



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

7. *Seventh lesson:* At this time a religious of the Order of the *Crucigeri* who was called Moricus was lying ill in a hospital near Assisi. It was a long drawn-out illness and he was faring so badly that they thought he was at the point of death. Then he recommended himself to St. Francis by means of an intermediary and begged him to be so good as to pray to God for him. In his compassion the saint agreed willingly; he gave himself to prayer and then he took some bread-crumbs and mixed them with oil from the lamp which burned before our Lady's altar, making a sort of pill out of them. This he sent by the friars to the sick man saying, "take this medicine to our brother Moricus. In his power, Christ will restore him to perfect health by means of it, and when he is ready for the fray, he will bring him into our company for the rest of his life." The moment the sick man took the prescription which had been made up under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he stood up, completely cured. God gave him such strength of body and soul that he joined St. Francis' Order a short time afterwards. For years he wore a hair-shirt next to his skin and never ate cooked food, refusing to drink wine or touch anything that had been boiled.

8. *Eighth lesson:* At this time, too, a priest from Assisi, Father Silvester, a man of good life and dove-like simplicity, had a vision. He saw the whole countryside being swallowed up in the embrace of a huge serpent which seemed to threaten the various

regions of the world with destruction, it looked so horrible and disgusting. Then he saw a shining cross of gold coming from St. Francis' mouth. The top of it reached up to heaven and its arms stretched far and wide and seemed to reach to the ends of the earth, and the mere sight of it in all its glory was enough to put the terrible serpent to flight. Father Silvester was a religious-minded man and after he had seen this vision for the third time, he realized that St. Francis had been chosen by God to take up the standard of the Cross and crush the wicked serpent's power. This he would do by enlightening the hearts of the faithful by the glorious witness of his life and teaching. He told the saint and his friars what he had seen and a short time afterwards he left the world; after Francis' example, he followed in Christ's footsteps with such perseverance that his life in the Order only served to confirm the vision he had seen while he was still in the world.

9. *Ninth lesson:* Another friar called Pacificus, when he was still a layman, met St. Francis at San Severino, where he was giving a sermon in a monastery. There the power of God came upon him and he saw the saint signed with the sign of the Cross in the form of two swords of fire, one of which reached from his head to his feet, while the other crossed his chest from hand to hand. He did not know St. Francis by sight, but he realized that the person pointed out to him by such a miracle could be



no other. He was overcome with amazement; the power of the saint's words moved him to sorrow for his sins and left him terrified, as if he had been transfixed with a spiritual sword coming from his mouth. He said goodbye to worldly popularity and joined the saint by professing his rule.

He afterwards made great progress in religious perfection and became provincial in France, where he was the first to hold that office. Before he left to take up his post he was found worthy to have a

vision of a great Cross which appeared in different colors on St. Francis' forehead and lit up his whole face with a beautiful radiance. Francis always had great reverence and affection for this particular sign and he often spoke in its praise; he made it before starting to do anything and the letters charity demanded he should write he signed with it in his own hand. His only desire seemed to be to mark the brows of those who weep and wail and are truly converted to Jesus Christ with his sign of the Cross, as we read in the prophet Ezechiel (Ez 9:4).

Bonaventure—Minor Life of St. Francis (1263)



VISITOR'S MESSAGE **Homily by Fr. Robert Altier (2012)**

A shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse...

Reading (Isaiah 11:1-10) Gospel (St. Luke 10:21-24)

In the first reading ... from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, we are told that a shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse, telling us very

clearly that what is going to happen is that the house of Jesse is going to be humbled. It is going to be destroyed, in essence, cut down, if you will. But what happens with an olive tree if you cut it down, it starts sending shoots up out of the stump that remains and the whole thing grows up all over again. And so what we are being told is that when the Messiah comes, the place that He is going to rise up from is going to be completely cut down. That is precisely what happened. The house of David was completely destroyed; it was the laughingstock at the time of Jesus. All of the promises that were made to David about a son being seated on his throne and all of these glorious things that God had promised appeared to be a complete farce because there had not been a king in Israel for quite some time at the time of the Lord, and the house of David really did not have a whole lot of authority or clout or anything glorious about it by the time that the Lord came. So again, we see how God fulfills everything that He promised. At the same time, as one would look at the house of David at that time, they would completely hold it in ridicule. They would not look up to it. They would not think anything of it. But those of simple faith, on the other hand, would be able to look at the promises God made to David and say, "Maybe I don't understand but I believe."

