



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter XVI—Francis' Patient Endurance and His Death

1. Francis now hung, body and soul, upon the Cross with Christ; he burned with love for God worthy of a seraph and, like Christ, he thirsted for the salvation of the greatest possible number of human beings. He could no longer walk because of the nails protruding from his feet, and so he had himself carried, half-dead as he was, through the towns and villages, to encourage others to bear Christ's Cross. To the friars he used to say, "My brothers, we must begin to serve our Lord and God. Until now we have done very little." He longed with all his heart to return to the humble beginning he had made at first and to nurse the lepers once more, as he had done before, making his body which was already worn out with toil serve him once again as it had served him before. With Christ for his leader, he proposed to achieve great victories and, even as his limbs bordered on collapse, he hoped to triumph over his enemy the Devil once again, because he was fervent and courageous in spirit. The goad of love never ceases to urge a person on to greater efforts and leaves no room for discouragement or sloth. In Francis, however, spirit and flesh were so much in harmony and so prompt to obey that, as his spirit strained after the height of sanctity, his body—far from being an obstacle—tried to surpass its desires.

2. Merit, as we know, is crowned by patient endurance, and so Francis began to suffer all kinds of illnesses, so that his treasure might be

augmented. There was scarcely a single part of his body which did not have some pain to suffer. The prolonged agony he endured eventually reduced him to a state where he had no flesh left and his skin clung to his bones. He was hemmed in with agonizing pain, but he called his trials his sisters, not his pains.



When he was suffering greater than usual one time, a friar who was a very simple man said to him, "Brother you should pray to God and ask him to be easier on you. He seems to be treating you too roughly." The saint groaned aloud at the words and exclaimed, "If I did not know your complete simplicity, I would never let you come near me again, because you dared to find fault with God for the way he is treating me." Then he threw himself on the ground, shaking every bone in his body with the fall, although he was worn out from his long illness, and kissing the earth, he added, "I thank

you, my Lord and God, for all the pains I suffer and I beg you to make them a hundred times worse, if you want to. Nothing would make me more happy than to have you afflict me with pain and not spare me. Doing your will is consolation enough, and more than enough, for me." To the friars he seemed like a second Job; the vigor of his mind increased as his body became weaker. He knew the day of his death a long time beforehand and, as it approached, he told the friars that he must soon fold his tent (cf. 2 Pt 2:14), as Christ had revealed to him.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...



Reading (Micah 5:1-4a) Gospel (St. Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23)

As we celebrate today our Blessed Lady's birth, there are a few things we need to keep in mind. Recall, first, that there are only three birthdays the Church celebrates, that of Our Lord, Saint John the Baptist, and today, of course, our Blessed Lady. These are the three persons who were born without Original Sin: Jesus, being God, never touched by sin in the least; Saint John the Baptist, having sin removed at the moment of the Visitation when he leapt with joy in his mother's womb (so conceived with sin, but having sin removed in the womb); and Our Blessed Lady, being immaculately conceived so that never even for a split second was there any sin on our Blessed Lady's soul. Being born into the world in a hidden, quiet manner unlike that of Saint John the Baptist where the people were talking about what this child was to be, she was born hidden. People did not know, but here the highest, most perfect creature that God had made was brought into the world and with her salvation began.

We can see in the Gospel in the genealogy the way God had been working throughout salvation history through the Hebrew people, all the way through the genealogy of our Blessed Lord. But in a very specific and particular way it was with Our Lady's birth that the work of salvation had begun in a very practical way. Our Lady, then, is known as the dawn. That is, the way that the sky becomes bright even before the sun rises, Jesus being the Sun, Our Lady then being the dawn that announces the fact that the Sun is going to be coming very soon. We hear, for instance, in the first reading, the prophecy from the prophet Micah about Bethlehem Ephrathah being too small to be among the clans of Judah and yet it is from that particular little town that One is going to be raised up Who is going to be the Savior of the world. Just like Our Lady, the one who is the smallest, the one who is the most humble, the one who is completely hidden, it is from her that the Son of God was born into this world, that the savior came into this world through the one whom God had chosen specifically for this task.

