



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Some of the miracles which took place after St. Francis' death

III. Those Whom Francis Saved from the Danger of Death

7. A similar incident occurred at San Severino in the Marches of Ancona. A huge stone which had been brought from Constantinople for the basilica of St. Francis was being pulled along by a large number of men, when it suddenly fell on one of them. They were sure that he was not only dead, but completely crushed. But St. Francis came to his aid and raised the stone, so that he escaped safe and sound without injury and jumped up, pushing the stone aside.

8. A man from Gaeta called Bartholomew had spent a lot of energy on the construction of a church in honor of St. Francis, when a beam which had been badly placed fell and struck him on the neck, injuring him seriously. He realized that he was at death's door and being a devout religious man he asked a friar for Viaticum. The friar was sure that he would die immediately and that he would not have time to get the Blessed Sacrament, and so he told him in the words



of St. Augustine, "Only believe, and you have received Him." The following night St. Francis appeared to him, accompanied by eleven friars and carrying a lamb in his arms. He approached his bed and called him by name saying, "Bartholomew, do not be afraid. The Devil wanted to prevent you from serving me, but he will not triumph over you. This is the Lamb for whom you asked and whom you received by your sincere desire. By his power you will be restored to full health of body and soul." Then the saint drew his hands over the dying man's injuries and told him to go back to the work he had begun. Bartholomew got up early the following morning and showed himself happy and well to those who had last seen him half-dead. They were lost in amazement, but he inspired them with reverence and love for the saint both by his own example and by the miracle the saint had performed.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier, March 31, 2019

(Readings: Joshua 5:9a, 10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32)

forge ahead with our Lenten resolutions because they will bring great joy to us when they are complete.

Having passed the halfway mark of Lent, we celebrate Laetare Sunday; rejoicing in the midst of our penance. People often associate penance with sadness, somberness, or even suffering. The Saints, on the other hand, teach us that the things we think of in a negative way are really causes for joy because they are being borne out of love.



Lent should be a joyful season because we can see our growth in holiness and virtue as the season progresses. It will only be joyful, however, as we saw last week, if we are motivated by true charity. If we are doing something selfishly, even if it is a good thing to do, we are not going to experience true joy. There may be some happiness or even satisfaction in what we have accomplished, but the deeper joy will not be present because our motivation was superficial or self-serving.

In the first reading the Israelites, after wandering in the desert for forty years and being fed with Manna, finally enter the Promised Land and eat of the produce of the land after celebrating the Passover. The Prophets refer to the Israelites' sojourn in the desert as their honeymoon. They grew close to God and learned to trust Him. Building on that trust and receiving His love, hopefully they have also learned to love Him.

As they come into the Land of Promise, they need to choose again to keep God at the center of their lives. In the desert it was easier to do this because they had to rely on God for everything. Apart from what He provided, they had no food or water; they had no means of buying clothes, shoes, or other necessities. They were dependent on God for everything and He proved His love and fidelity to them. Now it was their turn to show their love and fidelity to God when, on the surface, it might appear they did not need God so much because they could take care of themselves on their own.

We also are faced with this problem. Because we can go to work, make money, and pay the bills, we sometimes forget we are dependent on God. We might start thinking we are either independent or dependent on our job or our money while giving lip service to God with hearts that are far from Him. Like the Israelites, we need to choose to make God the center of our lives

and keep clearly in mind that our job, our finances, our stability are dependent on Him. Everything in our lives is dependent on Him!

In the Gospel reading we hear about the Prodigal Son. We see a young man who found himself at rock bottom, working with pigs and wanting to eat their food. He comes to his sense, turns himself around, returns home with a humble heart, and is greeted with his father's embrace, the finest robe, shoes, a ring, and a celebration. The conversion of his heart brought him home to his father, repentant for his sins and willing to accept whatever punishment there might be. His father's love restores him to his family, when he deserved his father's wrath, not his charity.

God is our Father who, like the father in the story of the Prodigal son, is watching and waiting for us to convert, to return home. We know what our sins deserve, but God wants us not only to be forgiven and restored, but to be elevated higher than we were previously. The son was not just clothed; he was given the finest robe. He was not just provided with food, the fatted calf was slaughtered for him. This is what God has waiting for us, not because we deserve it, but because He loves us. He wants to clothe us with Sanctifying Grace and feed us with the Bread of Life. If we can accept our Father's love and choose to love Him, we will find our joy and exalt in Him.

