



## BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

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

7. The pope was fully convinced of his extraordinary sanctity, not only by the miracles which he heard about after his death, but also by what he knew from his own experience during the saint's lifetime, what he had seen with his own eyes and touched with his own hands. He had no doubt whatever that Francis had already been glorified by God in heaven and in his anxiety to act in harmony with Christ whose Vicar he was, he was disposed to glorify him on earth, as being worthy of all veneration. He had the various miracles worked by the saint recorded in writing and approved by witnesses, in order to convince the whole world that Francis had been glorified in heaven. Then he submitted them to be examined by the cardinals who seemed to be least favorable to the process and when they had checked them carefully and agreed unanimously, he decreed that Francis should be canonized, with the advice and consent of the cardinals and of all the prelates who were then in the papal court. On Sunday, July 16, in the year of our Lord 1228, the pope himself came to Assisi and canonized St. Francis in a long ceremony which it would be tedious to describe.

8. In 1230 a general chapter of the Order which was attended by great numbers of the friars was held at Assisi and on May 25 St. Francis' body was transferred to the basilica which had been built in his honor. As his remains marked with the seal of the

supreme King, were being borne through the town a number of miracles were worked by the power of Christ whose image they bore; thus his lifegiving influence might move the hearts of the faithful to follow Christ. In his lifetime he had been pleasing to God and beloved by him, and so God raised him up to heaven by the grace of contemplation like Henoah (cf. Gn 5:24), and bore him away in a fiery chariot of burning love, like Elias (cf. 4 Kgs 2:11). It was only right, then that as he enjoyed eternal spring among the flowers of paradise, his remains should be fragrant with the fame of the wonderful effects which they caused on earth.

9. St. Francis had been famous during his life for the miracles which he worked, and from the time of his death until the present day, he has been glorified all over the world by the extraordinary prodigies which God performs in his honor. The blind, the deaf, the dumb, and the crippled; those suffering from dropsy or paralysis; the possessed and the lepers, the castaways and the captives, —all have found help through his merits. For every disease, every need and danger, there is a remedy. And the dead who were raised to life through his intercession proclaimed the power of the Most High before all the faithful, as God glorified his saint, he to whom be honor and glory through endless ages. Amen.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



### VISITOR'S MESSAGE

#### Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Reading (Acts 2:14, 22-33) Gospel (Matthew 28:8-15)

As we see this point about the fact that Our Lord had risen from the dead – Mary Magdalene had seen the vision of the angels,

and as she was going to tell the apostles, Our Blessed Lord appears to her and to the other Mary; they bow down, they worship Him, and He instructs them on what to do – the interesting thing in



juxtaposition is to see what happens with the guards. Like the high priest, rather than having faith, the guards run simply to tell what happened and then get caught into a lie. The point that is of great interest here is that only a few days earlier the high priest was willing to give thirty pieces of silver to put Our Lord to death; but when it comes to hiding the Resurrection, they were willing to give a very large sum of money. We are not told how big it was, just that it was large. And so Our Lord in life was worth thirty pieces of silver to them, but Our Lord in death was worth an immense amount.

First of all, they had put a guard at His tomb, the only person in history that we know of who had to be guarded so that he did not come out of the tomb! It did not work anyway. Then the fact that the soldiers would pocket the money, that they would buy into this lie, and that they would circulate this story so that people would not believe, we see the extent to which Satan is willing to go to try to undermine our faith. Money is not a problem for him. Power is not a problem for him. He uses anything that he can to try to lure us away, to try to put little ideas into our heads, or to play upon our selfishness or our greed so that we will not believe. What we have to be able to do is reject everything that is not of God.

