



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter XV—The Canonization of St. Francis and the Solemn Transferral of His Remains

1. From the time when he was first influenced by grace and took the earliest steps in his spiritual ascent, Francis the servant and friend of the Most High, the founder and leader of the Order of Friars Minor, made steady progress and eventually he attained the height of sanctity. He was a model of penance, a herald of truth, a mirror of holiness, and an example of Gospel perfection, but poverty was his profession. He was rich in his poverty and exalted in his lowliness; he was full of life in the midst of mortification, and his simplicity led him to supernatural prudence, so that he was marked out by the practice of all the virtues. God had brought him renown in a wonderful fashion during his life, but he made him more renowned than ever in death. As he left the world and his holy soul entered the dwelling places of eternity, where it was glorified by a full draught from the fountain of life, there remained on his body the clear signs of future glory. His flesh, which had been crucified along with its passions and had become a new creature, bore the image of Christ's passion by a singular privilege and gave some

inkling of the resurrection to come by this unheard-of miracle.

2. In his holy hands and feet could be seen the nails which had been miraculously formed out of his flesh by God; they were so much part of his flesh that, when



they were pressed on one side, they immediately jugged out further on the other side, as if they were made of solid material which reached right through. The wound in his side which was not the result of any human action could be seen clearly, just like the wound in our Savior's side, which gave birth to the mystery of redemption and human rebirth.

The nails were black like iron, but the side wound was red, and the flesh was contracted into a sort of circle, so that it looked like a beautiful rose. The rest of his skin which was naturally inclined to be dark and had become more so in his illness, became shining white, giving us some idea of the beauty which will belong to the bodies of the saints in heaven.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Sunday January 1, 2006 Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Reading I (Numbers 6:22-27) Reading II (Galatians 4:4-7) Gospel (St. Luke 2:16-21)

(BSP Newsletter editor's note: Although Fr. Altier preached this homily in 2006, it is more true today than ever. Let us take heed

of his powerful words.)

Today as we celebrate this great solemnity of the Divine Maternity of our Blessed Lady, we first of all have to

understand this is a feast that tragically we do not share with many people who call themselves Christian. The vast majority of Protestant Christians do not believe that Mary is the Mother of God. They believe, in essence, in a heresy that is called Nestorianism. This is a heresy that was condemned back in the year 431. It was at the Council of Ephesus in 431 that Mary was



infallibly proclaimed to be the Mother of God. And so we see that what has been continues to be. The heresies continue to be recycled and brought forth into our own day.

Yet if we look around at what is going on in our own time, we can all clearly see that things continue to get worse. It is pretty evident, if you follow anything in the news. The number of hurricanes and tropical storms set a record this year; the number of earthquakes set a record this year; the number of natural disasters is beyond what anybody can seem to comprehend. But these things are only reflecting what is going on in the spiritual order.

Remember back in 1917, Our Lady came to three little children in Fatima and she asked specifically that reparation would be made for crimes and blasphemies against her Immaculate Heart. Back in 1917, one might say, "What does that mean?" Today what we see is that the blasphemies against Our Lady are increasing and running rampant, even to the point where recently (and, I suspect, unsuspectingly) a Catholic (or so-called Catholic) publication was actually advertising some statues of Our Lady that were so completely blasphemous that I cannot even describe to you what it was they were trying to sell. Once this particular magazine caught on to what it was they were advertising, they pulled the advertisement. Unfortunately, the damage had already been done. Remember back a few years ago, there was some unfortunate soul who called himself an artist who took a picture of our Blessed Lady and flung elephant dung upon it and called it "artwork." Someone took a crucifix and put it upside down in a bottle of urine and called it "art." These are the kinds of blasphemies that the world has never heard of before that are going on in our own day, and they are getting worse.

