



...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 I. The Beginning of St. Francis' Religious Life

7. *Seventh lesson:* His father was beside himself with rage and he behaved as if he had become a stranger to all human pity. He dragged his son home and beat him, putting him in chains, in the hope that by wearing him down with physical punishment, he could turn his heart to the attractions of the world. However, the only result of his efforts was to make it clear beyond all doubt that Francis was more than willing to endure any torture for Christ. When he realized that he could not change his mind, he insisted vehemently that Francis should go before the bishop of the diocese with him and renounce into his hands the right of succession to the family property. Francis was only too glad to obey and as soon as he reached the bishop's presence, he made no delay, he never hesitated for a moment, or said or listened to a word from anyone; instead, he tore off all his clothes, including even his trousers, and stood there naked before them all. He seemed to be beside himself in his fervor, and he was not ashamed to be stripped naked for love of Christ who hung naked for us on the Cross.

8. *Eighth Lesson:* Now that he was free from the bonds of all earthly desires in his disregard for the world, Francis left the town; he was free and without a care in the world and he made the forest resound, as he sang God's praises in French. As the herald of the great King, he refused to be terrified when he met a band of thieves, and he continued to praise God. He was a pilgrim, half-naked and penniless, and he was glad to suffer tribulation, like the apostles.

In his love of utter humility, he now dedicated himself to the service of the lepers; by devoting himself to the care of such pitiful outcasts, he would learn to disregard the world and his own self, before attempting to teach such self-contempt to others. He had always had a

horror of lepers, above any other class of human beings; but now grace was infused into him in greater measure, and he devoted himself to waiting on their needs with such humility of heart that he washed their feet and bound their sores, drawing out the pus and wiping away the corrupt matter. In the excess of his indescribable fervor, he did not even hesitate to kiss their ulcerous sores, kissing the dust with his mouth (cf. Lam 3:29). He would expose himself to every kind of indignity, that he might bring his rebellious lower nature into subjection to the rule of the spirit; so he would gain complete control of himself and be at peace, once he had subdued the enemy that was part of his own nature.

9. *Ninth Lesson:* Now that he was firmly established in the lowliness of Christ and had become rich in his poverty, Francis set about repairing the church in obedience to the command he had received from the Cross. He had absolutely nothing to start with, but he devoted himself to the task wholeheartedly, loading his own back with stones, although he was worn out with fasting. He begged help in the form of alms from those among whom he had lived as a wealthy young man, and he was not ashamed. People eventually came to help him in their devotion to him, because they could see already that his was no ordinary holiness. With their cooperation he repaired the church of San Damiano and another dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles, followed by a third dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, all of which were abandoned and in ruins. In this way the work which God afterwards planned to accomplish through him on a spiritual plane was mysteriously foreshadowed in a visible, material fashion. Like the three churches he repaired, the universal Church of Christ was to be renewed in three different ways under his guidance and according to his directions, his rule



and teaching. The voice which he heard from the Cross, which repeated the command to repair God's house

three times, was a prophetic sign which we now see fulfilled in the three Orders which he founded.

*Bonaventure—Minor Life of St. Francis (1263)*



## VISITOR'S MESSAGE

### Homily by Fr. Robert Altier

#### Sunday Sermon for, March 28, 2021, Palm Sunday

**Readings: Mk 11:1-10; Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Mk 14:1-15:47**



Today, in the span of less than an hour, we recall the events that began with our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and culminated with His Passion and death in merely five to six days. One notices the emotional switch of the people to hailing Jesus to calling for His crucifixion. This reminds us of our own emotional swings which range from feeling great love and zeal at one moment to falling into the most unfortunate of sins in the next moment. It reminds us that emotions are not logical and that we must be careful not to make our decisions based on our emotions.

At the same time, we see the equanimity of Jesus throughout these events. He was not emotional when He rode into Jerusalem, nor did He allow Himself to be caught up in the emotions of the crowd. His demeanor did not change when He sent His disciples to prepare for the Last Supper. He remained calm when He spoke to Peter about the latter's upcoming denials. His choice to move forward in the garden, at the trial, during Peter's denials, and before Pilate are all based on the same interior determination that was founded on truth and charity in doing the Father's will. Finally, in carrying His Cross and at Calvary his resolve did not waver.

So, we are struck today by the dichotomy between the infinite and unchanging love God has for us, and our easily shifting "love" we have for Him. Our love is malleable because it is not true and pure charity. It is changing because it is selfish and it seems zealous when our emotions are high or when we want something from God; it is low when God seems far away or when we think we do not need Him. God's love, on the other hand, is selfless and completely focused on us. This is the reason for everything He did and continues to do for us. Being made in His image and likeness, Jesus shows us who we were created to be and what that looks like in practice.