When we talk about the Resurrection, there is no doubt that Our Lord has risen from the dead. We have eyewitnesses who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. We have the witness of the Gospels. Someone could say, "Well, these were written by Christian people, so there is really no idea that they are historical." It is funny that when we read pagan historians from the time, everybody bows down and says, "This is true; this is history," but when we read history that is inspired by the Holy Spirit, then we say, "Maybe that wasn't real." This is more historical and there is more evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead than there is of most historical personalities that have ever lived. No one would ever say, "Caesar didn't live because there isn't all that much written about him," or this one or that one or whomever it may be. So there is no reason for us not to believe.

What that Resurrection means is not fully

understood, and it will not be fully understood until our bodies rise from the dead. But we do know that the body of Jesus Christ was reunited with His soul, and His body shares in the glory of the eternal life of God. His body now is in a glorified form so that it is not held bound by any of the limitations that our bodies are. We cannot walk through the walls – He can. On the day of the resurrection, we will be able to do as well. People wonder how we are going to get out of a grave that is six feet deep. Not a problem. Your body is not going to be held bound by any of the physical limitations. When you rise from the dead, all of the inherent weaknesses and problems of the body will no longer be a problem. The body is going to be freed from all of those things. The body is going to be freed from everything that keeps it bound, and it will share fully in the freedom of the

children of God. Our Lord's Resurrection is the guarantee of that; it is the foreshadowing of what is going to happen to us.

While it is imperative that we never take our eyes off of the Cross, it is also imperative that we never forget that the Cross is not the endpoint; there is much beyond it. In fact, the Cross, in Our Lord's life and in ours, was very brief by comparison to the glory which is eternal. And so while we continue

through our lives on earth, it is living in this vale of tears, it is sharing in the Passion of Christ, it is still to walk up Calvary; yet it is because we know that there is something that is beyond Calvary. As Saint Paul said, For the joy that lay before Him, Christ accepted the Cross, heedless of its shame. It is the Resurrection that is possible only through the Crucifixion. It is eternal life that is possible only through sharing in the death of Christ. For us, it is to be able to listen to the words of Our Lord when He told the man: Doubt no longer but believe, and to believe wholeheartedly in the Resurrection and to know that the life, the victory, that Our Lord has won for us is guaranteed to us as long as we remain faithful. So as we keep our eyes on the Cross, keep it focused on what the Cross leads to. The Cross is the key to heaven. The Cross is the opening to eternal life. We go to Calvary, we go to be crucified with Our Lord, not merely for the purpose of dying, but for the sole purpose of eternal life.

Christ  
is  
Risen!

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





## ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... He is Risen!

Happy Easter to all of our members and friends! The Lord is Risen! Praised be Jesus forever!

Years ago we were asked, by our Archbishop, to conduct a seminar with priests to teach

them how to reach consensus on issues. It was an ongoing problem in our diocese that priests could not reach consensus on how to deal with problems. Bruce was asked to conduct this training as it was known, in the Church, that he was a Human Resources manager at 3M and taught consensus management to 3M groups there.

The process is simple but for the most part unknown. In its simplest definition it allows each person to express their opinion on how an issue should be resolved but then provides a process by which the opinion of the majority is made known. The meeting with the priests was conducted and the objective set for the priests to consider was: **"How can we destroy the Catholic Church?"**

Now, we know that cannot happen, and the priests knew it too, but that was the goal. The priests had to come up with an idea they all agreed on as to how to destroy the Catholic Church. It led to a lively debate for sure. The meeting went as follows.

Each priest gave us, the moderators, his idea on how that could be done. We listed those reasons in front of the group. We went from person to person and took each person's idea and listed it. When completed a large list of ideas was in front of the priests. In total there were probably a dozen different ideas on how one could destroy the Catholic Church. The ideas were varied and wide-ranging and so we won't even try to list them here. But, after we got this list up in front of them all they each had one vote on what idea was the best idea. The idea that got the most votes would be the consensus of the group. Bear in mind there were about 60 priests at this seminar. The idea that won the most votes of the priests, that is the consensus of those present, was this one. **"Find the grave of Jesus Christ."**

