



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter XII—The Efficacy of Francis' Preaching—His Powers of Healing

8. Francis had first convinced himself of the truth of what he preached to others by practicing it in his own life and so he proclaimed the truth confidently, without fear of reproof. He denounced evil wherever he found it, and made no effort to palliate it; from him a life of sin met with outspoken rebuke, not support. He spoke with equal candor to great and small and he was just as happy addressing a handful of listeners as a large gathering. Men and women of every age flocked to see and hear this new preacher who had been given to the world by God, as Francis moved from place to place preaching fervently, "the Lord aiding him, and attesting his word by the miracles that went with him." (Mk 16:20) Francis, the herald of truth, cast out devils by the power of God's name and healed the sick. By the efficacy of his preaching he moved hearts which had become hardened to repentance—which is greater still—and restored health to bodies and souls. We can see this from some of the miracles which he worked and which we shall now describe by way of illustration.

9. In Tuscany the saint was welcomed warmly by a

knight who gave him hospitality and then pleaded with him urgently for his only son who had been crippled since birth. Francis raised his hand over him in blessing and cured him instantly, so that strength came to his whole body even as they looked at him.



The boy was completely cured and got back his strength; he got up there and then, "walking, and leaping, and giving praise to God." (Acts 3:8)

At the request of the Bishop of Narni, Francis made the sign of the cross from his head to his feet over a paralytic who had lost the use of his limbs, and restored him to perfect health.

In the diocese of Rieti there was a boy who was so bloated that he had not been able to see his feet for four years. His mother brought him tearfully to St. Francis and the moment he laid his hands up on him,

the boy was cured.

At Orte there was a boy who was crippled, so that his head was bent down to his feet and some of his bones were broken. When Francis made the sign of the cross over him at his parent's request, he was cured instantly and was able to stand upright.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)

The "Transitus" is a special holy time to commemorate the passing of St Francis on October 3, 1226. As his end approached, he recited the 141st Psalm, at its concluding words: "Lead my soul out of prison that I may give praise to your Name," and his soul passed from earth to heaven. (From the BSP Forum)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Reading (Romans 8:31b-39) Gospel (St. Luke 13:31-35)



Our Lord, in the Gospel reading today, tells the people of Jerusalem that He has longed to gather them under His wings as a hen gathers her chicks but they were unwilling to do so. We see again the heart of the Lord. What He wants is for us to draw near. He wants to protect us. He wants to gather us into Himself, but we have to be willing, we have to make that choice. Now the wonderful thing is when we make that choice, Saint Paul then asks the question: What can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ? The answer is "nothing." He asks the question: Who is going to accuse us? Well, it is certainly not going to be God; He sent His Son to die for us. It is not going to be Jesus; He is interceding for us. He goes on to ask the question then: What can separate us from the love of Christ? Can anguish or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or the sword? The answer is "no." Nothing external to ourselves can separate us from the love of Christ. That is why he goes on later to talk about neither life nor death, nothing future or present, not even the angels, not even the demons, not even Satan himself can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ.

There is only one being in the entire universe who can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ--and that is ourselves. We are the only ones who have the power to separate ourselves from Christ. The devil will tempt us, all of these external things will befall us, but the reality is that we either adhere ourselves to Christ by our will or we separate ourselves from Christ by our will. It is a choice that we have to make. As He points out again, He longs to gather us to Himself. That is what He desires more than anything. He wants us to be right there, to draw near to Him, to be under His protection, but He will not force us to do so. He gave us free will and we have to exercise that free will. So there is absolutely

nothing that is going to be able to separate us from Christ outside of ourselves. It is only we ourselves who can do that. Just always keep that point in mind.

