11. When the Order was already well established and Francis was thinking of having the rule which had been approved by Pope Innocent confirmed for all time by his successor Pope Honorius, God granted him the following vision. He saw himself picking up some tiny crumbs of bread from the ground, with which he had to feed a large number of friars who were standing about. The crumbs were so small that he was afraid to distribute them lest they slip through his fingers. Then he heard a voice from heaven telling him, "Francis, make one piece out of all those crumbs and give it to those who are willing to eat it." He did so, and the friars who failed to accept it with due reverence, or despised it when they had taken it, were soon seen to be suffering from leprosy. In the morning Francis told his companions all about it. He was upset because he could not understand the meaning of his vision; but the following day, while he was watching in prayer, he heard a voice telling him, "Francis, those crumbs, the other night, are the words of the Gospel. The single piece is the rule and the leprosy is wickedness."

And so Francis decided to shorten the rule which he wanted to have confirmed, because it had become too long by the addition of numerous texts from the Gospel, as his vision indicated. Then he was led by the Holy Spirit into the mountains with two companions, where he fasted on bread and water; and there he dictated the rule as the Holy Spirit inspired him in his prayer. When he came down from the mountain, he gave the rule to the vicar of the Order; but a few days later the vicar claimed that he had accidentally mislaid it, and so the saint went into solitude once more and rewrote the rule just as before, as if he heard the words from God's own lips. Afterwards he obtained papal confirmation for it from his holiness Pope Honorius, who was then in the eighth year of his pontificate.

Francis used to exhort the friars fervently to be faithful to the rule, saying that he had dictated everything as it was revealed to him by God and that nothing he had prescribed came from himself. This was proved by God's own testimony only a short time afterwards when Francis received the stigmata of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the seal of Christ, the supreme High Priest, with which he gave the rule and its author his divine approval, as we shall explain later when we have finished describing Francis' virtues.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)
Our Lord, in the Gospel reading today, tells us (as we have heard over the last several days) to remain in His love and that we will remain in His love as long as we keep His commandments. His commandment to us, of course, is to love. So it sounds like a circular argument: “You will remain in My love as long as you love, and as long as you love, you will love.” Well, that makes perfect sense, but it is to remain in His love. It is not to love with a natural love but with a supernatural love because He loves the Father and loves us also and so He gives us His love, and with that love that we receive from Our Lord, we are able to love others. Not of our own strength, not of our own ability, not of our own ingenuity, but with His love and by His grace.

We recognize that point of being able, then, to love on a supernatural level, to love in a divine manner, which is precisely the dignity that we have from our baptism. And so the Lord is asking us to live according to what it is that He has done for us. In the salvation which is ours in Christ, in the faith that we have in Christ, in the saving grace, as Saint Peter spoke of in the first reading, we have the love of Christ poured forth into our hearts and we are then able to use that love for others. It is not given merely for ourselves because Our Lord commands us to love others as He has loved us. And so we are to take that love in and then we are to use it.

Now we know that as grace operates it either grows or it decreases, and the only way it is going to grow is if we use it. If we try to keep it for ourselves, it is actually going to be depleted. So if we want to be able to love God more, we have to use the love that He is putting there. It is not like a bank account that will gain more if we stuff it away and do not use it; in fact, it is exactly the opposite. Recall that Our Lord condemned the guy who buried the treasure, but it was the ones who used it who doubled what they had. The Lord has given to each one of us this treasure of His own love, and now He is asking that each one of us will use that love, will act upon it, will respond to what He has done for us and be able to love others.

And since it is the very purpose for which we are created—knowing that it is our very being to be created in the very image and likeness of God, and God is love, therefore, the purpose of our creation is to love and to be loved – the Lord then goes on to tell us that He has told us this so His joy may be in us and our joy may be complete. Now this is critical because we run around trying to find joy in everything that will not bring it, in fact, trying to find joy in everything that will bring us misery: more materialism, more selfishness, more pleasure, more things, more stuff, more self. It’s all about “me, me, me, me, me, me”. That is what our society is, and we think we are going to find happiness in all of these things. So I simply suggest that you look around and ask yourself how many truly joyful people you know. In America, there are very, very few because we are not doing what we are supposed to. We are trying to find joy in external things; we are trying to find joy in everything that is not God, and we pay very little attention to the Lord. He tells it to us straight out: If you want complete joy, total fulfillment, the peace that the world cannot give, it can only come through the love of Jesus Christ, or as Saint Paul would say, “the love of God in Jesus Christ poured forth into our hearts”.