Now, we know there is no grave to Jesus Christ on this planet as HE IS NOT HERE! He has arisen. If someone would find his grave, and confirm it through DNA or whatever, that would be the end of the Church. Period. Our salvation, and the life of the Catholic Church, relies on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

His death was manifest to all around him. It was the subject around Jerusalem, the disciples on their way to Emmaus said, to Jesus, who was walking with them, **"Are you the only resident of Jerusalem who does not know the things that went on there these past few days?" (Luke 24:18)**. His resurrection was not known to all. It was part of what the Apostles, and the rest of us, were to communicate over history. Yet, the amazing thing is that many people just do not understand it today. There is a message here for us.

We need to be Jesus to those around us. To be His Love, and to tell his story. Those were the last words he gave us before he left us.

**"Full authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations....Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!" (Matt. 28:18-20)**

So, Jesus gave us this mission. To do it we too must be resurrected in His Love, and on fire with the hope of being with him forever. We are supposed to be a light to the world. Leaven in the bread. In other words, to be Him to those around us. To be present in our Faith to our families, to care for our brothers and sisters, and the poor, who we will always have with us. To teach and encourage others how to live. Jesus we do not have anymore, but this mission we do have. Jesus quite deliberately left a void with His resurrection. We need to fill that void. In His Resurrection we have been born again!

We fuel the fires of our rebirth with our lives of penance. We live our Rule as an ongoing gift, our gift, to God. Our lives of sacrifice are a sweet-smelling oblation that burns in our lives and affects those around us in ways we cannot even imagine, even though it is our secret, and rises like incense, as an ongoing prayer to God. This is our life. This is what St. Francis gave us. The resurrection of Jesus is our resurrection too, now, in our lives, in how we live, and after our death in our spirits that will rise and go to Jesus forever. And, we will rise again, in judgment or in joy, at the end of time. Twice this is coming for each of us. First, when our lives in this world end. Second, when our world ends. In the last resurrection our bodies will rise too, and after that we will all live the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, forever, in our very selves, for all eternity.

So, Happy Easter to all! He is Risen! And we are His people, and we arise from His Resurrection too. We

are the Church, and our Church will never be destroyed because of our Lord, who rose from the dead. Praise God forever!

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



## NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

**"The angel said to the women, 'He is Risen, just as He said!'"**

(Matthew 28:6)

**"Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Do you love Me more than these?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'" (John 21:15)**

This Easter Season I would like to look again at the statement: "We will spend all eternity with the One (the one or thing) we love the most." All of us in the BSP have figured out the "One thing necessary" in life, to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind." With Peter we now hear the voice of Jesus say to us: "Do you love Me more than these?" Can we answer "Yes, Lord!" with Peter?

Fr. Rolf expanded on his opening statement during a Lenten retreat at our local parish. His talk embodies the theme of prayer and penance as found in the Rule of St. Francis. He presented it in such a simple and compelling way I'd like to at least try to duplicate it here.

He started out with some basic questions. "What have I devoted my life to? Take stock of your relationship with God: who have you become under God? What does God think of your life? Have I devoted myself to what is important **in God's eyes**? If need be, it's time to re-focus on the meaning of repentance."

Fr. Rolf said there are three stages in life. The first is life in the womb, normally a very peaceful and secure place to be. Music can be heard, beautiful music, harmony. The mother's voice is soothing. Plenty to eat and drink. When the time comes to enter the "real" world, it is usually accompanied by kicking and screaming! Why do I have to leave this wonderful place?

The second stage is our life on earth. Around age ten, he said, a youngster begins to say to him/herself: "What is life all about? What is my purpose in life? Who am I supposed to become?" He answered that our purpose in life is **"to learn how to love on earth as they love in heaven!"** It is to learn how to overcome the Original Sin of Adam and Eve who couldn't love God above all else, and the sin of Cain who killed Abel because they couldn't love each other. God the Father sent Jesus to show us how to love one another.

