a guide to follow: the Rule of 1221—the life of many Saints. It is the Rule of the BSP of St. Francis today and what joy it is to know that the Rule we all follow is a call to deep personal holiness, to life in the Church. Not a life by ourselves alone, but a life in the family of St. Francis which lives and moves and has its being in Christ in the center of His

Church. How? The answer to that question is in the Rule itself.

The Rule outlines the elements of a saintly life. Consider the content of that Rule. Reflect on it often.

- Chapter 1: Daily Life
We must lead lives that on a daily basis support and reflect our commitment to Christ.
- Chapter 2: Abstinence
We must learn self discipline and self control to become servants of the Lord.
- Chapter 3: Fasting
We must fast from food and other things that bind us to life in the world, especially from sin.
- Chapter 4: Prayer
We must pray assiduously and continually, wherever we begin our journey.
- Chapter 5: The Sacraments: other matters.

We must be a sacramental people, love the Church, and live peaceable lives in the world.

- Chapter 6: Special Mass and meeting each month.
We are a community in Christ with each other, wherever we live in the world.
- Chapter 7: Visiting the Sick; burying the dead.
We are a family, and we care for each other. We support each other until death do us part.
- Chapter 8: Correction, dispensation, officers.
We need to use our time and talent to promote the Gospel and the Rule of life we share, and we can begin to do that within the Association itself.

This is our Rule. Our way to holiness. Let us live it and love it, and celebrate with each other these great solemnities of our way. They are our celebrations. We are all called to be saints and should always be thankful for this way of life that the Lord gave us through St. Francis.

(Reprinted from the November 2005 newsletter)



THE FAST OF ST. MARTIN BEGINS NOVEMBER 12

November is a busy month in the BSP. Our rule lays down several things for us to consider and do in November, depending on where we are in formation, of course.

ARTICLE 8

From the Pasch of the Resurrection to the feast of All Saints they are to fast on Fridays. From the feast of All Saints until Easter they are to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, but still observing the other fasts enjoined in general by the Church.

STATUTES: ARTICLE 8

- a. All Fridays are days of fast for penitents throughout

the year unless a Solemnity in the Church. From the Feast of All Saints until Easter, penitents are to fast on Wednesdays as well as Fridays.

RULE: ARTICLE 9

They are to fast daily, except on account of infirmity or any other need, throughout the fast of St. Martin from after said day until Christmas, and throughout the greater fast from Carnival Sunday until Easter.

STATUTES: ARTICLE 9

- a. Penitents are to observe a pre-Christmas fast from November 12, the day after the Feast of St. Martin, until Christmas...

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



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery BSP

"The Lord God said: 'It is not good for man be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man. The man said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife..." (Genesis 2:18-24)

A great darkness has fallen over the world. Never before has a nation or a people sought to legitimize the unthinkable, to change what has been from the beginning—the union in marriage of man and woman. But today we are witnessing an outright attack on God

and His Plan for mankind. "Be fruitful and multiply," had been changed to "be sterile from the new 'family plan' you have freely chosen to invent out of thin air." The arrogance of the supporters of the gay-rights agenda, and same-sex marriage in particular, knows no bounds.



To think they alone are intelligent enough to discover a wonderful “alternative lifestyle”—the same lifestyle that has been universally abhorred and condemned among all people on earth since the beginning of time—is quite an accomplishment in moral and mental gymnastics! And they will not rest until the definition of marriage is changed.

Pope John Paul II had it right. “It is legitimate and necessary to ask oneself if this (same-sex marriage) is not perhaps part of a **new ideology of evil, perhaps more insidious and hidden**, which attempts to **pit human rights against the family and against man.**” (“Memory and Identity,” the last book he wrote in 2005)

Now ‘Blessed’ John Paul II (Oct. 22nd feast-day) laid the groundwork for the defense of marriage in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, in which he brilliantly laid out the main elements which constituted the Culture of Death, which wars against the Gospel of Life. The five elements of the Culture of Death are: abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem-cell research, cloning, and same-sex marriage. The last of them seems to be in a different category, but time has shown it is perhaps first in importance for us today. The attempt by homosexual activists to degrade the sacredness of the Sacrament of Marriage is indeed part of a new ideology of evil, something that is abhorrent to the faithful Christian.

