



...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

#### V. Prisoners Who Were Set Free

4. When Gregory IX was pope, a man called Peter from Alife was accused of heresy and taken prisoner at Rome, where the pope gave him over to the bishop of Tivoli for safe-keeping. The bishop took him with his diocese as the forfeit, and put him in chains, throwing him into a dark dungeon from which there was no escape. There the prisoner was given a ration of food and drink. Then hearing that it was the vigil of the feast of St. Francis, he entreated him with prayers and tears to have pity on him; he had now purified his faith and renounced all heresy and become a devout client of St. Francis who was one of Christ's most loyal servants. As a result, he was found worthy to be heard by God, through the merits of St. Francis. At twilight on the evening of his feastday, St. Francis took pity on him and came into his prison. He called him by name and told him to stand up. Peter was terrified and asked who it was. He was told that it was St. Francis. There and then he saw the chains on his feet broken by the power of the saint's presence. At the same time, some of the iron bolts fell from the stone walls of the cell, so that the walls opened and left the way free for him to escape. He was free but he was so overcome that he could not make his escape; instead he rushed to the door of the cell and frightened the guards with his cries. They told the bishop how he had been freed from his bonds and when he had heard the whole story, he visited the prison himself. There he realized clearly that the power of God had been at work and he fell down to worship him. The chains were shown to the pope and



the cardinals and when they saw what had happened, they were amazed and gave thanks to God.

5. Guidolotto from Castel San Gimignano was falsely accused of poisoning a man and of plotting to kill his son and the rest of his family in the same way. He was arrested by the city magistrate, loaded with chains, and locked up in a tower. However, he put his trust in God and committed his cause to the patronage of St. Francis, leaving it to him to prove his innocence. While the magistrate was busy thinking how he could force his prisoner to confess his crime by torture, and how he would put him to death, St. Francis came to Guidolotto the night before the man was to be tortured. The prisoner spent the whole night surrounded with a bright light; he was overjoyed and full of confidence and he was sure that he would be safe. In the morning the torturers came and led him out and put him on the rack, where they heaped iron weights on top of him. They took him down a number of times and put him up again, hoping to make him confess more quickly by the repetition of the agony. However, the prisoner seemed to enjoy it all and his innocence was clear from his face. As he gave no sign of suffering, they lit a huge fire under him, but not a hair of his was harmed, although he was hanging head downwards. Then they poured boiling oil over him, but he overcame it all by the power of the protector to whom he had committed himself. Eventually they let him go and he went off safe and sound.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



## VISITOR'S MESSAGE

### Homily by Fr. Robert Altier, October 27, 2019

(Readings: Sir 35:12-14, 16-18; 2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18; Lk 18:9-14)



In the first reading Sirach states that the Lord is a God of justice Who knows no favorites. When we look at people like our Blessed Lady and the Saints, it is hard to say that God did not somehow favor them above others. Well, He did. Then how can we say He knows no favorites? The fact is, God loves everyone infinitely. The love He pours upon His Mother is the same as the love He pours upon you and me. Because we are finite and the love God gives us is infinite, His love overflows the capacity of every creature.

This said, each of us has a different capacity and we can only receive love to the limit of our capacity. Even though God gave an infinite amount of love to our Lady, she could not receive the infinite love given to her. However, because her love for God was so great, her capacity to receive God's love was, and is, far more than anyone else. As each of us grows in love for God, our capacity to receive God's love will also increase. Hopefully each of us loves God more today than when we were younger, which means we can be filled today with more of God's love than we could in the past and be filled tomorrow with even more of God's love than we are today.

This capacity is not just about how much capacity we have at any given moment. Rather, when we are able to receive more of God's love, then God can love us more. To teach this truth, I use the example of a child's pail and 55-gallon drum which are both submerged into a river. The water, like God's love, overflows both of them. If we ask which is more full, the answer is that both are completely full to overflowing. If we ask which one holds more water, obviously the larger container holds more, even though both are filled beyond their capacity.

It is important to understand that there is no limit to our capacity. As long as we are alive, our capacity to receive God's love can continue to grow. Recall the Gospel reading when our Lord speaks of the different workers getting paid the same amount, even though some worked twelve hours while others worked only one hour. It seems unjust. However, in Heaven, every person will be filled with love to their

absolute capacity. The love given to each will be infinite; the love received by each will depend on how much they grew in love while in this life. Since, like the example of the pail and the drum, both are filled to capacity, no one will feel deprived and no one will feel superior.