The Prophet Isaiah told us of the Messiah and how God gave Him a well-trained tongue to speak to the weary a word that would rouse them. From this

reading and from history, we know that what was roused in many was anger and hatred. Isaiah tells us the Messiah gave His back to those who beat Him and His cheeks to those who plucked His beard; He did not shield Himself from buffets and spitting.

Most of us would never consider physically beating our Lord or spitting upon Him. But the deeper question is whether or not we are roused by His words. So often people today allow Jesus' words to go in one ear and out the other. They sound nice to us, but they do not seem practical. After all, if we actually did what He told us to do, we would be different from most people and we would be shunned. His words are the words of God, spoken to us in love because they are what is truly best for us. If we do what He says and live the way we were created to live, we will find fulfillment. Too often we reject the fulfillment He offers in exchange for acceptance by others who are more interested in living worldly lives.

In the second reading, St. Paul tells us Jesus chose obedience to the will of God. The will of God is love: love for the Persons of the Trinity and love for us, His sons and daughters. It was this love that brought Him to the Cross. He loves us infinitely, but frequently we do not believe He loves us, or we think we are unlovable. To prove His love and to demonstrate that we are loveable, He accepted the Cross and died for us. Because He is God and, therefore, could not die, He took our human nature to Himself so He had the capacity to die. He died for love of me and you! How it must pierce His heart when we do not believe in or accept His love for us!

As we go through the Passion with our Lord, we must always remind ourselves that He is God. How unjust this would be if a human person was treated as He was, but when we stop to think that we condemned God to death and He was obedient even unto death we should be shaken to our core. Our Lord has shown us true and real love, and His love for us remains unchanged. Our response must be to receive His love and to love Him, not in an emotional way, but as He loves us: with selfless charity.

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## ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...



### Focus

As Easter comes we gain focus on our Faith. Our whole journey, all of our life, is focused on one goal, to attain our salvation. Easter reminds us of that. At first we learn of the Faith, then, as time goes on and it surely does, we advance and mature our focus. If we live our Faith, study it, consider the lives of the Saints and all that the Church calls us to we move on into a deeper and deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, and His Father and the Holy Spirit, the living God.

We hopefully learn to hate our lives in this world, for Jesus says, **"he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal,"** (Jn 12:25) He is not describing how to obtain eternal life, unless we understand hating our life in this world to mean denying all trust in our own good works and trusting in Christ alone for salvation. But rather by "hating his life," Jesus is referring to the daily, lifelong process of dying to self as we live for Him. That process is characteristic of all who have truly trusted in Christ for salvation. If you're not engaging in the daily battle of fighting your own selfishness and pride, you may need to ask, "Have I truly repented of my sins and trusted in Christ as my Savior and Lord?"

We focus on our faith. It becomes our Faith in God, and His eternal plan for us. He has such a plan for every human being on the planet. That Faith moves us and brings us to focus on things differently. We learn, gradually, through our life, to focus on everything as coming from God and moving us towards God. It does not happen overnight. It is the long process of living that becomes our life. In that way our Faith becomes our life.

That Faith moves us to focus on loving others for God is love and Jesus told us. **"This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you...These things I command you, that you may love one another."** (Jn 15:12, 17) Whatever this demands of us we need to do it, and so we do. We make love the focus of our lives, in our family, in our jobs, and in our entire life. Pure, and simple, but not easy.

Jesus taught us. His teachings were far ahead of His time. He taught us to love our enemies. He taught us to forgive. He taught us to see people beyond

their race, age, gender, or nationality. He taught us to love God and to love our neighbor. But more importantly, He showed love in everything He did.

Christ was focused on his mission all of His life. Nothing mattered more to Him. After he rose from the dead, he appeared to His disciples who were still confused and hiding.

**"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.**

**"Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'" (Jn 20: 19-23)**

The Church is focused even today, on this mission. We are products of this mission and our debt to the Church is great. We rely on this mission and our Faith in the teachings of the Church to bring us to Jesus. They help us maintain our focus and our own mission which is unique to each one of us for it embraces our life. It embraces all we are and do, and it certainly calls us to love God and others as modern followers of Jesus, whose mission and call crosses all lines and time for all of humanity.

That focus has brought us all to living our Rule as our way of fully embracing our Faith in the manner and way that St. Francis gave it to us. Certainly, in this we learn to hate our lives in the world more and move away from our selfishness to selflessness and sharing the call to eternal life, however we do it, to all those around us. That is the Easter message lived, and it is the message we have been given to share. Just like those first disciples hidden in that upper room were called and sent, just as Jesus was sent, so are we sent. Let us move on in love for our world is very much focused on the wrong things.

