



...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

III. Those Rescued from Shipwreck

1. The crew of a ship which was in distress ten miles off Barletta had almost lost hope and, as the storm worsened, they put out anchors. However, the ropes parted as the sea rose higher in the gale-force winds and the anchors were lost, so that they were tossed about at the mercy of the waves. Eventually, by God's providence, the storm passed and the sailors prepared to do everything they could to recover their anchors; the broken ropes were still floating on the surface of the water. They found that they could achieve nothing by their own efforts and they called on all the saints in turn, but they could not even recover one the whole day, though they were bathed with perspiration. There was one of the crew whose name was Perfectus, although he was far from perfect in his life, and he said jeeringly to his companions, "Well, you have called on all the saints in turn and not one of them has come to help us. Let's try this Francis. He is new to their company. Maybe he will dive into the sea and get us our anchors." The others took him up seriously, not as a joke, and made a spontaneous pact with the saint, reproaching Perfectus for his insulting language. There and then the anchors



suddenly appeared floating alone on the surface, as if the iron had become light as wood.

2. A pilgrim who was returning from abroad by ship was worn out by severe attacks of fever. He had great devotion to St. Francis and had chosen him as his patron in the court of heaven; he was not perfectly

recovered from his illness and he was tormented by burning thirst. There was no water left on board, but he began to cry out in a loud voice, "Go and get me a drink. Do not hesitate. St. Francis has filled my gourd with water." Sure enough, they found his gourd full of water, although it had been thrown aside empty a short while before. Another day a storm arose, so that the waves broke over the ship and it was being battered

by the gale and they were afraid that they would be shipwrecked. Then the sick man began shouting all over the vessel, "Get up! Come to meet St. Francis. He is coming to us. He is here to help us." Then he fell prostrate with a great cry and flood of tears. At the sight of the saint, he recovered his health immediately and the sea became calm.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)



O most holy heart of Jesus, fountain of every blessing, I adore you, I love you, and with lively sorrow for my sins I offer you this poor heart of mine. Make me humble, patient, pure and wholly obedient to your will. Grant, Good Jesus, that I may live in you and for you. Protect me in the midst of danger. Comfort me in my afflictions. Give me health of body, assistance in my temporal needs, your blessing on all that I do, and the grace of a holy death. Amen.



VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier, May 26, 2019

(Readings: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Rev 21:10-14, 22-23; Jn 14:23-29)

In the Gospel reading today our Lord tells us not to let our hearts be troubled or afraid. It seems to be a rare person today who can actually say they are neither troubled nor afraid. With all that is going on in the world and in the Church, people have lost their sense of peace; they have pulled into themselves and, consequently, they are filled with fear and worry. In essence, people fail to trust God. When we do not trust God, the only one left to trust is our own self; that is reason enough to be worried and afraid.

As we see in the first reading today, problems have always existed in the Church. The Apostles and Elders had to write a letter to the Gentile converts explaining that the people who disturbed the converts were not sent by the Apostles. These people, I assume of good will, taught on their own accord and demanded the male Gentile converts be circumcised. In essence, they understood that Christianity was part of Judaism, therefore, one had to be a convert to Judaism in order to become a Christian.

This obviously caused problems for these new converts, but there was also dissension between these people on one hand and Paul and Barnabas on the other. The question of circumcision caused quite a stir among the leadership in Jerusalem before the grace of the Holy Spirit brought clarity to the issues and the Apostles wrote to the Gentile converts instructing them they did not need to be circumcised in order to become a Christian. This is not something a group of faithful Jewish men could determine on their own; they needed the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit not only in making the decision, but also in understanding it themselves and in teaching it to others.

As we read in the Gospel today, the Holy Spirit was given to the Church to teach her everything and lead her into all truth. We see this truth coming into clarity through the deliberations of the Apostles as they were led by the Holy Spirit. One might conjecture that the people preaching the necessity of circumcision were not very happy with the decision while the Gentile converts were quite pleased, but it is not a question of whether

or not we are personally happy with the Church's teachings, it is a question of whether or not we are willing to be obedient to God.