That is precisely what Our Lord is getting at in the Gospel today. He tells us that what had been hidden from the learned and the clever has been revealed to the childlike. Then He goes on to tell His apostles, "Blessed are your eyes because of what you see, and your ears because of what you hear. Many prophets and many kings desired to see what you see and to hear

what you hear but did not hear them or see them." The same is true of us. Many have longed to see what we see and to hear what we hear, that is, we have the Lord, we have the Scriptures, we have the Word of God, we have the teaching of the Church—we have everything.

We can also look at it from another perspective and the time in which we live to think about what the Fathers of the Church said: that the most blessed people of all time are going to be the ones who are alive when the Church is crucified. And I truly believe that is us. It is not going to be a fun time, but it is going to be a very blessed time: the grace that is going to be available to us and just the gift to be united with Our Lord in His passion and in His crucifixion. There is no price that can be put on such a gift and we need to be able to rejoice in it. All of the saints longed for that day and they did not see it. All of the saints longed to hear about the work that the Lord is doing but they did not hear it. But you do, because the Lord has chosen you for this time. For whatever reason, in His providence from all eternity, knowing the time and the place in which we live, He has chosen each one of us to be here and He is giving each one of us the grace to do the work that He has called us to do. He has given us the faith to be willing to say "yes" to whatever it is that He is going to ask of us.

So there is no reason to fear. There is no reason even to be concerned. All we need to do is pray and be faithful. That is all, because if we want to hear the voice of the Lord and if we want to see the work of the Lord the only way is in prayer. Otherwise, we are going to completely miss what it is that He is trying to do. It will be obvious to the whole world, but they are going to reject it. Only those of simple, childlike faith will be able to stand firm. And when the Church appears to be destroyed, that is when the new shoot is going to sprout



and it will be glorious. What we have seen we will see again, just in a different form. But what a blessing for us that we have been called to live in a society that is completely filled with sin, that has completely rejected Christ. It would be much easier to be able to live our faith if we lived in a faith-filled society where everyone was Catholic and supported their faith. But it is not about having it easier; it is about the idea of being able to serve the Lord, not because everybody else is doing it and we are getting caught in the current, but because it is what we truly believe and we have to make that

choice when it is not being upheld by our society.

That is the gift God has given to each and every one of us, and we need to be so grateful for the opportunity to live our faith in this time. Therefore, we also need to be very clear to make sure we are truly living the Faith and not trying to walk with one foot on both sides of the fence—it does not work very well—but to make the choice to serve Jesus Christ, to believe with childlike faith, and to be so blessed to see what we see and to hear what we hear from the voice of the Lord.

*This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier in 2012.
Reprinted from the December 2012 BSP Newsletter.*



ADMINISTRATORS (EMERITUS) MESSAGE FROM 2012 Peace

The Gospel of October 25, 2012, struck us. In it the Lord says: **“Do you think I have come to establish peace on the earth? I assure you, the contrary is true; I have come for division. From now on a household of five will be divided three against two and two against three; father will be split against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”** (Luke 12:49-53) There are many lessons in this gospel reading for us all. Serious lessons, especially in this Christmas season.

For one thing we need to be Peacemakers, despite this warning, and that is what it is, a warning, from Our Lord. We are not living among Peacemakers. We need to become Peacemakers, for the Lord also says, in the Sermon on the Mount, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”** (Matthew 5:9) And that is our primary concern, to be children of God, and therefore, to act like children of God. Yet the Lord’s warning remains.

As we enter the Christmas season again it is an annual reminder to us too. That despite the fact we do not live in a peaceful, peace-loving, world, we need to seek peace and promote peace, and love peace, the Peace of Christ in us and for others. Jesus

has been called the Prince of Peace, and with His birth He brought His Peace as His gift to us all with Him. He did not live in that peace Himself, but despite His warnings to us that He would not establish peace on the earth He did bring it for those who love Him and follow Him. Not for our world though. In our world, from now until the end of the world, peace will not be the ongoing situation, due to the sins of men.

So, as Christmas dawns on us let us renew our thoughts and desires for peace, for ourselves, certainly, and for those we can affect. If there is someone with whom we do not have peace we might want to take the opportunity to call them and just talk to them and try to reestablish the peace between us—in the Spirit of the season.

