



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter VIII—Francis' Loving Compassion and the Love Which Creatures Had for Him

8. Another time, St. Francis was offered a live hare at Greccio. He put it on the ground and left it free to go where it pleased, but the moment he called it, it jumped into his arms. He held it affectionately and seemed to pity it like a mother. Then, warning it gently not to let itself be caught again, he allowed it to go free. But every time he put it on the ground to let it off, the hare immediately jumped into his arms, as if in some mysterious way it realized the love he had for it. Eventually Francis had the friars bring it off to a safer place in the woods.

In the same way a rabbit which was caught on an island in Lake Trasimene was afraid of everyone else, but entrusted itself to Francis' embrace as if that were its home. When he was crossing Lake Piediluco on his way to Greccio, a fisherman offered him a water-bird. Francis took it gladly and then opened his arms to let it off but it would not go. The saint stood there praying with his eyes raised to heaven, and after a long time he came back to himself and once more encouraged the bird to fly away and praise God. When he had given it his blessing, the bird showed its joy by the movements of its body and then it flew off. On the same lake he was offered a live fish which he addressed as brother, as usual, and put it back in the water beside the boat. The fish played about there in front of him, as if it were attracted by his affection, and would not go away until he gave it his permission with a blessing.

9. One time when Francis was walking with another friar in the Venetian marshes, they came upon a huge flock of birds, singing among the reeds. When he saw them, the saint said to his companion, "Our

sisters the birds are praising their Creator. We will go in among them and sing God's praise, chanting the divine office." They went in among the birds which remained where they were, so that the friars could not hear themselves saying the office, they were making so much noise. Eventually the saint turned to them and said, "My sisters, stop singing until we have given God the praise to which he has a right." The birds were silent immediately and remained that way until Francis gave them permission to sing again, after they had taken plenty of time to say the office and had finished their praises. Then the birds began again, as usual.



A cicada used to perch on a fig-tree beside St. Francis' cell at the Portiuncula and sing there, inspiring the saint to praise God for its song, because he could admire the glory of the Creator in the most insignificant creature. Then one day he called it and when it hopped on to his hand as if it had been taught by God, he told it, "Sing, my sister cicada. Sing a song of praise to God your Creator." Immediately the cicada started to chirp and never stopped until the saint told it to go back to its usual perch. There it remained for a whole week and it came and went every day, singing at his command. Finally the saint remarked to his companions, "We must give our sister cicada permission to go away. She has given us enough pleasure by her singing and inspired us to praise God for a whole week." Immediately he gave it leave, the cicada disappeared and was never seen there again, as if it did not dare transgress his command in the slightest way.

(Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263))



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier... Opposite of the World

Reading (1 Corinthians 1:26-31) Gospel (St. Matthew 13:44-46)

In the first reading today, Saint Paul, in speaking to the Corinthians, reminds them of their background. The Corinthians, we recall, had a problem; there was lots of infighting and they were split up in different ways. They would claim, "I belong to this one," and, "I belong to that one." Who was more important was the question that they were really looking at. We recall that when Our Lord's disciples were arguing about that same question He answered it in a way similar to Saint Paul, that is, He called a little child to them and pointed out who was really most important in the kingdom of heaven. And He told us also that the one who is the greatest is the one who would serve the rest.

That is exactly opposite of what the world would consider, but that is the nature of Christianity: It is exactly the opposite of the world. That is precisely the point all of us need to consider. We have been called by God not because we were the best that the world had to offer, because it is exactly the opposite of the world. If there is somebody who wants to be worldly, there really is not any place for that within the Church because as a Christian person you are already professing that you are going to live opposite of the ways of the world. But, unfortunately, the worldly ways have come very much into the Church these days and they are affecting people very deeply. So we need to make sure we are working that stuff out of our lives.

But in the same token, Saint Paul is telling us (and this is, again, something that all of us need to keep firmly in mind) that God chose the weak to shame the strong, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, God chose the lowly and the despised of the world and those who count for nothing to put to shame those whom the world considers to be something of importance. Again, we see very clearly what the Lord is doing. He has called us because we were the weak, we were the foolish, we were the ones the world would not have considered to be of any importance; and He is going to use precisely that means to put to shame all of the worldly power and all of those

who think they do not need God.

