



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter XIII—The Stigmata of St. Francis

8. Francis was very careful to try and hide the treasure he had found in the field (cf. Mt 13:44), but he could not prevent everybody from seeing the stigmata in his hands and feet, although he always kept his hands covered and wore shoes. A number of the friars saw them during his lifetime, and to put the matter beyond all doubt they testified to this under oath, although they were good religious and deserved to be believed. Some of the cardinals who were close friends of the saint also saw them and celebrated their praise in various hymns and antiphons which they composed in his honor, thus bearing witness to the truth in their words and writings. In a sermon which he preached in public and at which I was present with a number of other friars, His Holiness Pope Alexander asserted that he had seen the stigmata with his own eyes during the saint's lifetime. More than fifty friars with St. Clare and her nuns and innumerable lay people saw them after his death. Many of them kissed the stigmata and felt them with their own hands, to prove the truth, as we shall describe later.



However, Francis succeeded in covering the wound in his side so carefully that no one could get more than a glimpse of it during his lifetime. A friar who used to wait on him carefully gently prevailed upon him to take off his habit and have it shaken out, and as he watched closely he saw the wound. He put three of his fingers on it immediately, so that he was able to feel as well as see how big it was. The friar who was Francis' vicar at that time managed to see the wound by a similar subterfuge. Another of his companions, a man of extraordinary simplicity, put his hand in under his capuche to massage his chest because he was not feeling well, and accidentally touched the wound, causing the saint great pain. As a result, Francis always wore trousers which reached up to his arm-pits, in order to cover the scar on his side. The friars who washed his trousers or shook out his habit found them stained with blood. This clear proof left them with no doubt of the existence of the wound which they afterwards contemplated and venerated with others on his death.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)

VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Reading (Acts 22:30; 23:6-11) Gospel (St. John 17:20-26)

In the Gospel reading today, Our Lord prays that we would be one, that we would be one in Him; and, as such, that He would live in us

and His heavenly Father would be living in Him. If His heavenly Father is in Him and He is in us, then obviously the heavenly Father is in us as well. So the gift that Our Lord is giving to us is His very self. But



since He is the truth, if there is union, that unity is going to be in the truth because the unity is going to be in Christ. He prays that we would be one as He is one with the Father. There is no division between Jesus and the Father; the two are one, as, of course, they are one also with the Holy Spirit. There is but one God although there are three Persons, so He prays for that kind of unity among us. The difficulty, of course, is that we are sinners, and we unfortunately fight that unity because of our pride. And the devil gets right in there and he stirs up things so that he causes division.

Now there are going to be different ways of being able to approach things, and the Church allows a wide spectrum of differences with regard to spirituality, for instance. But when it comes to dogma, there is no spectrum of what we can believe. The truth is very clear. It is objective. It is the same for every single person throughout the world. It does not matter which culture we are from; it does not matter what time we live in; the truth remains the same. The same truth that was two thousand years ago still is today. It has not changed at all because it cannot.

So if we look into our hearts and we say to ourselves, "I don't agree with what the Church teaches; I don't believe what the Church teaches," then we need to look at the fact that what we are doing is actually using our own free will to reject the explicit prayer of Jesus Christ. Jesus prayed that we would be one, and that unity, once again, can only be in Him. If we are not united in Christ, we are not united. We could both agree to do something that is entirely sinful, but obviously we do not have true union – we have two selfish people who are agreeing on something that is going to benefit each selfishly. If we are in agreement about the truth then we have two

people who are striving to be selfless, we have two people who are seeking union, not in something which is wrong, but only in that which is right. And He prays that we would be brought to perfection in this union. The only way we are going to be perfect is in Him, once again.

