



...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

Chapter IX. Those Who Refused to Honor the Saint by Not Keeping His Feastday

1. In the town of Le Simon near Poitiers, a priest called Reginald who had a great devotion to St. Francis told his parishioners that the saint's feastday should be celebrated solemnly. However, one of the parishioners knew nothing about the saint's power and he paid no attention to the order. He went to cut some wood on his land and as he prepared to start, he heard a voice saying three times, "This is a holyday. It is wrong to work." But he was stubborn and neither the priest's authority nor the miraculous voice could stop him. Then God worked another miracle of his power, in honor of his saint and to punish the offender. The man was holding a fork in one hand and when he raised the axe with his other hand to start working, both his hands became firmly stuck to the implements by God's power, so that he could not loose his fingers to let them go. He was dumbfounded and did not know what to do. He raced off to the church and crowds of people came from all sides to see the miracle. A number of priests had gathered there to celebrate the feast and one of them advised him to make an act of sorrow before the altar. He committed himself with all humility to St. Francis, and as he had heard the voice three times, he made three vows, one that he would keep St. Francis' feastday, the second that he would visit the church on that day, and the third that he would make a pilgrimage to the saint's tomb. When he had taken the first vow, one of his fingers become free, and after the second another was freed. When he



made his third vow, a third finger was released, and after it his whole hand. There was a huge crowd there and eventually his other hand was freed, as they prayed to the saint for mercy. So he was restored to complete freedom and he put aside his implements, while they all praised God and the miraculous power of his saint which had stricken him and cured him so wonderfully. The implements still hang there in front of the altar of St. Francis in memory of the incident. A number of other miracles which took place there and in neighboring districts show what an exalted position St. Francis enjoys in heaven and how reverently his feast should be celebrated on earth.

2. A woman in Le Mans put her hand to the distaff and took up the spindle on St. Francis' feastday; immediately her hands became paralyzed and her fingers ached with burning pain. The punishment brought her to her senses and she recognized the saint's power; she was sincerely sorry and she ran off to the friars. They begged St. Francis to have pity on her and she was immediately restored to health. No trace of injury remained on her hands but her fingers retained the marks of burns, as a reminder of what had happened.

Three other women, from Campania, from Olite in Spain and from Piglio, were miraculously punished for their obstinacy in refusing to observe the saint's feastday, and miracuoulsly delivered when they repented.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 8, 2019

Readings: Wisdom 9:13-18b; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Luke 14:25-33



In the first reading the question is asked: "Who can know God's counsel, or who can conceive what the Lord intends?" The author goes on to say: "the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans." By ourselves it is not possible to know what God intends. Look around at what is happening in the Church and in the world. Many people are either scandalized or have walked away because they cannot grasp the possibility that a loving God would allow the horrible things we have seen and experienced.

The wise man goes on to point out that one can know the counsel of God because the Lord has given wisdom and sent the Holy Spirit from on high. This, he tells us, makes straight the paths for us on earth. With this in mind, we have to look beyond what we see on the surface and delve more deeply into what God has revealed to those who are inspired by the Holy Spirit to have insight into the ways of God.

Although we do not have time or space to make a thorough examination of what the Scriptures tell us, we do know that St. Paul speaks of an apostasy that must happen before the man of lawlessness is revealed and tells us of those who would infiltrate to destroy the sheep of the Lord's flock. Jesus spoke of the situation that would occur prior to His second coming and said if the time were not shortened even the elect would be led astray. Beyond that, we know the world will end, not because it has become so good, but because it has become so evil.

The Church has to be purified as does every member of the Church. God has allowed the infidelity and the disgusting things that have been revealed to test us. Each person must ask if he or she truly believes in the Lord and in His Church. Each person must ask whether or not he or she will remain faithful to Jesus, no matter what happens. Our Lord told us the gates of hell would not prevail. This seems to imply that it might look like the evil one is winning for a time.

As things continue to spiral downward we must each remember that the truth cannot change. What the Church has declared infallibly is, therefore, unchangeable. Jesus is God and is, therefore,

unchangeable. His presence in the Holy Eucharist is unchangeable. In our fickleness we might think change or compromise is a good idea because it would make us more acceptable. This is where the words of our Lord in the Gospel reading today must be applied to us. We have to decide whether or not we have the resources to remain faithful.

We need to look at it: we do not have the money to build the tower or the power to defeat the enemies of the Church and of our souls. We do not have the resources or the ability to remain faithful on our own. In the Gospel, however, our Lord did not say that the troops must decide; rather, the king must decide if he can defeat an army twice the size of his own army.

If this battle was on a natural level, we would be easily defeated. Very few believe in the Real Presence, very few live according to the moral teachings of the Church. Our army is very small. Jesus called it a "little flock." However, the King is Christ and the leader of the opposition is Satan.