The Church's teachings are not always convenient or easy, but there is great peace of mind knowing and living the truth. In the Gospel Jesus said that He and His Father would come to dwell in the heart of whoever loves Him. Then He tells us the one who loves Him is the one who keeps His word. In other words, since love is demonstrated in action, it is not enough to believe everything the Church teaches; we need to put those teachings into action.

Needless to say, this can be very difficult and can cost us a lot. But when we look at the Cross, we see Jesus' love for us expressed in His actions. So, He taught us by His words what it means to love, but He also taught us by His actions how to love. Now, for those who will love Him by embracing His words and following His example, He promises the Indwelling of the Holy Trinity.

Whatever this kind of faithful discipleship will cost us in this world, we have Jesus' guarantee that we will never be abandoned (Jn 14:18); in fact, we will be the Temple and dwelling place of God Himself. Moreover, our faithfulness in this world will translate into the next where, as we see in the second reading, we will have access to the Holy City, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Notice in the description of the city that there is no Temple; rather, God and the Lamb are the Temple. In other words, for those who love the Lord and keep His words, God will enter into them and they will become God's dwelling place. In Heaven the opposite occurs: those who love the Lord and keep His word will enter into God and dwell in Him as in a Temple. They will be enlightened by the glory of God and the Lamb will shine in them and through them as a lamp.

In a world full of chaos, disturbances, worry, fear, and anxiety, our peace will not come from our own self, but from God Who dwells within. Keep your focus on God, believe His truth and live His love. Then you will become the Temple of the Holy Trinity, filled with the glory of God and shining with the lamp of the Lamb..

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ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... THE STAGES OF PRAYER



The stages of prayer as we understand them, and fear not, we have not experienced them all. :)

1. **Vocal Prayer** – This is it. Number one form of prayer common to all of humanity, that is, those of us who pray. When we are told to pray this is the number one way we all pray. And there are various ways to do it.

There are the rote prayers. The Our Father, as the Lord gave it to us, the Hail Mary, as the Church gave it to us, and the Glory Be in honor of the Trinity. All good prayers and all common to our lives as Catholic Christians. All vocal prayers. But there are others.

The Rosary, which is the number one way to pray to Our Lady, to ask her intercession or to pray for our causes. The rosary has a tremendous history in the Church and it should be part of the vocal prayers we all say and encourage others to say. Our Lady has said if we regularly pray the rosary, like daily, for our family, others, or her causes, it is a great sign of predestination, that is for heaven. So, it is a very great encouragement to us to pray the rosary, and we should.

Then there are so many other vocal prayers. All good. St. Augustine wrote at great length about the need to pray always and encourages us to pray vocal prayers. He also says that even the desire to pray is prayer. That is the prayer we take with us everywhere and we pray all the time. The desire to pray more, and to pray well. God does not miss that in our intentions. He is pleased with it.

2. **Mental Prayer** – is the second level of prayer. Many people only pray using vocal prayers, and that is OK. To pray more we need to begin to pray mentally. The nice thing about mental prayer is we can take it with us everywhere we go. Without a word on our lips, but with prayer in our hearts we can pray to God in whatever words we choose whenever we choose them and for whatever cause we choose. So we need to learn to pray mentally.

Mental prayer has the great benefit of being able to be said at any time and any place. It disturbs no one. It is between us and God which is always good in prayer. We can address any cause or any problem immediately with mental prayer. We can prepare for Mass or other wonderful significant spiritual events with mental prayer before they happen or as we approach them. We can pray mentally before receiving Holy Communion, and as we do. We can pray mentally during the Mass, at the Consecration, and as we receive Our Lord. It is a wonderful way to pray and it is one step up from vocal

prayer.

These two forms of prayer, vocal and mental, are the only two that we can create. These anyone can do. Most people get no further in prayer than mental prayer as they do not spend time in contemplation which is necessary to advance in prayer. St. Theresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church on the theology of prayer, says that without spending time at contemplation you will not advance further than mental prayer. Mystical prayer comes after mental prayer, and it comes from God, when and if He grants it. A life of penance is a prerequisite to advance into mystical prayer.

