



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Some of the miracles which took place after St. Francis' death

I. The Power of the Stigmata

1. As I set out to describe some of the authentic miracles of St. Francis, for the honor of almighty God and the glory of the saint who has already been raised to the glory of heaven, I have decided to start with the miracle in which the power of Christ's Cross is especially clear and its glory renewed. When Francis put on his new self, he was marked out by a new and unheard-of miracle; by an extraordinary privilege which had never before been granted to a human being in the course of history. He was emblazoned with the sacred stigmata, so that even his body which was destined to die was made like the body of the Crucified. No human tongue can suffice to praise such a miracle. All Francis' efforts, whether they were known to others or made in secret, were directed towards the Cross of our Lord. The seal of the Cross had been impressed upon his heart from the beginning of his religious life and he was anxious to carry it in his body too. So he clothed himself with the Cross and put on the habit of penance which was in the form of the Cross. He had put on the person of Christ crucified in his heart, and now his body was clothed with the armor of the Cross; God had routed the powers of evil in the sign of the Cross and now his army would do battle for him under the same standard. From the moment when Francis first began his active service in the army of the Crucified, a number of the mysteries of the Cross were seen in his life, as must be clear to anyone who studies his biography. In the seven visions which he had of our Lord's Cross, he was transformed into the likeness of the Crucified in thought and desire and deed by



ecstatic love of him. It was only right, therefore, that the supreme King who in his loving kindness condescends beyond all human expectation to those who love him should emblazon his body with the standard of the Cross. It was love of the Cross which had seized him from the beginning and it was the honor of bearing the Cross which was to make him a cause of admiration for the world.

2. To prove the reality of the stigmata beyond all doubt, besides the testimony of those who examined them and touched them, which is above all suspicion, we have a number of extraordinary visions and miracles which took place after the saint's death; and these help to banish all hesitation from our hearts.

His Holiness Pope Gregory IX of happy memory, of whom St. Francis had foretold that he would be pope, was inclined to doubt the wound in Francis' side, before the canonization of the saint. Then one night, as the pope himself used to relate with tears, St. Francis appeared to him in a dream. His face seemed a little hard and he reproached him for his doubts. Then he raised his right arm and showed him the wound and told him to get a glass and catch the blood which was streaming from his side. The pope got the glass in his vision and it seemed fill up to the brim with blood. After that, he was so devoted to the stigmata and so eager in his conviction that he could never allow anyone to call these wonderful signs into doubt by attacking them in their pride, and he corrected such people severely.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

May 13, 2005 Our Lady of Fatima Reading (Acts 25:13b-21) Gospel (St. John 21:15-19)

Today the Church celebrates the feast of Our Lady of Fatima. We recall the great events that took place in Fatima, Portugal back in 1917 as Our Lady appeared to these three little children. She revealed to them several secrets, including, of course, the Second World War and some of the events that would take place as we have only in the last few years had revealed as part of that Third Secret – the things that would take place with the shooting of the Holy Father and the martyrdom of many others.

So as these events that Our Lady spoke of continue to unfold, we have to look even further at what it is that she asked for. She asked that there would be reparation on the First Saturdays for all of the crimes against her Immaculate Heart. She asked that we would do penance and that we would pray the Rosary. It is precisely these things that are needed more than anything in our world today. Of all the things that we can get ourselves involved in, there is nothing more important than prayer and penance. It is only this that is going to bring about a change.

I think Pope John Paul II had demonstrated this very clearly toward the end of his life when he accepted the intense sufferings that God sent him. He showed all of us the dignity of a suffering human being. Sister Lucia did something that was very similar as she just suffered in silence for so many years, showing us once again what it means when Our Lord looks at each one of us as He did at Peter in the Gospel reading today and said, Do you love Me? Then when we say, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love You," the question is what we are going to do with that. Love, as we know, is demonstrated only in suffering; it is only when we are willing to accept the Cross.