The third stage is to be ready for the next life. He

told the story of an elderly lady he was attending in the hospital. She was dying. She wasn't yet ready to meet the Lord. He said she should let him know when she was ready to go. Sometime later she called him at 2:00 AM. He rushed over thinking she was dying. No. Rather, she was excited and said to him: "I have figured it out: **I couldn't love God with my hands full!** God had to remove everything from my life. Now He is the only thing left. All those lesser loves are gone, and now I can love God more than anything else." She had figured out that this isn't the real world, but one just passing by. The **really, real world** is yet to come, and it will last for all eternity!

"Wouldn't it be terrible if we couldn't die?" That was the refrain of another elderly lady. What a question. "If we don't have our eyes on heaven, we are no earthly good." C.S. Lewis. When is the proper time to pay more attention to the things of heaven, to the things of God? Maybe I'm paying more attention to these things because I'm at that stage of life...

In dealing with Original Sin, Father has a whole new set of questions. What do I love more? What is my favorite sin? Why do I lead a life of sin? Because I love to do it. Do I love a life of sin more than I love God? What could I possibly choose over God? We try to never say NO to God, only "later." If we feel called to pray a Holy Hour, as Jesus says, "I want to see you!" do we say, "later"? Really? Do we postpone meetings with friends?

"Heaven is not won or lost on a technicality." We owe God an apology for what we DO with a passion, not what we are tempted to do. Distinguish temptation from sin. A good day is to be tempted but not fall. Distinguish between our most serious, and our most annoying sin. A daily examination of conscience will help us find out how God rates our behavior. First thank God for the good I did today. Then be aware of the wrong. Consider sins of Omission: what could I have done today that I failed to do. When Jesus talked about the sheep and goats in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew—those were all sins of omission!

The final step of the examination is: how did I do

with my most prevalent sin? He gave an example of how confession works. If we hurt a really close friend, there is a process of reconciliation. First is to realize that fact, that I have broken that relationship of love and trust. Doesn't work just to feel bad. There needs to be contact to say I'm sorry. Then we need to hear back from that friend that he/she is OK, that all is forgiven. The priest doesn't say "Jesus forgives you." He says, "I absolve you from your sins." Big difference, real healing. Those are words that not God, but we need to hear. And we do some symbolic penance to complete the reconciliation.

How is my prayer life? What is the purpose of prayer, of saying prayers or praying? Talk to God. Give up stuff. The purpose of giving up stuff is "practice." Practice on saying NO to self. Say NO to self and mean it! If I can't say NO to chocolate, how can I say NO to REAL temptation? Like a fire drill. This is a good measure of our relationship with God, if we love Him enough to "give up stuff."

God will use any thread to save us. Purgatory is like the summer school of heaven. It's a place for those who sin out of weakness rather than malice. Sins of malice are wishing evil upon others. Appearing before God, a soul in this state will say "I don't want to live the way you live up here. I don't want to be with you!" Having not lived with God on earth, is it strange that some would say that to His face? Forever dissatisfied and angry, they won't let God help them. But for those who sin out of weakness,

and are just not ready for heaven, for that is too much to comprehend at the time, purgatory is a time of purification. To learn how they love in heaven. We don't necessarily aim for this place, but for those on the margins, it's a great place to end up, and they know it. Phew! Made it! Entrance exam passed despite an "incomplete" grade, or a "D" on conduct!

The beauty of purgatory is there is no way out, but up. No more procrastination, time to change to enter the Presence of God. One now sees his/her life as God sees it. For God is the Ultimate Lie Detector! He lets us see ourselves as we really are. No more hiding behind all the false illusions we carry about concerning ourselves. Nor the false illusions we have about others. Is there anyone we have such a grudge against that we never want to see them again? "We are not ready for heaven until we will be genuinely happy to see everyone there!" The question is, will they be happy to see us?