Our Rule calls us to peace, His Peace, because it calls us to be his true servants, and followers of the way of the Gospel, the Way that He gave us, to follow Him in living our Rule. This is the narrow way, and just as the way to heaven is narrow and difficult, so also is the way to peace. But, let’s go after it.

Peace be with you all and your families in this wonderful Christmas season. Merry Christmas to you all!

And plan to enjoy the Octave, the eight days after Christmas, when there are no mortifications.

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again we say, rejoice!

*Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators Emeritus, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota
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A Season of Hope...

by Janet Klasson, BSP



"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Advent--a season of hope. Hope is what the church in her wisdom proclaims to us as we begin our Liturgical year. As (then) Cardinal Ratzinger once said:

"The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope. It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us, memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

When we look around, there is precious little in this world to inspire hope in us. Dire events and calamities surround us. Each day's news brings new horrors and there seems no end in sight. What are these "memories of goodness" spoken of by Cardinal Ratzinger? In times such as these it is tempting to forget that there ever was anything good. Remembering, perhaps, brings more sorrow than joy. Those of us who bear the name of Christ, however, must be on our guard not to fall into this trap, no matter the circumstances. St. Paul tells us we must hold every thought captive to Christ. Our memories must be in continual reference to God, committed to goodness, and steeped in hope and promise.

The above Scripture passage speaks of the Lord's promise, the Good News. Even in bad times, if we keep the Lord's promise foremost in our thoughts, everything else will fall into perspective. It is the Christian's special challenge and duty to be a sign of hope at all times.

That we are called to penance is itself a sign of hope, for the Lord would not call us to penance if it did no good. It is a great prodigy that he uses our miserable little offerings, multiplied in the Two Hearts, to hasten the coming of his Kingdom. That is hope! Penance, linked to the sufferings of Christ, nourishes and sustains the church. Venerable Anne Catherine Emmerich speaks about the indissoluble link between Christ, suffering, and the Church:

Even if there should remain but one Catholic Christian, the Church would again triumph since its foundations were not cast in the intellect or councils of men. (The Church) had never yet been without members praying and suffering for her. (The Lord) showed me all that He Himself had endured for her, what efficacy He had bestowed upon the merits and labors of the martyrs and He ended by saying that He would endure it all over again if it were possible for Him again to suffer.

What love! What hope!

The hope that we speak of in Advent is counter-cultural. It is hope rooted in the eternal, glorious, and true promises of Christ, not in the empty promises of the world, the flesh, and the devil. When so many do not seem to so much as desire peace, Christians anticipate the birth of the Prince of Peace. In a world that celebrates Christmas long before December 25, we wait with Mary in joyful hope through the last month of her pregnancy, a month heavy with promise. Our fasting during this season properly anticipates the feast of Christmas.

It is so easy to get caught up in the secular whirlwind of December and to arrive at Christmas utterly spent--in more ways than one. But if we wish to give the season of Advent its due, we should remember Mary, heavy with child. If we unite ourselves to her we will instinctively slow down and turn our hearts attentively to the Lord; if he calls, we must be ready for anything, even a rigorous journey.

These are the memories of goodness that open the doors of hope. That is the spirit of Advent, a spirit of waiting, readiness, and joyful surrender to the will of God, a willingness to be His agents in proclaiming the Good News to the poor in word and deed.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I pray that you will have a blessed Advent, leading to a holy Christmas filled with light, happiness, and peace.

*Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada
Reprinted from the BSP Newsletter December 2008*



NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

BSP TRANSITION OF ADMINISTRATION

Transitions are always more complicated than we expect, so in the interest of keeping complications to a minimum, there is a temporary freeze on new inquirers. From the St. Anthony Chapter:

"It is the official direction of St. Anthony Chapter, as the head chapter of the Association, that all new membership efforts / onboarding of new members is to be paused until further notice. Until directed otherwise by St. Anthony Chapter, no new membership efforts are to take place. Inquirers are not to be onboarded."

NEW BSP COMMUNICATION CENTRE EMAIL ADDRESS: stanthonybsp@gmail.com

We appreciate your patience and understanding. God is in charge and all will unfold as it should. Fiat!

Note from Janet: I had offered to continue to publish the newsletter until St. Anthony Chapter was ready to take it on. Unfortunately I was unable to publish the October and November newsletters due to eye surgery. Thanks be to God I am fully recovered and will continue to assist as God wills with the transition.

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.



May the glories of the
Nativity
shower you and yours
with abundant blessings!

The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE OF ST. FRANCIS
In the world, but not of it, for Christ!

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