



...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 Chapter VIII. Those Who Were Cured of Various Diseases

4. A man named Peter from Foligno was making a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Michael, when he committed an offense against reverence expected of a pilgrim and drank at a well. There and then a number of devils entered into him. For three years afterwards he was possessed, and he tore at his own body, while speaking and behaving frightfully. However, he occasionally had lucid intervals and he heard of the efficacy of St. Francis' power in putting demons to flight. He implored his intercession with all humility and went to his tomb. The moment he touched it, he was miraculously delivered from the devils who tormented him.

St. Francis also had pity on a woman from Narni who was possessed, and on many others, but it would take too long to describe their sufferings and how they were cured.

5. A leper called Bonomo from Fano who was paralyzed was brought to the church of St. Francis by his parents and completely cured of both diseases.

A young man by the name of Atto from San Severion who was covered with leprosy was cured by the merits of St. Francis, when he made a vow and had himself brought to the saint's tomb.

The saint excelled in curing this disease because in his love of humility and kindness he had devoted himself to the service of the lepers.

6. A noble woman called Rogata in the diocese of Sora had suffered from a flow of blood for twenty-three years and had endured all kinds of treatment from various doctors. Her condition was so serious

that she often seemed on the point of dying, but if the flow was stopped, her whole body swelled up. Then she heard a young man singing in the local tongue about the miracles which God had worked through St. Francis. She was overcome with sorrow and burst into tears. Then her faith was roused and she exclaimed, "O blessed father Francis! You are famous for such great miracles! If only you would be so good as to cure me of my illness, then you would enjoy greater glory than ever, because you have not performed a miracle like that yet." No sooner had she uttered her prayer than she felt that she had been cured by the saint's intercessions.



St. Francis also healed her son Marius whose arm was paralyzed, when they made a vow in his honor. A woman from Sicily who had suffered from a flow of blood for seven years was also healed by the saint.

7. There was a woman called Prassede in Rome who was well known for her religious fervor; she had lived for almost forty years in a tiny cell for love of her Eternal Bridgroom and she received a special favor from St. Francis. One day she went up on the roof of her cell to get something she needed. There she was struck by dizziness and fell off, breaking her leg and one foot, and dislocating her shoulder. Then St. Francis appeared to her, clad in robes of glory, and spoke to her gently. "Get up," he said. "Get up, do not be afraid." He took her by the hand and raised her up; then he disappeared. She looked this way and that about the cell, convinced that she was seeing a vision. Her screams brought help and when a light was struck, she realized that she had been completely healed by St. Francis and she related everything as it had happened.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier Seventh Sunday of Easter, May 24, 2020

Readings: Acts 1:12-14; 1 Pet 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11a



In the Gospel reading today we have the beginning of the "High Priestly Prayer" of Jesus. This was prayed at the Last Supper, just before our Lord began His Passion. Many important points are included in this prayer, but these will be highlighted for us because of the situation we are in at present.

First of all, in this prayer Jesus pronounces that the Father has given Him authority over all people so He can give eternal life to the people the Father has given Him. Authority is given to serve, which is what our Lord is making clear that He is doing for us. But the question is not about how our Lord exercises His authority, the question for us is how we respond to His authority. Are we obedient to what He asks? Do we seek His will or just strive to carry out our own will? Do we have the proper respect for Him as our King, our Lord, our Savior, and our God?

This becomes important because in this prayer our Lord says to His Father that those the Father has given Him have accepted His words, understood Jesus came from the Father, and believed the Father sent Jesus. Still, within hours the Apostles had all abandoned Him and, after His death their faith in Him had completely faltered, and even after His resurrection some of them still entertained doubts.

This is not to point fingers at the Apostles or at any of our Lord's disciples because today it is our turn. We believe Jesus is the Son of God and we accept His words as the Word of God. We profess Him, with Thomas, to be our Lord and God. But is this just in our minds or have these convictions entered into our hearts? As things become progressively more ugly for the Church and spiritual darkness descends upon our world, we may be tempted to abandon Jesus. When the Church is crucified, we may be the ones entertaining doubts.

Before the time of the Church's crucifixion, there must be a Passion. This is because the Church is the Mystical Person of Christ and the Bride of Christ, so the life of Christ must be lived in her and through her. Therefore, it may happen that some of us will

need to suffer various trials because of our faith in Jesus. Are you willing to do that? Some trials may be fairly easy. St. Peter tells us in the second reading that if we are insulted for the Name of Christ we are blessed and the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us. And that, just for being insulted!

