



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

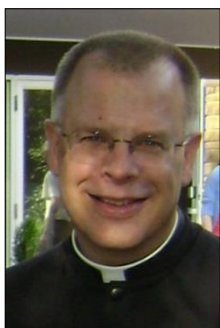
Chapter XII—The Efficacy of Francis’ Preaching—His Powers of Healing

12. Because of the extraordinary miracles which highlighted his preaching, the people listened to St. Francis’ words as if an angel from God were speaking. The extraordinary degree of virtue he had attained, and his spirit of prophecy; the power of his miracles, together with his divine appointment to preach, and the obedience irrational creatures paid him; the profound change of heart in those who heard him, and the fact that he had been taught by the Holy Spirit without the aid of man, and commissioned to preach by the



Supreme Pontiff as the result of a revelation, in addition to the rule in which the approach to preaching is laid down, and which was approved by Christ’s Vicar, together with the mark of the Great King which was impressed on his body like a seal—these were all so many testimonies which proclaimed before the whole world that Christ’s Francis deserved to be respected because of his office, to be believed because of his teaching, and to be admired for his sanctity, and that therefore he preached Christ’s Gospel as a spokesman from God himself.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Reading I (Isaiah 62:11-12) Reading II (Titus 3:4-7) Gospel (St. Luke 2:15-20)

Homily for Christmas

Today we celebrate what on the natural level is always one of the most joyous events: the birth of a baby. There is always great joy when a baby is born, but the baby who is born today brings even greater joy. As we heard in the first reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth that the Savior comes. And so it is not just a matter that a particular couple had a baby and their friends and family rejoice with them, but rather in this situation the whole world rejoices because today, as Saint Paul made clear in the second reading, the kindness and the generous love

of God have appeared. Even prior to that, in the second chapter of his Letter to Titus, Saint Paul says that the grace of God has appeared offering salvation to all men.

Now you ponder just those points: the grace of God and the kindness and the generous love of God have appeared. That is what we have in this little baby. Saint Paul says to the Philippians that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. So the miracle of what we celebrate today is God Who is born as a human baby. This is something which is completely beyond anything that our minds can even begin to grasp.



This child on one level is just like any other baby who is born—tiny, innocent, vulnerable, dependent upon his mother, all of the things that we could say about a baby—and yet at the same time this child is unlike any other who has ever been born, not only because this child is God, but every single baby who is conceived is conceived only by the will of his parents; this child is conceived because He willed it. It is the parents who unite together to bring forth a child under normal circumstances. In this case, the child created His mother in order that He could be created in her. He is born because He chose to be born. Obviously, none of us can do such a thing because none of us existed before we began in our mother's womb. But when the human nature of Jesus Christ began to live within the womb of His mother, His divine nature had already existed from all eternity.

The fact that God would become one of us is the most astounding thing that we can even imagine. Yet we have to ask the question of why. Perhaps we can grasp the idea that God wanted to become man in order to save us from our sins, but even so, the question is: Why would He become a baby? God created Adam and Eve as adults; He could have just done the same Himself. But we know, as Saint Paul would tell the Galatians, that in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law to deliver from the law those who were subjected to it. Well, Saint Paul then also tells us that the law brings death. So Jesus is born subject to the law, to the law of death. It is the very reason why He chose to come into the world: to die.

But He came as a baby, I think, for a couple of reasons; number one, because a baby is about life. When you see a newborn baby, immediately the hope that humanity is going to continue is present in that child. Immediately, when you see a newborn baby, your heart is wide open with love and with joy. Our Lord comes into this world subject to death in order to teach us that He came for life, that He came to give us life and to give it to us abundantly. In fact, as Saint Paul told us in the second reading today, by the grace of God we have become heirs of eternal life. God chose to take on our temporal life so that we could have eternal life. He chose to be subject to death so that we could have life. He chose to become man so that we could become God.

