



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

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter II. The Foundation of the Order — the Power of Francis' Preaching

"4. *Fourth lesson:* As Francis was on his way with his companions, determined to carry out his plan and gain an audience with the Supreme Pontiff, Innocent III, Christ, the power of God, Christ the wisdom of God, in his merciful condescension, came to meet him on his way. By means of a vision he instructed his Vicar on earth to give a peaceful hearing to this poor beggarman and grant his petition with good grace. In his vision the pope saw the Lateran basilica threatening to collapse and being held up by a poor, wretched-looking individual of slight stature who put his back to it, to prevent it from falling. When Francis appeared before him, the learned pontiff was struck by the purity of his heart and his disregard for the world, and he was deeply impressed by his love for poverty and his determination to be perfect, as well as his zeal for souls and the burning fervor of his will. "Behold doubt," he exclaimed, "this is the man who will uphold Christ's Church by his work and teaching." From that moment, he became completely devoted to the saint and he bowed graciously to his request. He approved the rule and gave the saint and his companions a mission to preach repentance, granting all their petitions there and then and promising generously to make even further concessions in the future.



5. *Fifth lesson:* With God's grace and the authority of the Supreme Pontiff to support him, Francis now felt completely confident and he took the road towards the valley of Spoleto. He had conceived true Gospel perfection in his heart and professed it solemnly by his vows, and now he was eager to practice it in his own life and teach it to others by his preaching. Together with his companions, he discussed the question whether they should go out among the people or live in solitude, and he begged God in persevering prayer to make known his will in this matter. Then he was enlightened by a revelation and he realized that he had been sent by God to win for Christ the souls which the Devil was trying to snatch away. And so he concluded that he should choose to live for others, rather than for himself alone. Thereupon, he went to live in an abandoned hut near Assisi, where he could share a life of poverty and strict religious discipline with his friars, and preach the word of God to the people, whenever he had the opportunity. He became a herald of the Gospel and he went about the towns and villages, preaching the kingdom of God "not in such words as human wisdom teaches, but in words taught him by the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:13). And God guided him in his speech by his revelations, and "attested his words by the miracles that went with them" (Mk 16:20).

Bonaventure—Minor Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier

Sunday Sermon for, May 23, 2021, Pentecost

Readings: Acts 2:1-11; Gal 5:16-25; Jn 15:26-27, 16:12-15

In the second reading today, St. Paul tells us the Spirit and the flesh are opposed to each other. While this has always been true, it has probably never been more important than it is in our day. A brief overview of art over the centuries shows a fascination with the human body, but our generation has taken this to a level earlier generations would not have thought possible. To be honest, they would have been scandalized if they were shown a glimpse into the future to see what has happened in our times.

We have made the body something of a little god, on one hand, and turned it into an object of the most vile and selfish lust on the other. The making of the body into something of a god tends to be directed toward one's own body while making it an object is more often focused on the bodies of other people. Either way, we have lost the reverence for the dignity of the person by abstracting the body or body parts from the whole person.

Since we also live in a world that has divorced itself from its Creator, there is a rejection of our dignity as being made in the image and likeness of God. After all, if God does not exist or if we were not made by God, there can be no reference to God in our being. It makes sense that we would act like that from which we came, so if we came merely from the animals, then we can justify why acting like animals is good and acceptable.

However, today we are witnessing two destructive and anti-human movements on both ends of the spectrum. As we just mentioned, there are those who are becoming more animalistic on one end. On the other end are those who claim we are about to evolve into the next phase of our humanness. This is called transhumanism. This entails the use of existing or future technologies to enhance or replace our human abilities, in essence, connecting us directly to the "web."

Obviously, even if there was such a thing as evolution, this would not qualify for the next stage of progression because it is purely unnatural; it is being artificially caused by people with a twisted sense of propriety. Claiming that most people are

already connected to a computer, meaning their "smart" phone, this would just remove the need for an external device and connect directly so one has immediate access to a wide array of information and technological applications.