Now He even goes one step further and makes a truly astounding statement. He says, Father, they are Your gift to Me. That is one you can ponder for the rest of your life. You are the gift of the heavenly Father to Jesus Christ. You and me. I was talking with somebody yesterday and said, "Thank goodness God has bad taste because look at who He picked." Why would He choose us? Because we are the least, because we are the worst, because we are the weakest, because we are the most helpless, on and on the list could go. When we see it from that perspective, for us to choose to go against the truth, for us to choose to reject the teaching of the Church, for us to choose to reject Jesus Christ is utter foolishness and pure arrogance, because when we realize how small and weak we are, why would we stand up and rebel against God and say that we know better? "I'm stronger, I'm smarter," whatever, absolute insanity is all that is. We are a gift from God the Father to His Son. If that is the case, we need to be humble and we need to be grateful. We need to strive to be able to accept and embrace and live the fullness of the truth because that fullness of the truth is Jesus Christ, to Whom we have been given. And that is where we will find the fulfillment of His prayer: when we use our free will to be able to recognize the truth about Him and the truth about ourselves, and we use that free will to embrace that truth and to conform ourselves to that truth so that in the truth we will be one.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

Exceptions

Recently a new Inquirer in the BSP decided he could not stay with us because he needed so many exceptions to the Rule. He could not live it like it is written. So, he left. That leads us to talk a

little about this rather hairy subject. Exceptions.

Life is full of exceptions. We accept them, or make them for others. We even hope for them. We can't make a meeting, or a ball game, or a wedding, so we ask to be excluded, and we are. Usually without penalty. If there is a penalty we find a substitute to avoid it. It happens all the time.



When Saint Francis wrote the Rule he put many exceptions right in it. To name a few, there is an exception to fasting for several groups of people, and for abstinence. For the pregnant, the working, and the ill to name three. The pertinent articles follow:

RULE: ARTICLE 10

10. Sisters who are pregnant are free to refrain until their purification from the corporal observances except those regarding their dress and prayers.

RULE: ARTICLE 11

11. Those engaged in fatiguing work shall be allowed to take food three times a day from the

Pasch of the Resurrection until the Dedication feast of St. Michael. And when they work for others it will be allowed them to eat everything served to them, except on Fridays and on the fasts enjoined in general by the Church.

RULE: ARTICLE 6

6. All are to abstain from meat save on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, except on account of illness or weakness, for three days at blood-letting, in traveling, or on account of a specially high feast intervening... And except for the feeble, the ailing, and those traveling, let them be content with dinner and supper.

Why on earth should those working, or traveling, have an exception? Those ill it is easier to understand. It is just an act of practical kindness extended to all of us by Saint Francis, and there is a lesson in that for all of us. Those characteristics should permeate all of our personal exceptions. They should be practical, fit our lives, and be kind, and maybe even kind to ourselves. Let's ponder a few examples.

Father Altier once told Shelley and I about one that he told a youngster should be made. During Lent no less, a young lady came to him, a teen I believe, came to him and asked him what she should do. A friend had come to her and offered her candy during Lent when she had given candy up. First off, obviously, she was a pretty tremendous young lady to be observing Lent so strongly as by giving up candy. Second, she declined it because it was Lent. Father Altier told her the next time her friend offers her a candy that her penance, or sacrifice, was to eat it. He told her to make the exception and make the exception her penance, and keep her sacrifice of that candy during Lent a secret.

We need to do the same. We need to keep our Rule, and living it, a secret. Between us and God. And this can come up often.

Say we come home from work and it is a day of abstinence and our spouse, who is not in the BSP or interested in doing penance, has prepared a nice dinner for us. The problem is the dinner is a nice steak with all the trimmings. Our penance in this case, our living the Rule here, demands that we eat the steak and not say a word. In fact, in general, in dealing with living the Rule with our families the Rule should never be mentioned. If you are going to have a discussion on it do that some time away from when you are living the Rule. Sometime when you are

discussing things in general, or at a time your spouse asks you about it. Blessed are those where both spouses are living the Rule.

Even if both spouses are living the Rule there will be times that exceptions need to be made. Say a friend invites you over to dinner on a fast day or day of abstinence and again you are going to have meat, recognizing that meat means meat when it comes to abstinence. Not soups, or casseroles, or even pizza for that matter. But say they have prepared a nice ham on a day of abstinence, unless it is a Church authorized day of abstinence which only comes up in Lent. Anyway, you both need to keep your mouths shut and eat the dinner. Offer the dinner as your penance. Move on in peace.