Imagine the glory and grace from the Holy Spirit that will be poured upon those who are arrested, beaten, or even put to death because of their faith in Jesus. This is why St. Peter tells us to rejoice to the extent that we share in the sufferings of Christ. On the surface it does not seem to be a cause for rejoicing, but if we are bearing these sufferings out of love and, especially if we can understand the grace and glory given to us for sharing in the sufferings of our Lord, then we can see there is great cause for rejoicing. After all, in the Gospel Jesus prayed that His Father would give Him glory so He could glorify the Father. This refers, not to the resurrection and ascension, but to our Lord's Passion and death.

Ask yourself honestly what you think your response would be if you found yourself in a situation of others harassing you or threatening you because of your faith. We would all like to think we would never deny our Lord, but Peter had that same confidence at the Last Supper and denied our Lord three times in the subsequent hours. This reminds us that we are weak and, if the conditions were right, we could also deny our Lord. It is not that we want to do so, but we can never be confident of our own strength and ability.

Notice that after the Apostles had learned the very important truth of their own weakness and the need to be dependent on God, that they gathered together in prayer. Most importantly, they were there with our Lady who taught them. Our Lady is the only one who remained completely faithful to Jesus and never harbored a doubt. This is because she was convinced of her own nothingness and, therefore, looked to God for everything.

This is the lesson we all need to learn and it is best learned from our holy Mother. This is her time, this is her work! Pray and remain close to Mary; She will keep you faithful to Jesus.

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ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

Open the Door

There is a message in the book of Revelation that is well worth pondering as it affects all of us in our lives, if we want it to and take it seriously.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and him with me. I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself won the victory and sit with my Father on His throne." (Rev. 3:20)

This Scripture doesn't say how we open the door but we must if we want the Lord with us, in us and guiding us, which He always does as God. So, this little Scripture is well worth pondering. We are the ones that must open the door. The Lord is the one knocking and that is at everyone's door. There are many ways we do it, all worth reflecting on.

The list comes primarily from a homily at a Mass on EWTN which we were watching with the churches closed during this pandemic. These various ways of opening the door were given by the priest presiding at the Mass in his homily and we have expanded on them a bit.

First, we open the door by prayer. We must become people of prayer. Mary in a recent apparition said: "Dear children! Pray with me for a new life for all of you. In your hearts...be prayer for all those who do not pray..." We need to become living prayers for everyone and certainly for ourselves and our families and all of our needs. The world needs our prayer. It is incredible the terrible things going on in the world. Hate transparent in it all. We have work to do here.

And, of course, prayer is the first of the good works we need to do. Good works matter right down to the little holy moments we have in adding joy and support to the lives of those around us. The smile we give someone, or the meal we cook for them, or laundry we do. In so many little ways we become Christ to them and in these various things we do for others we open the door to the Lord, and we give Him joy.

Of course, we open the door to the Lord by living His commandments. He said if you live His commandments, he will commend you to His Father. The first and greatest of the commandments is to love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul and the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself. The ten commandments set the framework

for our life and are the minimum anyone can do in living the commandments of the Lord. The Church sets other commandments for life in the Church, and above them all are the commandments to love God and others. So, by doing that with great sincerity and interest and persevering in them we open the door to the Lord.

The sacraments are ways the Church has given us to open the door to the Lord. In fact, without the sacraments you cannot open that door. So, we need to participate in the sacraments with enthusiasm and joy and as necessary to brighten our souls before the Lord. As adults in the Faith the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist are central to our ongoing lives in Christ and are extremely important ways we open the door to the Lord.

Scripture is too. We need to read it and love it and share it with others. God gave us the Bible and his apostles gave us the gospels, and in this way told us of Jesus and all he taught us. St. John says that: **"There are so many things that Jesus did but if these were described individually I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written."** (Jn 21:25)

In the Scriptures our Lord tells us how to open the door. And so spiritual reading is important, and includes the lives of the Saints and other good books certainly. The saints all faced the same problem we do in connecting with God and they found their way there through the same means that are in front of us every day. In the Mass, in Scripture, in the sacraments, and in living a life totally for Christ. Being Christ-centered and focused and seeking at every turn to open the door for the Lord. We need to live consecrated lives, consecrated to Our Lord through our Mother Mary, who will always bring us to her Son and help us to find him.

Finally, our Rule is one beautiful way we open the door to the Lord. It requires that we live our faith and are in full conformity to Mother Church. Especially to those of us who are professed this is a special calling. We know, even if the world doesn't, that we need to do penance, especially right now to head off the pandemic, and this Rule is our way to do it in a special way. Completely unique to us and to all in the world that may have taken a piece of it to live. So, let's live it with joy and courage. And remember that you are authorized to promote it wherever you live! It is a ministry waiting for you.