That is what will bring us true joy and complete fulfillment and the peace that Our Lord spoke of in yesterday’s Gospel: if we accept His love, if we return His love, and if we love others as we have been loved. That is the commandment the Lord has given, and the wonderful thing for us with God’s commandments is that He does not get anything out of it—we do. If we are obedient to what He is asking, we will find our fulfillment. What the Lord is doing is simply saying, “This is for your own good. This is what is the very best for you.” So even if you start out with a selfish motive, which is exactly the opposite of love, but even if you start out with a selfish motive—“I want to find happiness and contentment and peace and joy and all the other things”—here is the answer: Die to self and love, and you will have everything that you are looking for. The formula is exceedingly simple. The Lord gave us one commandment. He told us we will remain in His love if we fulfill that commandment and our joy will be complete if we fulfill that commandment, and that commandment is to love one another as He has loved us.

* This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier with minimal editing.
ADMINISTRATOR’S MESSAGE...
O God, be merciful to me, a sinner

In the Gospel of Luke the Lord tells the story of two men who go in the temple to pray.

“He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (LK 18:9-14)

We need to keep this Gospel in mind as we pray and consider our life and living the Rule of 1221, the Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. There are so many lessons in it. We need to be simple, humble, confident in God’s mercy. We need to recognize that we are sinners and not worry about others or compare ourselves to others. We each must stand on our own merits, for one day we will be judged on our own life, not how someone else did or did not live.

It is also a joy to keep in mind that the Rule we live is one way we say to God, “Be merciful to me a sinner.” We recognize and acknowledge before God that we are sinners just by reason of living it. These two points should keep us from exalting ourselves beyond others as the Rule focuses us on how we are living our lives before God.

The lay people in his day came to St. Francis because he was a holy man and they knew it. They asked him for a Rule of life that they could live that would get them to heaven. As with all things he went off and consulted the Lord and gave us the Rule of 1221 that we follow in this Association. Even today it is holy, and unique among Rules. More demanding than most. Calling us to live holy lives for the love of God and to do penance for the good of our souls the souls of others. So, the Rule St. Francis gave the laity became the Rule of his Third Order and it is as powerful today as it was in his day to convert sinners and sanctify souls. This is the life that we, in the BSP, are striving to live. We are blessed to have it, and just as it answered the hope of the laity in his day so it still does today.

We need to keep in mind the fact that we are sinners. It is also most helpful to remember this when we glance out at our world, which is in such turmoil. Most countries now have leaders that do not inspire us or give us much hope of positive change, and in many cases even threaten persecution for being Catholic, or even Christian. The world does all it can to keep our mind off our sinfulness. When do you recall the world, or someone in it, reminding you of sin, or calling you to worship God for that matter? It doesn’t happen. For these reasons alone the world needs people who pray and do penance. Our world is in serious trouble!

The problem the Pharisee has in the Scripture is that he loses sight of his own sinfulness in favor of watching that of his neighbor. He even fasts two days a week, like we fast every week, yet thanks God for his goodness and letting him be better than his neighbor. The Lord points out that he has missed the point and his efforts to exalt himself will be to his downfall. We need to always be humble and focus on our own sinfulness and weakness, and it is helpful to imagine that all others are better than us. St. Francis always considered himself the least of his brothers.

So, the Rule reminds us all of our sinfulness and we live it as sinners as best we can. For that reason let us live the Rule with joy, and confidence, that it is bringing us closer every day to the Lord and helping us amend for our sins and the sins of others. By living it we join that small group of followers of the Lord who make, or have made, efforts every day to live the gospel more perfectly. All of the Saints did that. In doing that we do, in fact, secure our way to heaven and when we meet the Lord, which we all will do one day, we will be so glad that we did it.

May the Lord give us all his peace.