And it is going to be very evident to everyone, as it should be already in our own lives if we are truly living the Christian life, that this could not be us. There is no possible way that we are going to be able to do this – only God can. That is the part that is important: to make sure that the way we are living our lives is in such a way that it will be evident to everybody that this is the Lord. If we want to live like everybody else out in the world, everybody is going to look at us and think how wonderful we are and isn't it great that we can fit in. That is not the way Jesus lived His life. He did not fit in; they hated Him because He did not live like the others. We need to make sure we are striving for the same sort of thing, not living in some sort of obnoxious way, but rather living a quiet Christian life, living the spiritual life, living the life of Christ.

Our Lord tells us in the Gospel reading that the kingdom of heaven is like something that is hidden, a buried treasure, a pearl that is inside of an oyster. It is something that is not just simply evident all by itself. It is going to require some work to find it, and it is going to be hidden. So for us, the kingdom of heaven is going to be hidden. The question is, are we willing to do the work to find it, to live it? Are we willing to go forth and get rid of everything else that is not of heaven in order to obtain heaven? Those are the kinds of things we need to think about. The kingdom of heaven, in this sense, is ultimately the Lord Himself, and He is hidden deep within. The Trinity itself dwells within each one of us if we are in the state of grace. Are we willing to do whatever it requires to be able to obtain that treasure?

If we really are the weak and the lowly, the despised and the foolish, we have no reason to boast. We have nothing to be able to point to ourselves and say, "Look at what I've done." All we have the right to do is to look at Jesus and say, "Look at what He has done. Look at who He picked to demonstrate His sense of humor, and now look at what He has done with the ones He has chosen." That is the only thing we can say. We

cannot boast about this as though somehow it is what we have done – because we have not. Anything good in us, the Lord has done in us. We can say only that we cooperated. And even that is kind of humorous because most of us have probably gone kicking and screaming as the Lord had to do His work by dragging us through something. So we cannot even really say that we have cooperated very well. It is all the grace from

God and we need to be so grateful for what He has done, for choosing us, for calling us, for forming us, for helping us to be able to see that this buried treasure of Jesus Christ is worth more than anything else and everything else combined, and for giving us the grace for being able to say “yes”. Now we have to allow Him to form us the rest of the way so that He really can through us put the worldly power completely to shame.

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



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. Venerable Bede says: "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, Bruce, have pondered this often and say I have never quite come to Venerable Bede's definition of holy for myself. As I deliberated being holy I considered many different ways I could address the people and causes of my days, my family, and situations I had to face in life and at work. Sometimes I had to make some tough decisions that others didn't like. I tried to be holy by living my Faith, but despite what I did I never really could define to you what it meant to be holy. For all of my life I assumed it meant that I would live my Faith well and with dedication, and try to be a good servant of the Lord. Servant being another word that is challenging to define for most Christians.

Now, as we begin a new year, it is worth pondering how we are going to be holy, and Venerable Bede's definition of God's holiness is useful. Our call to holiness transposes all the years of our life for we are called to be holy like God is holy. That 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 we should 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!

For purposes of this meditation the creatures in our lives are all the things that we have created. Money is one of them, but there are so many more. Every little electronic thing out there is a creature of our making. TV, radio, skateboards, and snowmobiles, fishing rods, and books. My gosh, books are our creatures too! When you consider that if we are going to be holy, and like God, we need to surpass all of this creation we have made. We clearly cannot surpass the creatures the Lord has made, as he made everything among which the richest and greatest was us, and he gave them life. But, we are called to surpass the "creatures" we have made, the things we have created, and to me, pondering this, it means forget them. Put them out of your mind to think of God. Remove yourself from all these things we have made and make time for God. Now as simple as that is it sounds holy to me, and it looks like something that most of the world would not be interested in doing.

Our Rule is our guide to doing this; to moving beyond the things we have created and spending time with God. As simple as the Rule is it brings us to focus each day on the things of God. The seasons of God. The life of God. It pulls us past the things we have created, and brings us to

create a time in each of our days when we will deliberately focus on the things of God. Now that sounds holy.

Carrying the cross of our life, all the difficulties and problems our lives pour on us, also brings us away from the things of the world that we have created or enjoy, and in that way we live the Gospel in which Jesus said we should 'Deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow me.'

