



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter VIII—Francis’ Loving Compassion and the Love Which Creatures Had for Him

5. Francis sympathized lovingly and compassionately with those stricken with any physical affliction and he immediately referred to Christ the poverty or deprivation he saw in anyone. He was kind and gentle by nature and the love of Christ merely intensified this. His soul melted at the sight of the poor or infirm and where he could not offer material assistance he lavished his affection. A friar once brusquely refused a beggar who had asked for an alms at an awkward moment. When Francis heard about it, he made the friar take off his habit in his love for the poor, and cast himself at the feet of the beggar, confessing his fault and begging his prayers and forgiveness. The friar obeyed humbly and Francis remarked gently, "My dear brother, when you see a beggar, you are looking at an image of our Lord and his poor Mother. When you see a sick person, remember the infirmities he bore for us." Francis saw Christ's image in every poor person he met and he was prepared to give them everything he had, even if he himself had urgent need of it. He even believed that they had a right to such alms, as if they belonged to them. When he was returning from Siena



on one occasion, he met a beggar at a time when he himself was wearing a short cloak over his habit because he was not well. At the sight of the poor man's destitution, Francis said to his companion, "We'll have to give this cloak back to that poor beggar, because it belongs to him. We only got it on loan until we found someone in greater need of it." His companion, however, knew well that the saint himself needed the cloak badly and he was reluctant to see him neglect himself while providing for someone else. "But," protested the saint, "God the great Almsgiver will regard it as a theft on my part, if I do not give what I have to someone who needs it more." Whenever he received anything for his needs from a benefactor, he always used to ask permission to give the article away, if he met someone poorer than himself. He spared absolutely nothing—cloaks, habits, books or altarcloths—as long as he was in a position to do so, he gave them all to the poor, in order to obey the commandment of love; and when he met beggars carrying heavy loads on the road, he often took the weight on his own weak shoulders.

(Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263))



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier... Our Lady of the Rosary

Reading (Galatians 3:1-5) Gospel (Luke 11:5-13)

Today as we celebrate this feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, we recall that it was precisely the

Rosary which brought about the victory for the Christian peoples over the Muslims back in the year 1571. At that point, the Church was about to be



destroyed (Europe, in essence, was about to be overrun) so the Holy Father asked that the people would pray their Rosary specifically for help from heaven in overcoming the onslaught of the Muslims. So the people prayed, and, by the miracle which came from heaven, things turned around and the Christian forces were able to defeat the Muslim forces that were pushing their way across Europe at that time.

When we think about this and then we put it together with the readings today, we begin by looking at what Our Lord says when He tells us that we are to ask and we will receive, to seek and we will find, to knock and the door will be opened to us. It is precisely through prayer that this is going to happen. We have been given by heaven all the weaponry that we need, particularly the Rosary. As we pray the Rosary, what happens is that we begin to be formed according to the mysteries of Jesus Christ; and if we are going to be formed according to Christ, to be united with Him, then what will happen is that we will begin to live more perfectly the life of Christ.

We see also, in the Acts of the Apostles, that the apostles, after Our Lord had risen from the dead, gathered around Our Blessed Lady and she taught them how to pray. We also do the same. Unfortunately, what is happening because many people do not see immediately the results that they desire is that they have sought other things. We can look at what Saint Paul has to say to the Galatians today when they abandoned Our Lord because they thought that faith was not enough, that they needed something different. He begins the reading by saying, "Oh, stupid Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" Isn't this what is happening to so many Catholics? They have abandoned the Blessed Sacrament; they do not pray; but they run around doing all kinds of bizarre things thinking that maybe this will work or maybe that will work: "Maybe I'll get what I want if I try this, that, or the other thing." But they do not pray.