If God is for us, who can be against us? No one. There are lots of people who are against us on one level; starting from Satan and working from there, you could probably count up all kinds of people. It does not matter. If God is on our side (or perhaps we should turn it the other way: if we are on God's side) then we have nothing at all to worry about. If we have drawn near to Him then we are protected under His wing. We have the grace of God, we have the power of Christ, we have everything right there at our disposal. The main thing is that we stay with Jesus. Again, we all know how easy it is to get pulled away. All the things of the world, all the temptations of the flesh, all the things that Satan will throw up there to try to entice us away from Christ, he tries to convince us that all these things that are not good for us are really harmless and because they are harmless it is okay if we pull away from being under God's wing, it is okay for us if we just step out a little bit. We know what happens when we step away from Christ, and we also know the harm that these supposedly harmless things will cause our souls.

As long as we are with God we have nothing to fear because it is the choice that we have made. But what we do need to fear is our own self because by one choice of our own we can separate ourselves from the love of God in Jesus Christ. But knowing that that is the only thing that can separate us, that God is not waiting up there to condemn us, that Jesus is not going to be waiting there to accuse us, that the heart of God is directed toward us to draw us near to Himself, then we have absolutely nothing to fear from God, nothing, absolutely nothing to fear from God. And if we are under God's wing we have nothing to fear from the devil or anyone else. The only one to fear is the one who can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ--and that is our own self.

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

NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

As Paul has been on vacation, there will be no message from him this month.





ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

A Call within a Call

Recently we received an inquirer from France. She had found out about the BSP some years ago from a professed member of the Association who lives in Florida. They had shared a conversation with her years before about being in the Private Association of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance and some of what it entailed, and this conversation remained with this individual for several years until she felt called to look up the Association on line, and inquire. This response of one member to the call to join the BSP in the midst of all the other events of her life led to this vocation of a lady in France. This simple event prompts us to talk here a bit about our call to serve the Lord which always comes within the other calls of our life.

Most of us are called to become married, and there are many saints who first honored this call. When we do that we often have no idea exactly how the rest of our life is going to come together to support this call. Once married, or usually before we get married, we need to find employment that will support the marriage, and then quite often, very soon, we find out we have mouths to feed. Both of these things are a call within the call of marriage. And so it goes on in regard to everything. God moves in us and calls us in a variety of ways. Many of these calls are very apparent in the BSP.

Shelley and I got married. We love each other very much. It was beautiful. Within that call very soon we found we were called to have children, and we have seven beautiful children who have provided us now with 24 beautiful grandchildren. We are awaiting our first great grandchildren. After many years of married life we felt called, both of us, to join the Secular Franciscan Order, and then, within that Order to take leadership positions and meet with other Secular Franciscan Order members and help the Order regionalize within the United States. It was a very busy time for us. In the midst of all of this we were called, quite suddenly and powerfully by the Lord, actually, to form a group of people that lived by the First Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis, and that was most definitely for us a call within a call. The BSP was born from this call.

Life goes on like this for everyone who comes to us. No one comes to us that is not called within the call of the rest of their life. This merely reflects the way that God has chosen to do everything with everyone.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of all things. He is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, that is, he knows all things, he is all powerful, and he is present in all things, including us. We live, and move, and have our being within Him. The entire universe is within Him. This kind of power is unimaginable to us. His ways and his thoughts are as high as the heavens above ours, and so are His power and his presence. This world belongs to Him but He has given it to us to form us and test us to determine who will remain with him and who among us will not. To survive this test we need to walk the bridge to heaven. That bridge is composed of three things. Trials, purgation, and humility. This is what the Lord told Maria Esperanza of Betania, Venezuela, who is the seer, mystic, and mother, to whom our Lady appeared in and after March 25, 1976. This site of Marian apparitions has been approved by Bishop Pio Bello Ricardo, their bishop, and subsequently, Rome.

So, within the trials of our life we need to deny ourselves and seek God for if we do not deny ourselves we very likely will not find Him. Just to find time to pray and live our Faith we need to deny ourselves. That says nothing about living the Rule of 1221 with its purgation and demands. In our life and in living our Rule we need humility, the mother of all virtues. To find it we need to realize that before God we all are nothing. Like St. Catherine of Siena was told by God the Father: "I Am who am. You are she who is not." Before God we are 'not', that is, nothing. Yet He loves us in our nothingness. He has created us and given us a life, from nothing. Within that life he has called us and most of us more than once, but He will not lead our lives for us. We have much to learn and do and free will to do it, or not to do it.