May the Lord bless and lead us all!

Happy Easter to all!

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

# Chittle

To be loved by All, why not try Chittle,  
chastised its true, but only a little,  
fasting and abstaining with joy pervading  
unseen in your life; a gentle invading.

When you feel like preaching forget you can talk,  
if you hate exercise, go for a walk.

Do you prefer a level road. Take to a hill,  
Chittle is a healthy way to break your will.

Go last in line when you could have been first,  
drink what you don't want to satisfy your thirst,  
sit up straight when you would like to slouch,  
take the hard chair when you would rather the couch.

If a bug bites don't chase it away,  
why not rise early so you have time to pray?  
And take time for still-prayer when you want to go fast,  
So He can create in you a Union that will last.

Those highest in heaven will not be the great,  
so when you should be on time but have to come late,  
take the heat like a soldier without getting hot,  
remember, He is He who is, we are they who are not.

If you hate speed limits, lock on the cruise,  
Another's mess to clean up? What should you choose?  
If you live where there's winter turn down the heat,  
bless those who curse you, He was always sweet.

Smile in adversity, laugh at your fears,  
listen when you want to leave, cover your tears,  
talk to whom you don't like, from enemies don't run,  
when you feel like working, have a little fun.

Be present to others when you want to be alone,  
if steak is served at table take one with a bone,  
if you want cookies eat crackers instead,  
when you feel like a full meal, try just some bread.

Share yourself with others, be it time, money, or task,  
be forgiving of others, don't wait till they ask,  
give of yourself all the day long,  
walk gently, talk sweetly, sing a holy song.

Penance might be hard, but does hold a Mystery,  
Chittle helps start the journey that can set you free,  
saving little for self; giving time and love away,  
in what's offered to God, unseen, each day.

Source: Reflections in a Morning Star  
Brother Not, SFO (a.k.a. Bruce!) 1994  
<http://bspenance.org/Roots.shtml>





## Rounds of Homecoming...

by Janet Klasson, BSP

**If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.** (Colossians 3:1-4)

Blessed Triduum and Easter, dear brothers and sisters!

Easter is about homecoming. The Resurrection tells us that our eternal origin and destination is heaven. We know how arduous this journey is, but Jesus Christ has come in the flesh to show us the Way. We have nothing to fear, but need only surrender to him and remain faithful and he will lead us there.

No coincidence then that this "Rounds of Homecoming" came to me little by little recently. It started with me wanting to make sure I prayed Grace before meals with due attention to God's astounding, endless Providence. The "Rounds for Meals", included below, came to me over a few days. It has been a great blessing for me and I thank God for the inspiration, knowing his Providence does not end with food.

I don't always pray the whole prayer and I sometimes go off-script and thank him for something that strikes me about the food on my plate. At one meal in particular I was thanking him for the gift of salmon. I thanked God, in the Divine Will, for the way salmon are born in fresh water and then make their way downstream to live in the sea for most of their lives (2-8 years). Then near the end of their lives they make the arduous journey back home to spawn. They swim long distances against the current, even up waterfalls **to reach their exact place of origin.** They get beat up along the way and many don't make it, falling prey to predators, exhaustion, and fishers. Their migration is amazing, but what struck me that day was the miracle of how hard they are willing to work to end up at the exact point of their origin—their home.

That led me to ponder all the other animals who migrate unimaginable distances, always finding their way back, often to the same beach, lake, or tree they called home before they migrated. We have a pair of urban geese that nests on the roof of our church every year, honking noisily at us as we go by.

Apparently it is their home, and we are not welcome!

Our loving Creator reveals himself in nature. One of the many things evolution can't explain is the longing in the human heart for home, for belonging. We all want a place to call home, a place of love, safety, belonging. Whether we know it or not, God has hidden in this longing for an earthly home, a higher longing to return to our point of origin, our final destination, heaven.

This longing for home was echoed in a hymn that kept coming to my mind this Lent. The refrain goes like this: *Save your people, O Lord. Show us the way to come **home**. We have been wandering far from your love. Save your people O Lord.*

All these things came together in the following Divine Will "Rounds of Homecoming". I invite you to pray this with me in the Divine Will in the name of all, to give God the glory of all souls past, present, and future, completing the final migration to the Love, safety, and belonging of our Heavenly Home.