Exceptions were prescribed in the Rule by our Visitors, Father Altier and Father Valerius, now deceased, when we wrote the Rule many years ago. These are the exceptions. The Rule is pretty explicit. The prayer of the Rule is the Divine Office. Yet Saint Francis put the seven Our Fathers, Glory Be's, and requiem aeternam in it, for each of the seven hours, as a second choice. Father Valerius and/or Father Altier added the Hail Mary in our statutes. St. Francis did that because most people could not read in the medieval ages but also as an exception to make living the Rule easier for some. He could have just put the Divine Office in it. That is how he prayed. We, and our Visitors, added the other exceptions. The four rosaries, the hour of contemplative or mental prayer, and what we call the prayers of a busy day for those parenting small children or suffering continuous distractions in their day as we say it in the Rule. The purpose of these options is to make praying easier for all of us on any day.

So, exceptions mark our lives, and our way of life and they are holy and good and important. Just living this life is pretty exceptional, if you think of it. To live this Rule you need to exclude yourself from the thinking of this age. You need to remember that the Lord called us all to 'deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow him...' (Luke 9:23). We do that living this Rule. So, we make exceptions in our lives to do what the Lord calls us to do.

The point is, if you have to make exceptions to live the Rule in silence and peace, for the love of God and invisible to those around you, don't fret over it. Do it with joy and fervor.

May the Lord bless and lead us all!

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





NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.” (Timothy

2, 1-4)

It’s all about authority. Donna and I have been enjoying a series of novels by Ellis Peters about a Benedictine monk of the 12th century named Brother Cadfael. The setting is in England, near the Welch border, around 1140 AD, just before the time of St. Francis. The novels are mysteries, with Brother Cadfael being the chief detective. What we really love about the stories is that in addition to being very well written, everyone involved is Catholic! The Abbot has a lot of authority, as the Abbey is almost a second governing body along with the town council of Shrewsbury. The local bishop is also very involved in political affairs. It is so nice to see what the world would look like if everyone belonged to the Catholic Church.

The Protestant “Reformation” changed all that rather dramatically. Even though the split with the Orthodox came earlier, the fallout was not as great. The authority of the pope was not recognized, but the Orthodox pretty much kept all the Christian doctrines intact. And they were in the East, while the Latin Church was in the West, pretty much physically separated.

But with the Protestant’s all-out assault on the authority of the pope, as well as the doctrines of the Catholic Church, the world changed forever, and not for the good. A good case could be made that moral relativism was a major result of the “Reformation.” What authority is left to unite various groups of people? The Tower of Babel all over again. Sacred Scripture, Sola Scriptura: how well has that worked out? Thirty-four thousand different Protestant sects are the result of trying to “unite” around the bible alone.

Moral relativism has now reached its zenith. Pope Benedict labelled it THE TYRANNY OF RELATIVISM. Mainline Protestant Churches meet regularly to discuss which doctrine they will discard next to keep up with the desires of the worldly. There is constantly shifting ground; where is the Rock? How can Christian unity succeed with such disunity? Even with our Lord Jesus Christ as our common Center, Christians are seriously fragmented. Throw in various political alliances pulling them in different directions, and Christian unity seems impossible.

If we can’t put our Christian house in order, how then can we put our country in order, with all the political and ideological divisions out there between right and left? Result: “THE CIVIL WAR IS HERE.” Daniel Greenfield writes, “The left has rejected all forms of authority that it doesn’t control. It has rejected the outcome of the last two presidential elections won by Republicans. It has rejected the judicial authority of the Supreme Court when its decisions don’t agree with its agenda. It rejects the legislative authority of Congress when it is not dominated by the left. It rejected the Constitution so long ago it hardly bears mentioning. There is no form of legal authority that the left accepts as a permanent institution.”

In other words, there is no possibility of common ground with the left: NONE. If there is no common ground in the battle for the soul of America, there can be no compromise, and one side must be defeated. Nor is there a level playing field, for our side has been hamstrung by the artificial “separation of church and state” doctrine, which we strictly adhere to, while the other side does not, for they don’t play by the rules, thanks to moral relativism.

Instead of giving up on the Culture Wars, we must more actively participate in the defeat of the forces of evil. That means we publicly support all who are on the side of good and God. St. John Paul II gave us clear guidelines in discerning good from evil in his encyclical “Evangelium Vitae.” It’s the Gospel of Life vs. the Culture of Death.