We have members called in their lives to be grandparents, mothers and fathers, and brothers and sisters, gardeners, and care providers, priests, and sisters, and deacons, but other things too. Maple syrup producers, fishermen, hunters, painters, cooks, technicians, managers, and bottle washers, and all of us, to be saints. Many of these same members have also been called in the BSP to be administrators, editors, prayer captains, ministers, treasurers, secretaries, and leaders in various other ways. These calls are from the Lord.

We do well to consider the history of the call to St. Francis. He was a rich kid, who became a penitent. A very holy penitent, but only after many calls from the Lord and events in his life. After he had arrived

at his call the laity could see how he lived his life, and the miracles that attended his work. Miracles in the real sense of miracles. His history is replete with them. He could read souls. He raised the dead. The sick and lame were healed. You need only read the old works on him, like the Little Flowers of Saint Francis, written by Brother Ugolino di Monte Santa Maria in 1330, or the First and Second Lives of Saint Francis written by Thomas of Celano in 1230, while St. Francis was still alive, to find out all the Saint did. And there was much Saint Francis did so well. He was so much so a second Christ that he was given the stigmata by the Lord. And, by his life he set many examples in motion to others on how they should live. He established a call within the call of many lives around himself.

The laity came to Saint Francis and asked him how they were to live so as to be holy. So they could go to heaven. Saint Francis took them seriously and, inspired, he went to Pope Ugolino and asked him for a Rule of life. The Pope wrote it, the story goes, and Saint Francis blessed it and it became the Rule of the Third Order of people that followed Saint Francis. The First Order are priests, the Second Order are nuns inspired by Saint Clare, who was first among them, and the Third Order is the laity, now called the Secular Franciscan Order. These forms of life St. Francis put together and people responded, and many reading this letter today have responded too.

So, in humility, let us lead our lives within our call in such a way that we inspire those around us, without making a show of it. Secretly. Invisibly. Which is the way our lives should be lived. Us and God. Hopefully the fruits of us doing that will show in our life and words as they did for St. Francis. If they do they may inspire others to ask about our faith and that will open the door for us to tell them, in some detail, on how we live our Faith to the full. From that they may feel called to do something holy or good in their own lives. And so it goes on. This is what happened with the inquirer from France who now, many years after a professed member spoke to her about it, is asking how she can live the Rule of 1221, in France. She became a member of the BSP. What more she will be is up to her, as it is for each of us. The fundamental question remains. What does the Lord want us to do with our lives?

This is a challenge we all have. To find ways to live our call more perfectly, and within this Association that means how do we live this beautiful way of life more fully. For the love of God and the good of our souls and the souls of those around us. And, to be the best possible servants of Jesus Christ that we can be.

May the Lord bless and guide us all as we live this holy way of life for love of Him.

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



The Power of Detachment... by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Gospel reading, for the Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you. (Luke 17:5-6)

If we had faith the size of a mustard seed, we would see miracles. Imagine! What can this mean for us who, like the man in Mark 9:24, can only pray, "Lord I believe! Help my unbelief!"

I often tell people, "Pray, 'Jesus I trust in you.' Pray it till you mean it!" What I have discovered is that trust in God is more than a prayer, it is a many-faceted virtue forged in the fire of trials. In my experience, the facets of trust include detachment, humility, surrender, and probably many more, but these are the three I want to expand on in this article.

