



...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 Rescued from Shipwreck

3. Brother James of Rieti was crossing a river in a small boat with a number of other friars and they stepped out on to the bank first. Then, just as he was preparing to leave the boat, it capsized accidentally. The boatman was able to swim, but the friar sank immediately. The friars who were on dry land implored St. Francis, begging tearfully to come and help his son. In the depths of the river Brother James could not open his mouth to speak but he entreated St. Francis' help with all his heart. And St. Francis was there to help him, so that he walked along the bottom of the stream as if it were dry land and picked up the sunken boat and brought it to the shore. His clothes were perfectly dry and not a drop of water had touched his habit.

4. A friar called Bonaventure was crossing a lake with two other men, when a timber in the boat gave way under the force of the water and it went down and they with it. From the waters of the lake they begged St. Francis confidently to have pity on them and the boat suddenly rose to the surface, full of water, and brought them safely to land under the saint's guidance.

A friar from Ascoli who was lost in a river was saved by St. Francis in a similar fashion.

A party of men and women who were in the same danger on Lake Piediluco were rescued from their peril when they called on the name of St. Francis.

5. A number of seamen from Ancona were being tossed about in a violent storm and in imminent danger of sinking. They had no hope and they begged St. Francis to help them. Then a great light appeared over their boat and the sea miraculously became calm, as if the saint could command the winds and the sea by his extraordinary power.

I am convinced it would be impossible to give a complete description of all the miracles which brought glory to St. Francis among seafarers and still bring him glory, and of all the times that he came to the aid of those who had given up all hope. Even when he was on earth, the whole of creation waited upon him, as it was originally intended to, and it is no wonder that now he is in heaven he should enjoy authority over the waves.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier, July 7, 2019

(Readings: Is 66:10-14c; Gal 6:14-18; Lk 10, 1-12, 17-20)

The times we are living in are very difficult for the Church and for her members. In parish after parish we are seeing the numbers of people who populate the pews diminishing. While we can blame some of

this on the scandals of the past few years, the reality is much deeper. If we look at the tragedy of the absence of faith in Europe, it is clear this is not due to the recent scandals. There is a much more pervasive problem which has infected society in general and individual minds and hearts in particular.

The enemy of our souls has been very successful in pushing people to abandon God and His Church. Of course, they will initially say they still believe in God, but as time goes on they drift further and further away. At the root of all this is atheistic nonsense which has resulted in the entitlement attitude we see in so many of our young people. What our Lady spoke at Fatima just over a hundred years ago is coming to pass before our very eyes.

As we have mentioned many times before, this is a time of purification and, ultimately, the time of crucifixion for the Church. While many more will abandon the Church because they fear the suffering and persecution, St. Paul tells us in the second reading that he will boast in nothing except the Cross of our Lord because through it he has been crucified to the world and the world to him. In other words, it is the Cross which made Paul a Saint.

When one is enduring the Cross it does not seem to be a cause for rejoicing. However, when we see the fruit God brings forth from our suffering, we are most grateful and would not trade the Cross for anything the world has to offer. We can see this with our Lord: the fruit of His suffering is our redemption and salvation. As horrible as His crucifixion was, neither He nor we would ever exchange it for something passing, no matter how valuable it may be.

St. Paul's rejoicing in the Cross merely follows the footsteps of our Lord Who rejoiced in His Cross first. Jesus did not rejoice because of the Cross itself and what it implied on the natural level; He rejoiced because of the incomparable good God would bring through the Cross. We see this same mystery described in the first reading when Isaiah calls upon all who were mourning over Jerusalem to rejoice with her and be glad because of her. Jerusalem had been destroyed and abandoned. The people were led into exile, the Temple was demolished, and it looked

hopeless.

Jerusalem had become unfaithful to the Lord. Although they went through the motions of serving the Lord, the hearts of the priests and the people were far from the Lord. God allowed the city to be destroyed, only to rebuild it and bring back a people who were faithful and grateful. Initially, the people could see nothing good in what was happening, but later they understood that what God was doing was very good and that He desired only their true good.

So, as the Church goes through her time of crucifixion, we need to know God's intention is only good. What is happening does not appear to be good and what is going to happen will not appear to be good. As it was with ancient Jerusalem, so it will be with the New Jerusalem, the Church: only after everything is finished and the restoration is complete will we be able to see fully the goodness of what the Lord has done. In the meantime, we have enough experience to know the pattern of how this works. For this reason, we can rejoice even now because we know the crucifixion is going to be the resurrection and glory of the Church and the cause for her rejoicing.