**"My daughter, come and do your round in my Will..."** (Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Volume 17, May 21, 1925)



### Rounds of Homecoming

Supreme Majesty, I want what you want in all your Divine Acts, and to give you, in return for your Divine Acts, the little acts of a creature. In the Divine Will in the name of all souls past, present, and future, I place my I love you and I thank you first of all for the great Gift of the life, death, and

resurrection of Jesus, who opened the gates of our heavenly homeland for us. I thank you for the longing you have placed in our hearts for home, especially our heavenly home. I especially want to thank you for showing us, in the miraculous migration of animals that heaven is not out of our reach because you have provide all we need to get us home. With that sure hope, I place my head on your heart and I begin my rounds.

**Triune God**, in the Divine Will, I love you and I thank you in the migration of the **salmon**, who are born in fresh water and then make their way downstream to live in the sea for most of their lives. At the end of their lives, they make an arduous, journey back to the fresh water, eventually reaching their exact place of origin in order to spawn. I love you and I thank you for teaching us through the salmon that even if we face dangers and adversity along the way, we can persevere in hope, for you are there to guide and protect us on our way home.

*Save your people, O Lord...*

**Triune God**, the butterfly is a symbol of your Resurrection. In the Divine Will I love you and I thank you in the migration of the **monarch butterflies**, the most delicate of creatures, who have even been known to migrate across the Atlantic Ocean! They have tiny brains, yet they return year after year to the same place 3,000 miles away. I love you and I thank you for teaching us through the monarch butterflies that we don't have to be great scholars to make it to heaven. We just need to surrender to you, and let your Breath of Love carry us home.

*Show us the way to come home...*

**Triune God**, in the Divine Will I love you and I thank you in the migration of the **sea turtles**, who regularly migrate more than 10,000 miles from Indonesia to the west coast of Canada and the United States, and back again, navigating to the same beach they were born on, in order to spawn. I love you and I thank you for teaching us through the sea turtles that no matter how far we travel, and even if we have strayed, your heavenly beacon never ceases to guide us home.

*We have been wandering far from your love...*

**Triune God**, in the Divine Will I love you and I thank you in the unique migration of each of the **4,000 species of migrating birds**. The Arctic tern migrates all the way to Antarctica and back each year, an astounding 55,923 miles. The bar-tailed godwits have the longest non-stop flight of 6,835 miles between New Zealand and China. Adélie penguins migrate more than 10,000 miles both swimming and on foot, often in extreme weather. I love you and I thank you for teaching us through the migrating birds that you have given each of us the unique graces we need for the journey—no matter how arduous it may be—and that you are waiting to

welcome us home.

*Save your people, O Lord...*

**Triune God**, what have you not done for us? In your mercy do not abandon us to the misery of our own will, but in the Divine Will, give us every grace we need to return to the Order, the Purpose, and the Place of our origin, for your glory. May your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Fiat!

### **Rounds for meals**

**Uncreated Power, Creator of all upon Whom all things depend**, fusing myself into you I praise and thank you in the Divine Will in the name of all souls PPF for your Divine Providence, abundance, and bounty, and for building into the creature an opportunity and the duty to offer thanks and praise to you each time food is taken.

I praise and thank you for the genius food factories we call plants and trees, for the sun, the soil, the seeds, the seasons, the water, the wind, the weather, the bacteria, microbes, phytoplankton and algae and every other step in the food chain, for the birds, bees, butterflies, bats, the insects and all pollinators.

I praise and thank you for the people who help bring food to our table, the producers, planters, pickers, processors, preservers, preparers, packagers, and presenters, for the cooks and for the inspiration of recipes, for the transporters and drivers of all machinery including farm and garden machines, carts, trucks, trains, boats, and planes, and thank you for the ingenuity that gives us these machines and all technology. In the Divine Will I pray a blessing over all machines and the people in and around them.

I praise and thank you for the variety of food, the colour, flavours textures, fragrances, for spices, especially for salt in all its uses.

I repair and redo for all ingratitude, complaining, pickiness, gluttony, waste, and greed leading to hunger for the poor. I redo all lives as if every morsel of food was received with gratitude as a gift from God, that none was ever wasted, and that no one was ever hungry, as if we had never left the Order, the Purpose, and the Place for which we were created. All glory to you O Lord! Bring us home! I love you and I thank you with your own Divine Will. Fiat!

*Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada*



## MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

### THE WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS IN A FREE DOWNLOAD

All are welcome to download a pdf of the writings of St. Francis made available at the Online Library of Liberty.

[https://oll-resources.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/oll3/store/titles/1172/StFrancis\\_0535\\_EBk\\_v6.0.pdf](https://oll-resources.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/oll3/store/titles/1172/StFrancis_0535_EBk_v6.0.pdf)

### 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 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)



The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF  
PENANCE



of St. Francis

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