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus tells the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee, who performs many religious deeds, had closed his heart to true charity. He looked down on the tax collector and thought he was superior. His self-righteousness earned him God's rejection. The humility of the tax collector, on the other hand, merited him the grace to be justified. The point is that we can close our own hearts to receive God's love, although we give lip service to God and go through the motions. At the same time, a sinner can repent and convert, opening their heart to receive God's love and mercy. Because we are all sinners, we all must repent and open our hearts to receive God's love.

Whether we have been serving the Lord and others in charity since our youngest days or whether we have recently turned our life over to God, what is important is that we open our hearts and keep them open to grow in love and, therefore, in holiness. In the second reading, St. Paul rejoices that he would soon receive the crown of righteousness from the Lord, and then reminds us that not only he will receive this crown because of his extraordinary love and service to God, but that such a crown will be given to every person who awaits the coming of our Lord.

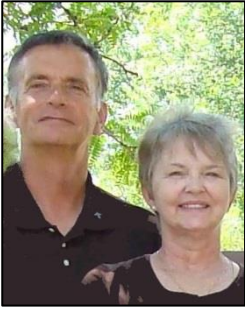
Once again, we see that God know no favorites. God loves everyone infinitely and desires that every person spend eternity with Him in Heaven. Because God has given us a free will, we must choose to love and serve God and others in this life so we can spend eternity with Him. We need to pray to get rid of any and all self-righteousness and beg for humility and charity so our capacity to love God and receive His love will continue to grow. Then we can enter into Heaven and rejoice with every person who has chosen God and is filled to capacity with the love of God!

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## ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

### NOVEMBER



November is a busy month for us, in the Church and in our lives following the Rule of 1221. It is worth considering that as we approach it.

#### **November 1—All Saints Day**

From All Saints to Easter we fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, not just Fridays.

#### **RULE: ARTICLE 8**

**From the Pasch of the Resurrection to the feast of All Saints they are to fast on Fridays. From the feast of All Saints until Easter they are to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, but still observing the other fasts enjoined in general by the Church.**

It also calls us to reflect on the lives of the Saints. All the Saints, which is everyone in heaven and the Church Triumphant. Also all of us here, in the Church Militant, struggling to become Saints. The call of the Church is certainly that we should all be trying to live holy lives. That calls us to keep the Church and each other in our prayers, and do all we can to help those around us lead holy lives.

#### **November 2 - All Souls Day**

St. Francis had a special love for All Souls day. He was very concerned about 'all souls', as his desire was that all people would find the Lord and be saved and he moved through his life with a constant awareness of people and their need to be saved. His Rules were in fact drafted to provide paths to people to find eternal life, and the Rule of 1221, the Rule we follow, was given to the laity specifically to provide them with a way to live that would result in their salvation. Because of this special love for people he requested that his followers pray for the souls of others, living and dead, and for this reason he put Article 24 in the Rule.

#### **RULE: ARTICLE 24**

**In addition, every year, for the welfare of the brothers and sisters living and dead, each priest is to say three Masses, each member knowing the Psalter is to recite it, and the rest shall say one hundred Our Fathers with the Requiem aeternam at the end of each.**



This article of the Rule has been associated with All Souls Day and so at this time of year we call everyone in the Association to pray for the living and dead as St. Francis requested. There is no actual deadline given as to when this must be accomplished but this date is the trigger that calls us to make this sacrifice and at least plan these prayers or even complete them.

There are more than 500 psalms in the Divine Office that we say over the four weeks, i.e. Weeks I, II, III, and IV, of the Four Week Psalter, so we must assume that St. Francis was simply calling people to pray the Divine Office for the day, i.e. November 2, for the brothers and sisters, living or dead when he mentions the Psalter. Otherwise, we should pray 100 Our Fathers with the Requiem aeternam (May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen) at the end of each. Usually that is what we do, in addition of course to saying the Divine Office as part of our daily prayer. The simple fact is that each penitent can decide how they want to pray to fulfill this element of our Rule.