3. **Prayer of Recollection** – the first level of mystical prayer, which is also known as the Prayer of Quiet and comes if we persist in the prayer of contemplation. In the stillness of our hearts this prayer quiets our imagination and all distractions and allows us to be totally, peacefully, recollected during contemplative prayer with no problems or distractions of any kind. Essentially we rest quietly, peacefully, lost in the love of God, in silence, with no books, or readings, or vocal or mental prayer of any kind. In a deep and wonderful silence and peaceful stillness hence the name Prayer of Quiet.

4. **Ecstasy** – Fiery sweet union with God that flows out of the prayer of Quiet. Pours over the soul like burning, sweet, oil. You will know it when you experience it.

5. **Prayer of Union with God** - A fiery burning loving union with God in contemplative prayer that flows out of the Prayer of Ecstasy and is very physical too and includes total recollection in God. We feel a deep and beautiful numbness in our bodies even to the point we cannot move. It is sweet. Deeply and purely sweet, and once experienced it will never be forgotten.

6. **Flight of Soul** – flows out of the prayer of Union with God, and there occurs in it a spiritual 'launch' that cannot be controlled by the person and can be even beyond space and outside of time. This is a dream-like experience except it is not a dream. We actually are taken out of ourselves by God and go where He wants us to go. We might see heaven. St. Paul said he went to heaven but he did not know how it had happened. The soul cannot resist this motion of the Holy Spirit.

7. **Spiritual marriage** – the ultimate prayer of union in which the Lord appears to the person in person. This marriage is usually performed by the Lord and often His Mother in person. They re-cloth the soul in heavenly garments and graces and after that the soul belongs totally to God and is impervious to sin. Obviously, few people ever attain this in this life. St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross both did, and many other Saints as well, certainly including St. Francis. Once in this state the soul is granted the beatific vision in this

life and that is why it cannot sin. It walks amid perpetual sweetness. It is not in heaven, but the experience is like in heaven. The soul can advance no further in prayer in this life than the Spiritual Marriage.

Our Rule calls us to the first level of prayer, that is Vocal Prayer. This vocal prayer, the Divine Office and the other options, all of which are good, gets us started on a holy way of life and a life of prayer, which is essential to live a holy life. The Rule presupposes that we might choose to spend more time at prayer. We do that essentially by adding a time of contemplation to the

prayers of our day. An hour of contemplation is one of the options of prayer of our Rule but to advance in prayer we need to add that to the vocal prayers of our Rule. We need this time when we just sit and love God. From this deeper prayer we might advance into the stages of mystical prayer but we need to persist in this prayer for this to happen. If you have questions about this do feel free to discuss them with your spiritual director.

God bless you in all things and grant you a deeper experience of His love.

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



BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST...

by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Office of Readings for Ascension

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were

called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

"We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:1-4, 14-16)

The nature of God is unity. At the Last Supper, Jesus entreated the Father, **"That they may be one as you are in me and I am I you."** (Jn 17:21) Unity is neither trivial nor optional. It was a last request of Jesus to the Father witnessed by the apostles at the Last Supper. We may not understand all that is going on in the Church, but this prayer is very clear. We are called to unity.

God's holy Church has undergone trials in every age, attacks from outside and from within. Today, the attacks on it from outside the Church are escalating in an unprecedented manner. So too are the attacks from within. The cunning enemy of the Church has released a weapon that is aimed directly at "good Catholics". It is the temptation to schism. I don't often read comment boxes on Catholic websites, but when I do, I am shocked at the vitriol being spewed against the Holy Father by people who consider themselves good, faithful Catholics. I have learned from personal examination that self-righteousness is a form of pride the devil reserves for good people. Humility is the only way to defeat evil.

Jesus gave a structure to his Church **to protect us**, and to which we owe the greatest respect. We know

that all the clergy have human failings as we all do, but let us remember the story of St. Francis where he was brought to confront a priest who was living in a scandalous relationship with a woman. St. Francis "fell to his knees, took the priest's hands into his own stigmatized hands, kissed them and said, *'All I know and all I want to know is that these hands give me Jesus.'*" It is said the priest converted after that.