The goal of penance and repentance is to help us see our lives as God sees them, and CHANGE what needs to be changed to become more Christ-like. Jesus died to save us from our sins, and to teach us how to love as they love in heaven. We on our part have done things in our lives to be ashamed of, and things to be proud of. Like Peter who reconciled with Jesus, we pray that after our frequent reconciliations, when we meet Jesus we may say in all honesty: "I did not always love You, but I do NOW!"

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



## Goods in common... by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the First Reading, Second Sunday of Easter

**"Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common."**

(Acts 4:32)

Blessed Easter to all!

Scripture is a rose eternally unfolding. When I was choosing a scripture passage as a launching point for this article, I felt more than ever that this passage referred to the spiritual goods of the members of the Mystical Body of Christ and how, in Christ, they are held in common for all to use for their good, the good of others, and the glory of God.

The Catechism explains in paragraphs 1474-1477:

*"The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his*

*sin and to become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone. 'The life of each of God's children is joined in Christ and through Christ in a wonderful way to the life of all the other Christian brethren in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, as in a single mystical person.'* [Indulgentiarum doctrina, 5.]

*In the communion of saints, 'a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who*



are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. **Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things.**' [Ibid.] **In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.**

"We also call these spiritual goods of the communion of saints the Church's treasury, which is 'not the sum total of the material goods which have accumulated during the course of the centuries. On the contrary **the 'treasury of the Church' is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which Christ's merits have before God.** They were offered so that the whole of mankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father. In Christ, the Redeemer himself, the satisfactions and merits of his Redemption exist and find their efficacy.' [Ibid.]

**"This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission the Father entrusted to them. In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body."** [Ibid.]

This should, of course, give us great hope and joy as penitents and as souls who long for the coming of the Kingdom of the Divine Will.

I was already in formation with the BSP when I first heard of Luisa Piccarreta and the Book of Heaven. I was strongly drawn to the deep spirituality of the Divine Will teachings (as you are no doubt aware!) and I wondered if I should exit formation and concentrate on the sublime truths as revealed by Jesus to Luisa.

I had previously discussed with my spiritual director

the reason I was drawn to the BSP. In 1997 I had had a profound experience of the Lord in the Eucharist, after which I felt a deep call to increased prayer and fasting. I tried to do this on my own and, lacking direction, only failed and fumbled. Then one day I picked up a book that had been waiting patiently on my bookshelf—unread—for 15 years. It was called, "God's Fool" by Julien Green, a biography of St. Francis of Assisi. I was so drawn to the saint's simple holiness that I immediately did an internet search of Franciscan Third Orders. The first to come up was the BSP. When I read the Rule and Statutes of the BSP, I burst into tears. It was exactly what I had been feeling called to.

A few years later, as I discussed with my spiritual director how drawn I was to the Divine Will teachings, he wisely counselled me to complete my formation with the BSP.

This week, as I read the scripture passage above, I began to see in a new way the connectedness of the life of penance and all holy ways of life, how they have their origin in Jesus Christ, and how each of us has a duty and an obligation to contribute to the spiritual goods of the Body. And while the Divine Will teachings may be more sublime than even the Rule of 1221, the life of penance is more than likely one of the instruments God has used over the millennia to make it possible for the Divine Will teachings to take root and bear fruit. The prayers, penances, and holy acts have pulled the weeds, picked the rocks, spread the compost and tilled the soil, until finally it was ready for the seed to be sown through the humble Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta.