The future of the country and the world resides in the Pro-Life coalition, the Pro-God coalition. A political party that defines itself as Pro-Life should be the natural home of people of faith. It’s where the fight for the future is taking place, where the action is to make sure that particular party maintains its Pro-Life identity and becomes even more hospitable to Christians in this post-Christian era.

For all its greatness, America has had a rather sad anti-Catholic past. Protestants came to the New World looking for freedom, and when they found it, they denied it to Catholics. Blaine Amendments, variations still in 38 state constitutions, prohibit any “public money” from going to Catholic schools –

blatantly unconstitutional amendments. They are finally on the way out, thanks in part to an increasingly Pro-Life, Pro-Constitution U.S. Supreme Court.

There was also an amendment that became law in 1954 that charitable organizations cannot endorse or oppose political candidates. It soon built an artificial wall separating church and state. A priest or minister dare not mention the name of a politician in church or they might have to answer to the IRS. Talk about a gag order. Few questioned its validity, or sought to repair the damage it has done. Our new president has promised to remove this gag order so that Catholics/Christians have more of a voice in the public square. Time will tell if we find our voices, and become anywhere near as assertive as those who seek to marginalize us.

Leftists have proven themselves the greatest danger to democracy by their refusal to accept legitimate authority. "Their first and foremost allegiance is to an ideology, not our country, our Constitution, or our system of government. All those are only to be used as vehicles for their ideology. Our system of government was designed to allow different groups to negotiate their differences, based around finding shared interests, namely, a common country based around certain civilizational values. The left has replaced these Founding ideas with radically

different principles. It has rejected the primary importance of the country, and thus shares little in the way of its values."

What does that sound like? Islam. I have often wondered why the strange alliance between the totally secular left and militant religious Islam pitted against Christianity. If Islam were to take over, secular leftists would be the first to lose their heads! Both are guided by an ideology that transcends national identity. That's why leftists are so opposed to safeguarding a nation's borders. No one should be able to be safe from leftist ideology, for it is manifesting itself as totalitarian. Violence likely will come next as it seeks to impose its will on all. It's already here on college campuses.

"This is a primal conflict between a totalitarian system and a democratic system. Its outcome will determine whether we will be a free nation of a nation of slaves."

We need to storm heaven with prayer for the safety and wisdom of those in authority. We seek that "prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



God's Chosen People... by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Second Reading on the Fifth Sunday of Easter

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter 2:4-9)

There is a danger, when reading the above Scripture passage, of perceiving "God's chosen" as a privileged elite, the lucky ones, God's favorites. Not so. Not at all. If we drill deeper into the scripture passage, we see that God's chosen are a "royal priesthood". What is the duty of a priest? To offer sacrifice. The passage also describes the chosen as a "holy nation", a nation that is holy, that puts the will of God before all else. The second half of the passage explains why—proclaiming God, giving the reason for our hope, in a word: evangelization! I have heard evangelization described as the Church having a mission and the mission having a Church. We are all called to evangelize.

In his [Great Adventure Bible Study](#) Jeff Cavins describes the progression of the Chosen People as a series of Covenants uniting God with his people: first, a couple (Adam and Eve), then, a family (Noah), next, a tribe (Abraham), then, a nation (Moses), next, a kingdom (David), and finally, a Church (Jesus).^{*} From this progression we can see that being God's chosen people is not a free ride, but a participation in a great progressive work—the glorious work of salvation! From the beginning, God's Chosen People were called to be leaven in the world for the sake of all His beloved children.

This Lent I read portions of Luisa Piccarreta's 24



Hours of the Passion. This section really struck me this time, illustrating clearly and graphically the role of Jesus as Mediator of our salvation. Here is an excerpt from the *Nineteenth Hour*, the Crucifixion:

"Oh, how moved is the Divine Father in looking at the horrible torture of your Most Holy Humanity, the terrible crafting that sin has made upon your Most Holy Members! And to satisfy your yearnings of love, He holds You to His paternal Heart, and gives You the necessary helps to accomplish our Redemption; and as He holds You tightly, You feel again in your Heart, more intensely, the blows of the nails, the lashes of the scourging, the tearing of the wounds, the pricking of the thorns. Oh, how the Father is struck! How indignant He becomes in seeing that all these pains are given to You, up into your inmost Heart, even by souls consecrated to You! And in His sorrow, He says to You:

"Is it possible, my Son, that not even the part chosen by You is wholly with You? On the contrary, it seems that these souls ask for refuge and a hiding place in your Heart in order to embitter You and give You a more painful death. And even more, all these pains they give to You, are hidden and covered by hypocrisy. Ah, Son, I can no longer contain my indignation at the ingratitude of these souls, who grieve Me more than all the other creatures together!"