Our job is not to judge the clergy, and especially not the Holy Father, but to respect their office, pray unceasingly for them, and support them in any way we can. St. Francis told his brothers: *"If you will be sons of peace, you will win the clergy and the people for the Lord, and the Lord judges this more acceptable than to win the people but scandalize the clergy. Hide their lapses, supply for their many defects; and when you have done this, be even more humble."* (Celano, Second Life #146)

Whenever we have trials, it is prudent to ask ourselves if we are being tested, and to ponder how we can best demonstrate our love and trust in the Lord. God is cleaning house and he is starting with His own. To paraphrase Fr. Altier, when Jesus cleared the temple, he cleaned like a man, moving only the big stuff. But



now His Mother is doing the cleaning, and she cleans like a woman, getting in all the corners. God is purifying his Bride. What is happening now is painful, but so necessary!

As Saint John Paul II said so prophetically during the 1976 Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia:

"We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has ever experienced. I do not think that the wide circle of the American Society, or the whole wide circle of the Christian Community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-church, between the gospel and the anti-gospel, between Christ and the antichrist. The confrontation lies within the plans of Divine Providence. It is, therefore, in God's Plan, and it must be a trial which the Church must take up, and face courageously."

More than ever we are called to pull together and let God work his mighty work through his unified Church, imperfect as it may be. Archbishop Chaput said during a recent Synod: *"We also need to thank God for the gift of this present, difficult moment. Because conflict always does two things: It purifies the church, and it clarifies the character of the enemies who hate her."*

It brings to mind what Simeon said at the Presentation of the Lord: **"This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed..."** (Lk 10:34-35)

This bears pondering. What I am noticing is that as the world becomes more polarized, the inner thoughts of people are being revealed. Think of all the polarizing figures in the world today, people who are challenging our assumptions and provoking often heated discussion: Pope Francis, President Trump, Prime Minister Trudeau, as well as countless other world leaders, factions, and movements. Our inner thoughts are being revealed and almost no one is holding back.

Let us keep in mind the messages of Our Lady, that the only appropriate response to all this turmoil is prayer, penance, humility, and trust in God. This is still God's Church no matter how things appear; her Immaculate Heart WILL triumph. I like this quote from Andrew van der Bijl, founder of Open Doors: *"Prayer is not preparation for the battle; prayer IS the battle."* If we're doing more talking than praying, we're fighting for the enemy, not against. Let our words be few and measured. Remember what Jesus told the disciples: **"Whoever will not receive you or listen to your words—go outside that house or town and shake the dust from your feet."** (Mt 10:14) There is a time to every purpose under heaven—a time to argue, and a time to quit arguing and fall to your knees. May God grant us wisdom!

We must trust in God, believe in his promises, and be

faithful to our mission—that is, OUR mission and not someone else's. It is tempting to act as armchair cardinals when there is so much to talk about and everyone has a soapbox literally at their fingertips, but it can be a huge distraction. Our main task in this world, and especially as penitents in it, is and always has been to become holy and to fulfill the mission entrusted to us. If we have expectations that are not being met by the Pope or the Church as a whole, consider that at any given point in the history of the people of God, people's expectations have not been met. That is how God operates. If he was predictable, he would not be God.

It is so easy to be dragged down by the negative voices in the world. Here are a few more quotes to give us hope and a reason to remain firmly planted on deck in the Barque of Peter, faithfully manning our stations.

The first three quotes I took from Mark Mallett's excellent blog post titled, [*On Criticizing the Clergy*](#).

Cardinal Sarah: *"We must help the Pope. We must stand with him just as we would stand with our own father."* —May 16th, 2016, Letters from the Journal of Robert Moynihan

Cardinal Raymond Burke: *"Absolutely not. I will never leave the Catholic Church. No matter what happens I intend to die a Roman Catholic. I will never be part of a schism. I'll just keep the faith as I know it and respond in the best way possible. That's what the Lord expects of me. But I can assure you this: You won't find me as part of any schismatic movement or, God forbid, leading people to break away from the Catholic Church. As far as I'm concerned, it's the church of our Lord Jesus Christ and the pope is his vicar on earth and I'm not going to be separated from that."* — LifeSiteNews, August 22nd, 2016

