



...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

5. At Lerida in Catalonia a man called John who was very devoted to St. Francis was walking along a road one evening where an ambush had been laid with intent to kill. John himself had no enemies, but the attack was intended for his companion who bore a close resemblance to him. One of the assailants sprang from his hiding place, and thinking John was his enemy, he attacked him so fiercely with his sword that there was no hope for his recovery. The very first blow he received severed his shoulder and arm almost completely from his body and another thrust pierced his chest, making such a gash that the escaping breath would have blown out half a dozen candles.

The doctors were convinced that he could not be saved; his wounds were festering and the smell was so bad that even his wife could hardly stand it. No human remedy could do anything for him and so he had recourse to St. Francis, begging his intercession as fervently as he could. Even while he was being attacked, he had commended himself to him and to the Blessed Virgin. As he lay there alone on his bed of pain, fully conscious and repeating the name Francis continually, a man dressed in the habit of the Friars Minor entered by the window and stood beside him, as it seemed to him. He addressed him by name and said, "You had confidence in me, and so God will save you." When the dying man asked him who he was, he replied that he was St. Francis and immediately bent over him and unwound his bandages. Then he seemed to anoint all his wounds with ointment. The moment John felt the touch of those holy hands which drew their power of healing from our Savior's stigmata, his flesh was renewed and the pus disappeared, so that his wounds closed up and he was



completely restored to health. Then the saint disappeared. Realizing that he had been cured, John called his wife and broke out joyfully praising God and St. Francis. She came running and when she saw her husband, whom she thought she would have to bury the following day, standing on his feet, she was terrified and she filled the whole neighborhood with her screams. When the rest of the family arrived, they tried to get John back to bed, thinking that he had gone mad, but he would not hear of it and tried to show them that he was healed. They were all so astonished that they seemed to be beside themselves and thought they were imagining things. It was only a few short hours since they had seen him covered with ghastly injuries and putrefying flesh, and now here he was in the best of health and delighted with himself. "Do not be afraid," he told them. "Do not think you are imagining things. St. Francis has just left me a moment ago and it was he who healed all my wounds with the touch of his holy hands." As news of the miracle went round, the whole population came to see for themselves, and when they saw the miracle which the stigmata of St. Francis had worked, they were full of joy and admiration, and acclaimed Christ's cross-bearer with loud praise.

Francis bore the stigmata of Christ who died for us in his goodness and rose again miraculously from the dead and by the power of his wounds healed the human race which had been wounded and left half-dead; and so it was only right that he who was dead to this world and lived with Christ should cure an injured man by appearing to him miraculously and touching him with his hands.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Reading I (Numbers 21:4b-9) Reading II (Philippians 2:6-11) Gospel (St. John 3:13-17)

In the first reading today from the Book of Numbers, we hear right at the very beginning that with their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses. This is a very important line because as we continue to journey through this world that is so infested with sin, so broken, it can get very, very frustrating for us. What can happen is that in the midst of it, if we are trying to do what is right and we are getting rejected and pushed around, we start to complain against God.

If we look at what has gone on over the last number of years, there are lots of good people who wanted to be faithful to Our Lord who have fallen away because the lure of the world and of what everyone else was doing was just a little too much for them. They were not able to withstand the social pressure, the peer pressure that was on them to be just like everyone else. Well, as things continue to get worse in the world, this is going to be a problem for all of us. We would all like to be able to think how firm our faith is, but we also know from our own experience that it might not be quite as solid as we would like to think that it is.

So today the Church places before us this glorious feast of the Triumph of the Cross to remind us of where our faith is centered. It is centered in the person of Jesus Christ crucified. If we take our eyes off of Our Lord – and particularly off of Our Lord crucified for us on the Cross – we are going to fall. It may be that we do not like to look at the Cross. We prefer to look at the Resurrection; we prefer to look at the glorification of Our Lord in heaven because it is more pleasant. This world is called the vale of tears, not the place of glory. As long as we are in this world, we are going to have to suffer. While it is a good thing to look forward to the glory which will be ours to share if we remain faithful to Our Lord, in this world we must always keep our eyes on the Cross.