If you ponder the idea that the one title Jesus gave Himself and called Himself over and over is simply "Son of Man," the question is why. Why would He call Himself the Son of Man? He is the Son of God from all eternity. Why draw attention to the fact that He is the Son of Man when by nature He is the Son of God? First of all, it is because we would have to have

complete faith that He is God; but secondly, He calls attention to that which He was not and has now become. If that is the case, if He became the Son of Man it was so we could become the sons and daughters of God, and to draw attention to that which we were not. By nature we are human, but by God's grace we have become children of God.

Again, go back to that point which we heard already from Saint Paul's Letter to Titus: The grace of God has appeared. The grace of God is Jesus Christ. His grace is His very life. The grace of God has appeared; this is something that cannot happen by nature. How can your life appear someplace? It cannot. Your life is not visible. But the grace of God has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, and it is by the grace of God that we become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Now if you think about it again in this exchange, Scripture tells us with regard to the One Whom God calls His own Son, that He will make Him the heir and give Him as His inheritance all the nations. So Jesus, He Who created all of the nations, comes into this world and becomes one of us, and His inheritance has to do with this world—all of the people in this world. In exchange, what is our inheritance? It is God; it is heaven; it is eternal life. And so He Who was not of this world becomes of this world in order to inherit every soul who would inhabit this world, so that those who are of this world would be able to become other-worldly, so that our inheritance will be heaven and will be God Himself.

He comes to us as a baby to show us life. He comes in a way that we can see and that we can understand the natural life in order to point beyond it, because the child upon whom we gaze in the manger, the child whose humanness we can see is God. If the grace of God has appeared, it is so that through the appearance of Jesus Christ in human form we would be able to look beyond to see the reality of what lies underneath. Only with the eyes of faith can we see that.

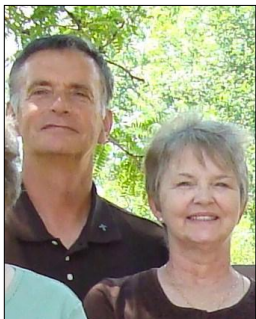
The other reason I think He came as a baby is to teach us what we are to be. Jesus tells us that we are to be as innocent as doves, and yet as clever as serpents. What is a baby? Innocent. Pure. Gentle. Vulnerable. Dependent. Trusting. The list could go on and on. And what does He want from us? To be exactly that: to have the innocence and the trust and the dependence upon God that a baby has upon his mother. That is what He wants from us. He took on our nature so that we could take on His. We could say in a way that He was transformed to become one of us so that we would be transformed to become Him. As Saint Paul points out in the second reading, it is through Baptism that we have become members

of Christ and heirs to eternal life. He became one of us so that we literally could become a member of Himself, to be a member of Jesus Christ, to share His life, to share His nature.

And so today, as we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord, we need to think very deeply about the joy that comes with the birth of a baby, and we need to think about the peace that is there. Mary, we are told, held all of these things in her heart; she pondered them. Just think what a mother does with a baby. She sets the baby on her lap and she just simply gazes at the child, looks deeply into the eyes of the baby if the baby is awake; and even if the baby is asleep, the mother just stares as if to look beyond what is physical into the very depths of the being of that child. That is what Jesus asks of us today, to have the kind of joy and the kind of peace that is experienced by a mother in union with her child, the kind of innocence that is present, and to be able to look beyond what is seen into the very depths of this Child, Who looks beyond what is seen in us to the very depths of our being. And what is it that we do with a baby? We love the baby. How could you not love a baby?

That is all Jesus wants from us. He wants us to come near to Him. He wants us to let down our guard just like we do with a baby, and He wants us to love Him. But the difference with this child as opposed to any other baby is that under normal circumstances a baby cannot love in return—but this baby is Love itself. He loves us first so that we can love Him. That is what He is wanting. That is what He is waiting for. He shows Himself to us in a way that we can be vulnerable. That is what we do with babies because we know a baby is not going to hurt us. We know that a baby is not going to violate us, so we can let our guard down and we can make funny noises and funny faces and we can just be as innocent as can be in the presence of a baby. Do not put up any pretenses with Jesus. He looks beyond what you can see anyway, and He knows what is in your heart. Let the guard down. Come to Him in innocence, in gentleness, in trust, in dependence upon Him. Be filled with the joy and the peace of this child. Love Him, and allow yourself to be loved by Him. Then you too will be able to hold all of these things in your heart and ponder them, to ponder the great mystery of God made man, born for us as a human baby of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