In the second reading, St. Paul tells us we have become a new creation in Christ. He calls us to reconciliation with God then presents the opposites for us. Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us so we might become the righteousness of God in Jesus. This is how far God wants to exalt us. Jesus emptied Himself in order to exalt us. The Lord loves you! Be converted! Persevere in your penance and reject the emptiness of this world to rejoice in the joy of the Lord!

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ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

On December 22nd Venerable Bede's writings are shared in the Office of Readings. In it he addresses God's holiness: "His name is called holy because in the sublimity of his unique power he surpasses every creature and is far removed from all that he has made."

Now that is profound, and worthy of consideration, when you consider the Lord told us to be holy, as His Father is Holy. So we have the unique responsibility, that many ignore today, to be holy. To say that means we need to know what it means to be holy. I have pondered this often and say I have never quite come to Venerable Bede's definition of holy. It is worth

pondering that! Especially now, as we begin a new year and embrace Lent, for our call to holiness transposes all years, which means that each year we need to be holy. Each day actually, and if not that then every hour, and even every minute, of our existence. The Lord did not put a time on it. He just said, "Be holy!"

So, our holiness needs to be like the Father's holiness. His holiness, according to Venerable Bede, "surpasses every creature" and "is far removed from what he has made." So also must ours be then, right? Far removed from everything we have made and surpassing every creature we encounter. Now that takes some study! We need a plan to do that.

Matthew Kelly, in his book, THE BIGGEST LIE IN THE



HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY points out that this biggest lie is THAT HOLINESS IS NOT POSSIBLE. If we cannot become holy why would the Lord, our God, say we need to be holy as the Father is holy? He maintains that this one lie has neutralized the majority of Christians, and he is so right.

He maintains that to become holy we need to try to create Holy Moments in our lives, and pray, of course. A holy moment is when you open yourself to God and make yourself available to him. You set aside what you feel like doing and you do what God is calling you to do, for others. Here are some examples of holy moments.

- ✠ Begin each day with a short prayer of gratitude thanking God for giving you another day of life. That is a holy moment. In fact every moment of prayer is a holy moment!
- ✠ Go out of your way to do something for your spouse that you would rather not do, as an intentional act of love. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Offer the least enjoyable task of your day to God as a prayer for someone who is suffering. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Control your temper even if you are justified to lose it! That's a holy moment.
- ✠ Encourage someone, coach someone, praise someone, affirm someone. These are holy moments.

- ✠ Be patient with that person who drives you crazy! That's a holy moment.
- ✠ Do someone else's chores. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Teach someone how to pray. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Ask God to lead you and guide you. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Tell someone your faith story. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Stay calm in the midst of a crisis. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Tell God you trust he has a great plan for you and your life. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ Give whatever is in front of you your full attention, for the love of God. That is a holy moment.
- ✠ And live the Rule we follow. It is full of holy moments!

The author goes on to say that holy moments are possible, so holiness is possible. This is a beautiful truth and truth animates us. St. Paul says, in Thessalonians 4:3: **"This is the will of God, that you be holy."** Don't let yourself be neutralized by the biggest lie in the history of Christianity. Reject that lie and embrace every holy moment that comes your way.

May the Lord bless and lead us all!

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



TEARS FOR BETHLEHEM...

by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Second Reading, Fifth Sunday of Lent

"Now as (Saul) was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 9:3-5)



Bethlehem haunts me

This past March, I was blessed to be part of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I had heard about the pilgrimage from a friend last fall. At the time I was just getting ready to leave for Medjugorje and was not thinking about another pilgrimage so soon. Still, I felt drawn to it, even though I only knew one person on the pilgrimage and the point of departure was on the other side of the country. I decided to wait until after Christmas to see if there were still spots available. There were. I prayed for a confirmation that I was to go, and I received three. In faith I booked my ticket.

It turned out to have been just the pilgrimage God wanted for me, focused on prayer and Scripture, but also with a focus on the "living stones" of the Holy Land, particularly on the current situation of the Christians who live there, both in Israel and Palestine.