We have lots of people who are denying articles of the Faith with great regularity. It is getting to the point now in our society where among those who wish to call themselves Catholic, we find ourselves to be fewer and fewer who really believe in much of what the Church actually teaches. It has become kind of a popular thing for people who want to call themselves Catholic to be interviewed by various news organizations in order to bash the Church, because the fact that they call themselves Catholic somehow gives them some sense of credibility when they want to try to undermine and deny what the Church teaches.

We see these various things that are happening around us, and all we can say is that things are getting a lot worse; they are getting a lot closer. Over the years, I have likened the situation that we are going through to a woman in labor. If you liken it to that, as we all know, in labor the labor pains get closer together and they get more intense. They are certainly doing that. They are now at a point where there are major things happening less than every two weeks in the world. That is getting close. Now the birth of the baby does not come until

there is no distinction between the labor pains, one on top of the next so that the labor is constant. We have not gotten quite to that point, but it is coming.

If we look at some of the bizarre things going on in the world that have happened over the last year, back around Easter time there is a convent of nuns over in England that, once again, put up something they call "art." It was down in their crypt where they bury the nuns; and in the very place where they put the nuns for the wake, they put up an entire "art project" (or whatever you want to call it) that was devoted to what they called "Saint Judas of Iscariot." They claimed that Judas did not really betray Jesus, that he did not kill himself, but rather he was killed by the other apostles, and so therefore he is really a saint—but the Church has "covered all that up over the years." This is in a Roman Catholic convent of nuns.

Just in the last couple of weeks, we have seen all kinds of weird things going on: a man out in California who heads up some group that is determined to try to eliminate human beings from the face of the earth, telling us that the biggest problem on earth right now is humanity, that all of these various species of animals and plants that are going extinct or are endangered is all because of us, so plants and animals would succeed quite well if we would just get rid of human beings. I mentioned that on the radio and suggested that perhaps it would be best if he started with himself because his recommendation is that people start killing themselves in order to reduce the population of humanity so we can allow the plants and animals to grow. You see the idiocy of the things that are going on, but it keeps getting worse. Just a couple of days ago over in Israel, in a very, very beautiful place called Eilat (if you look at a map of Israel, at the very southern tip of Israel right at the Red Sea before you cross the border into Egypt, that is where Eilat is) a woman married a dolphin. I am not kidding. This is the kind of nonsense that we have going on in the world.

Now things are going to continue to get worse. I just heard recently (but have not been able to confirm) that this unfortunate character who runs around calling himself "Maitreya" has manifested himself just in the last couple of days out in California. Maitreya is a Buddhist word that means "Messiah." He is calling himself "The Teacher," "The Awaited One," the Second Coming of Christ, the one whom the Jews are waiting for, the return of Mohammed, the return of Buddha, the return of Zoroaster, and every other goofy clown who has come along claiming himself to be anything of importance. This man is a figure of the Antichrist. He claims that when everything goes belly-up in the world, which is to come fairly soon, he will speak telepathically to the mind of every person on the face of the earth. And if you are watching TV, you will see his ugly mug on the TV because every network in the world, he claims, will be united at that moment and show his face on the TV set. Whether you are watching TV or not, you

will hear him speak to you, so he claims. It is purely diabolical. And remember that just a few months ago a Jewish rabbi who is the head rabbi of the Kabbalah, which is the occult group over in Israel (they are not true Jews; they are occultists), publicly announced—it was verified on the radio; in fact, he signed a form that was in the newspaper over in Israel—that the Messiah is now alive and is living in Israel. If the occult Jews think the Messiah is alive, my first thought is “This must be a figure of the Antichrist.” These are the not the ordinary Jews who are suggesting this; these are people who are into some very strange things. So we see that the time we are living in continues to get worse. We continue to progress forward.