Now we all know that we should be offering things up, but that is not easy. It is an easy thing to say; it is not so easy to remember in the midst of the difficult times. So when Saint Paul tells us that Jesus became obedient even unto death, death on a cross, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in the heavens, on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the Father that Jesus Christ is Lord, He is Lord only because of the Cross. The fact that He came into this world and taught the truth was

not enough; that was not the fulfillment of God's Will for Him. He proved His love and demonstrated that He is the Messiah by going to the Cross for us. Anything apart from the Cross is not the Christ. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One only because of the Cross. If we are going to profess that Jesus Christ is Lord it can only be because of the Cross and it cannot be separated from the Cross. We cannot just look at His teaching and we cannot just look at the Resurrection (that could not have happened without the Cross in the first place!); we have to keep focused and the focus must be the Cross. Our Lord told us precisely in the Gospel: As Moses raised up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be raised up, so that anyone believing in Him might not perish but might have eternal life. To believe in Him is to believe in His crucifixion. And He said when He is raised up from the earth He will draw all men to Himself. If we do not look at Him raised up from the earth on the Cross, we have no part of Him.

Right now, as things continue to get worse in the world, as things become more chaotic in our own lives, not only do we have to learn to keep our focus on the Cross, but we have to learn to unite our sufferings and our struggles with that of Jesus. This is the time to learn because when things get really bad, if we have not learned the lesson now, we will not be able to do it then. That is why God is giving us this time. So we need to look at Jesus. We need to look at the Cross – and not just from far away – we need to be united with Jesus on the Cross. That is the only way. We need to make sure that this lesson is deeply rooted within our hearts, that we are offering up our struggles and our sufferings, that we are uniting ourselves with Christ. Then when things get really bad that will be our first movement: to go right to the Cross. Then it does not matter how bad things get; our faith will be unshakeable because it is firmly rooted in Christ, in Jesus Christ crucified.

That is what we have to be about. It is exactly what Saint Paul told us to do, that we would boast in nothing else but Jesus Christ and Him crucified; not Jesus Christ and Him risen, not Jesus Christ and Him glorified – Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and that we would boast in nothing but the Cross of Christ, through which he said, I have been crucified to the world and the world to me. We do not want to be part of what is going on in the world right now; therefore, we have to be crucified to the world and the world to us. There is only one possible way that can happen, and that is to be united with Jesus in the triumph of His Cross.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... Meeting with Fr. Altier



Our annual phone meeting with Fr. Robert Altier, current Visitor of the Association, occurred on July 11, 2018. It was a terrific meeting, as usual, and he is very much still willing to be our Visitor and guide us. Good news for the BSP for sure.

We updated him on the status of the BSP. We have 43 professed members at this time, with Inquirers in virtually every State of the Union and 33 foreign countries. We have had two professions thus far this year, and we have a third coming before the end of the year. We advised him of the new Chapter, St. Clare Chapter, in Toronto, and updated him on our other Chapters as well. He found all of this very interesting and was very complimentary of how things are going in general.

We discussed the SFO connection with him. He advised that we should not bother to communicate with the Secular Franciscan Order unless they come to us seeking more information. To date that has not happened, and we do not anticipate it happening in the near future. It is what it is. The Carmelites also have established a new secular Order and revised their Rule and are in a similar position with those in the Carmelite Order that are still pursuing their original Rule, like the BSP.

We reviewed the current leadership situation in the BSP and our role as Administrators. He feels things are going well. He said we should remain the Administrators for as long as we live and can do it as we, Shelley and I, are the founders of the BSP. Those were his words. He suggested that we do not consider retiring as Administrators and that when, and if, there comes a time we cannot hold this leadership position due to health concerns we need to pass it on to a strong Chapter to take the BSP forward in to the future. He also said to do nothing on this at this time. So, that is how we will approach it. For now, things are to remain as they are as things are going well for us. Praise God!