So, let's open the door to the Lord and welcome Him into our lives. Let us do it with love in our hearts and

with the joy of meeting our best friend, for He calls us friends, and our brother, for we have the same Father and He is the one who told us that, who is

also our Lord and King.

May the Lord bless and lead us all!

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



Our Irresistible Mother...

by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Gospel Reading on the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John

19:26-27)

I am writing this on June 1, 2020, the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church a feast day Pope Francis instituted in 2018. The feast ties in perfectly with what has been percolating in my heart for the whole month of May, namely how irresistible our Mother is. Now, I really love Jesus and have experienced his unimaginable love in the Eucharist. But it seems the more I love Jesus, the more I love Mary (and vice versa), to the point now where my heart skips a beat when I think her. With and through Jesus, I can't help but say, I love our Mama so much!

Those who have had the rare honor of beholding the Blessed Virgin in apparitions have testified to the experience of falling irrevocably in love with her. Mirjana Soldo, one of the alleged Medjugorje visionaries has said that before an apparition she can't sleep for anticipation, and after it is over, there is a period of intense mourning of the loss of Our Lady's presence that often lasts for days. This happens every time.

Another such person is a Jewish convert named Roy Shoeman. In 1987 while walking at Cape Cod he met the Lord (who did not reveal his identity) and had an illumination of conscience. He was instantly converted but told the Lord he would follow anyone but Christ. The Lord respected his wishes and did not at that time reveal his name. He continued to "seek" the one he had met in various spiritualities but was never satisfied. For a year, every night he prayed to know the name of his Lord and Master and God whom he had met at the beach.

A year to the day after the initial experience, he fell asleep after saying that prayer. At some point he was awakened by a gentle hand on his shoulder and escorted to a room where he beheld the most beautiful young woman imaginable. He knew without being told that she was the Blessed Virgin Mary. They

had a conversation and when he woke the next morning, as he puts it, "I was hopelessly in love with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and I knew that the God I had met on the beach was Christ, and that all I wanted was to be as much of, and as good a, Christian as possible."

Roy's complete conversion story is easily found online or on "The Journey Home" on EWTN. It is well worth looking up. He has authored two books, "Salvation is from the Jews" and "Honey from the Rock".

Our Mama is truly irresistible. Archbishop Sheen speaks of the Paradise of Mary:

"As we gather about the crib of Bethlehem, we feel that we are in the presence of a new Paradise of Beauty and Love, and the name of that Paradise is Mary. And if we could have been there in the stable on that first Christmas night, we might have seen the Paradise of the Incarnation, but we should not be able to recollect whether her face was beautiful or not for what would have impressed us, and made us forget all else, would have been the lovely, sinless soul that shone through her eyes like two celestial suns. If we could have stood at the gates to that Paradise, we would have less peered at it as into it, for what would have impressed us would not have been any external qualities, though these would have been ravishing, but rather the qualities of her soul – her simplicity, innocence, humility, and above all, her purity. Christmas takes on a new meaning when the Mother is seen with the Babe. In fact, the heavens and the earth seem almost to exchange places. Years ago, we used to think of the heavens as 'way up there.' Then one day the God of the heavens came to this earth, and that hour when she held the Babe in her arms, it



became true to say that with her we now 'look down' to heaven." Archbishop Fulton Sheen (Manifestations of Christ)

If we take another look at the above-mentioned Gospel passage for today's Memorial, we can scarcely imagine how John must have felt when, from the throne of the Cross, Jesus bequeathed Mary to him and him to Mary. What a gift! And, even more wonderful, we are heirs with John to that glorious gift. We need to ponder this often. He above all knows how irresistible she is, not just to us but to Himself as well. In bequeathing Her to us He set himself up to be a servant of greater mercy through the irresistible Mother of Mercy.

We see at Cana that Jesus cannot resist Her any more than we can, as she is the only soul ever to have lived completely united to the Divine Will. I came across the following beautiful illustration of her irresistible maternal intercession in "The Twenty-Four Hours of the Passion" by Luisa Piccarreta. (This document bears a few imprimaturs beginning in 1915.)

Seventh Hour – Agony in the Garden
(In this excerpt Luisa is speaking.)

But Jesus seems to be not yet satisfied, because He wants yet more souls. He feels the dying souls of these regions being snatched from His arms, to fall into hell. These souls are now about to breathe their last and fall into the abyss. No one is near them to save them. Time is short, the moments are extreme – they will certainly be lost!