Now the thing that we can do, of course, is to panic when we look at some of these things, but there is no need to panic. All you need to do is remember what Saint Therese of Lisieux pointed out with regard to the apostles. When Jesus was sleeping in the boat with the apostles and the water was coming over the sides and the apostles were panicking because of the storm, Jesus was sound asleep. They woke Him up, and Our Lord rebuked them and said, You of little faith. But Saint Therese simply commented on it and said, “Did they really think with Jesus in the boat that the boat was going to sink?” That should be self-evident to any of us. In this last year, we have witnessed the death of one of the greatest Popes who has ever lived (JPII) and the election of a new Pope (Benedict XVI). Recall that this new Pope, before he was elected, went to the Coliseum in Rome on Good Friday (just a couple of weeks before his election to the papacy) and in one of the reflections of the Stations of the Cross he said that right now the Church is like a boat that is taking in water on all sides. It is sinking. But Jesus is in the boat, and as long as you are in the boat with Jesus, the boat will not sink. Jesus promised us that the jaws of hell will not prevail against the Church. That is a guarantee from the mouth of Almighty God. So as long as you are in the boat, you have absolutely nothing to fear.

Right now it will appear to many that Jesus is sound asleep. If you have been watching, it will seem that people’s prayers do not seem to have much effect. It is a constant complaint that we hear. You will notice there are all kinds of new and bizarre diseases that people are coming down with, things that doctors cannot seem to explain. The suffering that people are enduring is becoming more and more manifest by the day, and getting more extreme. These are great gifts from God. And while it may not seem that He is answering our prayers or listening, He is indeed. But perhaps He is sleeping in the bow of the boat. If He is asleep, why do we want to wake Him up? He is God; the boat will not sink. All we need to do is have faith and stay in the boat. Do not be stupid and try to jump out of the boat and see if you can swim through the waves and the wind and all the enemies that are out there. The waters are shark-infested and it is not going to be a pleasant swim. Stay in the boat and you have absolutely nothing

to fear.

In the first reading that we heard, we heard about a blessing that God was going to give to His chosen people. In that blessing, it says: The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His countenance shine upon you, and be gracious unto you! This is exactly what is happening. We need to understand that this is a great gift. It is such a gift to be alive today. People look back at things and say, “Oh, wouldn’t it have been nice to be alive in this time or in that time!” No, this is the best time in history to be a Catholic. There is no better time ever to be a Catholic. We are going to see things that, as Our Lord said, kings and prophets longed to see but did not see them. We are going to see in our day events that people have sought after for centuries and begged God to intervene, but He has chosen us to be alive at this time. You can be guaranteed that if He has chosen us to be alive at this time He will also provide every single grace we need to be able to be faithful, every single grace we need to be able to become saints. Never in the history of Christianity has there been a better time to be a saint, and God has chosen us to be able to do just that.

Now the question, of course, is: Are we willing to cooperate with Him? That is the problem. When you think about what was happening with the apostles out on the Sea of Galilee, their little tiny boat was pretty small compared to the sea. So too, the Church might appear to be small by comparison to all of the wind and the waves and attacks and enemies and everything else that surrounds us. It might seem to be a better thing to jump ship and join the enemy. Our Holy Father has told us that the remnant is going to be exceedingly small, much smaller, he said, than what most people would ever assume. And so, number one, what that means is do not trust yourself. It is easy to sit here today and say, “Oh, I won’t jump ship!” Do not count on it.

The only way we are not going to jump ship is if we keep our focus on Jesus. The only way—and I mean the only way—we are going to remain faithful is if we pray. If you do not know Jesus Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, you will not make it. It is just that simple. If you are not spending time with Jesus in prayer, you are not going to make it. Jesus is right here in the bow of the ship, in the tabernacle, silent, passive, one could say “sleeping” in the Eucharist. But He is right there in the boat, and as long as we are with Jesus, we are going to be fine. But if we take our focus off of Him, we are in serious trouble. Ask Peter when he tried to walk across the water. As long as he was focused on Jesus, he was just fine. As soon as he took his focus off of Jesus and watched the wind and the waves, he began to sink. We will be no different. Stay in the boat and keep your focus on Jesus. Spend time in prayer every single day. I do not mean while you are stuffing your face and watching TV, cranking off a little prayer on your way out the door. Throw the stupid TV away, first

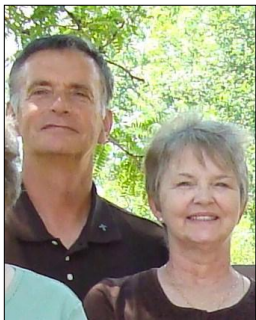
of all, and pray. How much time every day do you spend in front of the TV? How much time every day do you spend in front of the tabernacle? Who is your God? That is what we really need to ask ourselves.