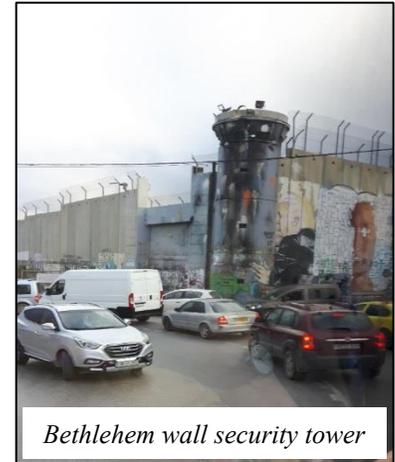
As our group of 37 pilgrims, including two priests, followed with awe the hallowed footsteps of Jesus through Nazareth, Galilee, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and points in between, we prayerfully pondered the Scripture passages that were set in the places we visited, Nazareth, the River Jordan, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum where Jesus called the fishermen, Mount Tabor, the mount of the Transfiguration, Tabgha where the loaves and fishes were multiplied and where Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me," and many other places. Halfway through the pilgrimage we "set our faces toward Jerusalem" stopping briefly at Jericho. We

celebrated daily Mass in stunning surroundings and were often brought to tears. The rosary came alive in our hands, and since returning, there is a new dimension to the Mass readings. I hope to expand on this in future newsletters, but first I feel compelled to tell you why, since coming home, Bethlehem haunts me.

As we traveled, our tour guide informed us of some of the extreme challenges faced by Christians and other Palestinians in the Holy Land. The States of Israel and Palestine have a population of some 10 million people of which the Christian population has dropped to less than 2%, some 180,000 souls. It is a delicate, extremely complex and utterly confusing arrangement, this tenuous co-habitation of the three main Abrahamic religions, along with various other people from around the world, including migrant workers. I am not qualified to explain or make sense of any of it, but I can tell you what I saw with my own eyes and why Bethlehem still haunts me.

The Shock of arriving in Bethlehem

The last five nights of our pilgrimage we stayed in Bethlehem, the holy city where Jesus was born. It is just a few miles from Jerusalem and would be our home base. Along with the other pilgrims on our trip, I was shocked and devastated to learn that Bethlehem is a **walled city**. It is **completely enclosed** by a security wall 25 feet high, equipped with security cameras and with watchtowers manned by Israeli armed guards. Everyone, including pilgrims, enters and leaves Bethlehem through manned checkpoints.



Bethlehem wall security tower

In spite of our shock, we spent our first day in Bethlehem, visiting holy sites, and celebrating a stunning "Christmas" Mass in a shepherd's cave. Even though the liturgical calendar told us it was Lent, every day in Bethlehem is Christmas Day we were told. But as a pilgrim to modern-day Bethlehem I could not help but be deeply disturbed at the current situation of Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, who live there.

Most of us pilgrims had not been aware that Bethlehem has had a security perimeter since 2002. On Easter Monday of 2002, the Israelis invaded and occupied all the cities of the West Bank, including Bethlehem. Not long afterwards, a security fence went up around Bethlehem, which later became a wall encircling the entire city of over 14,000 Palestinian residents, mostly Muslim and Christian. (Other walled cities include Jericho and Ramallah, but my story is about Bethlehem where we spent five nights.)



Warning to Israeli citizens entering Bethlehem

The checkpoints through which one passes to get in and out of Bethlehem are heavily manned. Israelis are forbidden to enter **by law**, and Palestinians need special permission to leave, permission which is rarely granted to anyone whose birthplace is listed as Bethlehem. The walled enclosure has been called an open-air prison, and that is not an exaggeration. I suppose that Jesus himself would not be allowed to leave had he been born in June 2002 or later.

The official unemployment rate in Bethlehem is 29%, the highest rate in Palestine. But that figure likely does not include those no longer looking for work because it's pointless, or those who are underemployed which is pretty much everyone. The jobs in that city are few, mostly tourism-based, and never full-time. The unofficial estimate is 80% unemployment within the walls of Bethlehem. Those "fortunate" few who are given permission to work outside of Bethlehem are strip-searched at the checkpoint leaving and returning. It can take an hour for them to get through the checkpoint at each end of the day.