That is something we all have to look at. It is prayer that is going to bring about the very things that we need. Our Lady has said that prayer can actually

suspend the laws of nature. All we have to do is look at what has happened throughout history; as Our Lord prays, Our Lady, the apostles, the saints throughout history, we see extraordinary things happening because of their prayers. The same thing can happen with us, but we have to be patient. Our Lord makes very clear that even if this man's friend would not give him what he needed because of friendship that he will certainly do so because of his persistence. So we need to pray and we need to persist in prayer. We get frustrated when something does not happen quickly, but when we are talking about bringing a soul to Christ, when we are talking about bringing children back who have fallen away from the Church, when we are talking about trying to deal with any human being, we have to recognize the value of that person's soul and that it is not as quick as just saying a prayer or two, or even doing so maybe for a few days or a few weeks. Sometimes it takes years. We are to persevere in prayer and we are to trust. That is the lesson we have to learn.

At times, God is going to allow things to look like they are utterly impossible, hopeless, and it is through prayer that we are going to be able to have our victory. The greatest victory is the salvation of souls, to snatch them away from Satan, and to break the bond that he has upon them. That is not going to happen in any way other than prayer. And sometimes, depending on the hold the devil has on a person, it is going to take a lot of prayer coupled with penance to be able to bring about the conversion of souls. That is what we are called to do, to place ourselves at the service of others, to operate on faith and not on works of the law, as Saint Paul says, but to operate on faith, knowing that as we pray the Lord is hearing our prayers and He is granting the grace for which we are asking to the person for whom we are praying, or granting the grace for the situation about which we are praying. If we persevere, even if it takes ten or twenty years, the prayer is heard, the grace is applied, and we trust as we operate by faith—not by sight—that the grace for which we are asking, because of our perseverance as well as because of our friendship with the Lord, will be answered.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

Eternal Life...

The last words of the prayer of St. Francis, which is a beautiful prayer we say every day, are: "...It is in dying that we are born to eternal life." St. Francis called his journey into eternal life to mind every day. That is what we

are all about. Trying to save our eternal souls. It is certain

the body has been crucified in this life.

These days particularly, with Ebola, and ISIS on the move and beheading men on the Internet, and all of the wars and insurrections, the shooting, stabbing, killings, in the news you gotta know there is something wrong with this picture. Then just today I read on the Internet that there is a caterpillar, yes, a caterpillar called the puss caterpillar



as it has long hair that lives in Florida that is poisonous if you touch it. It has poisonous spine in the hair like quills of a porcupine. Same place I read there is a tree called the "little apple tree" that has poisonous little apples on it and bark that will inflame your skin if the apples hit you or you touch the tree! Of course, then there are mosquitos! Yikes!

Ya know when God said "Cursed be the ground because of you! In toil shall you eat of its yield all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you..." (Gen 3:17,18) He was not kidding! This place is not paradise!

So, St. Francis calling us to recall eternal life in his prayer, is putting before us the need to see beyond this life to what the Lord has promised, eternal life on high in the perfections of heaven. This thought should drive us all to do better; to strive for holy things and to prepare ourselves to receive the gift the Lord came to tell us about—eternal life with God. And, in this way God makes it tough for any realistic person to get too excited about staying here forever. Our world just does not get it! The souls falling into hell are like snowflakes in a winter storm one Saint said.

It doesn't matter if we have money, or power, or prestige here. They are all fleeting and like the grass of the field. Here today; gone tomorrow. Or, they all disappear when we die. We need to examine on a daily basis how we plan to live.

We derive the call from all that the Lord teaches us. If we assume for a minute we are walking around Jerusalem in the times of Christ and we heard of this guy who was teaching and healing all around the area and we are curious about him. So, we go to listen to Him, and we are astounded at his teachings. They are so foreign to us as we have been all about doing everything that was fun and pleasant and screwing our neighbors to get ahead and he is teaching us a totally different way to live. We get interested in what he says and we decide to do what he says. So it should be with us today as many people today

around us just don't get it! Jesus is the way to eternal life. His teachings are how we are to live. We need to live that way.

So, when we hear the Gospel preached, or when we read it, we need to let those words sink in. They are the words of eternal life. The positive side of it. For the other side does exist. You see, we are going to live forever. That is not the question. The question is WHERE are we going to live forever? In heaven, or in hell?