This is not a time for mediocrity. This is not a time for those who want to be able to hedge their bets. We need to make a choice. The prophet Elijah, when he went to Mount Carmel when the people had strayed from God, looked at the people and challenged them. He said, If Baal is God, follow him; if the Lord is God, follow Him. Which are you going to do? And the people refused to respond because they wanted to play both sides, just in case: "We're not sure." We are sure. The Lord is God. Period. Joshua, a thousand years before Elijah came along, looked at the people and said, *Choose today whom you will serve, the gods your fathers served, or the Lord.* He went on to say, *As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.* Each one of us needs to make that same choice.

The time is near. The birth pangs are getting closer together. Any mother whose labor pains would be closer together understands exactly what that means. At that point, she is not goofing around trying to see if she can get a few last minute details accomplished, and she is certainly not wondering if there might be some way that

she could skirt around having a baby at that time. What are we doing with our heads up in the clouds, wandering around aimlessly, wondering if we should serve the Lord or not, looking at the stupid bumper sticker that says: "How much can I get away with and still get to heaven?" Forget it. There is only one way, and He made it clear: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If we are not united with Him, we are going to fall off the boat. So it is very clear what we need to do. It does not take a genius to be able to look around and see what is happening in the world. Things are progressing very, very rapidly, and we have a radical choice that we need to make. We have all been warned, and none of us will be with excuse. We have to choose today whom we will serve. If you are going to say *As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord* then prove it. Words are cheap. Put it into practice. Jesus Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament. Spend time with Him. Get to know Him. Get accustomed to the way that He deals with things, and then be at peace, because even if He does not seem to answer your prayers, even if He seems like He is sound asleep in the bow, it does not matter. He is God. As long as He is in the boat, it will not sink; and as long as we remain in the boat, we will be saved.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... The New Year



Happy New Year to everyone! And January 1st is also the happy and holy Solemnity of Our Lady, Mother of God!

May this year be the happy new year for everyone that we all need, especially in these

times. There is so much going on in all of our lives. May the Lord be with us all!

For us in the BSP this takes several turns. Some everyone experiences. Our life, our families, our jobs, our hopes and dreams. May they be upright, holy, and good, and may some of them at least be positive, or come true. Those things we need and are seeking for ourselves and others. In addition, we have the Rule and the gospel to live, and that calls us to do some special things.

Fr. Valerius Messerich O.F.M., our first visitor, now with God, who supported the BSP 1000%, said we should read at least some aspect of the Rule weekly. We were a little astounded when he said that in a regular spiritual direction meeting, but it makes good sense. If we do not read the Rule we should at least read the gospel, or some part of it, regularly, besides our regular attendance at Mass. Reading the Lectionary is a good

way to do this on a daily basis.

We should all keep in mind that the gospel is the First Rule of all of the Orders of St. Francis. St. Francis said that. And, that relates particularly to those of us who have professed to live the Rule. How can you live a Rule you do not know? How can you live the gospel if you do not know it. So it is a very good new year resolution to do this reading at least weekly if not more often!

If you are in a Chapter and have responsibility for new inquirers, as many do, there is the ongoing need to read the Rule as we do lessons for members. So, usually reading some parts of the Rule comes regularly to formation advocates, or those in formation. If we do not do formation, and most professed members do not, then we should make it a habit to read our Rule, and/or the gospel or part of it at least, on some regular basis. We all take time for prayer in our lives and part of this prayer time we can devote to this reading. There are many reasons to do that. The simplest, and easiest to understand is that since we say we are going to live the Rule and the gospel we need to know them, and how they call us to live.