As it said at the end of the Gospel reading when Jesus explained to Peter what was going to happen to him when he got older, Saint John says: This was to signify the kind of death by which he was to glorify God. Now we would look at it and say, "How can that glorify God? It is such an unjust thing!" But it is precisely because he accepted it and he embraced it

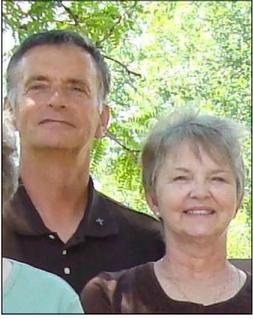
and he gave it all to God, and the Lord was glorified in that. So too now for us, to be able to look at this and remember that in that Third Secret as the angel stood with his sword and cried out to the earth, Penance! Penance! Penance! those are the only words that are in that part of the Third Secret that has been revealed. Penance! Penance! Penance! This is what the world needs: People who are willing to accept their share of the Cross, and by this means to glorify God; people who are willing to offer to God their suffering, to be able to unite that with Our Lord's suffering, and in this way to demonstrate their love.

This is what we see Saint Paul doing in the first reading, having to go through all of these injustices and all of the trials and things that he had to endure until finally he would be put to death. So too, when we look at it all, it is unjust if we look at it on the natural level. And there is cause, if we look at it just on that level, to be angry. But what good does it do? What we have to do is look at it from God's perspective and realize that if we are being given an opportunity to share in the sufferings of Christ through things that are unjust, it is by these means that we glorify God, and it is by these means that we show God we love Him. That is what is being offered to us.

As Our Lady calls us to prayer and penance, she is asking us also to be able to be like her Son, to suffer even unjustly, to forgive the people who cause the suffering, to be willing to offer it all to God, to give Him glory. And so today Our Lord looks at each one of us – and even though it hurts us sometimes that He would even ask, Do you love Me? – the reason He keeps asking is because most of us give Him lip service and we say, "Yes, Lord, of course I love You," but we have not demonstrated it very well, if at all. So He looks at us again today and asks the same question. Then, in response, when we tell Him, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You," if that be the case then we need to show Him that we love Him and not just tell Him. To show Him that we love Him is to accept the Cross so that by those very means we will glorify God.

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





ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... Mother...

It is certain that Jesus loved His Mother, and we can all be certain that he still does. She was with Him all the time, but Scripture is quite silent on what she generally shared with Jesus, or the others around her. In fact,

she seldom shows up in the life she had with her son in Scripture. She does show up at the Cana wedding feast.

"...there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had likewise been invited to the celebration. At a certain point the wine ran out, and Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." (John 2: 1,2,3)

And we know what happened. Jesus performed his first miracle, changing water into wine. So, Jesus performed his first miracle thanks to his Mother's request.

It is easy for us to ponder who his Mother was in the life of her divine Son? What was she like as his Mother? We can only assume she was to Jesus what our mothers were to us. She cared for him. She nursed him. She loved him and she counseled him, as least as he grew up. Not until Jesus gets lost in Jerusalem, and they find him "in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (LK 2:46), and when they confront him he says to them: "Why did you search for me? Did you not know I had to be in my Father's house?" (LK 2:49) is there any challenge to Mary of His Divinity, which she knew existed from her encounter with the angel who told her of God's will for her. "You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name, Jesus. Great will be his dignity and he will be called the Son of the Most High." And Mary said to the angel: "How can this be since I do not know man?" The angel answered her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence the holy offspring to be born will be called the Son of God." (LK 1:31-35)

And she suffered, as all mothers suffer, in the lives of their children only her so much more. She watched her son die a terrible and miserable way. And she was told she would suffer, unlike most of

us. "Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother: This child is destined to be the downfall and rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed and you, yourself, shall be pierced with a sword—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare." (Lk 2:33-35) And she was pierced by that sword when she watched her son die.

We need to carry Mary in our lives and hearts as our Mother. We celebrate her Assumption in to heaven because the Church teaches it. The fact is that there is no grave to Mary on earth. There are no graves to Jesus, or to his Mother. Their bodies are not here! Their bodies are with them in heaven. Mary is in heaven, body and soul. Some of the modern seers of Marian apparitions have touched her. She has a real human physical body.

So, what our mothers were to us when they were with us Mary is to us all now. It is good to keep that in mind. It will comfort us. Mothers are interested in everything about their children. Mary is interested in everything about us. Unfortunately, unlike our mothers, she can only act in our regard when we invite her. She is in the same position with us as her Son. If we don't invite the Lord in He does not come. He respects our free will. So, Mary will respect our free will too. However, if we invite her in, and pray to her, she will watch over us, protect us, and guide us as a mother always would—even if we don't ask her sometimes—because she loves us.

So, in this beautiful month of May, which the Church gives to Mary, when winter is gone and spring is sprung, flowers are blooming, birds are singing, and nature has awakened from winter let us awaken to the love of our Mother. Let us call on her, cherish our prayers to her and certainly her rosary, and be confident that she will watch over and protect us.