(Luke 9:23). So, that is our way to holiness as given to us by Jesus. That is our way to surpass what we have created or has been created around us, and remove ourselves from attachments to this world, and focus on God. That is the way He gave us, and that is holy.

May the Lord bring us all to a new level of holiness in the New Year! Have a holy, and happy, New Year!

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota
(Reprinted from a previous newsletter.)



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

"What do you want me to do for you? 'Lord, that I may see!' Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight, your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God." (Luke 18:41-43)

A friend of ours recommended that someone she knew should apply for an apartment with our rental management company. He called me and an appointment was set up for him several days later. As the time drew near, the gentleman failed to confirm that he was coming, nor did he return my call. Most people never show up in circumstances like these. I weighed the options. At the appointed time, I thought I better go see if he showed up (at another building). There he was, standing outside in the rain at the front door. He had a cane. I soon found out he was totally blind. To make the appointment, he had found his way unaided to the front door of our building in South Minneapolis from where he works in St. Paul, doing braille translations. He had gotten on the bus after work, transferred to the light rail, gone to Minneapolis, transferred to a bus, and walked to a completely new building, up a long flight of stairs, all on his own. And he was right on time. I was astonished! How did he do it?

I showed him a very nice apartment with newly sanded floors, though there was nothing but a back alley for a view. Didn't bother him... Perfect fit. He is a remarkable man, and is now a happy camper who will likely stay with us for a long time. When I showed him around, I learned a bit about how he operates. He counts the steps from one spot to another, uses his cane adroitly, and feels along the walls for doorways and such. He had me show him where everything was in the apartment so he could operate on his own. Must have a

remarkable memory. I took him downstairs to the laundry room. As he felt along the wall, he announced correctly: "You don't have a laundry room sign." I led him to the washing machines and how to operate them, how many quarters to use. Then over to the dryers.

Filling out his application was interesting. He gave me all the information to put down—job, current and previous rental history, etc. from memory. When it came time to sign, he had me place a credit card underneath the space where he was to sign his name. Then he gave me his checkbook, and we did the same thing. That takes a certain amount of trust. When everything was finished, I helped him get back down the stairs and onto the street. Then I watched him make his way down to the corner where he would, somehow, make his way back to his current apartment, most likely unaided.

He told me how early on in life he had dealt with those whose job it is to minister to the disabled. He spoke with a certain amount of angst, almost anger, as he detailed how they wanted to take care of his every need, whereas he wanted desperately to be free and completely independent. He was forced to leave the public welfare bureaucracy and find a private agency where he would be taught how to be self-sufficient. He wanted a life unencumbered by others who wanted him to be completely dependent on them. I thought, Wow, here is the perfect example of the American spirit, someone

demanding freedom even from those whose job it was to assist him due to his handicap. But he didn't think he was disabled, and he wanted to live on his own like everyone else. I had to admire his courage and tenacity, and the creativity needed to do all that he did, including getting verbal instructions from the manager to walk four blocks over to our office building to deposit his rental check downstairs through a slot in the door. Troy said James first dropped a slip of paper there as a test to make sure it was done properly, before he dropped off his check. I had seen it on the floor in the office, prompting me to make the inquiry.

How different this man is from his contemporaries. So many seem to want to be taken care of from cradle to grave by the State, surrendering their personal initiative and even faith in God to follow the dictates of Secular Socialist ideology which now governs the world. Every day James demonstrates for all to see the true American spirit, a thirst for freedom and independence, a hunger to lead a life of dignity, self-respect, and personal responsibility. May his kind grow and multiply and fill the earth!

I wrote this story for Christmas, for there are so many lessons to be learned from it. "Lord: that I may see!" James showed me how he overcame the physical limitation of his blindness. It was a wonderful hands-on lesson. He didn't get depressed. He didn't complain. He didn't think his handicap should alter the course of his days. He was determined to lead a normal life in spite of the hand he was dealt, overcoming what to most of us would be a very great obstacle.

How does my little cross compare with his? Am I justified in complaining to the Lord about things that look pretty inconsequential compared with being totally blind? For example, in my youth I thought that having a relatively severe case of acne was the world's greatest affliction! Now that looks pretty tame in comparison.