The Sacrament of the Present Moment

Recently we read a little Image book titled "Abandonment to Divine Providence", by John Beevers, Image Books, 1975. It put forth the writings of Jean Pierre de

Caussade, who lived from 1675 to 1751. His writings were simple but they called people who were seeking holiness to a new way of living. We should live each moment as belonging to God and abandon ourselves completely to Him. Every moment provides an 'ever flowing source of holiness." A sacrament that can enrich our lives immensely.

He points out that the presence of God in His creation is universal. From the smallest atom to the largest sun, even to the depths of universe, God is present in all things, and aware of their movement. So He is present in us and all we need to do is realize that and abandon ourselves to Him and He will move in our lives to draw us to holiness. We do not need to expend ourselves in excessive mortification or even excessive prayer. Our Rule is quite sufficient in

this regard for us. We need to accept his presence in the present moment and even the most insignificant events, and abandon ourselves to Him in them.

God doesn't make decisions in our life moment to moment due to our free will, which is His great gift to us. He allows us to make decisions based on what surrounds us. These decisions, even in the most trifling matters, are our choices. In them rest a whole series of trials that are unique to each of us. Prepared for us by God beforehand for our development and transition into eternal beings. How will we move into eternity? Day to day, moment to moment, will we choose God or not? Will we choose His way, as established in us by the commandments He gave us or the commandments of His Church, or not? This is what we all face and in it there are thousands upon thousands of moments of choice. In each of these present moments we must decide what it is we are going to do, and how we are going to do it.

Especially in interfacing with other people we face serious decisions to make. Even in the simplest of



encounters, with our brothers and sisters, we must decide how we are going to react. In every encounter, what words will we choose. Will we be gentle or abrupt, kind or unkind, cheerful or cruel? In these decisions among those around us we will define who we are before God, and so many people could really care less to even think about this.

Jean de Caussade says, and this is a quote: "You are seeking for secret ways of belonging to God, but there is only one: making use of whatever he offers you." It does not matter where we are in our life. All that matters is that at each moment we are open to God and aware of His presence and Providence. The matter may be trifling, or of great significance. It doesn't matter. Every matter is covered by God's awareness and Providence, for all things belong to Him. So our life belongs to Him if we give it to Him and stay focused on the motion of His will in our hearts.

Isn't that what we all want? To know and do God's will. The simple fact, according to Jean de Caussade, is that His will is what happens to us moment by moment, big thing or little thing, with or without the help of others. If we can come to an awareness of this reality we will realize that every word we speak, when we speak it, and whether it is at prayer or in lively conversation, is from God and to God. We will be judged on all of those situations and conversations, and also on the overall direction we have moved in our lives, which is the exercise of our free will in our lives. The effect of this is profound, and makes a sacrament of every moment of our lives.

It is almost overwhelming. To realize that at each moment we are not just in the sight of God but we are speaking and doing things directly for Him. With Him, if we belong to Him and are trying to serve Him. Or without Him and in His face if we don't believe in Him or care about Him at all. There are so many people in the world like that.

If you apply this principle to what you see on TV and imagine that all of those actors are acting in a present moment with God, you have to wonder what is on their minds. Of what significance is most of what you see on TV. If it is not just reporting what others have done it is promoting what others have made or want to sell us. The stories in the movies and on the various channels have nothing to do with reality. Those actors are surrounded by cameras. The situations are staged, not real. The purpose is

to get us to buy things, or the stories are about things that happened to others. They draw us out of the moments of our lives and take our focus off of the things of God. They are really pointless and valueless when it comes to salvation, that is unless, we offer them all to God. Unless, despite how insignificant and meaningless they are, we keep our eyes and hearts on God. Then we can move past them holding God's hand. He has put them in our lives. What does He want from us in their regard?

So, there is a sacrament in the present moment. A sacrament is defined as something in our lives that brings the presence of God and His power to us to improve our relationship with God and give us life. Life with God. Life that can become eternal in God. And our present moments, if given to God and reflected on as being from God, can do that.