It is from her, then, that we also need to learn what we have to do, to strive for humility, to strive to be hidden. But it is also this pattern that we see how Our Lady is born obviously before Our Lord in order for Our Lord to be born through her. This is the reason Saint Louis de Montfort would say that before the Second Coming of Christ, the coming of Our

Lady's kingdom has to be established; that just as Our Lady came first, so now the fullness of the knowledge of Our Lady and the establishment of the kingdom of Our Blessed Lady is going to be established before the Second Coming, because in the first coming of Christ and in the first coming of Our Lady, Our Blessed Mother was completely hidden, but in the Second Coming, our Blessed Lady is going to be completely known, completely honored the way that she deserves to be honored.

That is the joy that is ours, to be able to be part of ushering in this time. I have mentioned to you many times that this is the time Our Lord has given over to His mother. This is the Blessed Mother's time. As yet, the fullness of her kingdom is not established, but that is what we are working toward, that is what Satan is so desperately trying to destroy and so desperately trying to make sure does not occur because he knows fully well that once the kingdom of Our Lady is established he has no power. None. This humble, beautiful woman has crushed his vile and despicable head, and through the humble children who will recognize the glory and honor of their mother, his head is once again going to be crushed through faith, through charity, through humility, the very things that Our Lady was known for. And those who will honor her appropriately will be known in the same way. That is the glory which we all have the possibility to share in if we will make that choice.

We look at these various points and we see how it is all coming together. The One Who is from ancient times, as we see the genealogy (but even there, of course, Our Lord goes before that), but how Our Lady fits perfectly into that. Now, throughout history, once again, we come to this point where there is the birth of Our Lady's kingdom, and it is that for which we are in travail today. That is what we are awaiting. So we can pray and we can seek to usher in the glory of our Blessed Lady's kingdom because it is through that that the glory of Our Lord's kingdom, the Second Coming, is going to be brought forth. Our Lady has to be here first, the dawn that is going to bring the Sun, the dawn that announces the rising of the Sun. If we want to be prepared for the coming of the Son of God whenever it is that He should come, we first have to be watching for the dawn, to be awake, to be alert, and to be prepared. That is exactly what our Mother will do for us. But, in the meantime, we look to her and we ask her to form us as she formed Him so that we will be in the perfect

image of Christ, so that we, following the example of Jesus, will be perfectly devoted to our Blessed Mother, that we will honor her and love her as she deserves to be loved and honored. In that way, in our hearts the kingdom of Our Lady will already be

established as the world prepares to have her kingdom firmly established. And we will be prepared, as one day the world will be, for the blessed and glorious coming of Our Lord prefigured and preceded by the glorious coming of His mother.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

Good shepherds!

In the gospel of John the Lord says: "I am the good shepherd." And "I came that they may have life and have it to the full!" (Jn. 10:10,11)

In the Office of Readings for Monday of the Twenty-first week in Ordinary Time St. Thomas Aquinas addresses the subject of the Good Shepherd. To read it is a meditation on what a good shepherd should be. As Saint Thomas says, "...the good shepherd cares for the welfare of his flock, but the bad shepherd cares only for his own welfare." And "no one can be a good shepherd unless they are one with Christ in charity."

What we don't often consider is that we, the laity, are also shepherds too. We think of it so often in relation to the leaders of the Church. What we don't consider is that we need to be leaders in the Church too even if only in our own lives. That is not a little 'only'. Our lives are where we are centered. We are in the primary position to do things in the midst of our own lives. We cannot do things in other peoples' lives. We usually can't do a thing in the Church that affects very many other people. We do regularly affect people in our own lives however, and no one else does. So, in our own lives we need to be good shepherds to our families primarily, but also to those we closely care for and can affect.