We had one question from Todd Salmonson in Oakdale, Minnesota that we reviewed with him. Todd asked the question if days of fasting and/or abstinence under the Rule were covered by the Church's rule on Anticipation. Anticipation is how Sundays, which are all Solemnities under Church law, actually begin at 4:00 PM the day before. Applying Anticipation to the Rule would allow

one to eat meat on a day of abstinence or fasting under the Rule if the day following was not a day of fasting or abstinence. For instance, on Wednesdays, which are days of abstinence always for us under the Rule, we could eat meat after 4 PM because Thursdays are never days of abstinence under the Rule. He said we should only allow the Anticipation Rule where the day following is an actual Solemnity. So, on Saturdays, which are always days of abstinence for us under the Rule, we can all eat meat after 4 PM in accordance with the Church's guidelines for Anticipation of Sunday. Questions on this should be brought to us for clarification. We had a good discussion on this, and thank Todd for bringing it up.

We will have an annual phone meeting with Father Altier, as we always have had, in the future, and can bring to his attention at any time any other questions that might come up, for clarification.

We have scheduled a meeting with our Archbishop, Hebda, in October and Father Altier will be present at that meeting. So, we will report back to the Association any outcomes from that meeting.

We also discussed the '*adjournamento*' aspect of Vatican II with Fr. Altier. We had heard, somewhere, sometime ago, that it suspended all Rule of all Orders. Fr. Altier said that is not the case. *Adjournamento*, he said, allowed Orders to suspend outdated aspects of their Rules, not their entire Rule. He pointed out a recent case he had encountered with a convent of nuns whose Rule required them to always wear a girdle. The nuns complained to him that they could not even find girdles any more. Girdles were common in the 1950's and 60's. So, the nuns were advised that they could remove the requirement to wear a girdle from their Rule but the rest of it remained intact. This is a good point for us all to be aware of. Essentially our Statutes remove antiquated aspects of the Rule of 1221 for us consistent with the rules of *Adjournamento*.

It was a great meeting, and we are blessed to have Father Altier as our Visitor. He is most willing to remain in that capacity for us, and we can continue to bring questions we have to him for clarification. He is fine with us using his homilies in our newsletter.

If any member has questions on this meeting they can refer them to us.

May the Lord bless and lead us all.

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

If you haven't already done so, please update the official BSP Administrator email address in your address book from minncc@aol.com to minncc03@gmail.com.



**“Think about these things...”
by Janet Klasson, BSP**



“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Oh my! What a summer it's been! On a personal level, as you may recall, my husband of 42 years passed away in May. Then in August my father passed away at the age of 92 years. In between the two I moved to be closer to family. And this summer my area has been plagued with the smoke of an alarming number of forest fires burning in British Columbia and in many other places. Now at the end of summer it seems that the Church is itself engulfed in flames.

What a blessing the Rule is in times like these! The routine of prayer is consistent and calming. No matter how much we shudder and shake with the latest disasters or revelations of scandal, several times a day, the Rule calls us to renew our connection with God, through ancient prayers that point to the timelessness of God. The Psalms are a reminder of the patient and abiding love of God who, as St. Timothy tells us, is faithful even when we are not (2 Timothy 2:13-15), and who is near to us in every trial. They are a testament to His guarantee of victory over evil. What a blessing to pray the psalms several times a day!

The rule also calls us to simplicity of life. By distancing us from the drumbeat of the world, we become free to march to the beat of God's drum. Indeed, the drumbeat of the world holds less and less appeal the longer we live the Rule.

The fasting and abstinence of the Rule give us a way to effectively do battle with the powers and principalities of the world. We are seasoned warriors, not relying on our own power but on the grace of God. Our well-maintained weapons of obedience to the Rule, to our spiritual directors and good pastors, as well as our fasting and prayer will ensure we are ready to march as foot soldiers in our Mother's army.

For our part let us get our marching boots on and renew our mission as penitents in the world. As Jesus told us, some demons can only be cast out by prayer and fasting, so it is no wonder that he has resurrected the penitential lifestyle in our day.