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators - Morning Star Chapter – Minnesota
I was overwhelmed during the drama of Holy Week by the following words of Jesus: “I have shown you many good deeds from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” (Jn 10:32) Jesus was in dialogue with the Jews, who had asked Him if He was the Messiah. When He declared clearly that He was, they tried to stone Him “for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” At least, they had a reason. Apparently no one expected the Messiah to be divine. Seems to me that would be something positive—the Messiah as a divine being rather than merely human! Didn’t they realize the benefits of communing with their Creator? They knew Jesus was something extraordinary, and He spoke with authority. How could they accuse someone so obviously good of doing evil?

His followers have asked that question for two thousand years. Only in their case there is no answer. Jesus claimed to be God, and was ultimately convicted of blasphemy. We don’t claim to be God, nor divine. But we are still persecuted. A recent study claimed that seventy percent of Christians around the world suffer some form of persecution, with millions of martyrs who could as well have repeated the words of Jesus: “For which of these good works do you wish to put us to death?” Why are the genuine followers of Jesus persecuted in every age? Hated just as Jesus was hated? Objectively speaking, they are usually the best citizens of any country they inhabit.

The first clue is that not all who call themselves Christian are persecuted. Usually those who compromise His teachings are loved by the world. Jesus said the disciple is not greater than the Master. A sign of true discipleship has always been to be hated just as the Master was. Anytime we choose good over evil there are consequences, for this world is not our home. We are just passing through a place of testing, with pitfalls everywhere, and pitchforks waiting to push us into any one of them.

I think the answer is guilt. At Paul the Apostle tells us, the Creator has put into the hearts of each of His children the knowledge needed to be saved. If that’s true, then every person born into the world either has to open the door to Jesus, and let Him into their lives, or else consciously keep the door closed.

There is no power greater than the fire of divine grace to transform the most wretched lives. Perhaps the next greatest power in the world is a guilty conscience for those who keep the door of their heart closed to divine intervention. Just think of the quality of life of anyone who can only say NO to God. He has given us all we need in life. It is said that if we just stop saying NO, we will be saints. There is a great fear of submitting to God in complete loyalty. What will He ask of us if we say YES?

So for those who do evil, even the very presence of goodness is a rebuke, a stinging rebuke to their conscience. Honestly, I don’t know of any other explanation that causes an almost universal rejection of Christianity and its patently obvious good works for those in need. Any who would to be true to Jesus will likely be hated and persecuted just as He was. Who wants that, to be hated and picketed and scorned publicly in the worldly media? Who wants to be called a bigot, sexist, racist and homophobe?

Faithful Christians stand as a continuous reminder to those who live in fear of divine intervention, have refused to open the door to Jesus, who do not even wish to listen for His knock, a terrible choice for life and for eternity. The power and rage of a guilty conscience can result from a kind of abandonment by God: “I will leave them in their stubbornness of heart to follow their own designs,” says the Psalmist. The saying, “Misery loves company,” is absolutely true. Those who have chosen misery reject those who have chosen happiness, who by grace-filled lives are a continuous sign of contradiction—and ultimately deadly conflict—just as Jesus was to His generation. The darkness of evil cannot stand the light of good.

The probability of public persecution of Catholics in America has increased greatly through the Administration’s HHS Mandate by denying them rights of conscience and religious freedom. But there are many signs of hope: There is united opposition to the Administration’s assault on religious freedom. Different factions within the Church have united to face a common and dangerous enemy. Add to that a huge number of Protestants and people of other faiths who have joined with us in their opposition to the HHS assault on Catholics, knowing they may be next. That is a great accomplishment.

The leader of the opposition has been acknowledged even by the secular media. President of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, is one of Time magazine’s “100 Most Influential People in the World.” Among the reasons given:

“He put himself and his church back in the center of the national political conversation, a public square long dominated by Protestant evangelicals. In leading the opposition to a proposed Obama Administration rule that would
have required Catholic organizations like hospitals to pay for contraceptive services for female employees, Dolan successfully argued that such a policy violated the nation’s principles of religious liberty.

"Dolan offers a nuanced Christian witness, reaching out to Jews and Muslims and urging his own faith(ful) to re-evangelize itself before assuming that the rest of the world will open its head and heart to the Catholic message."