#### **November 11—Feast of St. Martin of Tours**

This is a very important date. St. Francis had a special love for St. Martin of Tours, and used his feast day to launch the Christmas fast in his Rules. So, on November 12, the day after the feast on St. Martin, we begin our 40 day Advent fast. Each penitent can decide how they will fast during this very special and holy season. The fast ends on Christmas. Article 9 of our Rule covers this.

#### **RULE: ARTICLE 9**

**They are to fast daily, except on account of infirmity or any other need, throughout the fast of St. Martin from after said day until Christmas, and throughout the greater fast from Carnival Sunday until Easter.**

Also during Advent we are all encouraged to go to daily Mass when we can.

#### **November 26—Thanksgiving**

Enjoy your Thanksgiving, and November, and give thanks and praise to God for all His gifts.

May the Lord bless and lead us all.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,

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

(Re-printed from the November 2015 newsletter)





## Sister Death...

by Janet Klasson, BSP



**"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if to others, indeed, they seem punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. (Wisdom 3:1-6)**

As November is ushered in by the feasts of All Saints and All Souls, it seems a fitting time to contemplate our good friend, Sister Death, our faithful, inexorable, beloved conductor into eternal life. Beloved, of course, by those well acquainted with the unimaginable love and mercy of God.

This week I was watching EWTN's Journey Home program. The episode featured an atheist turned Religious Sister, Sr. Theresa Alethia Noble, FSP. One of the points she shared was that an important part of her discernment process was a long period of time in which she daily contemplated her death. It served to cement her resolve to live each day as if it were her last chance to become a saint.

As poet Leon Bloy put it: *"The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint."* Contemplating our own death can assist us down that narrow path.

The Office of Readings on the feast of All Souls gave an excellent tribute to Sister Death:

*"It was by the death of one man that the world was redeemed. Christ did not need to die if he did not want to, but he did not look on death as something to be despised, something to be avoided, and he could have found no better means to save us than by dying. Thus his death is life for all. We are sealed with the sign of his death; when we pray we preach his death; when we offer sacrifice we proclaim his death. His death is victory; his death is a sacred sign; each year his death is celebrated with solemnity by the whole world.*

*"What more should we say about his death since we use this divine example to prove that it was death alone that won freedom from death, and death itself was its own redeemer? Death is then no cause for mourning, for it is the cause of mankind's salvation. Death is not something to be avoided, for the Son of*

*God did not think it beneath his dignity, nor did he seek to escape it.*

*"Death was not part of nature; it became part of nature. God did not decree death from the beginning; he prescribed it as a remedy. Human life was condemned because of sin to unremitting labour and unbearable sorrow and so began to experience the burden of wretchedness. There had to be a limit to its evils; death had to restore what life had forfeited. Without the assistance of grace, immortality is more of a burden than a blessing.*

*"The soul has to turn away from the aimless paths of this life, from the defilement of an earthly body; it must reach out to those assemblies in heaven (though it is given only to the saints to be admitted to them) to sing the praises of God."*

—From St Ambrose's book on the death of his brother Satyrus

As penitents we live with death every day as we are called to die daily to ourselves and to our passions. This too helps us down the narrow path.

In a few days, on November 12, we begin our pre-Christmas fast, one of the two 40-day fasting periods we observe each year. May God grant us every grace we need to carry in our fasting His own death as we prepare our hearts to celebrate his holy birth. May He make us saints.

*"Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death, from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will. No second death can do them harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks, and serve Him with great humility."*

—Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon, St. Francis of Assisi

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada

**Prayer of Surrender to God in Death:** O my God, I offer myself to undergo death and, from this moment, I accept it willingly from Thy Hands. I want to welcome it with love, in whatever way it comes to me, suddenly or slowly, easily or bitterly, be it in comfort or in desolation, completely abandoned by men, or in the midst of my brothers. In a word, I want the death Thou hast chosen for me. It is enough for me if it is precious in Thy sight. From this moment, I unite my agony to Thy agony, my death to Thy death. I implore Thee, O Jesus, that my death may be very holy and according to Thy good pleasure, and that the last act of my life may be an act of pure love of Thee. Amen



produced when several notes of various tones are sounded together. But restrictions apply. Not just any combination of notes makes a pleasing harmony. A musician is NOT free to scatter notes helter-skelter across the page and expect that people will enjoy singing his composition. Yet the principles and laws that God has established allow for almost limitless potential for creativity and imagination.