How are we, lay people, good shepherds? Well, let's consider first our families. In our families, whether we have only a spouse, or children, we need to be aware that we are always on display. We are always an example, good or bad, to our spouses or certainly our children. In the case of our children we also bear the responsibility to speak to them and teach them about the things of God. The Faith. The Faith goes on by us passing it on. We don't pass it on like a package. We teach it by living it, loving it, discussing it, and encouraging questions on it from our children. In that they see we love the Faith and it is important to us and they make it important to themselves.

They don't do it our way. They cannot do that. They do it their own way. But we are the call. The awakening for them. The shepherd's call.

So, if we bear this witness to our children we are good shepherds. We might also bring them communion when they are sick. Pray with them. Discuss Jesus with them, and make the Faith come alive in their day to day lives. In that we shepherd them just like the bishops and priests shepherd us. Just like the Pope shepherds the bishops, or the priests shepherd their parishes. Our responsibilities here are no less than theirs, just a different flock. A flock that is uniquely our own.

Then there are others around us. Everyone is a shepherd to someone, it seems, if you consider the role in the light of what we are sharing here. People see when we live our faith. Not everyone, and not all the time, but sometimes and some of the time. We don't exactly know when we are shepherding, all the time. Sometimes we do, like when we run into people, maybe even people we don't know, and they see the cross on our chest and are touched by it, or we tell them we are going to Mass, and they are not, or we tell them we will pray for them and they do not pray. So, they naturally, and usually immediately even if for only a short time, consider our words and our words call them to Christ. So, we shepherd others more often than we think.

And, knowing this we should always look for ways to grow in our faith. We grow in our faith when the good shepherds of our faith teach us and we take it to heart. Like when we hear a good homily that moves us towards virtue and we take it seriously. That happens fairly often if we are living our faith and going to Mass regularly. So, shepherds influence and teach shepherds, by example or word just as THE GOOD SHEPHERD, JESUS teaches us all. And good shepherds naturally help others to be good shepherds. Our priests help us to be better shepherds and we help others to be good shepherds by being good shepherds ourselves. Our Rule is one way we live that draws us to be good shepherds. We



need to be alert though.

Some of these other shepherds we might meet are bad shepherds. People concerned about themselves more than others. People who try to draw us away from living our faith. We can be an influence on them by our example and words and what we share of the Faith to them. They are not of our flock, but they

lead other flocks and we can influence them in their care of others.

So, it is good to keep this lesson on good shepherds in our minds and hearts and really try to be good shepherds. If we try we will succeed for the Lord, the ultimate and infinite Good Shepherd, will lead us.

Blessed be the Lord!

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



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP



“Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” And I consecrate myself for them so that they may also be consecrated in truth. I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one as you Father are in me, and I am in you. That they also may be one in us.” (Matthew 23:27-28)

After a long, hot summer, I would like to comment on current events, and how they relate to our life as Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Our life of prayer is a powerful antidote to the evils we see in our society. I was struck by an interesting article in First Things titled: “The Three Necessary Societies,” by Russell Hittinger, who outlines the social vision of Pope Leo XIII and succeeding popes through Pius XI. That’s pretty much where our modern Catholic social vision was formed.

The three necessary societies for the advancement of human happiness are first, the Domestic Society, marriage and the family. Second comes Civil Society, the state. Both Domestic Society and Civil Society are of the natural order. The third society, of the supernatural order, is the Church. There is a constant struggle between Church and state, between the natural and supernatural order. What are the rights and obligations of each of these societies? Since Christendom ended, the state has insisted it has priority. The battleground is in education, where future generations are formed.

“Therefore, we should not be surprised that the most persistent concrete issue in both Europe and America was the schools, the locus of competition between the rights of parents, Church and state. For all three of these necessary societies are, in their own way, nurseries of formation.” Pius XI further stated: “The family is more sacred than the state” when it comes to education, and parents should

always have priority in the education of their children.