Pope Benedict has continued to follow the inspiration of Pope John Paul II. In his visit to Fatima in May, 2010, Pope Benedict said the following in a speech to those who provide social services for the Church:

*“The services you provide, and your educational and charitable activities, must all be crowned by projects of freedom whose goal is human promotion and universal fraternity. Here we can locate the urgent commitment of Christians in defense of human rights, with concern for the totality of the human person in its various dimensions. I express my deep appreciation for all those social and pastoral initiatives aimed at combating the socio-economic and cultural mechanisms which lead to abortion, and are openly concerned to defend life and to promote the reconciliation and healing of those harmed by the tragedy of abortion. Initiatives aimed at protecting the essential and primary values of life, beginning at conception, and of the family based on the indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman, help to respond to some of today’s **most insidious and dangerous threats to the common good**. Such initiatives represent, alongside numerous other forms of commitment, essential elements in the building of the civilization of love.”*

The American Bishops’ Conference has also mounted a spirited defense of the marriage covenant, which has become a critical issue in the United States. Please confer Archbishop Timothy Dolan’s letter to President Obama, dated September 21, 2011. In it he states in part:

*“I write with a growing sense of urgency about recent actions taken by your Administration that both escalate the threat to marriage and imperil the religious freedom of those who promote and defend marriage. This past spring the Justice Department announced that it would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in court, a decision strongly opposed by the Catholic Bishops of the United States and many others... It is particularly upsetting, Mr. President, when your Administration, through the various court documents, pronouncements and policies identified in the attached analysis, **attributes those who support DOMA a motivation rooted in prejudice and bias**. It is especially wrong and unfair to equate opposition to redefining marriage with **either intentional or willfully ignorant racial discrimination**, as your Administration insists on doing.*

*“Mr. President, I respectfully urge you to push the reset button on your Administration’s approach to DOMA. Our federal government should not be **presuming ill intent or moral blindness on the part of the overwhelming majority of its citizens, millions of whom have gone to the polls to directly support DOMAs in their states and have thereby endorsed marriage as the union of man and woman**. Nor should a policy disagreement over the meaning of marriage be treated by federal officials **as a federal offense**—but this will happen if the Justice Department’s latest constitutional theory prevails in court. The Administration’s failure to change course on this matter will, as the attached analysis indicates, **precipitate a national conflict between Church and State of enormous proportions** and to the detriment of both institutions.”*

The federal offense Archbishop Dolan mentions is explained in the analysis attached to his letter:

“The Justice Department’s argument in Golinski compares DOMA in effect to racially discriminatory laws. According to the government’s view, support for a definition of marriage that recognizes that sexual difference is a defining and valuable feature of marriage now constitutes a forbidden intent to harm a vulnerable class of people. The false claim that animus is at work ignores the intrinsic goods of complementarity and fruitfulness found only in the union of man and woman as husband and wife. DoJ’s contention thus transforms a moral disagreement into a constitutional violation, with grave practical consequences.

“This new, more aggressive position poses a threat reaching well beyond the elimination of the federal DOMA. If successful in federal court, the Justice Department’s claim would create a precedent that casts into constitutional doubt all

state DOMAs. Also at risk would be any other federal or state policy that applies unique incentives for households where children are raised by a father and a mother who are legally married to each other.

"The Justice Department's position also denigrates the considered judgment of the American people. In every state where citizens have been allowed to vote on state constitutional versions of DOMA, twenty-nine states in all, voters by sizable majorities have affirmed marriage as the union of a man and a woman. A total of forty-one states have statutory or constitutional DOMAs on the books. Equating the approval of these state laws with racial bias wrongly treats the millions of voters in those states as if they were bigots, who refuse to redefine marriage only out of hostility against those who experience same-sex attraction."