Our Rule can help us but our Rule, profound and demanding as it is, pales in significance compared to us keeping God with us in the present moment. The Rule is a tool, and like all tools it needs to be put to work to chisel away at our self-sufficiency and bring us to live for God. Remember why the people came to Saint Francis and asked for this Rule. They wanted a way to get to heaven, a holy way of living, like the Saint had. And he gave it to them. He did not ask them to leave their homes or come with him. He gave them this Rule to live in their lives knowing it would open the door to God for them. So, in a sense it was the way of life for beginners. Those who were searching for God. When they grew in it everything would belong to God, and that included every precious moment.

So, let's take this message with us today and always. Let's keep in mind that the present moment, the present events and problems, or sometimes blessings, are all God's Providence in motion for us. Let's live our Rule of life with gusto and joy. It is the gate to eternal life. The narrow road and way that we are to follow, but the road is more. The road is every single thing that happens to us however great or small. The Rule is very important in that it brings us on that narrow way. In all regards we need to live the commandments of God and the Church as well as we can and love the gospel of Jesus Christ, for in these things are the rocks on which we build our way.

Praised be Jesus forever, and a holy and happy Christmas to all!

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





NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

“Rejoice in the Lord always! I say it again, Rejoice! The Lord is near. Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude. Then God’s own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus.”
(Philippians 4:4-7)

Please excuse a certain excess of fervor in the following comments, which are of necessity of a political, but also profoundly spiritual, nature. There is great rejoicing in certain quarters of America after the recent presidential election, continuing every day with new and hopeful expectations. Millions of people have poured out their hearts to God in every form of prayer and petitions to save our nation, and they have been rewarded. God has given America another chance to repent and return to Him. A few thoughts.

Perhaps the greatest reason for rejoicing is that the Pro-Life Movement has the Champion it has been looking for! And from a most unlikely source. Last month I questioned why Evangelicals were flocking to Donald Trump early in the primaries. Now it’s clear. They saw someone who had the courage to stand up and fight for their cause. Catholics also jumped on the bandwagon late in the campaign after the third debate, when Trump gave a masterful exposition on the horrors of partial-birth abortion. He also gave an unprecedented message in early October to Catholics (condensed), a majority of whom voted for him:

“Catholics in the United States of America are a rich part of our nation’s history. The United States was, and is, strengthened through Catholic men, women, priests and religious Sisters, ministering to people, marching in the Civil Rights movement, educating millions of children in Catholic schools, creating respected health care institutions, and in their founding and helping the ongoing growth of the pro-life cause. I have a message for Catholics: I will be there for you. I will stand with you. I will fight for you. Hillary Clinton has been hostile to the core issues and policies of greatest concern to Catholics: life, religious liberty, Supreme Court nominations, affordable and quality healthcare, educational choice and home schooling. That is a hostility to religious liberty you will never see in a Trump Administration.

“I will stand with Catholics and fight for you. On life, I am, and will remain, pro-life. I will defend your religious liberties and the right to fully and freely practice your religion, as individuals, business owners and academic institutions. I will make absolutely certain religious orders like The Little Sisters of Poor are not bullied by the federal government because of their religious beliefs. I will

protect and work to expand educational choice, the rights of homeschooling families, and end Common Core. I will keep our country and communities safe while respecting the dignity of each human being. I will help Catholic families and workers, and all families and workers, by bringing jobs back to our country where they belong. And I will appoint Justices to the Supreme Court who will strictly interpret the Constitution and not legislate from the bench, like Justice Clarence Thomas and the late and beloved great Catholic thinker and jurist, Justice Antonin Scalia. We are at a crossroads in our country. Much like 1980. But the stakes are higher now - the highest they have ever been. We have two candidates representing entirely different agendas for our country that will take it in two completely different directions for generations to come. And our direction offers a much brighter future for our beloved country.”