We need to always seek to move in the direction of eternal life with Jesus Christ. Our Rule is the way St. Francis gave us. Jesus is the Way to eternal life with Him. Do what he says. Listen to what he says. Hear Him! For in Him is eternal life forever in happiness and peace. And, while you are on your journey, pull the people around you with you. This world needs our example. This world needs to focus on Jesus Christ and eternal life with God more than at any other time in history. This a dark age. We need to be angels of light.

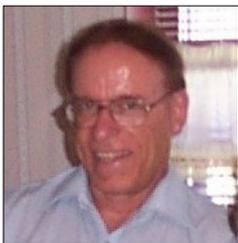
THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon, where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light, and where there is sorrow, joy. Grant, O Divine Master, that I might not seek so much to be consoled as to console others; that I might not seek so much to be loved as to love others; that I might not seek so much to be understood as to understand others, for it is giving that we receive; it is pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen"

What is eternal life? It is living in a perpetual state of 'now'. Nothing ends. It goes on and on forever. There is no such thing as time. Time is based on the movement of created things. Planets and stars. There is forever, and being. Let's seek eternal life with Christ, on high!

And, May the Lord give us all His peace!

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



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

"Count it pure joy, my brothers, when you face any kind of trial." (James 1:2)

(Part II of BSP Retreat "Mary, Queen and Intercessor" with Fr. Altier

We know the story of the "perfect joy" of St. Francis. Bernadette Soubirous was specifically told by Mary that her ultimate happiness would be in heaven, not on this earth. Padre Pio encountered a blind man who sought to be healed. Padre Pio told him that he could heal him, but if he remained blind he would convert many souls. The man said, "then I'll stay blind." Self-less love. Francis was the first person to participate intimately in Christ's Passion through the stigmata, which his spiritual son

Padre Pio bore for FIFTY YEARS!

Herman "the Cripple" gives us another example of suffering on this earth with an eternal reward as recompense. Suffering from spina bifida, Herman nevertheless composed some of the most beautiful and meaningful prayers we still treasure. Teresa of Avila said that one had to get to the sixth Mansion before one was able to desire, and actually seek suffering for the love of God. Once understood, why wouldn't the Saints seek it? In the movie "The Passion of the Christ," there is a scene

where Jesus strokes the wood of the Cross, the instrument by which He gained salvation for us. Jesus suffered the Passion in joy. Here Fr. Altier gave us food for thought. We think that Jesus was hesitant through the Agony in the Garden, but only through human weakness dreading the coming ordeal. Once He accepted the Father's will, He gave Himself completely to the task. I have it in my notes: Father actually said that Jesus considered it a **privilege to save us**. He could only compare it to "being in love." That when one is "totally in love, a person will do anything for the loved one."

We know there is no one closer to Jesus than Mary, nor anyone who loves more. At the Annunciation, the first public revelation of the Blessed Trinity, Mary said "Yes!" to God, and carried Jesus in her womb for nine months. Can't get any closer than that! She learned perfect love from the One who is love itself: God is love! John of the Cross said that one act of perfect love is worth more than all one had done in a lifetime. Imagine then one who is "Full of Grace," whose life is full of acts of perfect love! By her life, Mary is now Queen of heaven and earth. Are we willing to allow Mary to be our Queen? To help us "do whatever He tells you."

To seek holiness is to do the will of God. "If you find yourself telling God what to do, you are on the wrong path!" (Fr. Barron) As an antidote to self-will, Fr. Altier recommended the de Montfort consecration to Mary. Love of Mary takes nothing away from Jesus, for He loved her most of all! And if we love someone else, do we not rejoice when others do as well? In the fourth Commandment we are told to "Honor your father and your mother." Honor here means more like "glorify." If one sees Creation as the crown, men and angels would be the jewels in the crown, the Crown Jewel being Mary. Queens wear crowns. How fitting that the Queen of all Creation, without whose assent we would not exist, should be the Crown Jewel.