We can look back at the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Judges. God called Gideon to lead an army against the enemies of Israel. When the men answered the call, God told Gideon there were too many men. After those who were afraid left, there were still too many. God gave them a test and only three hundred remained. It was with these three hundred men that God defeated the enemy. The soldiers had their part to do, but it was God who brought about the victory without a single Israelite having to lift a sword.

Now, we are like Onesimus, the runaway slave who was converted to the Faith by St. Paul. Rather than allowing Onesimus to desert his master, St. Paul sent him back. Of course, Onesimus could have run, but he chose to go back. Each of us has a choice. We have been given the Faith and we know our Master. Now we have to choose whether or not we will serve Him, not with lip service, but with our whole hearts. He will equip us with the resources we need to persevere and remain faithful in battle. The battle is God's; remain faithful to your King!

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ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

God is Love

"God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. We love because He first loved us." (1 Jn 4: 16,19)

God is love. He is not just loving. He is love. That is incomprehensible to us. He created us in his love, because of His love, and to receive His love for all eternity. And his love is reflected in us, and in all creation.

Look around you. Consider what exists. In all of God's creation everything is at peace. Even systems that oppose each other, like fire and water, or heat and cold, do so with the greatest grace. Look at a flower. Look at its beauty. Its beauty is inherent. It was created beautiful, and it comes from the beauty of God. It takes something or someone beautiful to create something beautiful. So the beauty of nature is a reflection of the beauty of God. His beauty is boundless, infinite, as are all his attributes. He is that way. He was always that way, and He will always be that way. He said, **"I Am who Am." (Ex. 3:14)** He is, and always will be.

When Shelley was sick with an internal infection of her blood some years ago she was at the hospital for three months. In that time the doctors fought the infection. It came, and it went. She has Crohn's disease, and her intestines had folded. Everything in her intestines was bound in place and when they operated they took our 2 feet of intestines still filled with digesting food, and some of the bacteria in her intestines got into her blood. The bacteria in her intestines was anaerobic. It does not need oxygen to live and multiply. So it could easily multiply in her blood and it could have killed her a dozen times. The doctors kept trying different things, antibiotics, and other blood medicines, but they could not get it under control. Suddenly it was gone. Her body had quarantined it into a cyst, which is probably still in her. During this awful time one of the doctors told me that if not for the wonders of the human body she would be dead. That same doctor told me that if anyone ever knew the wonders of the human body they would believe in God because only God could have created such a magnificent creature as a human being. So, the human body is a wonder of creation. A wonder of the beauty and creativity of God, both attributes of His boundless love. And our souls are ever more beautiful. Nothing in creation is as beautiful as the human soul I have read.



Beyond that, the Universe is vast, and beautiful, and actually unimaginable. All the stars we see in the sky are in our galaxy, and there are a million galaxies scientists say. According to these same scientists the universe is 150 trillion light years across. A light year is how far light travels in a year and light travels at 186,000 miles a second. Think about that. That means that in one light year light travels more than a trillion miles. Do the math. That means that the universe, of which we only see our galaxy in the evening sky, is trillions of trillions of miles across. Yet, it has a boundary. It was created in the void at the creation of the world. It too is a creature of God's power and beauty, and love yet God possesses, in His very nature, all the attributes of love, because He is love. So, everything St. Paul describes about love is God. St. Paul says: **"Love is patient. Love is kind."** (1 Cor. 13 4), and much more. So God is kind, and patient with us, and cares for all of us, good and bad, and takes care of our needs and even our wants. He does it just because He is love, and Jesus is God.

We all would love to live a happy life, and that love comes first and foremost from God. We are made in His image and likeness. So we possess the power of love, but we are not loving by nature like God. We have to learn to love others, and even to love ourselves, and the gospel calls us to that. That is the downside of free will. We have to choose to love. God is love. If we were loving as God is loving the gospel would be silent on it. Just look around in the world and you can see love, and its absence, everywhere. These days its absence is more obvious. Like in the riots that are striking this country.

So, we need to be loving. We need to share love and value love. We need to show love to those around us and the measure we have and the measure we share is the measure we will receive.

Our faith calls us to love. If we do not practice the faith we will be drawn into the world, and the world is not loving. As Christians we need to strive to love others in the same way we love ourselves. We all love ourselves. In fact, we probably better understand love from what we love about ourselves and in ourselves. That is why Scripture says we should love others as we love ourselves.

Our Rule prepares us for a life of love. Denying ourselves and praying brings repentance to us as a reward, and in that repentance we move closer to the Lord. We become more loving. It is a journey for everyone. We all have to make it and no two paths

are ever the same. So rejoice in living the Rule. It is the way to holiness and draws us in to live the gospel more fully, to become love in motion.