The American people are not used to blatant hostility to people of faith and traditional Christian moral values by a government that is supposed to uphold and defend the Rule of Law as defined by our Creator. Our pastor said the next step in this hostile "transformation" of America to the Rule of Sodom and Gomorrah is to make opposition to homosexual "marriage" a felony. Well, not quite in those words, but the felony part stands. Anti-Christian bias has spread so far that we are on the verge of criminalizing free speech! And by the same people who at one time promoted the Gospel of Tolerance!

Same-sex "marriage" has been voted down by a majority of people in every state where it has been put on the ballot as a constitutional amendment. Minnesota is next. Led by Archbishop Nienstedt, the Catholic Bishops of our state are leading a vigorous campaign to protect the sanctity of marriage here. There are many obstacles in the way, mainly the fact that a government "of the people, by the people and for the people," is now governing **against the will of the people!** I know that government hostility to their own people is a common theme all around the world, but it's something new here in America. That is why our bishops are courageously taking on both the government and the Politically Correct culture in which we live. May God bless them in their efforts to mobilize the people of God to fight against a **"new ideology of evil, perhaps more insidious and hidden, which attempts to pit human rights against the family and against man."**

Faithful bishops, priests, and people of God are indeed promoting "Initiatives aimed at protecting the essential and primary values of life, beginning at conception, and of the family based on the indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman, helping to respond to some of today's **most insidious and dangerous threats to the common good.** Such initiatives represent, alongside numerous other forms of commitment, essential elements in **the building of the civilization of love."**

Paul Beery BSP - Morning Star Chapter - Minnesota



God has not left us orphaned... A MEDITATION by Janet Klasson BSP

From the Gospel reading on the First Sunday of Advent

"Jesus said to his disciples, 'Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come.'" (Mark 13:33)

In one of his appearances to St. Catherine of Siena, Jesus told her, *"In his ignorance man treats himself very cruelly. My care is constant, but he turns my life-giving gifts into a source of death."* In other words, what our Lord gives us for our good, we misuse to the point of causing ourselves grave harm. Consequently, in our willful disobedience, we are running headlong into destruction.

There are all manner of theories out there as to why the world is careening out of control on so many fronts. The popular theory about the wild weather patterns (becoming harder to defend all the time) is that global warming is to blame. According to the National Climatic Data Center, 2011 has seen more billion-dollar natural disasters in the US alone than any year on record, and the year isn't over yet. Any scientists worth his weight in reason must be shaking his head in wonder at the

violence and increasing frequency of the global disasters. Add to that financial calamity, rebellion, and chaos, and—to use an overused phrase—it's a perfect storm. Apocalyptic, some say.

Those of us who have been paying attention to the words of Our Lady, especially over the past century and a half cannot be surprised at what is transpiring as we have witnessed the wholesale rejection of Christ in contemporary society. Colossians 1: 17 tells us: "(Christ) is before all things, and in him all things hold together." That, my friends is the key to the matter: In Christ all things hold together, and the more he is rejected, the more things fall apart. What we have sown in rebellion and disobedience, we are reaping in chaos and destruction. Lord have mercy on us, for we have sinned!

However, even in the midst of trials that seem certain to

get worse before they get better, there is cause for great hope and joy. We who believe in Christ, believe that there is far more going on than what our senses tell us. We remember that at Calvary, all seemed lost, and even the apostles ran away scared. But a mere three days later--the resurrection! A more glorious outcome than could have ever been dreamed possible! We believe that God is in control now, just as he was then. The difference between us and the apostles is that they endured their trial before Pentecost, while we have already received the gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Catechism tells us:

"The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

"The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive

*them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations."*¹

The catechism goes on to tell us that the gift of fortitude "ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good." Fortitude is one gift we will have great need of as the days continue to darken.

As we hear so often, God has not left us orphaned. With the Holy Spirit as our strength and guide, the storms of life may batter us, but our immortal souls will not be harmed as long as we remain in a state of grace and remain docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Let us keep these things in mind as we enter into our Fast of St. Martin. The world is desperately in need of penance, as the angel indicated so strongly at Fatima. May the Holy Spirit grant us the fortitude to fast well according the will of our Father in heaven. St. Mary and St. Joseph, pray for us. St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Martin, pray for us. All you holy saints and angels, pray for us.