How does Mary exercise her Queenship? In the book of Revelation, the woman is in the pains of childbirth. Mary gave birth to Jesus at the Incarnation, but labors to give birth to US ("Woman, behold your son") through the Mystical Person of Jesus. Conceived in her heart, our Blessed Mother gives birth to us at Calvary ("Behold your Mother"). She conceived the Mystical Christ in her heart, and the Mystical Body at Calvary. Simeon said a sword of sorrow would pierce Mary's heart. The reason the woman is in the pains of childbirth in the book of Revelation, Mary, is because she is trying to give spiritual birth to US, and Lord knows that has to be a very trying experience!

The book of Genesis mentions two special trees: the tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve picked the wrong tree. The New Adam, Jesus, makes the Cross the new tree of Life—the source of daily nourishment—from the Eucharist. The new Eve, Mary, Mother of all those living in Christ, guides us to use that divine nourishment according to the will of God. When Jesus washed the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper, He became their Servant. Mary specializes in His Service. She produces in us a sweet spirit of self-giving, not grudgingly, but joyfully. For our highest calling as disciples of Christ is service to others: "There is No Greater Love

than to lay down one's life for a friend." Our greatest response to God's love, then, is a life of service to others. "Jesus took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men." It was a slavery of love, not of constraint. Mary helps us come to the attitude: "I WANT TO SERVE HIM!"

Mary's Queenship is related to Jesus as King. Jesus is Mediator between God and man. Mary shares in that Mediation, and is called Mediatrix of all graces. Fr. Altier emphasized "all graces" as an absolute statement. If we are her spiritual children, it only follows that she tends to our personal care, which includes all aspects of our life. (I recently heard a discussion about Lifelock, a service which protects people from identity theft and such things. Well, they would have to know **everything** about one's finances. How many people are willing to do that? No secrets, no privacy...) If we are in Christ, we also share in His Mediation as members of His Mystical Body. We are asked by others to pray for them and their intentions, and we ask others to pray for us. That's mediation! By consecrating our lives to Mary, she will perfect our love, service, and mediation to others. "Nothing is lacking where everything is given," is the Saint's motto. If a mother has ten children, she doesn't love each, one tenth, but all completely! We are not sacrificing self when we give ourselves totally to our Blessed Mother, for she loves us completely, and will bring us perfectly to Jesus.

Mary as Intercessor also follows in the footsteps of Jesus. From Hebrews 7:21-25: **"The Lord has sworn, and he will not repent, 'You are a priest forever.' To that same degree has Jesus also become the guarantee of an even better covenant. Because he remains forever, he has a priesthood that does not pass away. Therefore he is always able to save those who approach God through Him, since He lives forever to make intercession for them."**

Jesus lives forever to make intercession for us. Mary, united to Jesus in all things, makes intercession for us as Queen of heaven and earth approaching Christ the King. As she shared in His sufferings here on earth, she shares His Glory in heaven. The following verse fits Mary as well as Jesus: **"It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens."** (Heb 7:26) Our Blessed Mother referred to herself at Lourdes: **"I am the Immaculate Conception."** Can't be any more innocent and undefiled than that! Father Altier fondly refers to Mary as going to "Our Mom," who is the best Way to go to Jesus, she who has perfect access to Him, and who wants the best for her children, for she **loves all completely!**

Jesus has said we need to have a wedding garment on when we attend the ultimate wedding feast. I like to think of Mary as the seamstress. I learned to use a sewing machine a long time ago, not expertly, but sufficiently to correct small defects here and there. How many small defects in our spiritual life need to be corrected? Maybe even large ones? Who better than a heavenly Seamstress? One of Donna's favorite pursuits at the State Fair is to look at all the sewing exhibits and marvel at the beauty of the colors and intricacies of the patterns in all manner of clothing and quilts on display. Then think of the beauty of

each soul fashioned by our heavenly Seamstress. In this case it's a two way street, for the exhibit's prize is not a blue ribbon, but GOD HIMSELF!