I have since read that Bethlehem was originally built on an aquifer that is still one of the main sources of water in Israel. It is deeply ironic that since the Israeli occupation, citizens of Bethlehem are forbidden to dig deeper than 4 feet down, and are forced to truck in water at high prices. Not only are they not provided with water, but neither with electricity. Our tour guide told us that you can tell Palestinian housing all over the Holy Land by the solar panels and water tanks on the roofs. By contrast, Israelis have all the water and electricity they need.

It is the people, the living stones of the Holy Land that haunt me, that cry out for justice. We visited an orphanage, a secondary school, and talked to many local people who asked for prayers and implored us also to "tell people" about their dire situation. We found everyone in Bethlehem to be very friendly and open, even though their situation is tragic. The Israeli narrative is that they are dangerous, and it is dangerous to stay in Bethlehem. We found the opposite to be the case.

Palestinian Muslims and Christians do live outside the walled cities, but even they are not supplied with water or electricity and must have cisterns and solar panels installed on their houses if they are lucky enough to be able to afford it. High-paying jobs are denied to Palestinians, and they are never allowed a supervisory role over Israeli workers.

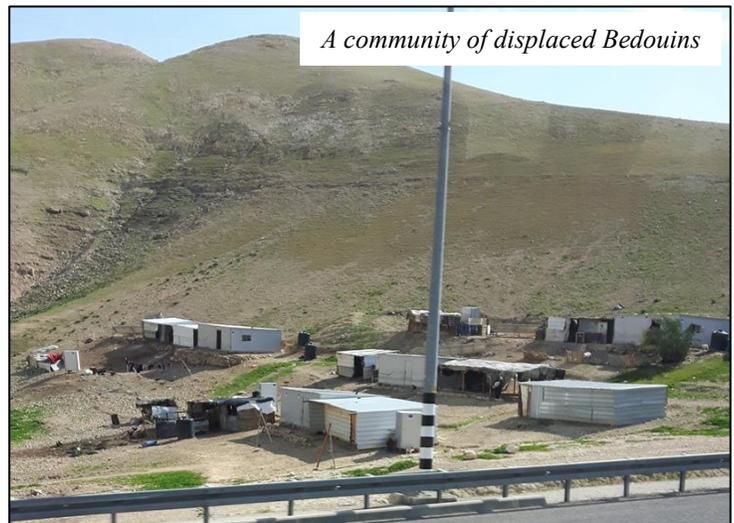
In addition, Israeli settlements encroach daily farther into Palestinian territory. Israeli settlements are communities of apartment units inhabited by Israeli citizens (often from other countries), built predominantly on Palestinian land. There are roughly 100,000 settlers living in the units that surround Bethlehem alone. The Shepherd's Field itself, having existed on the outskirts of Bethlehem for the past 2000 years, is now being swallowed up by Israeli settlements. It is as if a big hungry monster is devouring Palestinian land and there is nothing they can do about it. Often Palestinians are evicted from their homes and even schools to make way for the settlements.



Israelis believe they have an ancestral right to the lands they are occupying in the Palestinian territory. As we all know, the situation is enormously complex, but even if you believe this to be true, does that allow for denying entire populations access to water, electricity and freedom of movement? Does that allow for evicting Palestinian people from their homes so that settlements can be built?

For my part, I am haunted by the persecution being endured by the living stones of the Holy Land. The hallowed memory of my pilgrimage is overshadowed by it and every time I open my mouth to tell people about my pilgrimage, what comes out is the story of how Jesus is still being persecuted today in the people of Bethlehem and other areas of the Holy Land. Our pilgrimage guide deliberately included contact with the living stones of the Holy Land, particularly in Bethlehem, and provided opportunities speak to them and offer what little moral and material support we could. This included staying in Bethlehem for five nights at the splendid Jacir Palace, which has had to shut down several times over the years for lack of pilgrim traffic. We became aware of what it meant to them to have us there. They were so gracious and kind. It was very humbling.

Our first contact with the living stones was as we travelled from Galilee to Jerusalem. Our tour guide had arranged for us to meet with a group of Muslim Bedouins whose nomadic lifestyle is no longer possible as their territory has been overtaken by Israeli settlements. They now live with their animals in small communities of tin shacks eking out whatever existence they can with their small herds, selling trinkets where possible. They live in extreme poverty. We brought them lightly used shoes and clothing and were humbled by their ardent gratitude. Shoes are very important to nomads, and they wear out quickly in the rocky hills. I thought of the shoes in my closet that are never worn because of a pinch here or there. Those people would be happy for them.