Perhaps we can try to come up with new ways to fast. Small things done with great love can achieve

far more in the spiritual realm than we know. I have heard Bruce mention "chittle" which is short short for Wisdom 3:5 **“Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself.”** Practically speaking, we give up little things, ordering our second-favourite food at the restaurant, walking barefoot in the house, set the alarm 10 minutes earlier, give up a favorite food, TV show or limiting social media.

There are many ways to free up even a little more time for prayer and Scripture. For example, in the midst of all the negative things we are hearing, the Scripture passage at the beginning of this article can inspire us to thank God for what is honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, and excellent in the Church and in the world, including the BSP. There is so much to be grateful for, not least that he has called us and equipped us for our mission. Any little thing that we can give as a small sacrifice seen only by God and offered to him to use as he wills.

We can offer daily atonement or Masses of atonement to console the much-wounded hearts of Jesus and Mary. We are finding out about past horrific acts and grave sins only now, but God sees them ALL in real time. Let us do all we can for the cause of unity in the Church and the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart. Our Lord is purifying his Bride. Let us be faithful and attentive to the ways God may be calling each of us to respond. And let us not forget to pray very much for those who have been and are being victimized by those in authority, especially those in the Church! May the Flame of Love surround them, keep them safe and bring them healing.

Let us place our trust in this promise given in Haggai 2:9 **“The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.”**

Jesus, we trust in you. Save souls! Maranatha!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada





FROM THE 'SPARROW' The Donkey's Rebuke

Peace dear sparrows! St. Francis had a love for animals and he often viewed them as "simple souls." In today's message we see that the animal in question displayed a more serious depth in its being through the power of God.

Balaam was a man very much involved in spiritual activity. An intense battle was raging within him. Two voices were calling, and Balaam's responses divided his heart. One part of him portrayed a person sincerely desiring God's blessing. Balaam sought God's will about cursing Israel, and later he gave a noble response to Balak: **"How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed? or how I shall defy, whom God had not defied?"** (Numbers 23:8) Balaam even showed potential as a faithful Old Testament prophet when he prophesied that a Star would come out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17). This, of course, referred to Jesus Christ as the Light.

But there was another side to Balaam's heart. He was a man who "loved the wages of unrighteousness," which made him willing to compromise. He wanted to die the death of the righteous (Number 23:10), yet his "righteousness"

The Voice...

Peace dear little sparrows! Today the topic is the voice of God. Now we know that St. Francis of Assisi heard the voice of God that clearly gave him directions on how he should proceed in his walk before the Lord. There have been some notable Saints who also seemed gifted in like manner. This poses a question we shall look at for a moment.

Have we ever wished God would speak to us in an audible voice as He did to Adam, Abraham, and Moses? Or have we desired to hear the voice of Jesus as His disciples heard it when He lived on earth in bodily form? We may never be granted the privilege of hearing Him speak audibly, but we can be sure that God speaks to us today. The most important question is am I listening? Do I have ears to hear what God is saying, or am I spiritually dull of hearing?

God still speaks to us today by His inspired Word. The Bible is God's message to each of us. Do we diligently read it with an open heart and listen to it with a spiritual understanding at Mass? Are we ready to receive and obey the divine truth found in His

consisted largely of outward display. However, Balaam had an advantage in that God was able to use his donkey to speak to him audibly. This voice strongly rebuked Balaam and exposed his iniquity.

Sometimes a similar rebuke is just as needful today. Of, for a donkey's rebuke when greed and selfish gain have more appeal to us than obedience to God! Of, for a donkey's rebuke when reputation, prestige, or outward appearance means more to us than zeal for integrity and hatred for hypocrisy! Oh, for a donkey's rebuke when we would lash out at others because of wounded pride! Oh, for a donkey's rebuke when we forget that sin always does great harm to our soul! Many times, in life, it would be a great advantage to be rebuked for our folly, even by a donkey.

"When we commit a fault, we should never attribute it to a physical cause such as sickness or the weather; but we should confess that this fall was due to our lack of perfection—though without ever getting discouraged."