James never set limitations on himself. There's a good one. How many limitations do we set on ourselves? Oh, I can't do that. I've never done that. If I'm out of a job and no work is available where I live, am I willing to move to another city or state for employment? There are always alternatives.

We usually overcome limitations on our material needs. What about spiritual needs? It is said that

spiritual poverty is a much greater affliction than material poverty, which is for time, the former for eternity. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor," there was a reason.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." What limitations do I set on myself in this area? We easily see everyone else's shortcomings; what about our own? "Lord: that I may see!" Are we willing to grow in holiness at great personal cost, the cost of seeing ourselves as God sees us, in all our brokenness? Are we willing to change our behavior if it offends God? Are we willing to do penance?

Our holy father Francis compared himself to a worm, from Psalm 22: "But I am a worm, and no man." Thank God for a long life, and the opportunity to deal with the reality that we really are nothing—and as Jesus said, without Him "we can do nothing!" Bishop Cozzens (our BSP Retreat Master August, 2016) said the fact that we are loved "nothings" makes all the difference in the world – loved by God into existence! That is what gives meaning to our lives. "Christian, recognize your dignity!"

Well, James has given me a new perspective on human dignity as children of God. And what a great time to be making New Year's resolutions! How many times I have heard the admonition to live in the present moment. When I think of how James has to negotiate his way through life moment to moment in the material order, it gives me courage to try to do the same thing in light of my own blindness and incompetence in the spiritual order.

Jesus gave us the ultimate prayer. He asks us to go to His and Our Father for all our needs. "Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God." See how much children depend on their parents. Do we depend on God to the same degree? Yet that is what He wants!

There is NO GREATER LOVE than the love God has for us, and "He takes delight in His People!" We take delight in accepting the blessings of an all-Provident God. I've never thought of His taking delight in my and our response. What an awesome thought! Do you think it would change our lives if we tried to live in such a way that God could take delight in us? I think we would always live in the present moment.

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



Rejoice!

by Janet Klasson, BSP



From the Psalm response on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. (Isaiah 12:3)

Global tensions are on a seemingly exponential uptick.

Yet the utter importance of joy has been coming to me again and again. The above Scripture passage can be read in two ways, a passive way and an active way. The passive way implies that joy is what we are filled with after we are saved. Very true. But the active reading of this passage tells us that joy can also be the “bucket” we can use to draw water from the wells of salvation. Joy therefore becomes an instrument of salvation in the hand of the Christian.

Think about it: a dour Christian makes a crummy witness, but joyful Christian is a powerful sign to others that no matter the circumstances of our earthly lives, our hope is in something infinitely greater. But more than that, Christian joy has its own power to transform the hearts and the lives of those who cultivate it—as well as those around them.

But this must be done appropriately. As the days darken, as the sufferings of the current trial intensifies, it would be insensitive in the extreme to just say, “Chin up! Things will be better tomorrow. This too shall pass.” We are no mere optimists. We are filled with joy because a life lived for God gives meaning to everything—the good and the bad. In all circumstances we believe that God is, that He loves us, that He redeemed us, that when this life is over He will take us to himself. We know that God can use everything we give him, our joys and sorrows, our strengths and weakness, our consolations and our sufferings. In Him nothing is wasted.

Suffering in this “Valley of Tears” is *normal*, a consequence of our fallen nature. Sometimes we are given consolations, earthly joy, and for those times we are appropriately grateful. But we are foolish if we mistake those consolations for heaven. They are a pale imitation, a limited foreshadowing. No, we don’t get heaven here, but we can bring heaven to earth—for ourselves and others—through our selfless acts and attitudes. And this too is cause for rejoicing.

St. Paul told the Philippians: **“Rejoice in the**

Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (Ph 4:4) He did not say to rejoice in the Lord *sometimes*. He said *always*. Rejoicing always is a form of gratitude that goes beyond the secular ideal of living a life of gratitude. Rejoicing always means that you have a wellspring of hope that no earthly circumstance can drain. Even your suffering has an edge of anticipation to it. “Yes, I am suffering now, but this is not all there is. God has given meaning to my suffering. I am on the cross, with Christ. I know and trust that God will use my suffering to accomplish something far more wonderful than anything I could possibly imagine. I believe that in Christ every crucifixion is followed by a glorious resurrection. Jesus I trust in you! Use me as you wish to accomplish your designs upon the world.”