"But You, O my Jesus, triumphing over all, defend also these souls, and with the immense love of your Heart, form a shield to the waves of bitternesses and piercings that these souls give You. And to appease the Father, You say to Him: *'My Father, look at this 'Heart of mine. May all these pains satisfy You; and the more bitter they are, the more powerful may they be over your Heart of Father, to plead graces, light and forgiveness for them. My Father, do not reject them; they will be my defenders who will continue my life upon earth.'*

"Oh most Loving Father, consider that if my Humanity has now reached the extremity of its sufferings that my Heart bursts as well for the bitternesses and the intimate pains and the unheard-of agonies that it has suffered for the duration of thirty-four years, beginning from the first instant of my Incarnation. Father, You know the intensity of these interior bitternesses which would have been capable of making Me die in every moment of pure agony if Our Omnipotence had not sustained Me to prolong my suffering up to this extreme agony.

"Ah, if until now I have offered You all the pains of my most Holy Humanity to appease your

Justice over everyone and to draw upon everyone your triumphant Mercy, now, in a special manner, for the perversion of the souls who are consecrated to Us, I present to You my Heart; crushed, pressed and broken under the press of all of the moments of my mortal life. Ah observe my Father, that this is the Heart that has Loved You with infinite Love and that has always been burned with Love for my brothers, your children in Me. This is the generous Heart with which I have longed to suffer, to give You complete satisfaction for all the sins of men. Have pity on its desolations, on its continual heartaches, on its anguishes, on its tediums and its sadnesses in the face of death. Oh my Father, was there, perhaps, one single beat of my Heart that did not seek your Glory and the salvation of my brothers at the cost of pains and of Blood? Did there not come forth from this always oppressed Heart of mine the ardent supplications, the groanings, the sighs and the strong cries with which for thirty-four years I have wept and cried out for Mercy in your Presence?

"Oh Father, You have heard Me for an infinitude of times and of souls; and I give You infinite thanks. But look, oh my Father, see how my Heart cannot be calmed in its pains if even one single soul must flee from its Love: because, We Love a single soul as much as all souls together. And will it be said that I had to expire my last sigh upon this painful instrument of execution, seeing even souls consecrated to Us miserably perish? I am dying in a sea of anguish for the iniquity and for the eternal loss of perfidious Judas whom I so benefited unto making him Priest and Bishop as my other Apostles, and who was so hard and ungrateful that he rejected all of my loving and delicate ways. Ah, my Father, let this abyss of pains be enough! Let what I see be enough: souls chosen by Us to the same Sacred calling, one more, another less, who want to follow Judas!

"Help Me, my Father; help Me! I cannot support all these pains! See if there is one fiber in my heart which is not tormented more than all of the gashes of my Divine Body together! See if all the Blood that I am shedding does not issue from my heart which is destroyed by Love and by pain more than from all my wounds. Have pity, my Father, have pity, not on Me, for I want to suffer unto the infinite for poor souls. Rather, have pity on all souls, especially those, both men and women, who have been called to my holy service and to my nuptials of Love! Listen, oh Father; for my heart, about to die, accelerates its blazing beats, and cries: My Father, for these so many

pains of mine, I ask You efficacious Graces of repentance and of true conversion for all these unhappy souls! Let not one of these souls flee Us! I thirst, my Father! I thirst for all souls, especially for these. I thirst for more suffering for each of these souls! My Father, I have always done your Will. Now, this Will of mine which is also yours, ah, let it be perfectly fulfilled for Love of Me, your most beloved Son in whom You have found all your good pleasure!"