She is certainly most happy that we are living a Rule of life given by her Son to St. Francis for us. We can be confident that she, who perfectly lived her life with her son in poverty and simplicity, will guide us and strengthen us in living our life of penance and simplicity, for the love of God.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, and our Mother, please pray for us.

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



NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

"The angel said to the women, 'He is Risen, just as He said!'"

(Matthew 28:6)

"Count it all joy when you meet various trials." (James 1:2)

A treat this month, featuring a special combination of our holy father Francis, and the wisdom and wit of G. K. Chesterton, brought to us by Dale Ahlquist, founder of The Chesterton Society. He is also host of the EWTN series: "G.K. Chesterton, the Apostle of Common Sense."

I have gotten to know Dale, for he lives in the area, and attends many local events, including a men's group of three hundred men who get together for dinner and debate at St. Augustine's in St. Paul, MN, on important issues concerning fidelity to our Catholic Faith.

Ahlquist has also founded a superb Catholic high school called Chesterton Academy, where he also teaches. He knows Chesterton probably better than anyone else, for he was instrumental in Ahlquist's entering the Catholic Church. Chesterton wrote a book on St. Francis that I wish to highlight.

But first, some quotes from an article "The bottomless pit of unfathomable thanks" by Ahlquist in the March issue of "The Catholic Servant," in which he gives an introduction similar to "the perfect joy" of St. Francis that I want to begin with it:

"How's your lent going? Mine has been awful. It's been filled with death, pain, and suffering. One crisis after another, coming physically, socially, professionally, spiritually. Each project pelted with slings and arrows and heavier artillery. In other words, it's been perfect. I couldn't ask for more reasons to be focused on God, focused on others, and focused on my sorry soul. A very clear and poignant vision of the Cross."

How's that for the Franciscan attitude of "perfect joy?" Ahlquist tells us that Chesterton's book on St. Francis of Assisi is the first book he wrote after his conversion to the Catholic Faith. Send your kids to Chesterton Academy, for Dale teaches the life of St. Francis to the sophomore class every year. Following is one of his insights:

"Even before Chesterton came into the Catholic Church, he felt a connection to this universal saint. He said that Francis had never been a stranger to him, which is to say he had always been a friend. When we are devoted to a saint, he is first of all a friend. Chesterton was thankful to St. Francis for the path he helped pave to the Church, and fittingly, the book is about thanksgiving. 'The best kind of giving

is thanksgiving.'"

Ahlquist also learned, after reading the book on St. Francis for the tenth time, that the best kind of prayer is thanksgiving, the best kind of almsgiving is thanksgiving, and the best kind of abstinence is thanksgiving. That reflects rather well the title of the article: "The bottomless pit of unfathomable thanks" we owe to God.

"Francis realized his utter dependence on God. He set out to live for others and not for himself. He became a beggar helping other beggars, knowing all of us are beggars. He learned to restrain himself from physical joy for the sake of spiritual joy. Indulging in physical pleasures tends to make people forget God. St. Francis 'devoured fasting as a hungry man devours food.' He sought poverty as other men sought wealth. He basked in humility as others bask in pride and glory. Nothing that could happen to him could bother him. Nothing came between him and God. When we realize we owe everything to God, we live completely for Him, in a joyful relationship."

Chesterton says: *"Debt and dependence do become pleasures in the presence of unspoiled love. It is the key of all the problems of Franciscan morality which puzzle the merely modern mind; above all it is the key of asceticism. It is the highest and holiest of the paradoxes that the man who really knows he cannot pay his debt will be forever paying it. He will be forever giving back what he cannot give back, and cannot be expected to give back. He will be always throwing things away into a bottomless pit of unfathomable thanks."*

Ahlquist ponders the consequences. *"Every act of penance, every act of kindness, every act of holiness, every act of praise is a payment back to God on the debt we can never repay, giving back what we can never give back. What a revelation to know that our good works, our gifts, and our prayers really do not amount to anything. Rather, we are throwing them into a bottomless pit of unfathomable thanks. And the motivation is to keep doing so, joyfully and passionately, with a thanks that can't be measured."*

Some of us learned this idea years ago from the book by St. Louis de Montfort: "True Devotion to Mary." There we learn that going through Mary is the easiest and best way of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, for she, as our spiritual mother, will lead us

unfailingly to her Son. To Jesus through Mary. We give everything into her hands to dispose of as she wishes. We not only trust in Jesus, as in the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, but we trust in our Blessed Mother.