If we are struggling with some aspect of the Rule, say fasting or abstinence for instance, then it would be most useful for us to pray about and ponder the actual

language in the Rule that calls us to fasting and abstinence. We cannot live the Rule under penalty of sin. We live it under the penalty of being a promise we make, when we profess, to live this Rule for life for Christ. That calls us to action though. It is why we need to ponder our Rule. There are different ways we encounter it, if we profess to live it, and as we read it and live it we become it.

That is true for everyone, of course. Everyone decides how they are going to live their lives and they get in the habit of living a certain way. When St. Francis gave the laity the Rule of 1221 to live it was in response to their request for a way to be sure they got to heaven. He gave them the Rule so they had a way to heaven that was as sure as the life that he was leading to get to heaven. Different, as it had to fit the lives of all the people, but holy as was his life and it was to be lived in their homes. He spoke to our Lord face to face, man to man, and we can be sure that the way he called us to live was designed to fulfill what it was we, the laity, were looking for. Keeping that in mind it is a joy to sit down and make some time to just look at the Rule and how we are living it.

The New Year with our resolutions is a good occasion

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



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

"Amen I say to you, unless you change and become like little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 8:3)

Following are several examples of what it means to become like little children, to dwell secure in the parental love of God our Father, and live in His Will. The pursuit of holiness will naturally follow.

"If you ask God for something that will mean you no longer need Him, you probably won't get it." Is this a pearl of wisdom or what? Who needs God more than little children? The phrase comes from Fr. Jon Vander Ploeg, one of the founders of the Companions of Christ here in the archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota. They have a Franciscan connection.

At the beginning of this promising New Year, I wish to give an introduction to the Companions of Christ. Having observed many of the priests of the Companions for years, I would hope and pray that similar groups be formed in every diocese in the country and the world. From their website:

The Companions of Christ is a fraternity of diocesan priests and seminarians in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis established as a public association on October 21, 1992. In their life and ministry as priests the Companions of Christ have

to set a goal to do this over the next year. The Rule is so rich and calls us to do so much, and unlike so many things in our lives it carries with it the promise of salvation for those who live it. So, let's make a resolution to read the Rule on some regular basis this year. That will take care of the BSP, but there is more we can do.

We can all be more loving. Our spouses and our families need that, and love is the seal of all who belong to Christ. Spend some time thinking about how you can be more loving, in your families and in your community. For instance, more available to your family, and more attentive to their needs. Maybe this can only be done by spending a little more time praying for them, as our families get scattered as they age and it is difficult to see people often. We might also look for more ways we can help our parish communities, or needy people and associations in the society around us.

All in all, the New Year is a good time to look at our lives in Christ, and look for ways we can live our Christian commitment more perfectly in the various aspects of our life.

May the Lord bless and lead us all!



three emphases:

- *Commitment to a common life of prayer and fraternity in households*
- *Observance of the evangelical counsels within the context of ordained diocesan ministry*
- *Dedication to the new evangelization, including catechesis, spiritual renewal, and the fostering of vocations in the local Church*

Common life and the evangelical counsels of obedience, chastity, and poverty are often identified with religious communities, in contrast to diocesan clergy. However, Vatican Council II encouraged efforts to promote a common life for the diocesan presbyterium and exhorted all priests to voluntarily embrace the evangelical counsels.

Pope John Paul II stated that the benefits of such associations are not merely economic or practical, but also "spiritual and — in harmony with the early institutions of the early Jerusalem community — they are obvious and urgent in the modern condition of many presbyters and prelates, who must be offered attention and care to alleviate their difficulties and labors."

Together with their fellow diocesan clergy members of the Companions of Christ make a promise of obedience to the diocesan bishop and are assigned by him in the typical manner to serve in parishes or other diocesan institutions. The diocesan bishop in turn and as far as possible assigns members of the Companions of Christ to locations which permit them to live as fraternities of at least three members in rectories or other households.