This, dear friends, is what it means to be a "royal priesthood" in Christ, to participate in the glorious work of salvation from the altar of the Cross. This,

From www.pelianitoblog.wordpress.com

Ezekiel 2:9-10 I looked, and a hand was stretched out to me, and a written scroll was in it. He spread it before me; it had writing on the front and on the back, and written on it were words of lamentation and mourning and woe.

"My children, do not fear what is to come and what is already here. I have been warning you, calling all to repentance. Now the time is at hand when all will know the awesome power of God. Their idols will be smashed one by one. There will be a loneliness on earth that has never before been felt on such a grand scale. This will be the loneliness of a soul bereft of its idols. But it is in that loneliness that I will act to show each soul the futility of life apart from me. When they have nothing left, it will be their final opportunity to turn to me. Many will do so, but there are also many who will be lost. Do not let up on your prayers. Your sacrifices mean so much right now that I will multiply their effect on the souls you are praying for. Do not take this gift lightly my children. Offer your prayers and sacrifices with great confidence for I mean to use you in new ways to conquer the immense territory of souls in need of conversion. Children pray!"

Beloved Father of my heart, your unimaginable mercy is such a gift to us. In the Divine Will accept all my prayers and sacrifices, especially my Flame of Love prayers, to advance the cause you have mentioned—the salvation of souls. I offer all to you in the Holy Name of Jesus, the Beloved, through the Flame of Love. Holy Mary, Mother of God, spread the effect of grace of thy Flame of Love over all of humanity now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

(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/>.)

"I WILL GO TO MY GOD WHOM I SERVE DEVOUTLY IN MY SPIRIT"



A certain brother recognized that Francis was approaching his end: "Kind Father, alas, your sons are now without a father and are deprived of the true light of their eyes. Remember therefore your orphan sons whom you are now leaving; forgive them all their faults and give joy to those present and absent with your holy blessing." And the saint said to him: "Behold, my son, I am called by God; I forgive all their offenses and faults, and, in as far as I am able, I absolve them: I want you to announce this to them and to bless them all on my behalf."

Finally, he ordered the book of the Gospels to be brought and commanded that the Gospel according

to St. John be read from that place where it begins: Six days before the Passover, Jesus, knowing that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. The minister general had intended to read this Gospel, even before he had been commanded to do so; this passage had also appeared at the first opening of the book earlier, although the book was the whole and complete Bible in which this Gospel was contained. Francis then commanded that a hairshirt be put upon him and that he be sprinkled with ashes, for he was soon to become dust and ashes.

(*See Ascension Press for the Jeff Cavins resources. See also Mike Landry's online study resource here: <http://www.thirdplaceproject.com/unfolding-scripture-gods-covenants-with-humanity/>)

to St. John be read from that place where it begins: Six days before the Passover, Jesus, knowing that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. The minister general had intended to read this Gospel, even before he had been commanded to do so; this passage had also appeared at the first opening of the book earlier, although the book was the whole and complete Bible in which this Gospel was contained. Francis then commanded that a hairshirt be put upon him and that he be sprinkled with ashes, for he was soon to become dust and ashes.

Then, when many brothers had gathered about, whose father and leader he was and while they were standing reverently at his side awaiting his blessed

death and happy end, his most holy soul was freed from his body and received into the abyss of light, and his body fell asleep in the Lord...

O how glorious is this saint, whose soul a disciple saw ascend into heaven, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and as he ascended upon a white cloud he

was shining most gloriously!...

We therefore bless you, worthy father, whom the Most High has blessed, who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen.

(Translated from Thomas of Celano; taken from the Transitus Service)

Submitted by "Penitent"



FROM THE 'SPARROW' Chaplet of the Flame of Love

Peace my dear little sparrow friends. Lost in deep introspection I reached a rather insightful look into what St. Francis must have been thinking about when he spoke to

and preached the Gospel to the lowly birds. He was enamored by God's creatures and the smaller they were he seemed to pay closer attention to. It was not too far a reach to ponder him pondering the little sparrows most of all. His thoughts on littleness was even reflected in his selection of a name for his brothers, the first friars, in that he chose the name the Order of Friars Minor (OFM).