Detachment

I had a dream recently. I don't remember much about the dream, but a phrase from the dream has remained with me ever since: "the power of detachment". I have pondered that phrase a lot in the past few weeks. I had never thought of detachment as giving one power, but it is so true. Detachment liberates us from things we cannot change. It does not mean we love others less, but that we trust God more. Pope Emeritus Benedict once said: "We will know God to the extent that we are set free from ourselves." The power of detachment is about refusing to let other people or things get on your bus and tell you how to drive! It



is about not getting on someone else's bus and telling them how to drive. It is the wisdom of knowing what is ours to change and what is not. Not letting ourselves be blown about by all that assails us, not worrying about the future, but focusing on what God gives us to do each day. In other words, living in the Divine Will. Archbishop Sheen says it this way:

"Have you noticed that when you realize you were made for Perfect Happiness, how much less disappointing the pleasures of earth become? You cease expecting to get silk purses out of sows' ears. Once you realize that God is your end, you are not disappointed, for you put no more hope in things than they can bear. You cease looking for first-rate joys where there are only tenth-rate pleasures."

I was speaking to a friend once, and I told her that when things get really bad, I picture myself flinging my arms around Jesus' chest and just clinging. She replied, "Don't you think that when you do that, he's got your back?" Wow! I realized that I had been concentrating on my action, but had been totally oblivious to our Lord's response! Yes, he does indeed have my back. No one who relies totally on Jesus is left unaided. No one. We CAN trust Jesus. If we had faith the size of mustard seed, we certainly would trust Him!

Surrender

One of the most beautiful ways I have found to live detachment and trust more deeply is to pray Fr. Donlindo Ruotolo's beautiful "Novena of Surrender". Although it is a novena prayer, I have taken to praying it morning and night perpetually. (I have included the prayer elsewhere in this newsletter.) In the novena, there is a brief but beautiful meditation and then one prays 10 times: "O Jesus, I surrender myself to you. Take care of everything." Ahh....it fills one with the peace of an infant asleep in its mothers arms. The baby has no care for the future, only knows that right now all is well. That is a valuable attitude to cultivate. Even in the midst of affliction we can ask ourselves, "Am I ok right now?" Very often the answer will be yes. If we remain in the sacrament of the present moment, where God is, we will discover that, yes, we are ok right now.

Humility

Of course it takes humility to live a life of detachment and surrender. I have heard it said that humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. I would add, "and thinking of God more." If we are praying the Novena of Surrender, we cannot help but recognize how small and powerless we are, and

how many things we have no control over. There are so many things we would like to change, but in reality, we cannot even manage to change the one thing we do have control over—ourselves. If we can muster enough humility to make the changes we need to make in ourselves, we will find that peace that Jesus spoke about in the Gospel. We will realize that the weight of the world is not actually on our shoulders, but on God's. His alone are big enough to handle it all.

You may be familiar with the Litany of Humility. It is a wonderful way to help us detach from our desires and fears, those things that keep us from living a life of serenity.

Litany of Humility

Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930)

*Secretary of State for Pope Saint Pius X
O Jesus! meek and humble of heart ... **Hear me.**
From the desire of being esteemed ... **Deliver me,**
Jesus.*

*From the desire of being loved...
From the desire of being extolled ...
From the desire of being honored ...
From the desire of being praised ...
From the desire of being preferred to others...
From the desire of being consulted ...
From the desire of being approved ...
From the fear of being humiliated ...
From the fear of being despised...
From the fear of suffering rebukes ...
From the fear of being calumniated ...
From the fear of being forgotten ...
From the fear of being ridiculed ...
From the fear of being wronged ...
From the fear of being suspected ...*

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

Friends, if the Lord has given us trials it is so that we will grow in trust. We may indeed pray to be delivered from trials, but while we have them, let us use them to purify and solidify our trust in Jesus. Jesus I trust in you! Take care of everything!

Psalms 116:10-11 I kept my faith, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted'; I said in my consternation, 'Everyone is a liar.'