When cooperation breaks down, Hittinger added: “The Leonine popes, Leo through Pius XI, considered the demise of these three necessary societies as a calamitous social scenario. Such a demise might be instigated from above or below. The scenario from above was easily imagined by the Leonine social magisterium, for the Church had experienced it during the French Revolution. The rise of the totalitarian (regimes) after World War I provided another frightening instance, where all three necessary societies would be removed from everyday life.” Thank God we are hopefully past these assaults from “above,” where oppressive government control is brought about by force, virtually enslaving people as in Communism.

Today, a scenario from below. “It is a ‘liberal’ Utopia in which the three necessary societies are reduced, in Leo’s words, to ‘the genus of commercial contracts, which can rightly be revoked by the will of those who made them.’” For Utopians, rights come from man or the state, not God. No. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness...” Declaration of Independence. Our rights are from the Creator, not the state.

It seems that many in the West have forgotten what

it means to live by the Rule of Law, as in the Natural Law. We in America have this wonderful document called the Constitution, which is a great reflection of God's law written on the hearts of mankind. Christians have in addition the Gospel of Jesus Christ which adds supernatural weight to the mandate to live by the Rule of Law.

The "liberal Utopia," a parallel universe in which many Progressives, leftists, and the media dwell, daily bombard us with their moral relativism radical worldly opinions as though they carried the weight of truth or law. There has been a great "unmasking" since the last presidential election. For years all who follow the moral teachings of Jesus Christ have been called "haters" because we don't approve of the latest moral evils in civil society, which Saint John Paul II outlined so accurately as *The Culture of Death* in his encyclical "The Gospel of Life."

I have been on a crusade my entire life to try to provide clarity concerning the greatest warfare on the face of the earth, good vs. evil. I have never seen the forces of evil come out of the closet, as it were, as they are today. Exhibit A, the media. Following is the best explanation of just how the media creates fake news (emphasis added) I have ever seen:

"The evolution of public discourse in the year since (July 5, 2016) is worthy of scholarly study: Possibilities became allegations, and these became probabilities. Then the probabilities turned into certainties, and these evolved into what are now taken to be established truths. By my reckoning, it required a few days to a few weeks to advance from each of these stages to the next. This was accomplished via the indefensibly corrupt manipulations of language repeated incessantly in our leading media.

"Lost in a year that often appeared to veer into our peculiarly American kind of hysteria is the absence of any credible evidence of what happened last year and who was responsible for it. It is tiresome to note, but none has been made available. Instead, we are urged to accept the word of institutions and senior officials with long records of deception. These officials profess 'high confidence' in their 'assessment' as to what happened in the spring and summer of last year—this standing as their authoritative judgment. Few have noticed since these evasive terms first appeared that an assessment is an opinion, nothing more, and to express high confidence is an upside-down way of admitting the absence of certain knowledge."

This quote is from an unlikely source, *The Nation*, a

very Progressive entity. The article is titled: "A New Report raises Big Questions about last year's DNC hack" by Patrick Lawrence. It is mainly an exposé of the classic fake news story of the president and Russian "collusion."

Liberal journalists have traditionally held to the standard that they are being "objective" in their news coverage. No more. The unmasking is complete, and their pure partisanship is now out in the open through their becoming infected with TDS, Trump Derangement Syndrome. The new standard has been set by CNN and CBS, both vying for the lead in fake news at 93% hostile coverage of our new president, according to a study done by Harvard University. Members of the media have now been caught red-handed on multiple occasions lying through their teeth. And they can't help it.