When we couple these kinds of tragedies with the horrors of those who are using plastic surgery to change themselves into something they are not, whether that be a person of the opposite sex, an animal, or something of their imagination, we see that the focus on the flesh is leading in a very diabolical direction. The unholy spirit is unleashing his entire sick agenda and his hatred for humanity on a willing and gullible populace.

We need an outpouring of the Holy Spirit! In the Gospel reading Jesus tells us the Spirit will lead us into all truth. In a society of lies, we are not fulfilled because we are made for truth; we will be set free only by the truth. But the truth is deeper and affects us spiritually. The devil wants us to stay on the surface and focus on the flesh with its senses and its desires. God wants us to delve deeply into our own soul and find Him dwelling there. There we will learn the truth of our own dignity, the dignity of the human body and the dignity of the human soul. Together, they make an integral whole and express the full dignity of the human person.

When the people of Jerusalem heard the Apostles, they were amazed that each person heard about the mighty acts of God in his own native language. While we may not hear the sound or see the tongues of flame, we need to see the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, leading us to accept and to speak the truth.

St. Paul tells us we are to live by the Spirit, but this requires crucifying our flesh with its passions and desires. This is the only way we can follow where the Spirit will lead us. It may be uncomfortable for us to allow the Spirit to lead because we like to be in control. Look at what happened on Pentecost; the Apostles had to let go of any and all control. The Holy Spirit led them in a way that brought many to believe. Perhaps because the problems of today are different, the way the Spirit leads will be different. Let go, trust the Lord, and let the Spirit lead!

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ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

The Trinity

I'm writing this on Trinity Sunday, May 30, 2021, and it seems appropriate to attempt to write a message about the Holy Trinity for us to ponder.

Not an easy subject since it is hard to imagine for us human beings a Trinity that is Divine, is God, and is one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is considered to be one of the central Christian affirmations about God.

The simple way we human's can consider it is that one person can be three persons in life. A man can be a father, husband, and brother. A woman can be a wife, mother, and sister. So we can be three persons in one, and maybe a lot more even. Of course, as humans, this one person is not unique in each category. We don't possess different powers or abilities although we might have a different mission in each category which, of course, God has in each of His Persons. God has the same powers in each Person too, because Jesus often declared that He and His Father were one. One in Godhead, and one most certainly in Power.

We asked Fr. Altier once to do a retreat for the BSP on the subject of the Trinity, and he did it. We recall that he said the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were one Person and that the Power in that Person, and the completeness of the Godhead flowed between the three person like water flows in an ice cube tray. We can visualize that. The water overflows one cube into the others. It is the same water in each of the cubes of the tray but the ice cube tray is one unity. Now that is easy to visualize but the Godhead is much more of course.

St. Athanasius, bishop, in the Office of Readings for Trinity Sunday, in his first letter to Serapion, says that God is above all things as Father, for he is principle and source; he is through all things through the Word, and he is in all things in the Holy Spirit. Jesus speaks often of His Father. He says that God the Father is His God, and our God. In the Father resides every good, only good, and the greatest of good. He made all things and all things are His, and His Son, is Lord of all things. He is King of the Universe, of heaven, and earth. He is Lord of lords, King of kings, and the Best of the best. And the Holy Spirit is the fire of love and life that permeates and motivates all things.

The gospel of today says **"Jesus approached his disciples and said: 'All power in heaven and on**



earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.' (Matt. 28: 16 – 20)

And so we, as disciples, go forth now to make disciples of all nations, still, in this modern age. We need to represent Jesus to those around us, and to preach without preaching this faith we have, and to bring the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to the world around us which so sorely needs it. This is a mission in and of itself. It is THE mission of our lives, and as we do it we will thirst for God, and this thirst will carry us beyond this world to God in the spirit of unity with the Trinity and this mission that Jesus has given us. We really have no other purpose in life although we certainly have been given to enjoy the things of life that God gives each of us.