Part of re-evangelizing itself: the Catholic Church has the opportunity to re-catechize two generations of Catholics after Vatican II who were fed mush instead of meat. They can learn what it means to be a faithful-to-Jesus and His Church Catholic/Christian instead of compromising with secular standards. They have the opportunity by their obedience to partially undo the massive damage done by a systematic campaign of dissent and disobedience against those teachings. *Humanae Vitae* jumps out as the symbol of that dissent, one of the most prophetic encyclicals ever written. Time to stand for truth.

The moral argument for the rights of conscience is also being publicly waged. That ties in perfectly with *Humanae Vitae*, for it was the alleged "rights of conscience" that allowed liberals since 1968 to disobey the Church’s teaching on contraception. Today when the shoe is on the other foot, most liberals have returned to their old dissenting ways. They reject the same claims of conscience of those who oppose the evil of the HHS Mandate which denies religious freedom! That is, they claim the right of conscience to disobey their own Church, but would deny faithful Catholics the right of conscience to disobey the government. That’s pernicious. They are more faithful to the government than to their Church!

It’s good to have these moral arguments aired publicly. According to Dr. Charles Rice of Notre Dame, Thomas Aquinas made the argument that the Natural Law promoted the concept of limited government. The moral argument in favor of Big Government cannot be won using Gospel principles. Nor can it win for its efficiency over the private sector. We have lived off the benefits of Christendom, with Christian and Natural Law values largely accepted by secular governments. That time is over. All hell is breaking loose and the future is clearly uncertain. We are fortunate to reap the benefits of clinging to God through our Franciscan vocation. We have no fear of what the future holds. Being dependent upon God rather than man has never been so important. There is no better example than our holy father Francis.

"The Most High made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel. I had this written down briefly and simply and his holiness the Pope confirmed it for me. Those who embraced this life gave everything they had to the poor. I worked with my own hands, and I am still determined to work; and with all my heart I want all the other friars to be busy with some kind of work that can be carried on without scandal. Those who do not know how to work should learn...to give good example and to avoid idleness.

"And may whoever observes all this (Rule) be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father, and on earth that of His Beloved Son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints. And I, Brother Francis, your poor worthless servant, add my share internally and externally to that most holy blessing. Amen."

Testament of St. Francis

Paul Beery BSP - Morning Star Chapter – Minnesota

Love one another...

**A MEDITATION by Janet Klasson BSP**

From the Gospel, Sixth Sunday of Easter

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (Jn 15:12-13 )

I’m afraid there are valuable lessons from my childhood that are lost forever. But, by the grace of God and the prayers of the Sisters who taught me, there are some that have stayed with me and helped shaped me. For instance, I clearly recall the Sisters telling us that we were never supposed to put ourselves first. To reinforce the lesson Sister Charles Henry read us a true story called, “Janice” about a girl who when she found out she was dying decided to donate her corneas to the blind upon her death. That story has stayed with me for nearly 50 years. I admired Janice for thinking of others even when faced with her own untimely death.

The message of love of neighbor was also reinforced in other ways. I was a member of the Brownies (Guides) then and the lesson I was taught by the Sisters was echoed in the Brownie Law, which at that time was: “A
Brownie thinks of other people before herself.” Now, that is a tough lesson for a kid to learn, albeit an important one, and the Holy Spirit provided plenty of opportunities to practice it in our large family. I can’t say we lived it perfectly—quite the opposite—but at least we were given an understanding of the concept of selflessness!

Today, unfortunately, that message has been largely set aside and this Gospel passage can be a tough sell even in Church circles. For several decades now the gospel of self-esteem has been proclaimed unequivocally. Self-esteem is not the same as self-respect. Self-respect is gained when one lives the life they were meant to live and behaves in a way that is in keeping with their place in God’s family. It comes from outside of oneself and is rooted in God. Self-esteem is rooted in the ego without reference to God or anyone else. Today we are reaping the destructive fruits of self-esteem in rebellion and anarchy.