"My beloved, do not be deceived but cling to me in every trial. Have I not said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me' (John 16:16)? Am I gone just because you can no longer see me? Do I cease to exist? Of course not! I AM! Then trust in me. My Church, my Body, is eternal. It can never be separated from me. It may appear to die, but only so that my greater glory may be revealed in it. I have been telling you for many years that there is much to come. I have warned you so that you will not lose faith. Trust in me with an act of the will—whether you feel it or not. It is at these times of abject dryness that your trust means the most. Your prayers of trust at such times shine to all the farthest reaches of heaven, and the Gloriana rejoices. Ponder this well, my children. You will all be tested. Happy the one whose faith in me remains steadfast. Pray for this grace, my beloved. I will not deny it to anyone who asks."*

O my beloved Jesus! How you care for us! In the Divine Will and as your Eucharistic Agent, I beg for the grace of steadfast faith and enduring trust for myself and all those you have given me to pray for. Help us to always say with the Psalmist: "I kept my faith, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted.'" Jesus I trust in you! Amen.

(*Gloriana: The angels and saints in perfect communion with the Blessed Trinity; the perfect unity of heaven.)

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: <https://pelianitoblog.wordpress.com/about-2/on-private-revelation/>.)

O Jesus I Surrender Myself to You

A Prophet of our Time Don (Fr) Dolindo Ruotolo

On November 19, 1970 Don (Fr) Dolindo Ruotolo died at the age of 88. Padre Pio once said of this priest from Naples, Italy, "The whole of paradise is in your soul." His name "Dolindo" means "Pain" and his life was rich with this pain. As a child, a teenager, a seminarian and a priest, he experienced humiliation, which was the realization of the prophetic words of a bishop who said "You will be a martyr, but in your heart, not with your blood."

In his profound humility, he was able to hear the words of God. Even with his hidden life he was one of the greatest prophets of the last century. He wrote to Bishop Hnilica in 1965 that a new John will rise out of Poland with heroic steps to break the chains beyond the boundaries imposed by the communist tyranny. On this postcard, he wrote words of consolation for Poland and all the countries suffering under the communist regime. This prophecy was realized in the papacy of John Paul II.

In his tremendous suffering, Dolindo became more and more a child who lived his self-offering to the Divine Father. "I am totally poor, a poor nothing. My strength is my prayer, my leader is the will of God which I let take me by the hand. My security over the uneven path is the heavenly mother Mary."

One of the treasures from the words which Jesus spoke to Dolindo was the teaching about total abandonment to God. In this novena, Jesus is talking to Don Dolindo and also to you.

Day 1

Why do you confuse yourselves by worrying? Leave the care of your affairs to me and everything will be peaceful. I say to you in truth that every act of true, blind, complete surrender to me produces the effect that you desire and resolves all difficult situations.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 2

Surrender to me does not mean to fret, to be upset, or to lose hope, nor does it mean offering to me a worried prayer asking me to follow you and change your worry into prayer. It is against this surrender, deeply against it, to worry, to be nervous and to desire to think about the consequences of anything. It is like the confusion that children feel when they ask their mother to see to their needs, and then try to take care of those needs for themselves so that their childlike efforts get in their mother's way.

Surrender means to placidly close the eyes of the soul, to turn away from thoughts of tribulation and to put yourself in my care, so that only I act. Saying "You take care of it."

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 3

How many things I do when the soul, in so much spiritual and material need turns to me, looks at me and says to me; "You take care of it," then close its eyes and rests. In pain you pray for me to act, but that I act in the way you want. You do not turn to me, instead, you want me to adapt to your ideas. You are not sick people who ask the doctor to cure you, but rather sick people who tell the doctor how to. So do not act this way, but pray as I taught you in the Our Father: "Hallowed be thy Name", that is, be glorified in my need. "Thy kingdom come", that is, let all that is in us and in the world be in accord with your kingdom. "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven", that is, in our need, decide as you see fit for our temporal and eternal life.