In prayer we move into a deeper relationship with the Trinity over time. That is how we grow in prayer. St. Theresa of Avila, who is a doctor of the Church for all she has written about prayer and the life of a soul, describes the soul as a castle with seven rooms. God dwells in the seventh or innermost room of the castle, which she refers to as a mansion, meaning in each of our souls, and we need to move into these rooms through prayer and our prayer deepens as we penetrate deeper in to the castle. The first room is just outside the world, which is full of vermin: snakes, and lizards, scorpions, and spiders. Even in the first room we step away from the vermin although they will sometimes come in to these first rooms and make life miserable for us. This first room is characterized by vocal prayer, even the simplest of vocal prayers. If we don't pray at least vocally we remain outside the castle surrounded by vermin, that is the distractions of the world, and so many do these days.

As we move deeper in the castle to other rooms closer to the center our prayers deepen. The second room is characterized by mental prayer, and the further rooms all are characterized by mystical prayer of varying degrees. It is all too much to try to put on paper but for us to get to the inner room, the mansion where God abides in every soul, we must move in to these inner rooms. The last room, where God lives, is the seventh room, or His mansion. The character of prayer in this room is very deep and very mystical. It permeates our imagination, which

is still, i.e. quiet, by now, and enlightens us. Part of this enlightenment is an intellectual visitation of the Trinity, which God instills in us as we enter the seventh room, the mansion, where God dwells.

This illumination is purely intellectual. We do not see it with our eyes. We see it with our intellects, and it shows up suddenly as knowledge and love for the Trinity. We worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We do that intellectually. We do it without thinking about it. We are just suddenly aware of the Trinity as God. Father, Abba, Son, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, Love and Life. It is a joy, and we experience it without realizing what is happening until it happens. This must happen before we consummate a union with God, and it must happen in this life, or it will happen in the life to come. Hence this is called a spiritual marriage of our souls with God. Praise God we arrive at this point before we die!

The mystery of the Holy Trinity opens to us without us seeking it if we continue to try to pray more and better. Contemplative prayer is the key. God is well aware of our efforts and in his Holy Spirit makes us move into these deeper levels of awareness and

spiritual growth. The Trinity remains mysterious, and it will always be mysterious even when we are deeply immersed in it, or even when we are in heaven. We will be immersed in it for all eternity as this union, and ongoing prayer of the heart and mind, will be part of who we are for all eternity. It will be totally natural then, and the lifeblood of heaven. Ongoing, mysterious, simple but totally consuming contemplation of God. The Holy Spirit, who is the fire of life and love, will fire all the souls in heaven with this joy, and in this joy, which will totally hold us, we will abide forever.

It is impossible to describe the Trinity. It is impossible for us to understand it, here, or hereafter. On earth, or in heaven, and in this mystery we will be lost but claimed by God, forever.

God the Father is the Head. God the Son, Jesus, is the Heart, and God the Spirit flows from the love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father and is the Movement of God's love in us and all of creation.

May the Holy Trinity bless and lead us all!

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

Franciscan Saints

By Ian Vincent, BSP

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May 23rd was Pentecost, celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit. This got me reflecting on the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22). This got me thinking about how anyone can have joy in the midst of this very un-joyful year of COVID, which led to "God loves me and cares for me so much He died for me. If I can't find joy in this, what in the world will I ever find joy in?"

And all of that brings me to the Saint I'd like to talk about for this month: Thomas More, Third Order Franciscan; Feast Day June 22nd. For the Commonwealth members out there, you may remember your school history about Thomas More being executed by King Henry VIII for not attending the coronation of Henry to Anne Boleyn. More did this because his Catholic faith held that Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon was invalid. His execution makes More a martyr for the faith.