We are all doing our part for the good of all. Certainly, Luisa's writings bring the "good of all" to a whole new level—from Adam to the last man! Jesus told Luisa that before the gift of the Divine Will, a person's good actions were only effective in a certain time and place. But in the Divine Will, time and place are irrelevant, so that this gift makes all actions done in It—even ordinary actions—work for good in all times and places. Truly: **"Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more!"** (Rom 5:20) Our God is unfathomable, incredible, amazing! May His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven! Fiat!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada





## FROM THE 'SPARROW' Angel in the Garden

Peace my dear sparrows! As we are approaching the Easter Triduum and in meditation we follow along in St. Padre Pio's footsteps taken from one of his greatest insights into the

spiritual world. In this meditation a liberty is taken for things that aren't in evidence in scripture but can be found rather in the heart of the penitent. As we all know St. Pio was one of the most noteworthy Franciscan penitents that ever graced our humble world. Let us turn then to the scripture verse that keyed one of St. Pio's unique meditations. (Verse taken from Douay-Rheims Bible-1582 translation).

**And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground.** (Luke 22:43:44)

St. Pio was so involved spiritually with the Lord's passion interiorly that eventually he participated in that passion by receiving the stigmata of the Lord. He was the first priest to have this spiritual manifestation. This, of course, led many Franciscans, and other penitents, to closely examine his life, including his many spiritual sayings of which many came from his intense prayerful meditations. It is here that we sparrows shall look closely at this meditation about the Agony in the Garden which we experience in our own readings and prayers on Good Friday, it being the first day of the Easter Triduum.

In the two verses supra St. Pio harvested a keen insight into many facets that we overlook or simply gloss over in our often hurried reading of scripture. St. Pio rightly placed the beginning of the Way of the Cross (cf. Via Crucis) within the Garden on that night. Having thus made this reference as the most critical point in his meditation—what, then, was that interior "light" that he was so focused on? What then have we, as little sparrows and penitents, overlooked or not paid close enough attention to, that this spirit-led man of God gazed upon with such clear enlightenment, so much so, that it takes one's breath away in such a sublime way when one is enlightened by exposure to it?

The Lord Jesus "first" shed His blood of salvation in the Garden in the presence of a divine heavenly being—an angel of the Lord! Stop! Do not go forward till you understand the dualistic role of this angel (and if you will allow there were many angels surrounding their Lord and Master that night in the Garden as well) for yes, the angel came to comfort

Jesus. That is one of chief characteristics of most angels. The second, and most significant underlying and unwritten reason, but one that St. Pio reasoned, was the angel also came to adore the Lord and worship those fallen drops of the Savior's Blood! The Blood of Jesus must be worshipped and adored—this is a basic tenet of faith for all believers in Christ. Yet, on this night of nights, there were not, as of yet, any true believers in the Blood of Christ, in the sense that that Jesus had not died on the Cross at that point.

St. Pio reasoned that this suffering was an integral part of Jesus' passion and therefore it was salvific and worthy of worship and adoration. St. Pio goes on to say in his meditation that he makes his spiritual presence in the Garden to "gather up these first drops of Blood shed by his Lord" in the chalice of his heart. St. Pio then worships and adores along with the angel in the Garden. It was obvious to St. Pio that this angel stayed there and continued to worship even as Jesus moved on into the night and further in his sorrowful passion.

Yes, this was a deliberate "light" of insight by St. Pio—wherever the Blood was shed that place was marked out as sacred and as a holy place needing the manifestation and ministrations of the Holy Angels of God. Do we, as lowly sparrow penitents, treat the Blood of Christ with the same reverence in our modern day world? If not, why not? Not to digress let us also focus our attention to the countenance that this ministering angel wore as he approached his (our) Lord and Master at such crucial and pivotal place in this divine mystery as it was then unfolding for all men in all ages. Many artists throughout the ages have portrayed a congenial angel with fair characteristics, one that almost is demure in its bearing and gentleness.

No, not so, the angel that came to comfort and strengthen Jesus in his combat would have been one that projected power and strength with a fierce face of determination. The countenance of this angel would put one in the remembrance of one like St. Michael the Archangel, if it was not him in fact. This angel would have projected an awesome presence that at once would have reassured the Savior of the love of His Father. St. Pio advanced in his spirit that the angel also came with a second reason. This would be worshipping the fallen drops of Blood of the Savior as would St. Pio, his spiritual children, and all the little Franciscan sparrows!