From the Washington Post, Nov. 24: “When Donald Trump shocked the world with an upset victory in the U.S. presidential election this month, much of Europe was aghast. But in at least one critical sense, the result couldn’t have been more European: across the continent, parties of the center-left that have dominated politics for decades, giving Europe its reputation for generous social welfare systems, now find themselves beaten, divided and directionless. ‘With the economic crisis, and the negative effects of globalization, the socialists couldn’t convince the populations in their respective countries that the future lies in a liberal Europe. This is the end of the European utopia.’” (Gerard Grunberg, historian of socialism)

What was totally missing in that article was the fact that socialists have effectively de-Christianized Europe, much to the chagrin of recent popes, especially St. John Paul II, and they were well on the way to doing the same to America. That has come to a screeching stop! This was a tipping point election, the winner able to profoundly influence the course of events for generations.

Our current president said America is no longer a Christian nation. Time will tell. Can Christians fundamentally transform our decadent culture back to a Christian culture that cherishes life? Western Civilization hangs in the balance. The coming spiritual warfare will be of epic proportions. There is

no compromise between life and death, good and evil. What nation will take the lead in restoring Christian culture, promoting the Gospel of Life?

Sister Lucia of Fatima commented that the final battle with Satan would be over marriage and the family. The efforts to rescue the basic unit of society from Satan's grip is going to cause intense opposition. That's what the riots in the streets are about. Expect more of them, especially when the Killing Machine of abortion is threatened. It's awesome to think of what a Pro-Life Supreme Court can do to reverse the Culture of Death that has been imposed by previous court decisions! To see unity

between a Pro-Life president and Congress to pass ethical, moral and just laws faithful to the Constitution! The possibilities are endless!

With all these wonderful things happening, and more blessings to come every day, it surely feels like THE LORD IS NEAR! He has heard our cries from the heart, and is giving us another chance. That's all we ask. Come Lord Jesus! Lead us out of the wilderness into your Kingdom. Father, let us depend upon and live by your Divine Will, and then "God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus."

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



St. Joseph... by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Gospel Reading, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' [...] When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife. (Matthew 1:18-21, 24)

Ever since my pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal last June, I have had a much stronger devotion to St. Joseph, about whom precious little is said in Scripture. The Oratory is the largest shrine dedicated to St. Joseph in the world, and was built against all odds through the prayers and inspiration of St. Brother André Bessette, the humble doorkeeper of Notre Dame College in Montreal, whose devotion to St. Joseph developed into a great ministry of healing. The secular press once dubbed Brother André, "The Miracle Man of Montreal". With a conservative estimate of 10,000 healings attributed to his prayers to St. Joseph in the 60 years or so of his healing ministry, it can be argued that he was one of the greatest healers in the history of the Church. However, he never took credit for any of the miracles. When asked for prayers, he would humbly tell people, "Pray to St. Joseph. I will pray with you."

Near the end of that article on my pilgrimage to the Oratory, I noted that in reflecting on the life of St. Brother André—and my visit to the Oratory—one

thing that occurred to me was that his mission and ministry in life was not primarily one of healing, but of making St. Joseph more well known and loved, of increasing devotion to him for the greater glory of God. I have come to believe that God means this to be the era of Mary and Joseph. The Church has had 2000 years in which to solidify her theology and establish Jesus Christ as her true and only centre. However, it seems that Jesus wants his Mother and Foster-Father to be more well known and loved now. He is bringing them out from behind the veil as if to say, "Children, here are your Mother and Father. Listen to them, as I do. Love them as I do. Pray to them and I will respond with great joy."

My devotion to St. Joseph since returning home has blossomed and I recently had an experience which left me feeling called to promote St. Joseph even more fervently. Certainly Advent and Christmas are ideal times to do so, as St. Joseph figures so prominently in the Mass readings.