Cardinal Gerhard Müller: *"There is a front of traditionalist groups, just as there is with the progressivists, that would like to see me as head of a movement against the Pope. But I will never do this.... I believe in the unity of the Church and I will not allow anyone to exploit my negative experiences of these last few months. Church authorities, on the other hand, need to listen to those who have serious questions or justified complaints; not ignoring them, or worse, humiliating them. Otherwise, without desiring it, there can be an increase of the risk of a slow separation that might result in the schism of a part of the Catholic world, disorientated and disillusioned."* —Corriere della Sera, Nov. 26, 2017; quote from the Moynihan Letters, #64, Nov. 27th, 2017

Archbishop Fulton Sheen: *"The revelation of Fatima is a reminder that we live in a moral universe, that evil is self-defeating, that good is self-preserving; that the basic trouble of the world are not in politics or economics but in our hearts and our souls, and that spiritual regeneration is the condition of social amelioration."*

And from Scripture:

Psalm 46:7 **"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."**

Psalm 37: 10-11 **"Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look diligently for**

their place, they will not be there. But the meek shall inherit the land, and delight in abundant prosperity. "

Come Divine Will! Come to reign upon the earth! May your kingdom come and come quickly.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



FROM THE 'SPARROW' "I Will Work Through Him"

Jesus is looking for ordinary people who want to do **extraordinary** things for **Him**. He is willing to put up with all our weaknesses, flaws, and excuses. Remember, God used Moses even though Moses protested that he was not equipped

to set the people free. The Lord used David even though David was a murderer, an adulterer, and a negligent parent. He used Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, and Angela of Foligno—even through they all had troubled pasts. He used Augustin, Thomas Becket, and Charles de Foucauld, despite their scandalous lives. And today He wants to use all of us, no matter where we have come from.

It's not the condition of our outward lives that matters—it's the condition of our hearts towards God and toward the people all around us. When someone asked St. Francis of Assisi how he was able to accomplish so much for the Church he said, "I have

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

God used all these people, as well as many more, because he wanted to show everyone that holiness is not beyond anyone's grasp. If these people, sinners that they were, could turn their lives around and become beloved saints, then anyone can.

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

We pray: "Lord we ask as your wounded sparrows to come and fill us with Your love. Melt our hardened hearts, and mold us in your likeness and use us to build up your Church. Jesus, we love you."

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

(Note: The image above was drawn by one of Bob Hall's friends and fellow converts to the Lord. Used with permission.)



From the Desert Fathers

[From the contributor, "Philothea":] As a quick note I would like to explain, that one must not feel too much admiration or amazement or even discouragement at the "tangible" degree in which sometimes God communicated and operated visible miracles within and through the desert fathers and mothers. But let it be more a sign of "hope and reassurance" to us these days of how much God is indeed so tenderly close, especially to those who seek Him with sincerity of heart.

"There was a bishop in a city who, by the operation of the devil, fell into porneia. Nobody knew about his sin but, one day when there was a synaxis in the church, he confessed of his own free will in the presence of the whole congregation, saying: "I have fallen into porneia," and he deposited his pallium on the altar

saying: "I can no longer be your bishop." Now the whole congregation cried out in lamentation, saying: "This sin is upon us [cf. Mt 27:25], only do you remain in the bishopric." In answer he said: "If you want me to remain in the bishopric, do what I tell you." Having ordered the doors of the church to be shut, he threw himself face down at one of the side doors and said: "He who does not trample me as he is walking out has no place with God." When they had done as he ordered and the last person was going out, there came a voice from heaven saying: "I have pardoned his sin on account of his great humility."

Submitted by: Philothea

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

SUMMER BREAK

This will be the last issue of the BSP newsletter until September. May God bless you and yours this summer and give you abundant rest in His Sacred Heart.

WEBSITE

Bruce has suggested I extend the deadline to raise funds for the website upgrade to end of June. More details are in the April newsletter. Please direct questions to webmaster@bspenance.org.

Thank you for considering this.

Janet Klasson BSP

STAY CONNECTED...PLEASE!

If you wish to connect with your Brothers and Sisters in the BSP, please remember that the **BSP Forums** at <http://bspenance.org/forum/>. Hope to see you there!

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.



*All of them were filled
with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in
other languages, as the
Spirit gave them ability.
(Acts 2:4)*

Photo Credit: Jean II Restout [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

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 minncc03@gmail.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
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Welcome to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance!

In the world, but not of it, for Christ!



The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
PENANCE



of St. Francis

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