This does not mean that we should not pray to be delivered from suffering, but that if we are not delivered, we can rejoice knowing that God has a divine plan and that he will bear the burden with us, heaping on us grace upon grace so that we will not be crushed by the burden.

This also does not mean that we have to enjoy the suffering. Jesus and Mary did not enjoy the crucifixion, but they rejoiced in it, knowing that the glory of God to be revealed would far exceed the dear cost. They gave it their “Fiat!” and in that word, God’s glory was spectacularly revealed. Our “Fiat” too has immense power. It is a profession of trust in the divine plan, of hope in things unseen and unimagined. This joy fills us with grace and strength. **“Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”** (Neh 8:10)

We are in the beginnings of what will certainly be a tumultuous year ahead. One of the most important ways to prepare for uncertainty is to cultivate holy joy—a joy that is rooted in trust and abandonment to the perfect will of God. We know that God has a plan. While he rarely divulges the details to us, we can trust that he always has one, and that the victory is always his. He asks only that we trust him and that we remain faithful to the end, like the Blessed Mother, John and the women at the foot of the cross.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

(Jer 29:11) The future of hope, my friends is not referring to this life, but to an eternity of joy and peace undreamed of in this life. That is the source of our joy.

"But even if you do suffer for doing what is

From www.pelianito.stblogs.com

Nehemiah 9:21 For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness so that they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

"My children, trust in me! Can I say it too many times? Have you believed it yet? There is much more to come, it is true. All will suffer. And yet those who place their trust in me will be comforted. They will know a peace that no earthly power can give them. Children, what do you have that was not given to you? Trust in your Father who loves you. Remain in him and do not let yourself be distracted from what is essential, namely union with him. Let your daily duty be a prayer in the Divine Will. Let your every waking moment, every breath, be a prayer of surrender to the will of God. If you do this you will cease to worry. Peace will be your constant companion. For where the will of God is adored, there is peace, there is hope, there is abiding joy. Children ponder this. It is very important. Surrender to me. Believe that I love you. Here I am my little ones. I am near!"

Beloved Father of my heart, I thank you for your gratuitous love and care for your little unworthy children. Help me to trust in your love and mercy in all circumstances. May our Mother help me with her prayers and example. O my Father, I love you, I trust you, I surrender myself joyfully to your loving will for me and mine. Help me to trust you more! Amen.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada

(The messages on the Pelianito Journal blog are the fruit of Janet's *lectio divina*. She submits all messages to her spiritual director, a Catholic priest. You may read his remarks here: <http://pelianito.stblogs.com/on-private-revelation/>.)



FROM THE 'SPARROW' Where is God when it hurts?

Peace! As a sparrow, when I was first placed on this the 5th floor, I could not possibly fathom why this floor of the Federal Medical Center was chosen for me to reside on for the last two years. It is the floor of death...plain and simple. When inmates (many I know) come to this floor they rarely leave it alive. Just in the small amount of time I've been here I have witnessed ten or more people I knew have died slow lingering deaths. Many are waiting to die. There is little hope in their eyes and they mostly stare blankly into space as they wait their moment to die. There is little comfort given to them. Mostly they are ignored by the medical staff. In fact the medical staff treats them rudely and looks down on them as little more than a nuisance. To say the least it is a travesty of justice...a great

right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you." (1 Pt 2:14-15)

Jesus is our hope. Rejoice and be glad!



insult thrown into the face of human rights.

For a great portion of my life, I have shared the perspective of those who rail against God for allowing pain. I could find no way to rationalize a world as toxic as this one. As I look at people whose pain far exceeds my own, though, I am surprised by its effects. Suffering seems as likely to reinforce faith as to sow doubt.

My anger about pain has melted for one reason: I have come to know God. He has given me joy and love and happiness and goodness. It leaves me with faith in a Person, a faith so solid that no amount of suffering can erode it.

Where is God when it hurts? He has been there from the beginning. He designed a pain system, in the midst of a fallen world, bears His stamp. He transforms pain, using it to teach and strengthen

us if we allow it to turn us toward Him.