But to me the real news is the unmasking of who the real "haters" in society are. It's doubtful anyone with TDS can truthfully say they do not hate the man. I consider this a great triumph for the truth, and it is there in public for everyone to see every minute of every day. And they don't even know how ridiculous they look. The ultimate irony is for a new group called the "Antifa," allegedly an anti-fascist group, bringing hatred to a new level by using fascist tactics to beat up the supposed "haters." ("From a historical viewpoint, fascism belongs with communism on the far Left. With its cult of violence, the worship of the state, and its totalitarian urge to control every aspect of life, it has more in common with communist practice than with any other political system." Paul Johnson)

For the irreligious left to call followers of Christ "haters" is a real insult, and as far from the truth as the examples above. Those with TDS really do live in an alternate universe. It would be nice for the living of our Christian faith to be supported by the culture we live in. It's not. The media perfectly represents the world, the flesh, and the devil. Please let us not be fooled by the Father of Lies. The media is like today's modern scribes and Pharisees Jesus clearly described above. They hounded Jesus with "Gotcha!" questions, tried to make Him look bad at every turn, and even plotted His demise. I bet most of the people at the time of Jesus had as much contempt for the scribes and Pharisees as many of us today have for the media.

Thank God there is a new sheriff in town. EWTN now has a daily newscast "from a Catholic perspective." It is so refreshing to listen to news and attitudes from a truly Catholic perspective.

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



Joy in Suffering... by Janet Klasson, BSP



From the First Reading on the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it

profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.'" (. (Matthew 16:24-27)

One of the few lines I distinctly remember from homilies past is this one: "Every love suffers, but the deeper (love) suffers deeper." I have spent some time over the years pondering that phrase and applying it to whatever the current suffering may be.

More recently, I had a conversation with some people from the church. They had seen a little booklet at the church whose title was, "Joy in Suffering" by Bishop A. A. Noser. Now these were two parishioners whom I consider grounded and knowledgeable in their faith. In our conversation, however, they wondered what "joy in suffering" actually meant. One thing we all agreed on—none of us enjoys it! How then to find joy in it? As a penitent, it is one thing to take up my cross, as Jesus and Father Francis exhort us, but joy? I picked up the booklet, which turned out to be a short novena-style reflection on some of the sublime teachings of St. Therese of Lisieux. I found the teachings beautiful, challenging and insightful. No surprise, considering the source.

St. Therese was no stranger to suffering, and she had much time to ponder it throughout her life, much to learn and, in turn, to teach us through the grace of the Holy Spirit who led her. St. Therese herself wondered how the good God, who loves us so much, could be happy when we suffer. Her inspired answer came (my emphasis): "Never does our suffering make Him happy, but it is necessary for us; and so He sends it to us while, as it were, **turning away his face**....I assure you that **it costs Him dearly** to fill us with bitterness." She concluded: "The good God, who so loves us, has pain enough in being obliged to leave us on earth to fulfill our time of trial, without our constantly telling Him of our discomfort; **we must appear not to notice it.**"

She counseled one of the novices who wanted to give her tears only to God: "Tears for God! That must not be. Far less to Him than to creatures ought you to

show a mournful face....Our Divine Master comes to us in search of rest—to forget the unceasing complaints of His friends in the world, who instead of appreciating the value of the Cross, receive it far more often with groans and tears....**It is for us to console Our Lord, not for Him to console us.** His Heart is so tender that if you cry, He will dry your tears; but thereafter He will go away sad, since you did not allow Him to repose tranquilly within you. **Our Lord loves the glad of heart, the children who greet Him with a smile. When will you learn to hide your troubles from Him, or tell Him gaily that you are happy to suffer for Him?"**

St. Therese herself was given the grace to thirst for suffering. Lest this discourage us, the book *Thoughts of St. Therese*, there appears this footnote on p. 133: "No reader should be discouraged by this chapter on Suffering. What St. Therese says is very consoling for those who are nailed to the Cross; and others must remember that God had given to his humble Servant a sensible (meaning of the senses) attraction for suffering, which is a rare grace and reserved to very few souls, though many imagine they possess it and mistake their road, choosing to follow this supposed attraction. Without the sensible desire and even though experiencing an invincible repugnance to suffering, souls can be sanctified. **What pleases God is that the suffering be borne with love.**"

So, even in these few passages, we can see that joy in suffering has nothing whatever to do with enjoyment, or it would not be suffering! What it has to do with is love. "Every love suffers, but the deeper suffers deeper." Like Jesus and Mary, St. Therese lived this on a level that few of us will ever attain. But perhaps by deliberately applying the little lessons above we can, by God's grace, grow in our experience of joy in suffering, of offering our Fiat to God in a deeper and more loving way in every

moment.