In Hebrews 9, Jesus is the Mediator of a New Covenant. In Chapter 12, we "have drawn near" to Jesus in the New Covenant of Love, a Covenant that was ratified on the Cross. If we put on the wedding garment as children of God, we become heirs, members of His only Son, in line to inherit God Himself! Just remain in the State of Grace. And who better to guide us in the transformation from the natural man to the Super-natural State of Grace than she who was proclaimed by the angel as "Full of Grace!" God creates the soul, the principle of life, and infuses life inside the mother. As Jesus was conceived in Mary at the Annunciation, we are conceived in her soul as members of Christ's Mystical Body. As the sword pierced Mary's heart, it created, as it were, a spiritual opening for her to bring forth her children, spiritually re-born: "Behold your Mother." **That's our Mother!**

Father ended his last talk by reminding us that love is

service. To be true Servants of God, we must put God first, neighbor second, self last, and be willing to lay down our lives: die to self! Serve to Reign, and love as we have been loved!

Herman the Cripple perhaps perfectly sums up the role our Blessed Mother plays in this drama in his composition "Hail Holy Queen." He who was physically crippled became completely dependent upon God. We who are spiritually crippled must learn to do the same. Every phrase is worthy of meditation:

"Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us. And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary, Pray for us holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



"The joy of the Lord is your strength." by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Second Reading Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Phil 4: 12-16)

The theme of joy has been coming very strongly to me in the last few days. It seems strange, given much of what is occurring in the world and much of what I am feeling in my spirit. Human logic would make joy an unlikely theme in these perilous times. Yet, it comes to me, again and again along with the scripture passage from Nehemiah 8:10 – **"Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."**

Some years ago I felt the Lord give me an image. I was in stormy waters and clinging to a rock, getting tossed around a bit but hanging on quite easily. In the image I was joyful, and even though the situation seemed dire, I was actually having fun! I felt the Lord explain: *"The rock is hope, and joy is the glue that holds you to it. Let not fear drive joy from your heart, for love and joy must reign in the hearts of my faithful ones."*

We are living in increasingly terrible times, which seem likely to get worse before they get horrific! Now is the time to increase our capacity for joy. God is not calling us to be sad sacks and worry warts. As the days continue to descend into darkness, we need to be less and less prophets of doom and more and more prophets of holy joy.

How is that possible, when things are so dark and getting darker? My friends, it has always been true that if our joy is tied to earthly circumstances, we are in deep trouble. Our joy must have its source in the Lord and be independent of our earthly circumstances. God has not left us orphans; he has not abandoned us and will never leave us—much less in our time of direst need. Scripture is steeped in hope and full of promise. GOD WINS! WE GET TO GO TO HEAVEN! All this toil and trouble is temporary. God loves us and nothing can change that. Whatever happens to us in this life we will be infinitely—infinitely!—compensated for in the next, so long as we keep our faith.

All the more reason to take every opportunity to expand our heart's capacity for joy. We do that by practicing joy and gratitude in every moment. Remember, we don't have to actually feel the joy, but we are called to BE joyful, whether we feel it or not. Joy is not a feeling, but a grace. As Nehemiah tells us, it is not actually **our** joy, but the **joy of the Lord**. The grace is given, but the practice of it requires discipline, and certainly our life of joyful penance should be preparing us for that.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:16-18)

In the Office of Readings for the feast day of St. Andrew Dung Lac, a Vietnamese priest who was martyred in 1839 we read this poignant illustration of joyful hope in dire circumstances:

"The prison here is a true image of everlasting hell: to cruel tortures of every kind--shackles, iron chains, manacles--are added hatred, vengeance, calumnies, obscene speech, quarrels, evil acts, swearing, curses, as well as anguish and grief. But the God who once freed the three children from the fiery furnace is with me always; he has delivered me from these tribulations and made them sweet, for his mercy is for ever. In the midst of these torments, which usually terrify others, I am, by the grace of God, full of joy and gladness, because I am not alone—Christ is with me."

Yes, the joy of the Lord is our strength!

Christ was unequivocal in his message to his disciples:

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:9-11)

"So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if

you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete." (John 16:22-24)

I want to end with a present-day story of someone who lives in the the joy of the Lord. A friend related to me what happened to her father some years ago. He had been diagnosed with a serious degenerative disease that eventually left him unable to walk. He and his wife decided to go to Medjugorje to pray for a miracle. At one point on their trip, he says he felt a warm sensation at the back of his neck where the degeneration was causing damage. Very shortly, not only was he able to walk—he was able to run! It was a dramatic healing, a true miracle!