On November 2 of this year, the first Wednesday of November, I spoke to a classroom of students about



my trip to Montreal. I related to them that I felt that the mission of St. Brother André was not so much one of healing, but of making St. Joseph better known. Interiorly, I felt privileged to be doing the same with these students in my small way. When I returned home, I checked my blog comments and one of my readers had posted this comment:

"...It's the first Wednesday of the month. In the approved apparitions of St Joseph in Itapiranga, Brazil, he said:

'My beloved son, today is the first Wednesday of the month. On every first Wednesday of the month, my Chaste Heart pours numerous graces on all who rely on my intercession. On these Wednesdays, men will not receive a shower of simple graces, but very strong torrents of extraordinary graces! I will share them with those who honor me and rely on me, all the blessings, all the virtues, and all the love I received from my Divine Son Jesus and my spouse the Blessed Virgin Mary while still living in this world and all the graces that I continue to receive in the glory of paradise.'

I was overwhelmed that this "First Wednesday" was, providentially, the day I had evangelized about St. Joseph. I had been praying for a specific intention and that same day it seemed that a great grace was given regarding that intention. I was quite overwhelmed when I put the pieces together! I responded to the comment with this prayer:

"Good St. Joseph, thank you! I claim these graces, these torrents of graces, over the one I am praying for most fervently, and all those poor souls in my spiritual territory. Today I had the honour of making you better known to a group of school children. I promise you good Father, that I will re-double my efforts in making you better known in the world, should you condescend to answer my prayers—and even if you don't, for I know that whatever you do or don't do is within God's perfect will. May God's holy will be done in me, through me, and around me. I love you Papa Joseph! St. Brother André, pray with me. Amen."

I think there can be no doubt that the days will

continue to darken. I want to urge all readers to develop a devotion to the Most Chaste Heart of St. Joseph. Rather than duplicate what has already been done well, I will direct you to the Apostolate of St. Joseph website, where I also found this reference to a vision of Blessed Catherine de St. Augustin regarding the Ascension of Jesus:

"I saw a very august procession of blessed souls... St John the Baptist was at the head and carried a white banner, white as snow, on which was written in large red characters these words: Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi [Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world]. ... This procession seemed to rise in the air, and the King of glory, in the centre of this entire troop, was taken up in an admirable way by His proper virtue. I followed as much as I could and my spirit accompanied Him. ... St Joseph was the closest at the entrance of the eternal gates, and it was he, it seemed to me, who spoke first to the Most August Trinity; and addressing himself to the person of the Father, after the most sacred Humanity was put into its appointed place, said to Him in a language of the blessed:

"This talent has profited so much that not only do I return it to You doubled, but You see this multitude that it has acquired; I return all to You and offer it to You.'

"The Eternal Father then not only set him over a great many people, but even said to him: 'Faithful servant! Since you were the steward of My house on earth, I want you to command here and to have all power.' The Son Himself gave him power over Him, all King of glory that He was, and wanted him to have the honor of commanding Him."

This is an amazing vision, but so in keeping with what we know of our humble, obedient, magnanimous Lord and God. We can do no wrong in honoring St. Joseph, confidently and continuously begging his intercession. By God's holy Will, St. Joseph is a most powerful ally to those of us still embroiled in the battle of this evil age. St. Joseph, Terror of Demons, pray for us!

[From www.pelianitoblog.wordpress.com](http://www.pelianitoblog.wordpress.com)

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

"My beloved, the power of the Holy Spirit is without limit. Then why do you doubt? Why do you constantly fall back into your own reasoning? Take the example of St. Joseph who, when tested, responded with complete trust. This was credited to him as righteousness. So you too, when you are tested, learn to let go of your own understanding and in complete faith put all your trust and hope in God. Many of you are being tested now, and all of you will be tested before the year is done. Imitate St. Joseph who never once

in his life put his will ahead of God's. His faith was pure and unwavering. You would do well to seek his intercession at all times. His prayers I cannot resist. Shalom."

O my Jesus, what a gift you have given us in St. Joseph—what a gift you have given yourself! May we never cease to imitate him and ask his intercession. Good St. Joseph, keep our faith as pure and unwavering as yours. Help us to always put the will of God in first place, so that we will not be put to shame when tested. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we love you—save souls!

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: <https://pelianitoblog.wordpress.com/about-2/on-private-revelation/>.)