Harmony, then, has little value without melody. Harmony alone is like finding yourself in the middle of a beautiful theme garden. Although you appreciate the beauty, still you want to stroll through the garden from beginning to end. Ah then, melody is the vehicle that gives you a "pleasant ride" through the whole song.

Harmony is a beautiful thing in our spiritual and human relationships. When it is spiritually motivated, we will find that when we work with grace, seeking the will of God then we will find ourselves working things out with "divine harmony" which will ultimately bring about glory to God and our own good. Harmony in human relationships it can be produced when several people work smoothly together. But restrictions apply here as well. Not just any type of working relationship produces pleasing harmony in either the spiritual or human interactions. Yet within the Bible and Church Doctrine there is to be found almost limitless potential for joyful and fulfilling interaction.

Harmony without Christian fellowship has little value for those who "walk the walk" along with the Lord. This would have made no sense, nor been acceptable to St. Francis of Assisi and the many other Saints before or after him. Having the mind of Christ will enable us to work effectively with others who are like-minded. This will take us sparrows from the

beginning of our walk with God safely to the conclusion of our time on earth. God made provision for us to travel this way in the security of unity and the pleasantness of fellowship. An understanding of these concepts is found in the words of the Poverello:

*"Therefore, I implore you, brothers, kissing your feet and with all charity of which I am capable, that you lend all the reverence and all the honor that will be possible for you toward the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which the things that are in heaven and those that are on earth have been pacified and reconciled to Almighty God [...]"*

*"All humanity should fear, the entire universe should shake, and heaven exult, when Christ, the Son of the Living God is present on the altar in the hands of the priest. O admirable heights and stupendous condescension! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity: that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, humbles Himself to the point of hiding Himself under the appearance of bread for our salvation. Look brothers, at the humility of God and open your hearts before Him. Humble yourselves, you also, so that you may be exalted by Him. Keep nothing of yourselves, therefore: that He may receive you whole and entire, He who offers Himself entire to you."*

—A Letter to the Entire Order, St. Francis of Assisi

Now that, dear sparrows, is harmony with a beautiful melody intertwined by the Master of Sparrows himself!

*"To live by love is my heaven, my destiny."*

—St. Therese, the Little Flower

*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.)



## **INDULGENCED ACTS FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED**

There are many indulgences, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, that can be obtained during the month of November. From the fourth edition of the *Enchiridion of Indulgences*, 1999:

1. A *plenary indulgence*, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, is granted to the faithful who,
  - o on any and each day from November 1 to 8, devoutly visit a cemetery and pray, if only mentally, for the departed;
  - o on All Souls' Day (or, according to the judgment of the ordinary, on the Sunday preceding or

following it, or on the solemnity of All Saints), devoutly visit a church or an oratory and recite an Our Father and the Creed.

2. A *partial indulgence*, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, is granted to the faithful who,
  - o devoutly visit a cemetery and at least mentally pray for the dead;
  - o devoutly recite lauds or vespers from the Office of the Dead or the prayer *Requiem aeternam* (Eternal rest).

[Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.]

According to the Manual of Indulgences:

[https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/3189/documents/2018/4/Indulgences\\_v2.pdf](https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/3189/documents/2018/4/Indulgences_v2.pdf)

1. To gain a plenary indulgence, in addition to excluding all attachment to sin, even venial sin, it is necessary to perform the indulgenced work and fulfill the following three conditions: sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.
2. A single sacramental confession suffices for gaining several plenary indulgences; but Holy Communion must be received and prayer for the intention of the Holy Father must be recited for the gaining of each plenary indulgence.
3. The three conditions may be fulfilled several days before or after the performance of the prescribed work; it is, however, fitting that Communion be received and the prayer for the intention of the Holy Father be said on the same day the work is performed.
4. If the full disposition is lacking, or if the work and the three prescribed conditions are not fulfilled, saving the provisions given in Norm 24 and in Norm 25 regarding those who are "impeded," the indulgence will only be partial.
5. The condition of praying for the intention of the Holy Father is fully satisfied by reciting one Our Father and one Hail Mary; nevertheless, one has the option of reciting any other prayer according to individual piety and devotion, if recited for this intention.

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

### **STAY CONNECTED...PLEASE!**

If you wish to connect with your Brothers and Sisters in the BSP, please remember that the **BSP Forums** 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.



# 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](mailto: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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