The healing was short-lived, however. Within two weeks of his return, he was back in his wheelchair and has been that way for over 20 years; today he is a quadriplegic. But that is not the end of the story, because ever since returning from Medjugorje, to the wonderment of all who know him or meet him, and most especially those who care for him, he has been filled with true joy and radiates it to all around him. He is a beacon of hope to all he encounters.

My friends, we too are called to be that kind of witness—we penitents most of all! As this man shows us, the joy that we radiate on earth is a magnet that will attract others, an irresistible evangelical beacon. When all is darkening, we are called to be the light shining in that darkness. Jesus needs conduits of his light. We are called to be his instruments, his little torches, his flames of love. Let our joy be the lighthouse that guides others to the safe harbor which is the Church.

May we all be given the grace and the desire to live lives of holy joy in all circumstances. And may the joy of the Lord always be our strength. Amen.

[From www.pelianito.stblogs.com](http://www.pelianito.stblogs.com)

Jeremiah 15:20-21 And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

"My beloved children, the time is upon you when the enemy of souls will seek ever more to crush the Bride of Christ. Remain firm and steadfast in your faith. Do not fear! He who is in you is stronger than he who is in the world. (cf 1 Jn 4:4) I tell you again be firm in your faith. You are standing on a rock. It is only if you abandon the rock that you will be in danger. Do not let toil or sorrow, pain or persecution discourage you, but begin now to give thanks to God in every circumstance. You will be amazed at the strength and power this will produce in you. Refrain from complaining. This is a very insidious form of ingratitude and will serve to weaken you. It is the joy that a grateful heart presents that will draw souls to me. In all things—praise!"

Heavenly Father, you are all goodness and love. We praise you for all you have given us and especially for the gift of faith—our light in a dark world. We trust in you to deliver us from evil. Keep us free from ingratitude and let us praise you in all circumstance. Thank you Father! Praise you Jesus! Come Holy Spirit! We love you!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada

(The messages on the Pelianito Journal blog are the fruit of Janet's *lectio divina*. She submits all messages to her spiritual director, a Catholic priest. You may read his remarks here: [http://pelianito.stblogs.com/on-private-revelation/.](http://pelianito.stblogs.com/on-private-revelation/))



FRANCIS OF ASSISI: FATHER IN FAITH Committing Ourselves Anew to Live the Gospel and the Rule of 1221 By Christopher G. O'Donnell, BSP



October 3rd and 4th make up for us a united celebration of the life and glory of our blessed founder and saint, Francis of Assisi, our Seraphic Father. I offer this reflection on him and on our own journey of faith as Catholic laity who live out the Gospel in accordance with the Third Order Rule of 1221 and the Franciscan charism.

To be Franciscan, for me, is to “*go out into the deep*” (= *duc in altum*) (Lk. 5:4), to enter into the life of the world, in its darkness and bring to it the light of Christ through joyful love, sincere respect for the dignity of creation—especially human beings—devoted service, and a pardon that brings peace to all. We are to be the ‘Church on the borders,’ to enter in where others do not go, to descend downward to those who most need us, there at the bottom, and raise them up on high. It is only there, in the midst of real life, that we will encounter Christ face-to-face, just as he himself told us: “*Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me*” (Mt. 25:40b).

And so, on this extended celebration of this most incredible person, made like our Lord himself, even down to the stigmata he bore, because of his great humility, desire, and love, I feel a personal need to reaffirm for myself the profession I made...That is, I promise to live out the Gospel every day according to the manner of the Rule of 1221 and the example of Saint Francis himself. I remind myself what the cord I wear under my clothing means—to always do penance so as to be more open to the love that God desires to fill me with. I recall that the TAU, which I have been found worthy to bear upon my breast openly, is a symbol of “*those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced*” (Ez. 9:4b) and desire, instead, to love God. I remind myself why the sandals that I wear nearly always are not some fashion

statement but a means of living a simple life. I promise to live out the chastity of matrimony, the life of evangelical simplicity, and an attitude of obedience as a sign of my loyalty to the Kingdom of God.