Jesus instructed His disciples not to rejoice so much in the fact that the demons were subject to them, but that their names were written in Heaven. Our Lord told them He observed Satan fall from the sky like lightning. More than that, our Lord has given His Church the power to tread upon scorpions and serpents and has said "the full force of the enemy will not harm you." Satan, as intelligent and powerful as he may be, is nothing in comparison to God. The Lord will allow the vile creature some leeway for the purification of the Church, but it is ultimately for the good of the Church. The victory is assured, but it is through the Cross and resurrection. Therefore, recognize the pattern, rejoice, and do not boast except in the Cross of the Lord!

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ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... SOME WORTHWHILE THINGS



Once again, in the Office of Readings there was a beautiful writing worth pondering at length.

"For me, life means Christ, and death is gain. The waters have risen and severe storms

are upon us, but we do not fear drowning, for we stand firmly upon a rock. Let the sea rage, it

*cannot break the rock. Let the waves rise, they cannot sink the boat of Jesus. What are we to fear? Death? *Life to me means Christ, and death is gain.* Exile? *The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord.* The confiscation of goods? *We brought nothing into this world, and we shall surely take nothing from it.* I have only contempt for the world's threats, I find its blessings laughable. I have no fear of poverty, no desire for wealth. I*

am not afraid of death nor do I long to live, except for your good. I concentrate therefore on the present situation, and I urge you, my friends, to have confidence."

—St. John Chrysostom

These are wonderful words for us to consider in our commitments to Christ and to living, in full or part, a life of penance for him. We all live in different places and situations as given to us by God, yet we are one in what we are trying to do for the love of Christ. We are one, in Him. We are united in our spirits, our intentions, our prayers, and the Rule however we are living it through the BSP. These things are what makes us a community in Christ as this is what we do in common. The life and dreams we share.

So, when we seem all alone out there let's remember that for now this is the best we can do. Let us put on Christ, and seek holiness in our life, and really seek to grow in His love where we are planted. The Rule is our 'narrow path' to eternal life. If God sends you brothers and sisters where you live, who want to share your life, then you can bring them into the BSP and begin a Chapter where you live, and the life and lifestyle of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance will come alive for you. If you would like to do that please contact us at minncc03@gmail.com and we will help. It is a worthwhile goal.

Another worthwhile goal would be for all of you in other countries to translate the Rule and Statutes, from the web page, into your language and post it

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

to the Internet. That way your friends and neighbors, who do things on the Internet, might run in to the Rule of 1221 as St. Francis gave it to us and find in the Statutes a modern adaption to living the Rule today. If you decide to do this please just drop us a line and let us know you are doing it, for the record. ☺ We thank Martin Wolter, in Germany, for doing this in the German language, and Fr. Jacob Gerard, for doing this in the Spanish language.

To do this is completely consistent with our Mission and Vision Statements which say:

THE MISSION OF THE BSP

The Mission, Purpose or Social Objective of the Association is to renew the lifestyle of the Rule of 1221, the First Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis, as given to us by St. Francis of Assisi and approved by the Church, in our own lives and our modern world for the Love of God and as a Gospel witness to the world, so as to fulfill our Vision.

THE VISION OF THE BSP

The Vision of the Association is that we are a family of Catholic lay brothers and sisters who are seeking Union with God in fulfillment of the Gospel after the manner and according to the example of the early penitents in the Catholic Church, which included many Saints and Blessed.

God bless you in all things, all ways.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,



IN CHRIST ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER...

by Janet Klasson, BSP

"In (Christ) all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16-17)

In one of his appearances to St. Catherine of Siena, Jesus told her, *"In his ignorance man treats himself very cruelly. My care is constant, but he turns my life-giving gifts into a source of death."* In other words, what our Lord gives us for our good, we misuse to the point of causing ourselves grave harm. Consequently, in our willful disobedience, we are running headlong into destruction.

There are all manner of theories out there as to why the world is careening out of control on so many fronts. Even if you believe in climate change, it is vastly

inadequate to explain the confluence of calamities—natural, economic, political, and social, not to mention the rebellions, protests, and chaos—that currently assail our world in apocalyptic proportions. It's like being focused on a broken fingernail during an earthquake. It's like trying to stop a flood with a sieve—every new solution is so full of holes it only serves to exacerbate the situation. Vanity of vanities!