Chesterton finishes by saying: "Most of us in the modern world are too small in our thinking, too petty, too plain, too shallow, too unimaginative. We are not generous enough to be ascetics like St. Francis. One might say not even genial enough. A

man must have magnanimity of surrender, of which he commonly only catches a glimpse in first love, like a glimpse of our lost Eden. The truth is in that riddle; the whole world has only one good thing: a bad debt."

St. James the Apostle explains how it works. "**The testing of your faith produces steadfastness, which leads us to be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.**" THANKS BE TO GOD!

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



Vexation... by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the First Reading, Second Sunday of Easter

(The trials of St. Paul) "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers,

danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches." (2 Cor 11:24-28)

One has only to read the trials of St. Paul to put their own trials into perspective. It seems that lately I am beset, not so much by trials, although there have been some of those, but it is the day-to-day vexations that are getting under my skin. For instance, our house is for sale and the market is rather stagnant here, so there is the elation/disappointment roller-coaster I ride every time we have a showing. There are the vexations of waiting for a showing, of waiting to move, and waiting for someone else to move.

And there is the vexation that comes in my dealings with others, when I fail to act as I should or when my expectations fail to materialize. I once heard about a person complaining to another about someone who was always pushing their buttons. The wise reply was, "Well, what are you doing with buttons?" Touché! As someone who is trying to live in God's will, sometimes all I can see is how far I am from it.

Vexations come and go throughout life. The trick is in maintaining the peace of heart that is a free gift from God in all circumstances. This past Easter a dear friend gave me a book by St. Alphonsus de Liguori called, "Uniformity with God's Will". St. Alphonsus writes:

"The instances of jangling irritation that are

bound to arise will not fail to make surface impact on the senses. This however will be experienced only in the inferior part of the soul; in the superior part will reign peace and tranquillity as long as our will remains united with God's."

Living in uniformity with God's will is very easy to learn and not so easy to put into practice. We had a long winter where I live, and I know many others had the same problem. Everywhere I went, there were complaints about the weather, sometimes coming from me! I finally decided to try something different. Whenever I felt like complaining, or whenever someone else complained about the weather—I started quoting from the book of Daniel, Chapter 3: "**Ice and snow, bless the Lord, frost and chill, bless the Lord. Praise and exalt Him above all forever!**" What I found is that blessing God through the vexation brought a smile to their face and to mine. Some even laughed out loud! I had not defeated the weather, but I had defeated the vexation of it!

Vexations will always be with us. I think God sends them as an opportunity for us to build the spiritual muscle that will get us through major trials. If we see vexations as a gift from God, we mitigate the harm and ensure that the surface vexation does not deal a serious injury to our interior peace.



The following, from Daniel, Chapter 3, is an excerpt from the prayer of the three youth in the fiery furnace, that got them out of that inferno completely unharmed. The passage is prayed regularly in the Liturgy of the Hours. It is an easy one to imitate, even on car trips as the scenery passes by. Praying this way can be an antidote to vexation, or a vaccine against it. May the glory it gives to God send a dew-laden breeze into the fiery furnace of our next vexation.

*Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord;
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord;
You heavens, bless the Lord;
All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord.
All you hosts of the Lord; bless the Lord.
Sun and moon, bless the Lord;
Stars of heaven, bless the Lord.
Every shower and dew, bless the Lord;
All you winds, bless the Lord.
Fire and heat, bless the Lord;
Cold and chill, bless the Lord.
Dew and rain, bless the Lord;
Frost and cold, bless the Lord.
Ice and snow, bless the Lord;
Nights and days, bless the Lord.*

*Light and darkness bless the Lord;
Lightning and clouds, bless the Lord.
Let the earth bless the Lord;
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord
Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.
You springs, bless the Lord;
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.
You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord;
All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.
All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord;
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
You sons of men, bless the Lord;
O Israel, bless the Lord.
Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord;
Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.
Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord;
Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.
Ananias, Azarias, Misael, bless the Lord;
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost;
Let us praise and exalt God above all forever.
Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven;
Praiseworthy and glorious forever.*

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



FROM THE 'SPARROW' Life-Changing Gospel

Peace dear sparrows! It has been said, "True Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; rather, it has been found difficult and left untried." Now let us "sparrow wrestle" with this surmise a bit. Consider the following:

Jesus is portrayed in John 10 as the Good Shepherd, compassionate and ready to sacrifice His own comfort and life for the sheep. Are we content within His sheepfold, or is our life like that of a sheep without a shepherd? It is most imperative that we hear the Shepherd's voice and follow Him, lest we be led astray by the voice of a stranger. Like our Shepherd, we need to be compassionate and seek the well-being of others. (cf. BSP Rule)

Christ was a friend of sinners and was sensitive to their needs. He was a "good doctor" with effective remedies for people's problems. That remedy is the Blood of Jesus Christ, which must be applied to our sinful nature by receiving the Church's Sacraments and then sharing the good news that these holy gifts



bring to us with the people that are all around us in the world we live in. The spreading of the "Good News" is, and should be, one of the driving goals that animate our respective lives. Jesus said, "Go into the whole world..." which gives us our direction—the whole world!

Christ revealed that His Kingdom is within reach of all who want to enter it. Do we present His Kingdom as attainable and desirable? Christ is not looking for just an informal commitment to spread His Gospel; He wants people fully dedicated to His cause. We sparrows have only to look at the first three hundred years of Christian martyrs to get a clear understanding of how this "dedication" has been experienced by those Saints who have blazed a trail for us to follow. To be such people, we must be humble and surrendered, and have Christ in control of our entire being—even our thoughts. (Does that ruffle some feathers dear sparrows?) We should have such a close relationship with our heavenly Father that we can forgive those who wrong us.

We need to offer the world a life-changing Gospel. If the Gospel we represent hasn't already changed us, we have nothing to offer to the uninformed of the world. We, as Christians, as Franciscans, cannot convince people of the power of the Gospel message if it has no effect on us! Can we, then, tell others that Jesus is the answer, if we in our turn, are still questioning God's provision and protection for us as the lowest and littlest sparrows of His heart? Christ

offers eternal life imbued with His eternal love. Those of the world, should they follow us, should be grounded in the fact that they too will inherit eternal life. This Gospel message and the life we profess is the most important and eternal matter that we sparrows have undertaken in life. This brings into sharp focus the often-repeated words of St. Francis, "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

God and Logic

Peace dear little sparrows! Today we leave the world of littleness and strive for the heights of logic (this should be interesting...mixing sparrows and logic together). One of the most unique recent quotes is, "Faith concludes what logic eludes" in other words a sparrow might say "logical faith!" (Smooth out your feathers for we are fixing to take an unexpected flight!)

A logical person reasons his way to a conclusion based on ideas previously accepted as factual. The pattern of reasoning follows an "if/then" formula (simple sparrow logic). Jesus used logical truth when He said, "If you love me, [then] keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The other side of this logical conclusion is the one who does NOT keep the Lord's commandments does not love Him (simple logical truth-emphasis added!).

God's truth always follows logic; however, divine logic is sometimes elevated to a plane high above our comprehension (here we need our little wings of understanding...). God promised Abraham a son. He promised that through Isaac his seed would become as numerous as the sands of the sea. This promise did not seem logical, because Abraham's wife was past the age of childbearing. Sarah thought of an alternate method of having a child which, according to the laws of logic, seemed to be the only possible way God's promise could be fulfilled. But God meant exactly what He had said, and in retrospect we understand what was perfectly logical to Him the whole time. Sarah's plan to help God comply with human logic brought grief and trouble to all involved.

Years later Abraham faced the supreme logic-defying test of all time. God ordered Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a human sacrifice. God had promised that Abraham's descendants would come through Isaac. Now He ordered him put to death. How could this possibly be the will of God? But Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead if necessary (Hebrews 11:19). He didn't harbor any doubt that God would keep His promise. From God's perspective it was a perfectly logical test of Abraham's faith, and He was pleased by Abraham's response. Any system of logic NOT founded on faith in God's Word will lead a man away from truth and away from God.

This logical faith in God's Word is best demonstrated in St. Francis' prayer *Oratio Ante Crucifixum*:

Summe, gloriose Deus, illumina tenebras cordis mei et da mihi fidem rectam, spem certam, et caritatem perfectam, sensum et cognitionem, Domine, ut faciam tuum sanctum et verax mandatum.

(Prayer before the Crucifix: Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart. Give me a right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, good sense and knowledge, O Lord, that I may fulfill Thy holy and true command.)