At the same time, however, I am challenged by the figure of Francis to whom I look for inspiration and understanding. He is so joyful and yet he constantly weeps bitter tears over sins and disharmony! He is so humble, yet his words strike one like rock hurled at their mind and heart! He is so gentle, and yet he demands so much of those who follow him! Am I really living the life that he has led me to? Is my piety real or just show? Do I truly seek to love the poor and marginalized or am I too caught up in my own interests to give them more than a passing nod? They are troubling questions and yet they must be asked. The Christian life is of growing in love and the demands of love can never be satisfied and this means that I will always have more to do, more to give, more to pardon, more to serve, more to love.

My prayer to our Seraphic Father on this his day of ‘passing over’—transitioning (= *Transitus*)—from the life of the flesh and death to the life of the spirit and life, is that he will pray to God to give me a heart like his. One that seeks Jesus among the disenfranchised. One that smiles at everyone, is respectful, courteous, and generous to all. A heart that exalts in my God and weeps tears of both joy and sorrow. Increase my faith! Let the fire of Your love, fiery and sweet as honey, burn in me as an unquenchable desire that leads me to true simplicity, the deepest obedience, joyful humility, and love of neighbor.

So blessings to you all on this our founder’s birthday into eternal life. May the God of peace grant each and every one of you joy, contentment, peace, and all good. Praise the Lord for His goodness!

Chris O'Donnell BSP, St. Anthony Chapter, Escondido CA





FROM THE 'SPARROW' The Secondhand Violin

Paganini, the great violinist, came out before his audience one day and made the discovery just as they ended their applause that there was something wrong with his violin. He looked at it a second and then saw that it was not his famous and valuable one.

He felt paralyzed for a moment, then turned to his audience and told them there had been some mistake and he did not have his own violin. He stepped back behind the curtain thinking that it was still where he had left it, but discovered that someone had stolen his and left that old secondhand one in its place.

He remained back of the curtain a moment, then came out before his audience and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I will show you that the music is not in the instrument, but in the soul." And he played as he had never played before, and out of that secondhand instrument, the music poured forth until the audience was enraptured with enthusiasm and the applause almost lifted the ceiling of the building, because the man had revealed to them that the music was not in the in the machine but in his soul.

As with St. Francis, in his beggars clothes, and living his vowed life with "Lady Poverty," he too looked like that secondhand violin. It was only after the touch of the Lord Jesus and his Holy Spirit that caused the "music to pour forth" and give glory to God the Father.

It is your mission, tested and tried one, to walk out on the stage of this world and reveal to all the earth and heaven that the music is not in conditions, not in things, not in externals, but the music of life is in your soul.

May you be touched by the Master and make his music!

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, NC



Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, hear me.
From the desire of being esteemed, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being loved, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being extolled, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being honored, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being praised, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being preferred to others, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being consulted, deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being approved, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being humiliated, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being despised, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of suffering rebukes, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being calumniated, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being forgotten, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being ridiculed, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being wronged, deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being suspected, deliver me, Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be esteemed more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That, in the opinion of the world,
 others may increase and I may decrease, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be chosen and I set aside, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be praised and I unnoticed, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be preferred to me in everything, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become
 as holy as I should, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

Dying To Self



When you are forgotten, or neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you don't sting and hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ...that is dying to self.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take all in patient, loving silence...that is dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any impunctuality, or any annoyance; when you stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility- and endure it as Jesus endured...that is dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering, and climate, any society, any raiment, any interruption by the will of God...that is dying to self.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendations, when you can truly love to be unknown...that is dying to self.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy, nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances...that is dying to self.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart...that is dying to self

Are you dead yet?

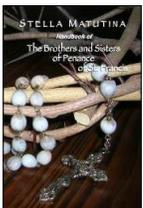
---Author Unknown

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

BSP ON FACEBOOK

[Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis](#) facebook page by Lisa Drago, BSP

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.



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

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