When I think of him talking and preaching to both the lowly sparrows and other little birds and to lowly the OFM brothers and other little people of Assisi and surrounding Italian towns it is conceivable that he loved both the little sparrows and the little people as the true handiwork of Francis' own Creator and Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When viewing men of all walks of life Francis may have looked, with eyes of amusement, and also deep recollection, at they often seemed to line up with their counterparts in the bird kingdom. The poor, lowly, humble, the unloved and often unwanted he could equate as little sparrows and those with serious problems physically, mentally, socially...he might have thought of as wounded sparrows because of the wounds that life had brought them. Conversely, on the other hand, he might have seen the rich, affluent, well to do, those with little or no problems in the secular life, as the beautiful Cardinals, Robins, even Hawks and Eagles, if you will. The difference between the two groups is visually striking and with their beautiful plumage the Cardinals and such always draw the eyes of the world. This was NOT the image Francis wanted to associate with his brothers and that is why he chose the name of "friars minor" to make it clear and certain that they, like the sparrows, were to be



considered as the last and the least in the pecking order (!) of society.

I read this on Good Friday: "Consider your own calling brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, and not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord.'"

The above scripture ties little sparrows and little Franciscans together is a beautiful way when viewed in light of God working through the little and lowly. Jesus is looking for ordinary people who want to do extraordinary things for Him. He's willing to put up with all our weaknesses, flaws, and excuses. Remember, God used Moses even though Moses protested that he was not equipped to set people free. The Lord used David even though David was a murderer, and negligent parent. He used Augustine, Thomas Becket, and Charles de Foucauld, despite their scandalous lives. And today He wants to use all of us, no matter where we come from.

It's not the condition of our outward lives that matter--it's the condition of our hearts towards God and towards the people all around us. When some asked St. Francis of Assisi how he was able to accomplish so much for the Church, he said:

"I have thought about this myself and this may be why: the LORD looked down at the earth from heaven and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, the littlest, the meanest man on the face of the earth?' Then He saw me and said, 'Now I have found him, and I will work through him. He won't be proud of it.

He'll see that I am only using him because of his littleness and insignificance."

So little sparrows you may think of yourself as unworthy. You may think that you are incapable or untrained. But history tells us that it is the lowly ones, the least ones, the weak ones, and the unworthy ones, who end up doing great work for the

Church. So little sparrows let us pray, "Lord, we ask as your wounded sparrows to come fill us with Your love. Melt our hardened hearts this Good Friday, and mold us in Your likeness and use us to build up Your Church in love, Amen."

pax et bonum

Bro. wounded sparrow

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...



HANDBOOK OF THE ASSOCIATION...

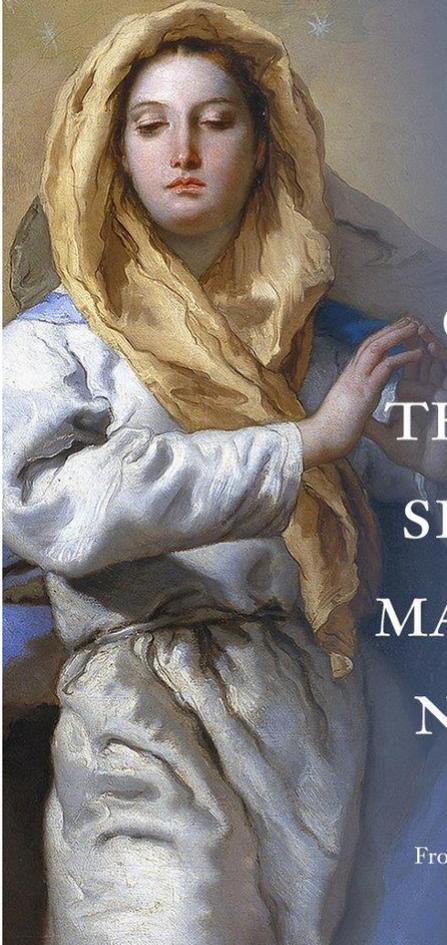


The BSP Handbook, titled *Stella Matutina: Handbook of The Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis* is now available for order.

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



MARY'S
GREATNESS
CONSISTS IN
THE FACT THAT
SHE WANTS TO
MAGNIFY GOD,
NOT HERSELF.

Pope Benedict XVI
From the book, *An Invitation to Faith*

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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, Administrators



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



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