May the Lord bless and lead us all!

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



DEATH TO SELF, BY A THOUSAND TINY CUTS...

by Janet Klasson, BSP



From the Gospel Reading on the Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 16:24-25)

It does us good to regularly reflect on the three scripture verses that St. Francis used as the basis for the Rules of Life of his three orders. The one cited above is particularly good for penitents to meditate on often. Dying to self, one desire at a time, should be for us a 24/7/365 undertaking, a continuous death to self by a thousand tiny cuts.

We might wonder, do the little things really matter, when we already undertake so much fasting and prayer? Let us check with St. Faustina. In her Diary, she describes with breathtaking simplicity what happened in her personal illumination of conscience.

"Suddenly I saw the complete condition of my soul as God sees it. I could clearly see all that is displeasing to God. I did not know that even the smallest transgressions will have to be accounted for. What a moment! Who can describe it? To stand before the Thrice-Holy-God!"

—St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, Diary #36

That's pretty clear! I can't help but wonder, if the experience was that distressing to St. Faustina, what will it be like for the rest of us?

Often in confession we tend to focus on the biggest baddest weeds. That's great! We should. But, once they have been eradicated, it would be fruitful to bend down (think humility) and scour the earth for those tiny, persistent weeds, that don't seem so bad but can grow to be a big problem later on.

As I was pondering what direction this message would take, words kept coming to me that began with the letter "C". Certainly "cuts" is one of them, as in "death by a thousand tiny cuts". As penitents we should try to identify what tiny, persistent weeds we need to "cut" out before they get away on us—a pre-emptive strike.

Here are some of the "C" words that came to me. Most of them identify weeds that I am very familiar

with myself, and need to be vigilant about cutting out.

Complaining – Once I asked God what to give up for Lent, and the first word that popped into my head was "complaining". Try giving it up for 40 days and you'll see how insidiously it works its way into daily life. Complaining is the height of ingratitude. Even small complaints offend our God who loves us and *makes all things work for good for those who love him*. Complaints are a poison that feeds the spirit of negativity in the world. Here's one example of turning the tables on a complaint. I live in Canada, so winters are long. Recently I learned this trick. Whenever I hear someone complaining about the weather, I quote the book of Daniel: "Ice and snow, bless the Lord; Frost and chill, bless the Lord!" Usually that brings a smile out of the complainer, but more to the point, it gives glory to God even in hardship. Glory to God is the whole point of everything.

Correcting – There is fraternal correction that is kind, gentle, and done in private. Then there is the correction of the self-righteous. It is often public, prideful, and mostly unnecessary. I am someone who values accuracy and clarity. Sometimes it is important to give voice to accuracy and clarity, as in a police report or a math equation. But in casual conversation, for the sake of charity, I have to learn to let it go!

Criticizing – This is a very bad weed. Even small criticisms draw blood, whether the person is present or absent. Tiny cuts. Persistent or relentless criticisms are more like scourges. Jesus feels every lash of the tongue, as does the one criticized. Don't delay! Cut out that weed now!

Comfort – As a penitent I have some work to do on this one. Comfort is an easy sell. We don't like things too hot, too cold, too hard, too soft, too spicy, too

salty. These days there's an app or a pill for everything that ails us! It helps to remember that seeking endless comfort is akin to complaining and has its roots in ingratitude. We will be endlessly comfortable in heaven, but here, while there are still souls to be saved, let us find little things to "offer up". It's good practice for when the big things crop up.

Commenting – This is a big, bad weed in the social media age. It is also a temptation in most social situations. Do we really need to voice our opinion on everything? What does it change? Does it build up or tear down? *Hold every thought captive to Christ.* These days, face masks are everywhere. As penitents we can view face masks as a reminder that we should pray more and talk less. God will give us wisdom if we pray. That alone will give us something worth saying.

Curiosity – This social media age, the TV and news cycle fosters the belief that everything is our business. Is it really? Curiosity is a huge distraction from the spiritual life. It would be good to review what we give our time and attention to and cut out the excess. I had to cut down on my COVID news as I was getting anxious. Now I just consult the health services website to see if there's anything immediately threatening. It's all in God's hands. As Franciscans, I need to trust—and keep it simple.

Complacency – This is defined as "a feeling of smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself". It is an attitude of "So what? Rules are for other people." It puts the self above the common good. These are complex times. Confusing times. The driving force in our lives must be the Divine Will and the common

good, not our own will and our own good.