In this new millennium the Companions of Christ join themselves to the mission of the local and universal Church. As Pope John Paul II said, "The new evangelization needs new evangelizers, and these are the priests who are serious about living their priesthood as a specific path toward holiness."

The Companions as a group (about 30) went on a pilgrimage to Assisi recently, and ended up in Rome meeting with Pope Francis. There is a great picture of that event on their website. Fr. Jon is on the left side in front of Fr. Michael Becker, Rector of the minor seminary, and former BSP Retreat Master. Donna and I frequently attend Mass at St. Lawrence in SE Minneapolis where Fr. Jon serves as pastor as well as head of the Newman Society for the University of Minnesota.

Fr. Jon writes in the Dec. 17 St. Lawrence bulletin about an interesting Franciscan connection:

"In November I had the great privilege of going to Assisi with my community, the Companions of Christ. There were altogether, 39 priests and Bishop Cozzens. The town of Assisi itself is very hilly with narrow, cobblestone roads. We celebrated Masses together at St. Francis Tomb, at the Basilica of St. Clare where she is buried, and at the little church

where the Crucifix spoke to Francis, telling him to 'rebuild my church.'

"We also had the opportunity to meet Pope Francis as a community. He told us three times, 'pray every day,' while holding up the rosary. He asked us to pray for him. It was a very important time for our community. We have never done anything like this before, but it was a blessed time."

Let's watch our holy father St. Francis work on this community, and bring them a Franciscan orientation!



The Morning Star Chapter is in mourning over the loss of Donna Welter, actually our loss and heaven's gain! She had cancer and lost her leg as a result, but that was only a temporary respite. She suffered much the last several years, having the opportunity to do any possible time in purgatory while she was still on this earth. Donna and her husband Ted had attended the BSP Retreat for many years, and were very faithful members of the BSP. They were farmers in southern Minnesota, living some distance from the Twin Cities, yet still managing the long drive to our BSP Chapter meetings.

In Donna's last days, some of her fellow Chapter members were able to visit her in hospice care. She couldn't talk at this point, but was aware of her surroundings. It was suggested that we all pray the Chaplet of Mercy. Donna attempted to raise her hand for the sign of the Cross. It was a great sign that she was with us in spirit, and we were all united in prayer, the one thing necessary! Thank you, God, for her life, and exemplary manner of departing in the midst of His love, and loving family and friends.

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



Daily Bread by Janet Klasson, BSP

From Psalm 40, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Then I said, 'Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.'" (Psalm 40:7-8)

"Remember—death is never convenient." Those were almost the first words I said to my replacement when I retired from my job as parish secretary recently. "Everything stops for a funeral." I told her that this was probably God's design, as death is meant to disrupt, to dislodge us from our schedules and plans, to give us pause, and to point us away from what is mortal and towards eternity.

The passing of Fr. Robert Young several weeks ago certainly gave us pause. His passing seemed such a

great loss. However, I feel that now more than ever this servant of the Divine Will is able to obtain for us in a new and more effective way the graces we need to understand and internalize this "new and divine holiness." Surely now he is able to reach, not just the local audience, or those who listen to his radio show, but all souls who are interested in learning about it, to give new light to our minds and hearts. The Lord gives, even as he takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!



I continue to be edified by learning about the Divine Will through the incomparable lens of Luisa Piccarreta's "Book of Heaven". Fr. Robert Young's elucidations continue to bear fruit in all of those who take the time to listen to them.

I have been pondering part of the Lord's Prayer recently as it pertains to the Divine Will. In light of the Divine Will teachings we see that "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" has been, through the centuries, a hidden beacon calling for the Third Fiat, the Fiat of Sanctification, the coming of the Kingdom of the Divine Will on earth. Much more could be said and has been said about this golden petition our Lord carefully placed in His prayer. But it is a different petition I have been pondering lately.