Although historically very interesting, it all seems a bit abstract and removed from most people's day to day lives. But this brings me to the point about the



fruit of the Holy Spirit. If anyone could be excused for being joyless or stressed or angry, it would be More on his way to the scaffold to have his head cut off. Yet More showed he had the fruit of the Holy Spirit by the way he joyfully went about his life right up until his death. He was widely reported to have told one of the officials upon being brought to the poorly constructed stairs up to the scaffold "I pray you, master Lieutenant, see me safe up and as for my coming down, let me shift for myself." He was also reported to have kissed the executioner in advance and to have forgiven him as well. He was also reported to have joked, as he moved his long beard out of the way, that his beard was innocent of any crime so he didn't want it to be harmed unjustly.

Here is someone so sure of the love of God and so filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit that he could joke with the man who was about to cut off his head. And so, Saint Thomas More is an outstanding saint to remember when you think there is no reason to have any joy or love in this terrible time: "God loves me and cares for me so much that He died for me; what more reason do I need for joy?"

God Bless everyone!

Ian Vincent, BSP, Canadian member living in Japan



Deep is calling on deep...

by Janet Klasson, BSP



Gospel Reading on the feast of Corpus Christi

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. (Mark 14:22-24)

I think it is safe to say that members of the BSP are regular adorers of the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. Adoration is our strength and our joy. Even if we can't get to a church regularly, I'm sure we have all found ways to adore the Lord through a printed image, holy card, statue, or on one of the many websites that provides livestream adoration. God be praised in those who are working to provide those precious links to the Lord of Life!

Recently, in the writings of Luisa Piccarreta, I came across a beautiful meditation that lends itself perfectly to contemplation. I have found that by repeating it slowly, each phrase is a launching point into the heart of God. I have also found it to be a gentle draw back into the Presence when my mind wanders. Sometimes I don't get past the first line.

As we are celebrating the feast of *Corpus Christi* this week, I felt led to share first of all the little passage in its entirety, and then a sample of where contemplation has led me.

**"In Your Beautiful Heart
one says more by keeping silent than by speaking;
and by loving, one learns how to love.
Love, Love - speak,
You alone, because being Love,
You know how to speak of Love."**

(L. Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Volume 10, February 8, 1911)

In your Beautiful Heart

O sweet Jesus...

The soldier's lance gives eternal access to Your Beautiful Heart...

One says more by keeping silent than by speaking

...waves of light, love, mercy, and sheer beauty...



And by loving, one learns how to love

...two beating hearts, a litany of *I love you's*, the call and the echo, the chant and the refrain...

Love, Love - speak,

...listening...

You alone, because being Love, You know how to speak of Love

...listening...

Luisa's passage continues with our Lord's response:

**Do you want to hear Love?
All Creation tells you Love.
If the stars twinkle, they tell you Love;
if the sun rises, it gilds you with Love.
If it shines with all of its light in its full day,
it sends arrows of Love to your heart;
if the sun sets, it tells you: 'It is Jesus that dies of Love for you.'
In the thunders and lightnings, I send you Love,
and smacking kisses I give to your heart.
It is Love that runs upon the wings of the winds;
if the waters murmur, I extend my arms to you;
if the leaves move, I clasp you to my Heart;
if the flower gives out its fragrance, I cheer you with Love.
All Creation, in mute language, tells you, in chorus:
'From you alone do I want life of Love'.
Love do I want, Love I desire, for Love I beg from within your heart.
I am only content if you give Me love.**

Summer is a wonderful time to hear creation speak of God's love. *Deep is calling on deep* (Ps 42:7). May our contemplation lead us to continuously echo the refrain, "I love you too!"

Blessed summer dear friends.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

SUMMER BREAK

The BSP newsletter is taking a summer break again this year. May God bless us all and keep us safe in the arms of Our Blessed Mother. See you in September!

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

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 first Eucharistic Procession...



...was from Nazareth to ein Karem
"She went with haste"—about 90 miles!

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, 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



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