Those of us who have been paying attention to the words of Our Lady, especially over the past century and a half cannot be surprised at what is transpiring as we



have witnessed the wholesale rejection of Christ in contemporary society. Colossians 1: 17 tells us: *"(Christ) is before all things, and in him all things hold together."* That, my friends is the key to the matter: In Christ all things hold together, and the more he is rejected, the more things fall apart. What we have sown in rebellion and disobedience, we are reaping in chaos and destruction. Lord have mercy on us, for we have sinned!

However, even in the midst of trials that seem certain to get worse before they get better, there is cause for great hope and joy. We who believe in Christ, believe that there is far more going on than what our senses tell us. We remember that at Calvary, all seemed lost, and even the apostles ran away scared. But a mere three days later—the resurrection! A more glorious outcome than could have ever been dreamed possible! We believe that God is in control now, just as he was then. One significant advantage we have over the apostles is that they endured their trial before Pentecost, while we have already received the gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Catechism tells us:

"The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

"The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations. (CCC #1830-31)

The catechism goes on to tell us that the gift of fortitude *"ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good."* Fortitude is one gift we will have great need of as the days continue to darken.

As we hear so often, God has not left us orphaned. With

the Holy Spirit as our strength and guide, the storms of life may batter us, but our immortal souls will not be harmed as long as we remain in a state of grace, are docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and make use of the extraordinary graces being poured out over us at this time. God has not left us orphaned, but we must accept the graces he offers, especially those he showers on us through the Eucharist.

A recurring theme in the writings of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is the need for the human will to be united with the Divine Will. He taught that peace will only come when we enter into this Communion of Wills. This is something each of us can work towards and by doing so, we accomplish far more than the sum of our paltry efforts. Pope Benedict was familiar with the life and writings of Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, whose cause for canonization is currently in process. Jesus teaches us through Luisa how to live always in the Divine Will. The Italian translation of Luisa's writings have been found by Vatican-appointed theologians to contain no errors in faith or morals. They are complex writings, but Fr. Robert Young (may he rest in peace) has left us a treasure in a series of podcasts found at <https://divinewilllife.org/>. If you are unfamiliar with the writings of Luisa, please click on "An Introduction to the Divine Will" at the top of that web page. There are 19 podcasts that give a very gentle and solid primer. God be praised!

Let us keep these things in mind as we continue to pray and offer sacrifices for souls and for the coming of the Kingdom. The world is desperately in need of penance, as the angel indicated so strongly at Lourdes and Fatima. May the Holy Spirit grant us the fortitude to fast and pray well according the will of our Father in heaven.

St. Mary and St. Joseph, pray for us. St. Francis, St. Clare, pray for us. All you holy saints and angels, pray for us. All you holy souls in purgatory, pray for us. We need all the help we can get!

Jesus we trust in you. Maranatha!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



FROM THE 'SPARROW' Mater Dolorosa

Peace and good things to all my sparrow friends! September and October along with May are special to us sparrows because some of the most notable feasts to Our Lady are found within these months. With especial interest this month

following the Triumph of the Cross (September 14) is Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15). It is quite appropriate that the Church saw fit to place her feast following closely the Triumph of the Cross. Let us examine this noble and sad title of Our Lady to see a definite contrast of the joys and sorrows that came to her through her Son as the Angel Gabriel secured her "fiat" to God's invitation for her to enjoin His plan of salvation for us.



Our Lady of Sorrows in Latin is known as Mater Dolorosa and her sorrows are known as her dolors. To bring these sorrows into a sharper focus let us turn to and examine them through two Catholic devotions of the Marian Rosary and the Chaplet (or Rosary) of Our Lady of Sorrows. The Marian Rosary with its twenty various mysteries is well known to all sparrows and needs little explanation. The Chaplet of Our Lady of Sorrows is somewhat different with seven groups with seven beads on which seven Hail Mary's are set in reference to the seven Sorrows suffered by Our Lady and which correspond to dramatic scenes in Our Lord's life.

The contrast we are looking for in the depth and intensity of Our Lady's suffering must be viewed by looking first at her involvement with the Angel Gabriel which in the Gospel of Luke does NOT include any hint of suffering at all and this will set the stage and engage the contrast we are seeking. At Luke 1:26-38 we find the story of the Announcement of the Birth of Jesus with the Divine promises to Mary that her "fiat" to God's requests would usher in the kingdom of God through the promised coming of the Son of God. Please read the story told by Gabriel and you will see for yourself that there is no hint of sadness, suffering, or sorrow inferred but seemingly a story that would move Mary to a hopeful future.