"Give us this day our daily bread" has been meditated on by many over the centuries. Certainly it is good to acknowledge our dependence on God for our daily physical needs. So often in our day we take for granted what seems to appear on the table without much effort on our part. Far beyond that, our daily Bread from Heaven is something else we take for granted. How many times do we neglect daily Mass for no good reason or receive without the proper preparation? If we really knew what the Bread from Heaven was, we would, as many do, crawl great distances on our knees for it. These wonderful applications aside, the daily bread I am currently meditating on in reference to John 4:34: **"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.'"**

Lately any time I have prayed the Lord's Prayer, it is as if that petition for "daily bread" has been highlighted for me, as if Jesus had hidden a second golden petition for those to whom, in the fullness of time and through no merit of our own, he would offer the unparalleled grace of living in the Divine Will. Indeed, the more one

learns about this grace, the more one hungers for it, and the more the passing "treats" of the world hold less and less allure.

I had a lovely experience at Mass on New Year's Eve, the anticipated Mass of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. I have a relative who is seriously ill. I had spent some time that day reading up on the illness, reading the blogs of others affected by this illness, trying to get a handle on it, so to speak. The more I read, the more unsettled I got, and the more worried I was about the future. At Mass, I felt the words, "Jesus I trust in you," settle over me and give me peace. It came to me in a new way that my fiat and my trust in him is the only thing that will bring me true peace, and it is all he wants from me.

Fr. Robert often said that living in the Divine Will is simple but not easy. I find it to be a bit of a tug-of-war. The more I learn about the Divine Will, the easier it is to pull the rope and gain ground, the less time I give to it, the more I find myself pulled back into my own will. The beauty of it is, that even if I have found myself a long time in my own will, once I turn back, I do not have to gain back the ground I lost, but Jesus himself pulls me back and even gains me some distance. He wants this even more than I do. I just have to remember to hang onto the rope and never let go. Our glorious God will do the rest.

Perhaps that is as good a resolution as I—or anyone—can make this year, to commit to living and learning about the Divine Will. We have a treasury of solid teachings, and I find that I can listen to Fr. Robert's podcasts numerous times without them feeling repetitious. Like Scripture, the Divine Will always has new treasures to reveal.

May God grant us all new delights in the Divine Will, and may his glorious kingdom come and come quickly. Fiat!

From <https://pelianitoblog.wordpress.com>

Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

"Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you in your turn will suffer want. My children the sin of greed has caused many to suffer. What must I do to satisfy my perfect justice? Every valley must be lifted up and every hill laid low. We must begin again from a point of total dependence on God. Yet this must not be for you a sign of despair, but a sign of hope—and more than that—great hope! For the Lord will come to restore the balance. What sin has knocked off-kilter, your Lord will restore, and not just to the standards of former days but to the standard of the Divine Will. When you pray for "daily bread" I want you to also pray for the renewal of the earth, when hunger will be like a bad dream one has awakened from. Pray the prayer I have given you with renewed vigor. Let every word resound in heaven and earth. When you pray this prayer well, a countless multitude of graces flows through you. Do you see now that this prayer is the most important part of your preparation for what is to come? Children pray!"

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

(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/>.)



FROM THE 'SPARROW' In Silence

Peace my dear sparrows! In conversation with a fellow, formerly a practicing Catholic, but now a Protestant, I was taken back by so many words that we exchanged in the complexity of presenting our points of view on matters of faith. This caused me introspection later when I was alone with my thoughts. Here I need to launch out into some thoughts bolstered by scripture.

"But the LORD is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20)

The verse above instructs us to keep silence before God, but do we comprehend the purpose and value of silence? It is sometimes hard to find silence, because we are surrounded by so many noisy inventions of men. To hear God's still small voice, we need to keep silent.