*"Without Divine Grace, could you have been victorious in all the crises and all the spiritual*

battles which you have had to face? Well, then, open your soul, more and more to Divine Hope, have more trust in the Divine Mercy, which is the only refuge of the soul exposed to a stormy sea."

—St. Padre Pio

"Nos cum Prole pia, benedicat Virgo Maria."  
(May the Virgin Mary, Mother mild, bless us with her Holy Child)

pax et bonum, Bro. Sparrow  
Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina



## The Admonitions



A medieval admonition was more than a warning or a calling to mind: it had more of a religious sense in which a biblical passage or image was presented and, in light of it, a practical application was made. Thus, these twenty-eight teachings of St. Francis offer insights into his biblical thought and the ways in which he translated them into the ordinary experiences of daily life. Although some of these pieces offer clues as to their composition or deliverance, they are difficult to date. The five manuscript collections of the thirteenth century

contain only one consistent document: the following twenty-eight pieces or admonitions. This attests to their importance in the early Franciscan tradition and to their place as Francis' "Canticle of Minority."

—Francis of Assisi The Saint, Early Documents, Vol 1

DEAR PENITENTS, I will submit Admonitions from April to July 2018 for us to review together or privately. Our Lenten period has ended and we have been delivered through the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord. However we always remain humble and in need of correction/teaching for continued spiritual growth.

Submitted by: Penitent

### THE BODY OF CHRIST

**The Lord Jesus says to his disciples: I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me. If you knew me, you would also know my Father; and from now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip says to him: Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us. Jesus says to him: Have I been with you for so long a time and you have not known me? Philip, whoever sees me sees my Father as well.** (cf. John 14:6-7)

The Father dwells in inaccessible light, and God is spirit, and no one has ever seen God. Therefore, He cannot be seen except in the Spirit because it is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh has nothing to offer. But because He is equal to the Father, the Son is not seen by anyone other than the Father or other than the Holy Spirit.

All those who saw the Lord Jesus according to the humanity, therefore, and did not see and believe according to the Spirit and the Divinity that He is the true Son of God were condemned. Now in the same way, all those who see the sacrament sanctified by the words of the Lord upon the altar at the hands of the priest in the form of bread and wine, and who do not see and believe according to the Spirit and the Divinity that it is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are condemned. This is affirmed by the Most High Himself Who says: This is my Body and Blood of my new covenant which will be shed for many; and Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. It is the Spirit of the Lord, therefore, That lives in Its faithful, That receives the Body and Blood of the Lord. All others who do not share in this same Spirit and presume to receive Him eat and drink judgement on themselves.

Therefore: Children, how long will you be hard of heart? Why do you not know the truth and believe in the Son of God? Behold, each day He humbles Himself as when He came from the royal throne into the Virgin's womb; each day He Himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day He comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of a priest. As He revealed Himself to the holy apostles in true flesh, so He reveals Himself to us now in sacred bread. And as they saw only His flesh by an insight of their flesh

yet, believe that He was God as they contemplated Him with their spiritual eyes, let us, as we see bread and wine with our bodily eyes, see and firmly believe they are His most holy Body and Blood living and true. "Behold I am with you until the end of the age."

### *From the Desert Fathers*



*Abba Pambo asked Abba Anthony,  
"What ought I to do?"  
and the old man said to him,  
"Do not trust in your own righteousness,  
do not worry about the past,  
but control your tongue and your stomach."*

## **MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...**

### **ENJOY THE OCTAVE OF EASTER!**

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#### **Statutes Article 9.c.**

Sundays and Church Solemnities are never days of fast or abstinence. These include the Octave of Christmas, the Feasts of New Year's, Epiphany, Annunciation, **the Octave of Easter**, and the Feasts of the Ascension, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and all other Solemnities of the Church.

### **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](http://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

65774 County Road 31  
Northome MN 56661