Our next contact with living stones was a visit to a Catholic secondary school in Bethlehem. The school welcomes all Palestinian students, no matter their faith background. The Catholic school provides a quality education for the children who live within the walls. They work towards peace, harmony and respect for all. Unfortunately, the Palestinian children are unlikely to be able to fulfill their career dreams as they may never be allowed to exit the walls of Bethlehem. Bethlehem does have an excellent university, however (<https://www.bethlehem.edu>). One person I heard of attended the university and got permission to finish her college education in Jerusalem. However, once she obtained her degree, she was not given permission to find work outside of Bethlehem, and has been unemployed ever since. Her husband is fortunate to have a job, but many educated people live there in poverty or are seriously underemployed.

We arrived at the school on a Friday, a traditional day off for the students and staff as it is a holy day of worship for Muslims. Sunday is also a day off as it is a Christian holy day, but Saturday is not a day off, so the weekend

is split. No matter, since they are not allowed to go away for the weekend but must remain inside the walls even then. The students and staff were joyful and came in on their day off to talk to us. The young student I spoke to talked about the possibility of going to Europe on exchange, which he may indeed get permission to do. The danger is that students who get a taste of the outside world often make plans to leave permanently. I couldn't help but think that might be the reason they get permission to go, so they won't come back.

The school staff then offered us refreshments and the students (including some girls) played a game of basketball in the outdoor courtyard for our enjoyment. I was impressed by the students' resilience and joy, but I am haunted by them. I am free. They are not.

Later that day, we had a visit from the priest who is with the Secretariat for Christian Educational Institutions for all of Israel and Palestine. He spoke about how they are working for love and peace in the Holy Land by welcoming and serving others in their schools and in their lives, that they do not just coexist as Christians and Muslims, but that they live together as community, as neighbours, and as friends. He asked us to go home and be witnesses, to encourage people to come here to see for themselves. He thanked us for coming to see the living stones of Bethlehem.

In his work, he travels all over the region to the schools, including in Gaza, which is the poorest area of Palestine. There is a great deal of damage from Israeli artillery there, but the Israelis do not allow building materials in and no outside food. It is a desperate situation and they are little able to help themselves. In other walled off areas of Palestine, they have access to outside food and building materials, but they are very expensive.

When the priest was asked about their needs, he asked for prayer, donations if possible, and that we would make known the situation among those we can reach. Since coming home, whenever I have spoken to people about my pilgrimage and the situation in Bethlehem, I am met with shock. How is it that this has been their situation since 2002 and we have not heard about it? I am haunted by that as well.

The tiniest living stones we met were the children at an orphanage in Bethlehem run by an order of Sisters. We brought gently-used clothing, supplies, candy—and bubbles! We spent an hour visiting with the children and blowing bubbles. The Sisters were grateful, the children were happy, and we were deeply moved by the experience. Some of the children had been left there by parents who could not afford to keep them. Again, the injustice of it haunted me.

While hope for the future is hardly possible for any of them, the spirit of the people is not crushed. They do rely on pilgrim traffic to sustain them. We purchased what we could from vendors in Bethlehem, knowing it was likely their only source of income. In one shop, one of the young brothers who ran it asked one of our group members to keep an eye on the place while he went to get his older brother for a price check! Within the walls there is a high degree of trust. Not the narrative you get from the Israeli tour organizers.

Franciscan connection



One ray of hope, dare I say a moment of pride as a lay Franciscan, was when I learned of the importance of the Franciscans in the Holy Land.

Franciscans have been there since 1217, the time of St. Francis, when they created in the order the Province of the Holy Land. They have been in the Holy Land in one form or another since then. Since 1342 they have been known under the title "Custody of the Holy Land". They currently occupy Saint Savior Monastery in Jerusalem. Their primary responsibility is safeguarding holy places and making sure the spiritual value of these places is preserved. They welcome pilgrims and maintain the shrines, basilicas, and churches in the Holy Land.