This is another illustration of how far we have come from the Gospel message. I have said before that the evil one rarely presents a choice between what is good and what is evil. Not many of us would knowingly choose evil. He presents a choice between what is good, and what appears to be good. And often, what appears to be good is also an easier alternative to what is truly good. By nature humans have a tendency to follow the path of least resistance, so, predictably, few people take the “narrow way”.

Take the abortion debate. What is truly good is that all life be valued from conception to natural death. What appears to be good is that a woman has the right to do what she wishes with her own body. Choice is good, right? It means we are “free”, right? If one does not care to dig past the shiny paint on the surface, one will never see the rust and corrosion beneath the shiny words.

It is the same with the gospel of self-esteem. It looks good on the surface, but requires no commitment to the common good, only that we feel good about ourselves, no matter what we do or how we behave. In contrast, Christ gives us the commandment to love one another unto death—our death, not someone else’s! That message may have less shine to it on the surface, but it is pure gold through and through.

I suppose all these lessons from my childhood prepared the ground for when God would call me to the BSP. Remember the Brownie Law: “A Brownie thinks of other people before herself.” Now brown being one of the colors we Brothers and Sisters are allowed to wear, I suppose we might consider ourselves honorary “Brownies” as well. Somehow it gives me comfort to be able to graft that childhood lesson onto the tree of self-renunciation that is our rule. It makes me sad that these lessons in selflessness are not taught as much as they used to be. Perhaps that is something we can offer our penance for—that our children and grandchildren would learn the beauty of a life lived for God and other.

The rule of 1221 is foolishness to the world, even to many in the Church. It really doesn’t look very shiny at first glance, but is gold through and through, a beautiful way to fulfill the call of Christ to self-renunciation, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends—one desire at a time.

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From www.pelianito.stblogs.com

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

“Children, do not be afraid of your crosses. My holy cross was the instrument of redemption. Each cross is tailor-made for each soul. In fact, your cross existed and was set aside for you before you were born. Every cross is a replica of mine. Every cross originates in mine. Do you want to be Simon of Cyrene and carry my cross for me up the hill to Calvary? Then do not shun your own cross. Just as Eve was formed from Adam, your cross is formed from mine. People have fought wars over relics of the True Cross. Did those same people acknowledge the power and grace in the cross they were asked to carry, as true a relic as the piece of wood they were seeking—and as powerful. Ponder these things, my children, as the days darken. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.”

O my Jesus! How often I have complained about my crosses! Forgive me O Lord, for I did not fully grasp the immense honor it is to be asked to participate in your work of redemption. Lord, grant me grace upon grace, that I might carry my cross with gratitude and joy. Amen.

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter
FROM THE ‘SPARROW’
Regarding prisoners

The peace of Jesus be yours! Thirty years ago, and while in prison, I decided to do two things that were interrelated. One was to become a Franciscan and the other was to relate the views of the Christian prisoners to those in the free world in hopes of showing that Christian prisoners had something in common with their Christian counterparts outside of prison. Thus was born "The Sparrow" which metamorphosed and I somehow unwittingly became "little brother sparrow" (which proves God does have a unique sense of humor!).

A key scripture verse at that time was Hebrews 13:3: "Regard prisoners as if you were in prison with them. Look on victims of abuse as if what happened to them had happened to you." I know from many years interaction that this is almost impossible for most people to do (or for the matter want to do). That was why it was most important to write to you from prison...to try and show you that there was NOT that much that separates us...and yet a lot that DOES.

These writings were needed because as you are keenly aware, the sky is not blue for those in prison. It may be green or purple, but it is not blue. A blue sky suggests normalcy. And prison life is anything but normal. Normalcy includes making decisions about our lives. Free men and women walk on the grass, decide where to work, how to dress, where to live, what time to get out of bed, and make countless other routine decisions every day. That's not the case in prison.

In prison, you are told when to get up, what to wear, when to eat. You are counted several times a day. Your name and identity are replaced with a number. Outgoing phone calls are monitored, the number of books allowed in cell is limited, and power over your life is surrendered. While this is the expected result of being convicted of a felony, it creates an environment that is abnormal. How does the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST apply in these circumstances?