*No, Mama, this Blood will not be shed uselessly for them; therefore, let us quickly fly to them; let us pour the Blood of Jesus over their heads, that It may serve them as baptism and infuse in them faith, hope and love. Place Yourself near them, O Mama; make up for all that they lack. Even more, make Yourself seen. On your face shines the beauty of Jesus; your manners are all similar to His; and so, in seeing You, they will certainly be able to know Jesus. Then, press them to your maternal Heart; infuse in them the life of Jesus, which You possess; tell them that, as their mother, You want them to be happy forever, with You in Heaven; and as they breathe their last, receive them into your arms, and let them pass from yours into those of Jesus. **And if Jesus, according to the rights of Justice, will show He does not want to receive them, remind Him of the love with which He entrusted them to You at the foot of the Cross. Claim your rights as mother, so that He will not be able to resist your love and prayers, and while making your Heart content, He will***

also content His ardent desires. (My emphasis.)

This prayer moves me to tears. What hope for our own miserable souls and all the souls we are continuously praying for! If this irresistible creature was the only gift our Lord ever gave us, it would be enough to give us the joy of countless heavens! The King himself finds her irresistible as we see in Psalm 45.

Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear;

forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him;

the people of Tyre will seek your favour with gifts,

the richest of the people ¹³with all kinds of wealth. (Psalm 45:10-12)

Thank you, Jesus for the irresistible gift of our Mama! Glorious, Ark of God, pray for us!

"A TIME LIKE THIS"

A lesson from Esther 4:12-17

When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he had this reply brought to her: "Do not imagine that you are safe in the king's palace, you alone of all the Jews. Even if you now remain silent, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another source; but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows—perhaps it was for a time like this that you became queen?"

Esther sent back to Mordecai the response: "Go and assemble all the Jews who are in Susa; fast on my behalf, all of you, not eating or drinking night or day for three days. I and my maids will also fast in the same way. Thus prepared, I will go to the king, contrary to the law. If I perish, I perish!" Mordecai went away and did exactly as Esther had commanded.

The words of Mordecai have been coming to me lately. "Who knows, perhaps it was for a time like this"...that you were called to a life of penance? There is a rich lesson here from Queen Esther. She is on the front lines, knowing her nothingness in the presence of the King. Before daring to approach the King, she begins a fast and asks the community to support her by fasting as well, so that her request to the King for the life of her people will be heard.

What has our own Mother been asking of us for the last century and a half? Repentance, fasting, and prayer! Why? Because she knows its effectiveness in

the face of evil. Before it the powers of darkness flee.

A time like this—four words, packed with meaning. We are being called, dear brothers and sisters, at this time, to renew our commitment to serving Our Mother in this great battle with the weapons of prayer and penance that we have been given through Rule of 1221. She is the one on the front lines, but she desires our cooperation. So what if there are not many of us? Gideon's little band of 300

men defeated an army as numerous as locusts. To paraphrase St. Francis: Let us take up the banner anew, dear friends, for up to now we have done little or nothing.

Queen Esther's humble strategy was overwhelmingly successful. How much more, then, is the Queen of Heaven's strategy likely to result in Triumph. Ah, but we already know the end of the story. "In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph." Alleulia!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

SUMMER BREAK

This will be the last issue of the BSP newsletter until September. May God bless you and yours this summer and give you health and abundant peace in His Sacred Heart.

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.



“I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:14-21



Consecration to the Holy Family

O Jesus, our most loving Redeemer, who having come to enlighten the world with Thy teaching and example, didst will to pass the greater part of Thy life in humility and subjection to Mary and Joseph in the poor home in Nazareth, thus sanctifying the family that was to be an example for all Christian families, graciously receive our family as it dedicates and consecrates itself to Thee this day. Do Thou defend us, guard us and establish amongst us Thy holy fear, true peace, and concord in Christian love: in order that, by conforming ourselves to the divine pattern of Thy family, we may be able, all of us without exception, to attain to eternal happiness.

Mary, dear Mother of Jesus and Mother of us, by thy kindly intercession make this our humble offering acceptable in the sight of Jesus, and obtain for us His graces and blessings.

O Saint Joseph, most holy guardian of Jesus and Mary, assist us by thy prayers in all our spiritual and temporal necessities; that so we may be enabled to praise our divine Savior Jesus, together with Mary and thee, for all eternity. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be (three times each).

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, Editors



Welcome to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance!

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

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The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
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