Conditions – Do we imitate Jesus, who is totally self-giving, or do we set conditions on our generosity? There is an [inspiring story about Catherine Doherty](#), who had a very hard life. After WWI, she and her husband were literally starving. Her husband was ill and suffering from shell shock. In one instance of heroic charity, Catherine saved for her husband the egg from her lunch, although she was extremely weak herself after a day of work and almost fainted on the way home. It was doubly heroic because her husband was abusive, unfaithful, and made her life miserable. This was not done in servile fear, but in heroic charity. She was one who set no conditions on her generosity.

These are just a few of the "C" words that came to me. There are probably a lot more, and we could no doubt make similar lists for every letter of the alphabet. That might not be a bad exercise to, once a month, take the alphabet to confession!

Of course, it is not enough to identify the weeds and tirelessly pull them out. The best way to make sure they don't come back is to replace them with the wholesome plants of **compassion, consideration, charity, clarity, contentment, consolation, courage, contrition, confession, and contemplation of the Cross of Christ.**

Fr. Dave Pivonka said this in his ["Wild Goose"](#) series on the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit **convicts** us in order to **convert** us, not to **condemn** us."

Come Holy Spirit! In your mercy, **convict, convert, correct, and console** us. Amen.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...



THE BSP PROFESSION OF IAN VINCENT—A CANADIAN IN JAPAN



If you spend any time on the BSP Members Forum, you will have "met" Ian Vincent. He is currently the most prolific contributor to the forums. Praise God! It could have something to do with living in Japan and having no other way to connect with the Brothers and Sisters as a group. As a Canadian living in Japan, Ian is a case in point that the BSP is an international association!

Ian recently completed formation and has the dubious distinction of being the first BSP member to make his Profession during a pandemic—twice! He has done so with a spirit of grace and loving surrender to the Will of God.

Ian chose August 11, 2020, the feast of St. Clare as the day of his Profession. Given the pandemic, the event was necessarily simple, quite fitting for a Franciscan. God was in the details. Here is how he described it on the Members Forum:

Ian's profession. August 11, 2020, feast of St. Clare

I had a lovely morning. I took an hour to bicycle up to the cathedral in 38 C/ 100 F (well, that wasn't too lovely) :-)

I had earlier tried to go to the oldest church in the area (The Church of Our Lady) but it was locked up. So I went over to the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul and found it open. [Due to coronavirus all the small churches are closed and locked in Nagoya (the first time I've ever seen a locked church in 14 years in Japan) I had tried my local Carmelite church the night before.]

I made my profession promise in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Providentially the organist was practising at the cathedral, which was lovely. I can't send any pictures (no photography in the cathedral but I've put a link below for the architecture company that built it, that actually has some photos.)

Thank you for your prayers... I also ask that St. Clare and St. Francis pray with me for you and all your family!

God Bless you and keep you safe!

Ian

[Photos of the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul](#)

Then on Sunday, August 23, I received the above photo with this note from Ian:

This Sunday I was able to have an in-person profession with Father Joey Mission, MSC (after doing my profession by myself at the cathedral). He is doing a live-streaming of Mass now (the only one in Nagoya, apparently) and he did a short ceremony after Mass for my profession, which was lovely of him.

It could be that the Lord wished to offer Ian a consolation for having to make his profession alone during a pandemic! 😊 God be praised in all things!

Congratulations on your Profession, Brother Ian! Welcome to the BSP family.



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!

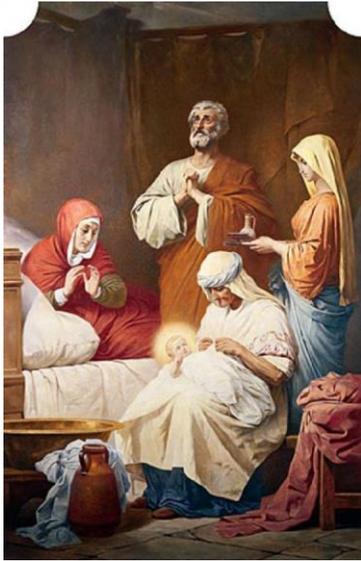
HANDBOOK OF THE ASSOCIATION...



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.





The Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary

SEPTEMBER 8 - FEAST

“Mary was born a saint, and a great saint; for the grace with which God enriched her from the beginning was great, and the fidelity with which she immediately corresponded to it was great.”

–St. Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*



Our Lady of Sorrows

SEPTEMBER 15 – MEMORIAL

“Behold we are about to consider a new kind of martyrdom; we have to consider a Mother condemned to see her innocent Son die as a malefactor on an infamous gibbet. This mother is Mary, who indeed, with too great reason, is called by the Church the Queen of



Martyrs; yes, for Mary, in the death of Jesus Christ, suffered a more cruel martyrdom than all other martyrs; for:

- I. Her martyrdom was never equalled.*
- II. Her martyrdom was without relief.”*

–St. Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*



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, Editors



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)



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