If you say to me truly: "Thy will be done". Which is the same as saying: "You take care of it". I will intervene with all my omnipotence, and I will resolve the most difficult situations.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 4

You see evil growing instead of weakening? Do not worry, Close your eyes and say to me with faith: "Thy will be done, You take care of it." I say to you that I will take care of it, and that I will intervene as does a doctor and I will accomplish miracles when they are needed. Do you see that the sick person is getting worse? Do not be upset, but close your eyes and say "You take care of it." I say to you that I will take care of it, and that there is no medicine more powerful than my loving intervention. By my love, I promise this to you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 5

And when I must lead you on a path different from the one you see, I will prepare you; I will carry you in my arms; I will let you find yourself, like children who have fallen asleep in their mother's arms, on the other bank of the river.

What troubles you and hurts you immensely are your reason, your thoughts and worry, and your desire at all costs to deal with what afflicts you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 6

You are sleepless; you want to judge everything, direct everything and see to everything and you surrender to human strength, or worse- to men themselves, trusting in their intervention,- this is what hinders my words and my views. Oh how much I wish from you this surrender, to help you and how I suffer when I see you so agitated! Satan tries to do exactly this: to agitate you and to remove you from my protection and to throw you into the jaws of human initiative. So, trust only in me, rest in me, surrender to me in everything.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 7

I perform miracles in proportion to your full surrender to me and to your not thinking of yourselves. I sow treasure troves of graces when you are in the deepest poverty. No person of reason, no thinker, has ever performed miracles, not even among the saints. He does divine works whosoever surrenders to God. So don't think about it any more, because your mind is acute and for you it is very hard to see evil and to trust in me and to not think of yourself. Do this for all your needs, do this all of you and you will see great continual silent miracles. I will take care of things, I promise this to you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 8

Close your eyes and let yourself be carried away on the flowing current of my grace; close your eyes and do not think of the present, turning your thoughts away from the future just as you would from temptation. Repose in me, believing in my goodness, and I promise you by my love that if you say "You take care of it." I will take care of it all; I will console you, liberate you and guide you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 9

Pray always in readiness to surrender, and you will receive from it great peace and great rewards, even when I confer on you the grace of immolation, of repentance and of love. Then what does suffering matter? It seems impossible to you? Close your eyes and say with all your soul, "Jesus, you take care of it." Do not be afraid, I will take care of things and you will bless my name by humbling yourself. A

thousand prayers cannot equal one single act of surrender, remember this well. There is no novena more effective than this:

"O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything!"

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Mother, I am yours now and forever.

Through you and with you I always want to belong completely to Jesus.

A two-page printable version of Fr. Dolindo's novena of surrender may be found here:
<https://pelianitoblog.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/novena-of-surrender-to-the-will-of-god.pdf>



FROM THE 'SPARROW' Resting in the Spirit

Peace dear sparrows! When I was a teenager my family lived in Michigan, the "Sportsman's Paradise." On the edge of Lake Michigan was an area where

birdwatchers gathered to observe the migrating birds (no we sparrows don't migrate for we are tough little birds). After the birds had flown across the lakes, they needed a place to rest and regain their stamina to continue on their southern route. Unfortunately, there were local birds of prey that would often swoop down on the tired migratory birds and pick off some of the birds that were making valiant efforts to reach safety.

Sometimes a death, a sickness, or some other adversity in our path is the same as that wide expanse of water that the migratory birds had to traverse with its hidden dangers. Often our strength may fail when we see what lies ahead, and we are tempted to give up or at least stop for a while. This is when we, like the migratory birds who stopped in their flight to rest, may be most vulnerable to an

The Flights of Fantasy

Today here in Northern France it is September 30, 1897, and I had flown back from Mont Saint Michael just this very day. As a common "house sparrow" that has short wings and small body, not too many of the Sisters here at the Carmel in Lisieux had not even missed me for the days I had been at Saint Michael's great island Church in search of "spiritual food" that us little ones are wont to search out. Having found that refreshment I returned to Lisieux to take up my perch near the roof of the Caramels portico.

Upon arrival I noticed that Sr. Therese was not in her bed on the portico, where daily the other Sisters had placed her so that she could get fresh air and sunshine. She was very sick and the disease of



attack by the enemy.