We had a presentation from one of the Franciscans in Jerusalem and he told us what a delicate diplomatic balancing act it is to have so many religions and even various Christian sects as actors in the preservation of the holy places. Very often at meetings, nothing gets decided, so nothing gets done. Changes come slowly if at all. He mentioned that in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre a ladder is brought out each Lent and placed in the place where it was once used to light candles—right in the way of pilgrims entering the building. It is no longer needed because electricity was installed a long time ago. However, the ladder comes out every Ash Wednesday anyway and must be gone around by the thousands entering and leaving. Apparently, there are more important things to talk about at meetings than useless ladders!

Given their long service, and their knowledge of the inner workings of the Holy Land machinery, we owe the Franciscans in the Holy Land a great debt of gratitude, and an abundance of prayers for their continued presence. God is working miracles through them that we will never know about.

What can be done?

I grieve for Bethlehem. I have had difficulty writing and talking about my pilgrimage to the Holy Land because when I open my mouth to speak, my words are haunted by the living stones. They are crying out for justice and I feel called to give them a voice.

I have also been haunted by the words addressed to Saul of Tarsus in the Acts excerpt at the beginning of this article: **"Why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."** May God intercede with the same blinding miracle of conversion for those who are persecuting the living stones of the Holy Land.

If you too are haunted by the plight of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, there are ways to help. First of all, pray and offer sacrifices and Masses for them. The Holy Land is bleeding Christians, now down to 2% of the population. If the situation does not change, what will keep the few remaining Christians there? Would you stay if you were them? Please pray for those who are sacrificing so much to keep the Christian presence alive in the Holy Land.

Second, educate yourself and others, and write to your federal representative urging them to ensure that the basic human rights of Palestinian citizens are respected.

Third, donate to the Good Friday collection in support of the Holy Land, either through the parish or at <https://www.custodia.org/en>. The Catholic Near East Welfare Association www.cnewa.org also has projects that include support for foreign workers in Israel and the poor in Palestine. You can also support students directly through the University of Bethlehem <https://www.bethlehem.edu/>.

Above all, go visit the living stones of the Holy Land to support and encourage them, to let them know they are not forgotten in the world. Join or arrange a church pilgrimage, but try to choose Palestinian tour guides. And don't be afraid to stay in Bethlehem. The birthplace of Jesus is full of beautiful souls.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we pray for the Holy Land, for peace that comes from hearts filled with love, for justice that flows from the heart of God, and for strength and courage for those who are bearing the cross of injustice.

St. Paul, pray with us for the conversion of all who are in need, that the peace of Christ, beyond all understanding will fill the hearts of all.

Shalom.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



FROM THE 'SPARROW' Light and Darkness

Peace to all the little sparrows! Lent brings about the contrast of the light and darkness we face in our choices before us in the world. The "the light of Christ" and "the darkness of the world," in other words. Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world, but rather to save the world by bringing light into it. But men hate the light of truth because it exposes their real nature. Many would say they couldn't care less about the light Christ brought, but why then do they hate the light? It is foolish to hate something that one disregards.

The light came in the person of God's Son, and it has splashed itself across the ages of time and the pages of space. Christ could truly say, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) However, people reject the light and make fun of divine judgment on sin, and God gives them freedom to do that. But when unbelievers close their eyes in death, they have nothing more to expect

than outer darkness. If we love darkness and hate the light because we know that it will expose our evil, we are condemned already to that darkness.

We see a united and intense effort to eliminate Christ from society today. This, in part, by cursing in His name and by removing His name from its rightful place. Men and women seemingly glorify darkness in their celebration of Halloween (and other occult-oriented days) that detract from Christian ideals and do so in the name of fun and recreation. Darkness falls over the whole world, while unbelieving man foolishly tries to convince himself that life is a party of sin.

At the beginning of Creation God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Today it is still as it was back then. When daylight arrives, darkness flees. When light leaves, darkness always comes back. Even just a glowing ember has some power over darkness. When Jesus was arrested, He said to the chief priests and captains, "This is your hour, and the power of



darkness." (Luke 22:35) John 3:19 tells us that "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." When crimes and sins are committed, they are frequently done at night.

When Abraham Lincoln was a boy living in a three-sided shack, he had the responsibility of keeping a fire burning night and day. The fire gave heat, light, and safety from wild animals. In our own experience, the darkness in our heart will be driven out when we consistently receive Jesus as the Light. There will be warmth and peace within us. If we move away from Jesus, darkness returns to our heart. Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' (John 8:12)

Paul describes the light he saw from Heaven as being "above the brightness of the sun". (Acts 26:13) Jesus spoke to Paul out of that light and sent him as a witness

to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God". (Acts 26:18) In Revelation it says that in Heaven there will be no light. The light of Heaven is so brilliant that there will be no shadows, not even to its outer edges.