The seemingly first sorrow, but one NOT included in the Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows seven distinct sorrows, but one we must look at nonetheless, is found in Matthew 1:18-25, wherein Joseph is mistaken in his beliefs about how Mary's pregnancy came to be and the narrative shows how an angel straightened Joseph out on the matter while he slept. But there is no real clarification as to the feelings of rejection and suffering Mary had and we should take note that this was a slight that would be the first of many yet to come because of her saying yes to God's plan. Divine plans are not without trials and sufferings at times. This caused her indirectly to be uprooted from her native home and moved to Bethlehem to arrive with no place to stay in her pregnancy, but instead to give birth to the Son of God in a stable. The picture is already darkened as to the further possibility of struggle and more sufferings and sorrows. Immediately after the birth of Our Lord we come to where the Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows breaks from the traditional Marian Rosary and focuses primarily on the Seven Sorrows, or Dolors, of Our Lady. The first three Sorrows are independent of each



other having occurred at different times. The concluding four happened on Good Friday and show Mary contrasted with the Passion narrative. In Catholic devotional art Our Lady of Sorrows is often depicted with Seven Swords piercing her heart which, of course, correspond to the Seven Sorrows. This image speaks eloquently to our sparrow's heart!

The first sword is the Prophecy of Simeon where the Virgin Mary is forewarned of the coming sorrows that her Son would cause her and bring sorrows to her heart. Mary being aware of scripture references of the Suffering Servant had to be saddened at what the future held for her Son and herself. She had now approached the road to mental and emotional suffering in proper.

The second sword is for the Flight into Egypt with her Son to avoid His being murdered by Herod. One can only imagine the anxiety of that flight from her native land with the Child Jesus. Followed by learning in horror of the slaughter of the Innocents by Herod who was trying to search out the long-awaited Messiah.

The third sword is the Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple. This is the counterpoint to the Fifth Joyful Mystery of the Marian Rosary. The grief of Mary at the loss of her Son for three days cannot be easily grasped...only by a loving parent can this pain be understood. Her

sighs and tears during those days of separation should move our hearts to the utmost sympathy for this Mother of God.

Before we move to the Passion Sorrows let us briefly recognize some suffering and sorrows that are not heralded herein. The death of St. Joseph must have been a very hard trial for her for she had known him from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to Egypt, and then back to Nazareth, and this void in her life could only be filled by her comforting Son. From the onset of Jesus' ministry he was opposed by various religious leaders of Mary's faith and this concern would have brought anxiety to her. Even her own townspeople of Nazareth rejected Jesus and turned on Him and this would have certainly broken her heart. There are many other examples that would have been hurtful when viewed from her mother's protective eyes.

The fourth through seventh swords are the Passion, Death and Resurrection and we shall view them as one scene. The fourth sword is Mary meets Jesus carrying His Cross; the fifth sword is The Crucifixion; the sixth sword is Mary receives the body of Jesus from the

Cross; and the seventh sword is the body of Jesus is placed in the tomb. These four Passion scenes must leave us in a shocked sense of the utter grief, sorrow, pain, and tears that Mary was left with. The Rosary is then ended with three Hail Marys in honor of the tears she shed then and for the tears she is still shedding for us her wayward children now living in the world.

Looking at the suffering and sorrows and then looking at Mary how did such a young woman endure these many trials of faith? Yes, faith is the answer and now we turn to Mary's words of the Canticum of Mary found in Luke 1:46: **"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my soul rejoices in God my savior."** This was her courage and her strength and her staying power through those extremely trying and difficult times. St. Francis of Assisi recognized this about Our Lady and chose her to be his guide when he started his walk of faith.

St. Bonaventure said about Our Lady and St. Francis: "In the church of the Virgin Mary Mother of God, therefore, her servant Francis made his devout delay, and he implored her insistently with continuous sighs—she who conceived the Word full grace and truth, that she might deign to become his advocate; and through the merits of the Mother of Mercy, he himself conceived and gave birth to the spirit of evangelical truth." (St. Bonaventure, Major Life, Dolours)

Clearly my dear sparrows, St. Francis was aware of the suffering, sorrows, and tears of Our Lady, yet he emphatically chose her as his patroness. Can we do less?

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

(Note: The bird image above was drawn by one of Bob Hall's friends and fellow converts to the Lord. Used with permission.)



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWLY PROFESSED BSP MEMBER KATHLEEN McCORMICK!

Blessings and congratulations to sister Kathleen McCormick who professed at the annual retreat for St. Anthony Chapter of the BSP in Escondido. She has given permission for her beautiful, lively letter of thanks to the members of the St. Anthony Chapter, to be published in the newsletter. Who says penitents are dour? ☺

Dear St. Anthony Chapter,

I want to express my deepest gratitude to you all, especially Brother Chris for assisting in my final profession. It sounds so Final!