He has hurt and bled and cried and suffered. He has dignified for all time those who suffer, by sharing their pain. But one day He will gather the armies of heaven and will unleash them against the enemies of God. The world will see one last terrifying moment of suffering before the full

Servanthood...

Peace! The unconditional love of God changes hearts and lives, though we may not see the immediate results. St. Francis of Assisi knew that and it was the chief motivation in his walk with the Lord...it should be ours also. Jesus was serious about sin, but His first concern always was the sinner. He wanted those who came to him to understand one thing: GOD LOVES THEM.

If we live for ourselves, the fruit of our labor will be obvious: a need to be noticed first, receive credit for what we do, and a continual striving for a material reward. This is NOT the Franciscan way...it is the wrong way for us, as Christians, to walk! We could summarize the self-centered life with four words: convenience, comfort, covetousness, and compromise.

"Servanthood, (we all are servants of the Great King Jesus Christ), personal sacrifice, and a genuine love for others mark the Christ-

Storms...

Peace! A person was explaining suffering and sacrifices in life. It brought to mind something C.H. Spurgeon had expounded on many years ago. I believe it is correct to mention his words here:

"As soldiers show their scars and talk of battles when they come at last to spend their old age in the country at home, so shall we in the dear land to which we are hastening, speak of the goodness and faithfulness of God who brought us through all the trials of the way. I would not like to stand in the white-robed host and hear it said, 'These are they that came out of great tribulation, ALL EXCEPT ONE (my emphasis!).'

"Would YOU like to be there and see yourself pointed at as the one saint who never knew

victory is ushered in. Then God will create for us a new, incredible world. And pain will be no more. (Rev. 19:11-22:6).

Pain will either...

turn us against God
or draw us to Him.

centered life. Instead of asking what you can get out of this situation, job, or friendship, ask, 'Lord, how can You use me to bring glory to You in this particular situation? Whom can You love through me?' Pray that you will live your life in such a way that men and women will see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

"Lord, I know that the Christ-centered life is the only effective life. Use me. Love through me. Let my life bring You glory today and in the days to come. Amen."

—The Little Way

"To come near Jesus, we must be very little. O how few are the souls who aspire to be lowly and unknown."

—St. Therese of Lisieux

sorrow? Oh, no! for you would be an alien in the midst of the sacred brotherhood. We will be content to share the battle, for we shall soon wear the crown and wave the palm."

—C.H. Spurgeon

My little sparrow friends...so smooth out your ruffled feathers from the last storm you flew through...bow your little heads in a prayer of thanks for the Lord keeping you under His wings (Psalm 91) in that storm and know He will keep you in all the storms of your life...He is faithful...He is I AM.

Pax et bonum,
Little Brother Sparrow

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, NC

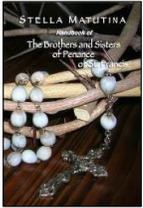
MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...



BSP MEMBER WEBSITES

[Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis](#) facebook page by Lisa Drago, BSP
[The Joy of Penance](#) by Janet Klasson www.joyofpenance.wordpress.com

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. We have used a print-on-demand service at Lulu.com to print the book. This means we do not have to keep a stockpile of books, but customers order directly from Lulu, which prints them as they are ordered and ships them directly to the customer. This simplifies the ordering process for the administrators.

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.

Prayer for a Blessing on the New Year



O sacred and adorable Trinity, hear our prayers on behalf of our holy Father the Pope, our Bishops, our clergy, and for all that are in authority over us. Bless, we beseech Thee, during the coming year, the whole Catholic Church; convert heretics and unbelievers; soften the hearts of sinners so that they may return to Thy friendship; give prosperity to our country and peace among the nations of the world; pour down Thy blessings upon our friends, relatives, and acquaintances, and upon our enemies, if we have any; assist the poor and the sick; have pity on the souls of those whom this year has taken from us; and do Thou be merciful to those who during the coming year will be summoned before Thy judgment seat. May all our actions be preceded by Thy inspirations and carried on by Thy assistance, so that all our prayers and works, having been begun in Thee, may likewise be ended through Thee. Amen.

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!

[Website: www.bspenance.org](http://www.bspenance.org)



The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
PENANCE



of St. Francis

65774 County Road 31
Northome MN 56661