Winter and night are times of silence. Both are planned by God for renewal and expectations of things to come. Have you ever stepped outside on a clear, cold winter night and marveled at the beauty and serenity of silence? Great things can come out of silence. God wants to renew our inner man day by day through communion with Him. Silence before God means meditation and prayer in the heart, along with resting,

God's point of view

Peace my little sparrows! We are always aware of "our" point of view...that's pretty easy to assume! God's point of view is quite different than ours. We, as sparrows, can hardly begin to envision His perspective. He sees all of mankind at one time. In fact, the whole universe is spread before Him, with the earth, a tiny sphere. Upon this earth are billions of humans, each with a heart that God seeks to enter. He wants us to trust Him. His desire and love for each of us is so great that He sent His only Son to die for our sins before we were born. In 1 Peter 1:20 we read that Jesus "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

God's perspective is unfathomable and indescribable. Not only can He see and direct the physical world, but He also has perspective into the spiritual world. He sees into our hearts and understands our motives (not that sparrow motives are all that complex to begin with...I'm just saying...).

God sees into the future. He knows all things. He knows the path we will go. (This is the "Omni-" school we grew



trusting, waiting, subjecting, and yielding.

Many times we miss these blessings because we feel that we have no time for silence. Our heads are filled with concerns, personal needs, pressures of life, changing circumstances, disappointments, uncertainties, duties, and schedules. In the midst of these we find it a challenge to keep silent before God. But when we do, we sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Here God can instruct us through His Word in the way we should go, and refine us so we come forth as gold. We find courage and strength to cope with our busy schedule and duties, for God is a refuge and very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). We can see God as a wall of fire around about, and see His glory in the Church. We can understand that it's not our own works but His grace that saves us. May we make provision, as good sparrows, for God to have this quiet time in our lives. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

I do not count on my own merits, since I have none, but I trust in Him who is virtue and sanctity itself.

—St. Therese, the Little Flower

up learning about). Nevertheless, we have free will. The choice is ours; we are not mere puppets on a stage. God sees our hearts and knows our days on earth. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members are written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them" (Psalm 139:16).

We can rest assured that our future is in God's hands. From our point of view many experiences make no sense at all, but from God's perspective they make perfect sense. Ah yes...let us yield to His plan, confident that He desires our best. Everything will work out for our good if we allow it. God delights to address our uncertainties through a growing relationship of our love and trust in Him.

"Consider, O man, the sublime condition in which the Lord God has placed you, for He has created and formed you in the image of His beloved Son according to the body, and in likeness according to the spirit." —St. Francis of Assisi, Admonition V





IS CHRISTMAS OVER? NO, NOT UNTIL EPIPHANY JANUARY 6TH

THE MANGER ST FRANCIS
MADE IN CELEBRATION OF
THE LORD'S BIRTHDAY

Francis' highest aim, foremost
desire, and greatest intention

was to pay heed to the Holy Gospel in all things and
through all things; to follow the teaching of our Lord
Jesus Christ and to retrace His footsteps completely
with all vigilance and all zeal, all the desire of his soul
and all the fervor of his heart.

Francis used to recall with regular meditation, the
words of Christ and recollect His deeds with most
attentive perception. Indeed, so thoroughly did the
Humility of the Incarnation and the Charity of Passion
occupy his memory, that he scarcely wanted to think of
anything else.

—Francis of Assisi, Saint, Early Documents Vol 1

WAIT HOPE JOY PEACE – LOVE!

Submitted by "Penitent"

From the Desert Fathers

It is told that a thought came to a monk: Rest today and do Penance tomorrow.

He replied: No, I will do Penance today and rest tomorrow!



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

STAY CONNECTED...PLEASE!

If you wish to connect with your Brothers and Sisters in the BSP, please remember that the **BSP Forums** on our website are set up specifically for that purpose. Remember too that there is also a prayer forum. Don't underestimate the prayers of a few poor penitents under the patronage of Father Francis and St. Clare!

Hope to see you on the Forums! <http://bspenance.org/forum/>



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.

BSP MEMBER WEBSITES

- ✝ [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



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, Administrators



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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