St. Therese exclaimed at the end of her life: "Yes, all that I have written about my thirst for suffering is really true. I do not regret having surrendered

myself to Love.... Oh!.... I love Him!.... My God, I... love Thee!"

May our lives too be a joyful surrender to Love in all its forms.

From www.pelianitoblog.wordpress.com

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5 Therefore we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgement of God, and is intended to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering.

"My beloved, all that you are enduring is for your ultimate good and the good of those I have given you to pray for. Do I take pleasure in suffering? No! But my great joy is to give you far more in return than you can ever imagine. Give me your pennies and I will open the storehouse of heavenly goods! I do not exaggerate, for in the Divine Will this is more than possible, it is being done already through the small sacrifices of those whose generous hearts offer all to me. I say small sacrifices, because when you see what they have been able to purchase you will be amazed at the extravagance of your loving Abba. Then offer me everything, a thorn in your finger, a stubbed toe, the death of a loved one, your own illnesses—leave nothing out. So many souls are in need. Suffering is the currency of love. Offer all to me and you will be filled with love and great joy."

O my beloved Abba, in the Divine Will I offer you all that I have suffered in my entire life and all the sufferings of all souls of all time. I redo all sufferings in the Divine Will to make of them a perfect gift of love. Eternal Father let these poor pennies purchase souls for the kingdom and may your kingdom come quickly. 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/>.)



FROM THE 'SPARROW' St. Francis & St. Padre Pio on Worry

Peace my little sparrow friends! When meditating on St. Francis and St. Padre Pio one of the more sublime points in their characters was the absence of worry. Most certainly their lives were beset with problems and concerns and these things came to their minds in their proper times and seemingly were handled with the minimum amount of energy. It is this ability that I want to contrast with them and us...for clarity.

"Pray, hope and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer." –St. Padre Pio

We have all had times when we were worried about something. Worry will take control of our thoughts and drive out the peace and joy available to us through Jesus. Fear and worry affect us in nearly the same way; it would be difficult to separate one from the other. Worrying about tomorrow hampers our efforts today. Satan wants us to doubt and worry and to mull over negative thoughts. We must remember that God "is able to accomplish

abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine." (Ephesians 3:20)

It is all right to be concerned but not to worry. There is a difference. Worry wastes energy, but concern stirs us sparrows to action. Planning for tomorrow is time well spent, but worrying about tomorrow is time we sparrows have wasted. We, as the littlest of the little, need to focus on the Lord Jesus' ability to control all circumstances.

When Jesus came walking on the water, Peter wanted to join Him. He stepped out of the boat in faith, but as soon as he focused on the boisterous waves, his faith gave way to fear and he began to sink (Matthew 14:26-30). Does this same thing happen to us sometimes?

When the apostle John was exiled on Patmos, he chose to continue living in faith despite his circumstances. He recorded a great testimony about God when he wrote, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns." (Revelation 19:6) When we walk by faith and trust our lives to the almighty God,

we can find courage to face each tomorrow with confidence. There is no peace like the peace of knowing that our future is in God's hands.

We, little sparrows, cannot have faith and fear at the same time, any more that we can be happy and angry at the same time. The larger our thoughts about God, the smaller our thoughts about our problems!

"Pray with perseverance, trust, and a serene calm mind."

"Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is the key that opens God's heart." –St. Padre Pio

Pax et bonum
Bro. Sparrow

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina

POOR HEART



We might ask ourselves, "Who is the Poor Heart? Is it Jesus, St. Francis, St. Clare? Is it the suffering person, or is it you or me?"