--St. Therese, the Little Flower

Word? God speaks to us through His Spirit. Are we receptive to His gentle work of prompting, pleading, and convicting us in our daily Christian and Franciscan lives? God speaks to us through creation as He did with St. Francis. **"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."** (Psalm 19:1)

The vast universe and the marvelous design, order, and beauty throughout God's creation remind us of His almighty power, His infinite wisdom, and His watchful care over us. God speaks to us through death. That inevitable reality is God's reminder to us of the shortness, uncertainty, and seriousness of life and even St. Francis referred to it as Sister Death. Our last day on earth may come sooner than we think. Are we ready to meet our maker?

God speaks to us through storms, earthquakes, and accident. He speaks to us through concerned parents and faithful fellow believers. To resist God's voice is a serious matter. **"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."** (Hebrews 12:25)

"Jesus Christ is the One Mediator between God and humanity; the Immaculate is the one Mediatrix between Jesus and humanity; and we will be the happy mediators between the

Immaculate and souls scattered throughout the whole world. What a beautiful job!"

--St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, OFM Conv.

pax et bonum, Bro. Sparrow

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina



The Admonitions continued from June...



XV: PEACE

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Those people are truly peacemakers who, regardless of what they suffer in this world, persevere peace of spirit and body out of love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

XVI: CLEANNES OF HEART

Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God.

The truly clean of heart are those who look down upon earthly things, seek those of heaven, and, with a clean heart and spirit, never cease adoring the Lord God living and true.

XVII: THE HUMBLE SERVANT OF GOD

Blessed is that servant who no more exalts himself over the good the Lord says or does through him than over what He says or does through another.

A person sins who wishes to receive more from his neighbor than what he wishes to give of himself to the Lord God.

XVIII: COMPASSION FOR A NEIGHBOR

Blessed is the person who supports his neighbor in his weakness as he would want to be supported were he in a similar situation.

Blessed is the servant who returns every good to the Lord God because whoever holds onto something for himself hides the money of his Lord God within himself, and what he thinks he has will be taken away from him.

XIX: A HUMBLE SERVANT OF GOD

Blessed is the servant who does not consider himself any better when he is praised and exalted by people than when he is considered worthless, simple, and looked down upon, for what a person is before God, that he is and no more.

Woe to that religious who has been placed in a high position by others and who does not want to come down by his own will.

Blessed is that servant who is not placed in a high position by his own will and always desires to be under the feet of others.

XX: THE GOOD AND VAIN RELIGIOUS

Blessed is that religious who has no pleasure and delight except in the most holy words and deeds of the Lord and, with these, leads people to the love of God with gladness and joy.

Woe to that religious who delights in idle and empty words and leads people to laughter with them.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI THE SAINT EARLY DOCUMENTS VOL 1

Continued in October
Submitted by: Penitent





From the Desert Fathers

*Abba Hyperechius said,
"It was through whispering
that the serpent drove Eve out of Paradise,
so he who speaks against his neighbor, will be the serpent,
for he corrupts the soul of him who listens to him
and he does not save his own soul."*

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.



September 8

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.

Amen.

The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE OF ST. FRANCIS

A.k.a. BSP, is a non-profit Private Association of the Faithful, which is dedicated to renewing the ancient way of penance as contained in the First Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis of 1221 for lay people in our modern world. We have the blessing of the Catholic Church to do this through several of its Archbishops, Bishops, and priests. If you are bound by another Rule of life in another profession of the way of St. Francis that does not permit you to enter other religious families you are nonetheless invited to add the elements of this beautiful way of life that Saint Francis of Assisi gave us to the lifestyle of your profession.

All members, and Franciscans, are welcome to submit articles for consideration for inclusion in this newsletter if they are directed towards the spiritual formation of members or are the outgrowth of the lifestyle of the Association. Just send them to the BSP at minncc@aol.com. Feel free to share this newsletter with your friends or neighbors. It is intended to be the primary monthly communication of the Association, and ongoing formation for all members and friends. And if you can find it in your heart and in your budget remember that donations to the BSP are used strictly to promote the lifestyle and are tax deductible.

We remain, always, sincerely yours in the love of Jesus Christ!

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP, 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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