When we are at a point like this, we must respond as David did in Psalm 121.1, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Peter cried out to Jesus when he began to sink when he walked on water. Jesus immediately stretched out His hand and caught him. "And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased" (Matthew 14:32).

We, my dear sparrow, are NOT at our at our final destination, there is still an uncertain "expanse" to be crossed. However, as we rest in the Spirit that Jesus promised He would send us after His Resurrection and Ascension, we can have our strength renewed so we can continue our journey to the safety of His Kingdom.

"Let us work together for the salvation of souls. We have only the day of this life to save souls and to give them to the Lord as proofs of our love."

St. Therese, the Little Flower

Tuberculosis had already ravaged her 24 year old body. Still in her debilitated state she had never complained about the situation but rather had only praised the Lord God and had given Him glory for her life, including the sufferings. The other sparrows and various birds that hopped around on the ground within the enclosure could only marvel at Sr. Therese's will power and strong faith in God's will for her life.

I was reminded of the first time she had seen me from her cells window as I sat perched upon the roof in the drizzling rain one evening right before nightfall. She had her Scriptures open and was reading from the Psalms when she glanced up at me again and then read, "...like a lone sparrow on the

roof..." Sr. Therese smiled at some hidden insight that God had shared with her and then she smiled at me and made a little wave with her hand as if she was saying "Hello." Such a friendly gesture to such a lowly little sparrow such as myself that the world did not see. It was her "little way" of embracing everything in life, but at that point the "little way" was lost on me as I sat in the cold rain...but still it touched something in me but what I couldn't tell.

In the early days when I frequented the Carmel, I used to hear Sr. Therese as she talked to the Sister Novices and the other sparrows and myself could not help but wonder at the love of God that was evident in her words. Sr. Therese was totally committed to the Lord not only in words but in her actions! One day we sparrows, witnessed from the roof tops, that she was throwing something into the air in front of a huge Crucifix that was in the center of the open courtyard. As the things she was throwing at the Cross came fluttering down around her she had a huge smile on her face. Sensing it might be food I flew down and landed at her feet to get a morsel of what I thought was edible but I was soon shocked to find out they were "rose petals" that she was throwing at the Crucified Lord's Face out her great love and devotion she had for Him. When the rose petals actually touched His Face she was delighted and smiled in love. From this display I realized that there was something very deep and moving in her "little way" of going to Jesus...but this was something only a little sparrow would comprehend

as it was too simple for the larger birds of the world to try and believe in.

In the twilight of the evening we sparrows noticed the other Sisters hurrying to the Infirmary where they had placed Sr. Therese. It was soon evident to all the birds, small and large, that Sr. Therese was passing from this life to a glorious one and knowing of her desire to break the bounds of this "vale of tears" and be united to her Lord and Savior, all of us birds went to singing loudly (historically accurate fact) as Sr. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face was greeted by St. Joseph, Our Lady, St. Michael and the hosts of Saints and Angels that only the little singing birds could see.

The next day, October 1, 1897, soon to be the Feast day of St. Therese, the Little Flower, with my little heart touched by the love of God through the "little Therese" I decided to fly to Assisi, Italy it would take three or four days and I'd get there by October 4th, which some other little sparrows of the "brothers and sisters of penance" had celebrated St. Francis of Assisi death on that day. It is remarkable that at the "little poor man's death" that birds also appeared as he started his walk into eternity. People of the world see no significance in such occurrences, but we little sparrows know the Hand of God as He shows His love and kindness to His creatures that recognize their littleness in humility. After all you can believe this story or not as this is just a brother sparrows flight of fantasy.

Pax et bonum

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina

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.

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.

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- † [Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis](#) facebook page by Lisa Drago, BSP
- † **The Joy of Penance** by Janet Klasson www.joyofpenance.wordpress.com
- † Francis 1221 <https://francis1221.wordpress.com/>



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



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