Looking back into the 1200's when Francis and Clare were alive, as alive as you and I are today in this moment, we start with Francis, a young man who suffered poverty, rejection, beatings, hunger and sorrow, being misunderstood and yet, at the same time was being called by God! Francis did not "act out" these trials; he did not bring them upon himself, but instead, his choice was to accept, embrace and respond to God's call. Francis made a choice to love, forgive and give the mercy God gave to him, back to others. That was his choice. Francis knew how to keep the love, forgiveness and mercy flowing; he never cut it off from anyone but tried to bring peace wherever he was.

St Clare (we just celebrated her Feast Day on August 11) in her physical and spiritual beauty, saw Francis as one who had a "Poor Heart"; one who had more than empathy for others. Francis had a "Poor Heart" that made him "one" with Jesus—united in pain and suffering, as one leper to another leper, and that is why God drew Francis so close to his Son Jesus.

In Francis the "Poor Heart", Clare also saw Joy and Peace! A "Poor Heart", but called by God and free to respond—respond to God and others. Although Clare's trials were not as severe as Francis', by grace she was bonded to his trials and to his peace. Going against her family's plans for her, she eventually broke out of her home on a Palm Sunday evening to respond completely to God calling her.

Now, we have both "Poor Hearts" responding to God and following Jesus' footsteps. When Clare was a small child and her mother had visitors, Clare would dress up in old raggy clothes serving them tea and

cookies, pretending she was serving the Apostles. She was already serving, identifying and bonding with other "Poor Hearts", not knowing yet, that God was also calling her. Francis, the "Poor Heart" in one place being called and Clare the "Poor Heart" in another place being called.

Even as a young child long before she knew, God was forming Clare to serve her Sisters in the Monastery; a beautiful thread of grace through her life to found an Order of Poor Clare's. Clare was a "Poor Heart" just like Francis but each in their own way, in order to respond to God and fulfill His will and mission on earth. Clare grew into a very deep, gentle and loving soul, having a committed prayer life and yet we know she would often break her own Monastic Rule to shelter and feed another "Poor Heart" who approached her for help. She identified with "other" – the rich, poor, healthy, sick, broken and in need of prayer. She was a "Poor Heart" with and for them!

Clare would often say, "even the baby has something to offer" if a new or young person had something to say. She did not try to stifle them knowing this "Poor Heart" could have something worthwhile to offer. So, it was not about ego, or barriers, but about "Poor Hearts" understanding and helping one another.

Now, what does this mean for us today as Brothers and Sisters of Penance? It means we are no different that St Francis and St Clare – being called to be "Poor Hearts", identifying with joys and sorrows, offering prayer, serving food and much more. God will always put it in front of us; we don't need to look – just be open and willing to be a "Poor Heart – a beautiful thread of grace!

*St Clare: August 11 - submitted by the Penitent & reviewed by the OFM Friar

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...



NEW CHAPTER IN ONTARIO, CANADA – THE ST. CLARE CHAPTER!

The Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis are happy to announce the launch of the St. Clare Chapter in the Archdiocese of Toronto, Ontario Canada. This chapter welcomes those who may feel called to the penitential life, and who are living in and around Toronto, and throughout Ontario. The Rule of 1221 is the first rule given to the laity by St. Francis of Assisi. A brochure may be downloaded from our website, <http://bspenance.org>. You may also find a mention on the Archdiocese of Toronto website under Lay Associations. St. Clare, pray for us!

STAY CONNECTED...PLEASE!

If you wish to connect with your Brothers and Sisters in the BSP, please remember that the BSP Forums on our website are set up specifically for that purpose. It is a wonderful place for those who have lived the Rule for some time to give encouragement to those just starting out. You don't have to post long messages, but post and respond as the Spirit leads you. If you have something edifying to share, especially on living the life of penance, you will find a very appreciative audience.

Remember too that there is also a prayer forum. Don't underestimate the prayers of a few poor penitents under the patronage of Father Francis and St. Clare!

Hope to see you on the Forums! <http://bspenance.org/forum/>

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

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF MARY – SEPTEMBER 8



Birth of the Virgin | fresco by Giotto

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



of St. Francis

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