The culture inside prison is HOSTILE to the teachings of Jesus. Jesus teaches "turn the cheek" and to "bear one another's burdens"; the "CONVICT CODE" teaches "GET THE OTHER PERSON FIRST" and "PROTECT YOURSELF." Jesus' teaching preaches submission to authority; the convict code preaches rebellion. While Jesus says, "Love your enemies," the prison code says, "GET REVENGE" and "DELIVER PAYBACK." Living the Gospel behind bars takes a special kind of courage from the men I see here and that can only be strengthened by the wisdom from people who understand prison and realize that in or out of prison Christians all need the Lord is the same way for the same thing...that is that we are all sinners in need of a Savior.

For the men in here with me, my desire has always been to put in plain words the transforming power of Jesus, in a way that can be clearly understood by anyone living in a world where the color of the sky is anything but blue. For those little sparrows that do live in a world where the sky is blue my desire has always been to show you that we love, worship and adore the same Lord God and therefore we have something in common...that would be eternity with Him.

Pax et bonum

Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter

MEDITATION ON THE PASSION
by Dawn Usak, BSP

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

We adore you oh Christ and we praise you. Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

My dear Lord, once again the weight of our sins has caused You to fall. This time I have fallen with You. How much You have endured for us and even for those who despise You. Oh God, I pray that the love You have for all people is reflected in me, and that through that love I may help You carry Your Cross.

(Stations of the Cross. Painted by Sister Mary Leo Hargarten, SSND (1900-1959). Born in Milwaukee, Sr. Mary Leo studied art in Munich, Germany (1930-1934) and later headed the art department at Mount Mary College in Wisconsin. Suffering poor health, witnessing her mother's chronic illness and saddened by the premature deaths of siblings, Sister found her comfort in the Passion of Jesus. This set of Stations, painted in 1953, was first erected in the old St. Francis Hospital in Shakopee, Minn. When the Sisters of St. Francis made major modifications to the Chapel they gave the set to Fr. Robert Bayer, who mounted them at the Franciscan Retreat Centre, Prior Lake MN.)
MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

RETREATS FROM HOME

The following website provides access to recorded talks by orthodox church leaders such as Abp Fulton Sheen, that would enable anyone with computer access to experience a retreat in their own home.

http://stpaulbr.webs.com/foryourprivateretreats.htm

PRAYERS FOR THE FAMILY OF LINDA CURTIS

The family of our sister in the BSP, Linda Curtis, has suffered a great tragedy. Linda's son has been murdered. Please keep the family in prayer as they endure this unimaginable cross. Jesus we trust in you. Holy angels and saints pray for us.

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ANNA FERONI

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Anna Feroni is a sister in the BSP who is seriously ill. She is the original webmaster and has been a dear friend to Bruce and Shelley and many in the Association for a number of years. Please continue to keep her in your prayers.

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. We have used a print-on-demand service at Lulu.com to print the book. This means we do not have to keep a stockpile of books, but customers order directly from Lulu, which prints them as they are ordered and ships them directly to the customer. This simplifies the ordering process for the administrators.

There is a link to the ordering page on our BSP Hompage. You will need a credit card or a Paypal account to order. Cost is $10.00 plus shipping ($3.99 for a single book).

**Bruce and Paul also have copies available.**

May the Rule of 1221 lead many souls on the path to holiness.

Bruce and Shelley Fahey, Administrators

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*
WINGSong

Soundless like air moves my way,
opportunity covers me as water the sea,
and for this time, scarcely a day
is life, as living here I flee.
My soul invisible, silent but real,
moves, but not effortlessly
as I see on modern wings of steel,
but peacefully, through striving, towards holy Thee.
Prayer, ministry, fasting, sacraments amidst joy,
give it peaceful power, and speed to lift,
Earth journey’s bounds to destroy,
moving life through the ancient rift.
Hoping in mind and deed for Jesus,
and for Him does glide and soar,
songs on air, wings sing sweetly for us,
of things that matter more.

Flightless rear fledges, only guiding things,
thought in error strong when empty of power,
the gift of flight comes from Godly wings
beating tirelessly; thru them spirits would flower.

Brother Not, sfo
12/29/93

In Flight to God
The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENCE

of St. Francis
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