Everyone was so very sweet and kind and loving. I loved all the hugs. Thank you!

I had a ball laughing as we waited to confess our sins. I even was provided a "throne" while I waited. I tried to trick you into using my chair while I took a walk, but our ingrained "we must suffer for our sins" standing in line was alive and well. Sorry for my arrogance but it was a trip! I'll blame Christian for that!

The real purpose was to let Jennifer and the rest of you all know that it all was overwhelming. But when I got in the car to go home, God saved the best for last. I came home in a pink cloud, full of God's joy and I could not stop praising God for the gift of being called to be a BSP Franciscan!! It was so great to rise in the morning and be so full of hope. I give thanks to Jesus, our Mother Mary, St. Francis, St. Anthony (he's always there for me) and St. Clare. I pray to them daily. Holy Spirit thanks a million for keeping the lines of communication open to me. You are so incredible. There are no words.

Your sister in Christ,
Kathy. Pax et Bonum always



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!

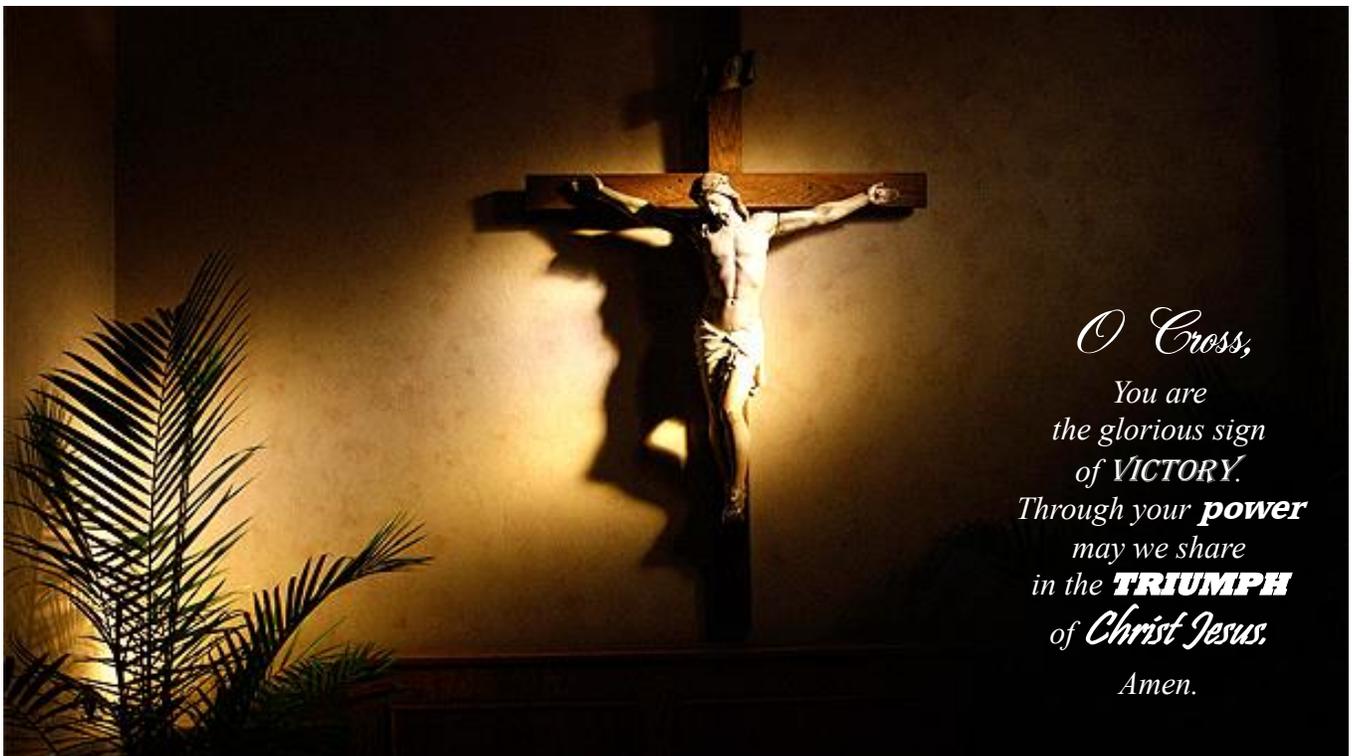
HANDBOOK OF THE ASSOCIATION...

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.



Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

September 14



*Our Lady of Sorrows,
Sweet Mother of Grace, pray for us.*

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
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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

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