St. Francis abandoned the world logic and pursued God's logic in this prayer and in the way he allowed God's will to lead and direct his life. Now I ask you, dear sparrows, should we not follow in the Poverello's footsteps?

pax et bonum, Bro. Sparrow
Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina



The Admonitions



#2 THE EVIL OF SELF-WILL

The Lord said to Adam: "Eat of every tree: you may not eat, however, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

He was able to eat of every tree of paradise, because he did not sin as long as he did not go against obedience. For that person eats of the tree of the knowledge of good who makes his will his own and, in this way, exalts himself over the good things the Lord says and does in him. And so, through the suggestion of the devil and the transgression of the command, it became the apple of the knowledge of evil. Therefore, it is fitting he suffer the punishment.

#3 PERFECT OBEDIENCE

The Lord says in the Gospel: "Whoever does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple" and "Whoever wishes to save his life must lose it."

The person who offers himself up totally to obedience in the hands of his prelate, leaves all that he possesses and loses his body. And whatever he does and says which he knows is not contrary to his will is true obedience, provided that what he does is good.

And should a subject see that some things might be better and more useful for his soul than what a prelate commands, let him willingly offer such things to God as a sacrifice; and instead, let him earnestly strive to fulfill the prelate's wishes. For this is loving obedience because it pleases God and neighbor.

If the prelate, however, commands something contrary to his conscience, even though he may not obey him, let him not, however, abandon him. And if he then suffers persecution from others, let him love them all the more for the sake of God. For whoever chooses to suffer persecution rather than wish to be separated from his brothers truly remains in perfect obedience because he "lays down his life" for his brothers. In fact, there are many religious who, under the pretext of seeing things better than those which the prelate commands, look back, and return to the vomit of their own will. These people are murderers, and because of their bad example, cause many to lose their souls.

#4 LET NO ONE MAKE BEING OVER OTHERS HIS OWN

"I did not come to be served, but to serve" says the Lord. Let those who are placed over others boast about that position as much as they would if they were assigned the duty of washing the feet of their brothers. And if they are more upset at having their place over others taken away from them than at losing their position at their feet, the more they store up a money bag to the peril of their soul.

#5 LET NO ONE BE PROUD, BUT BOAST IN THE CROSS OF THE LORD

Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for He created and formed you in the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to "His likeness" according to the Spirit.

And all creatures under heaven serve, know, and obey their Creator, each according to its own nature, better than you. And even the demons did not crucify Him, but you, together with them, have crucified Him and are still crucifying Him by delighting in vices and sins.

In what then, can you boast? Even if you were so skillful and wise that you possessed all knowledge, knew how to interpret every kind of language, and to scrutinize heavenly matters with skill, you could not boast in these things. For even though someone may have received from the Lord a special knowledge of the highest wisdom, one demon knew about heavenly matters and now knows more about those of earth than all human beings.

In the same way, even if you were more handsome and richer than everyone else, and even if you worked miracles so that you put demons to flight; all these things are contrary to you; nothing belongs to you; you can boast of none of these things.

But we can boast in our weaknesses and in carrying each day, the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#6 IMITATION OF CHRIST

Let all of us, brothers, consider the Good Shepherd Who bore the suffering of the Cross to save His sheep.

The Lord's sheep followed Him in tribulation and persecution, in shame and hunger, in weakness and

temptation, and in other way; and for these things they received eternal life from the Lord.

Therefore, it is a great shame for us, the servants of God, that the saints have accomplished great things and we want only to receive glory and honor by recounting them.

#7 LET GOOD ACTION FOLLOW KNOWLEDGE

The Apostle says, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Those people are put to death by the letter who only wish to know the words alone, that they might be

esteemed wiser than others and be able to acquire great riches to give to their relatives and friends.

And those religious are put to death by the letter who are not willing to follow the spirit of the divine letter but, instead, wish only to know the words and interpret them for others.

And those people are brought to life by the spirit of the divine letter who do not attribute every letter they know, or wish to know, to the body but, by word and example, return them to the most high Lord God to Whom every good belongs.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI THE SAINT EARLY DOCUMENTS VOL 1

Continued in June Newsletter.....

Submitted by: Penitent

From the Desert Fathers



*Abba Anthony said,
"I saw the snares that the enemy
spreads out over the world and I said groaning,
'What can get through from such snares?'
Then I heard a voice saying to me,
'Humility.'"*

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

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. 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.



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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