St. Francis of Assisi, The Christmas Crib



The manger was prepared, the hay had been brought, the ox and ass were led in. There simplicity was honored, poverty was exalted, humility was commended, and Greccio was made, as it were, a new Bethlehem. The night was lighted up like the day, and it delighted men and beasts. The people came and were filled with new joy over the new mystery. The woods rang with the voices of the crowd and the rocks made answer to their jubilation. The brothers sang, paying their debt of praise to the Lord, and the whole night resounded with their rejoicing. The saint of God stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love, and filled with a wonderful happiness. The solemnities of the Mass were celebrated over the manger and the priest experienced a new consolation.

The saint of God was clothed with the vestments of the deacon, for he was a deacon, and he sang the holy Gospel in a sonorous voice. And his voice was a

strong voice, a sweet voice, a clear voice, a sonorous voice, inviting all to the highest rewards. Then he preached to the people standing about, and he spoke charming words concerning the nativity of the poor king and the little town of Bethlehem.

Frequently too, when he wished to call Christ Jesus, he would call him simply the Child of Bethlehem, aglow with overflowing love for him; and speaking the word Bethlehem, his voice was more like the bleating of a sheep, His mouth was filled more with sweet affection than with words. Besides, when he spoke the name Child of Bethlehem or Jesus, his tongue licked his lips, as it were, relishing and savoring with pleased palate the sweetness of the word.

The gifts of the Almighty were multiplied there, and a wonderful vision was seen by a certain virtuous man. For he saw a little child lying in the manger lifeless, and he saw the holy man of God go up to it and rouse the child as from a deep sleep. This vision was not unfitting, for the Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of his grace, he was brought to life again through his servant St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory. At length the solemn night celebration was brought to a close, and each one returned to his home with holy joy.

(To read the entire account of this amazing story in the life of St Francis according to Thomas of Celano, see http://www.franciscanfriarstor.com/archive/stfrancis/stf_francis_christmas_crib.htm)

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

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.

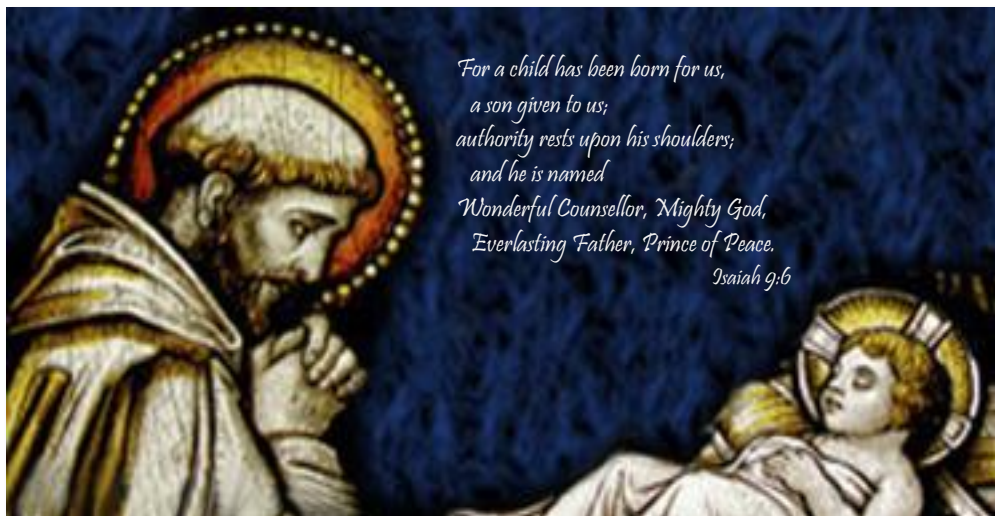
There is a link to the ordering page on our BSP homepage. You will need a credit card or a Paypal account to order. Cost is \$10.00 plus shipping.

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
- † **Francis 1221** <https://francis1221.wordpress.com>

OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

Statute Article 9. c Sundays and Church Solemnities are never days of fast or abstinence. These include the **Octave of Christmas**, the Feasts of New Year's, Epiphany, Annunciation, the Octave of Easter, and the Feasts of the Ascension, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and all other Solemnities of the Church.



*May the glories of the Nativity
shower you and yours with
abundant blessings!*

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

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