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 1830-31

From www.pelianito.stblogs.com

Still the men rowed hard to regain the land, but they could not, for the sea grew ever more turbulent.

(Jonah 1:13)

"My child, all the efforts of man are of no use at all if the will of God is not followed. You see this all around you. Everywhere in the world, there are vain efforts to change the course of world events. They are trying to stop a flood with a sieve. Every plan is so full of holes, I am amazed that so few can see it. Of course no one is looking at the root of the problem, and that is sin. The world has turned away from God—he in whom all things hold together. My child try to sew a garment without thread. Whatever you try will eventually fail. But in Christ the garment is seamless and strong. Continue to fast and pray, my child, for the seas are about to become more turbulent."

Jesus, save us for we are perishing! Only in you are we safe. Keep us united to you in whom all things hold together. Jesus I trust in you. Amen.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter



FROM THE 'SPARROW'...A God of Surprises

The peace of Jesus.

God is a God of surprises. He takes nothing and makes a world. He fills a boat with animals and saves a family from a flood. He uses a reluctant talker to

convince Pharaoh to free a nation. He wakes His people up to the sight of manna covering the ground. He demolishes walls with the sounds of trumpets. He spits up a prophet from a fish's stomach. He teaches uneducated fishermen to be eloquent. He reaches into a lunch bag and feeds five thousand people. He makes ordinary bread and wine holy. He sends His Son to die

and restores His life. He heals sick people. He makes sad people happy. He makes dead people live. And He takes sinners like you and me and makes us saints.

Ours is truly no ordinary God. Just ask yourself...did you ever in your wildest imagination, think that you would be receiving spiritual insights from a prisoner locked up for forty years that was known as "little brother sparrow"????

Lord, thank You for doing the impossible for our world and for me.

Bob Hall BSP. Little Flower Chapter



MEDITATION ON THE PASSION by Dawn Usak, BSP

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

We adore you oh Christ and we praise you.

Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Oh my sweet Jesus, You fall exhausted to the ground under the weight of the Cross that my sins have burdened You with. Yet, You rise again, lifting Your Cross and me along with it. In Your rising I find the power to rise under the yoke of my own sins and to move forward with You to Calvary, toward Salvation.

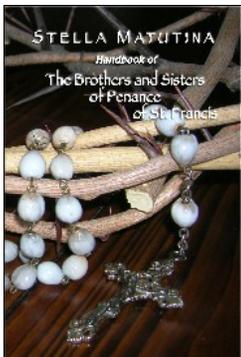
Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory Be..., Amen.

(Stations of the Cross. Painted by Sister Mary Leo Hergarten, SSND (1900-1959). Born in Milwaukee, Sr. Mary Leo studied art in Munich, Germany (1930-1934) and later headed the art department at Mount Mary College in Wisconsin. Suffering poor health, witnessing her mother's chronic illness and saddened by the premature deaths of siblings, Sister found her comfort in the Passion of Jesus. This set of Stations, painted in 1953, was first erected in the old St. Francis Hospital in Shakopee, Minn. When the Sisters of St. Francis made major modifications to the Chapel they gave the set to Fr. Robert Bayer, who mounted them at the Franciscan Retreat Centre, Prior Lake MN.)



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

HANDBOOK OF THE ASSOCIATION...



The BSP Handbook, titled ***Stella Matutina: Handbook of The Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis*** is now available for order. We have used a print-on-demand service at Lulu.com to print the book. This means we do not have to keep a stockpile of books, but customers order directly from Lulu, which prints them as they are ordered and ships them directly to the customer. This simplifies the ordering process for the administrators.

There is a link to the ordering page on our BSP Homepage. You will need a credit card or a Paypal account to order. Cost is \$10.00 plus shipping (\$3.99 for a single book).

Bruce and Paul also have copies available.

May the Rule of 1221 lead many souls on the path to holiness.

Bruce and Shelley Fahey, Administrators



"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross."

(Col 1: 15-20)

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)

**The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
PENANCE**



of St. Francis

**65774 County Road 31,
Northome, Minnesota 56661**