The well known Peace Prayer, which is often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, has the intercessory prayer line, "Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace...where there is darkness (let me bring your) light..." St. Francis recognized that there would be darkness and to offset it we were to bring the Lord's light...it was the needful thing to do in the past, my dear sparrows, it is still the needful thing for us to do today!

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
—Psalm 119:105

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

EGO DORMIO ET COR MEUM VIGILAT... **By Donna Kaye Rock, Postulant, BSP**



"I am sleeping, but My Heart keeps watch." Jesus is saying this to us from the Tabernacle in the Most Blessed Sacrament! He is always there for us with such Love that we cannot fathom it with our limited knowledge and insight.

When I was an Aspirant at 19 years old, I entered for three months with The Benedictine Sisters in St Marys, PA. I would often make visits to Our Lord in the Chapel. Such comfort and Joy it gave me to know that Jesus is there in the Tabernacle, waiting for us! Wow! What a beautiful mystery. As I knelt in one of the Sisters' Prayer Stalls, I picked up a Prayer book and came across that awesome meditation that was in Latin, *Ego*

Dormio Et Cor Meum Vigilat! The Sisters had taught me a lot about going to Jesus and speaking with Him, and we were encouraged to let Him speak to our hearts.

When the Mistress of Aspirants took us girls to see a movie, that is when I fell in Love with St. Francis. The movie was about a little Italian boy who took his sick donkey to the tomb of St. Francis to be healed. It has fostered in me a great love and admiration for St. Francis and Clare ever since. And thanks to the dear Benedictine Sisters who taught me about Our Lord's Love for us in the Blessed Sacrament, and for the day I found the Prayer Book, I shall be ever grateful.



From the Desert Fathers

*An anchorite saw one demon inciting another one to go and awaken a sleeping monk and he heard the other one saying:
"I cannot do that because I did awaken him once.
He got up and burnt me, singing psalms and praying."*

Submitted by: Philothea



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT OUR WEBSITE

Pax et bonum dear Brothers and Sisters. The BSP website was initially designed and built by Anna Feroni (Italy) in 2003 using html code. Anna became ill and I took over from her in 2010. Sadly, Anna passed away not long after that. Unfortunately, I have only a basic knowledge of html code and have difficulty making any but the smallest changes to the site. Technology has improved exponentially since 2003 and I would now like to upgrade to a Wordpress format, which I am quite familiar with. As most of our members come to us through the website, I think it is important to keep it as current as we can.

There are thousands of files on the current site, connected in ways that only Anna would know. I am not confident that I could migrate it myself without losing files or making mistakes I could not fix. I have found someone qualified to assist with the transition. He has quoted me a cost of around \$600 to make the migration to Wordpress. So I am asking you, in the terminology of St. Francis, "for the love of God," if you are able to make a donation in any amount, please send a check to The Brothers and Sisters of Penance, c/o Bruce Fahey at the address on the last page of the newsletter. The BSP charges no fees and has no funds in reserve. So, I come to you in the Franciscan tradition of a beggar. Should any extra funds be raised, they will be put towards the annual website fees, which amount to around \$100 per year for web hosting and domain name renewal. In the past, individual members have paid the annual website fees, which is our main BSP expense. Direct questions to webmaster@bspenance.org.

Thank you for considering this. As God wills. Fiat!

Janet Klasson BSP

STAY CONNECTED...PLEASE!

If you wish to connect with your Brothers and Sisters in the BSP, please remember that the **BSP Forums** at <http://bspenance.org/forum/>. Hope to see you there!

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.



*May our risen Savior,
Jesus Christ,
lead, guide and protect
us all as we wait in
joyful hope
for the coming of
His kingdom.*

"The Resurrection of Christ" (1700) by Noel Coypel

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 minncc03@gmail.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
minncc03@gmail.com ~ www.bspenance.org



Welcome to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance!

In the world, but not of it, for Christ!



The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
PENANCE



of St. Francis

65774 County Road 31
Northome MN 56661