BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Chapter VI—Francis’ Humility and Obedience—God’s Condescension to His Slightest Wish

He would not hesitate to confess his faults even when preaching in public, in order to appear contemptible in the eyes of others. One time when he was very ill, he departed from the rigor of his usual abstinence and took a little meat to regain his strength. Then, when he had only barely recovered, he felt urged to humiliate himself for his weakness in genuine self-contempt. “It is not right,” he declared, “that everyone should think that I never eat meat, when I really did eat it unknown to them.” Inspired with a true spirit of humility, he set out there and then and made his way to the town square in Assisi, where he assembled the whole population. After that he entered the principal church in procession with the friars whom he had brought with him, and there he took off his habit and put a rope around his neck. Then he told one of the friars to lead him to the stone where criminals were punished, in full view of all the people. He mounted the stone and was still weak and feverish. He told them all that they should not regard him as a spiritual man, but as a sinner and a glutton, worthy only of contempt. The onlookers were amazed at the extraordinary spectacle. They knew how austere a life he led and they were deeply moved, but they made no secret of the fact that they thought his humility was rather to be admired than imitated. His action certainly seems to have been intended rather as an omen reminiscent of the prophet Isaias (cf.Is 20:3) than as an example. However, it is a lesson in true humility and shows the true follower of Christ that he is bound to disregard all earthly praise and subdue the displays of bloated pride, while renouncing all lying pretence.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)

VISITOR’S MESSAGE
Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...
Prayer and Fasting

Reading (Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3)
Gospel (St. Matthew 10:7-13)

In the first reading today from the Acts of the Apostles, we heard that in Antioch the people were fasting and praying. And in the midst of their fasting and praying, they understood that the Holy Spirit was asking them to set aside Barnabas and Paul to go do the work for which God had called them. One of the questions that we have to look at is – What is God asking of me? We always have to wonder. Sometimes, of course, it is crystal clear; that is, whatever the state of your life is, whatever your vocation happens to be, the duties of your state in life are required. The question is – Is God asking an apostolate beyond that? How are you going to know? For most of us, what we tend to do is assume that if something sort of falls right in front of us that must be what God wants. It is not necessarily...
so. And so the way is made very clear: fasting and prayer.

Our Lady, in all the apparitions that the Church has approved, usually asks for the same thing: “Fast and pray.” The Church asks that we would do the same. It is so important that the Mother of God is going to come from heaven and ask us to fast and pray, not only so that we would know what we are supposed to do, but also for the good of others. If we are willing to fast and pray, that is going to have an effect on the world, and it is going to have an effect on individual lives, our own first and foremost, and then the lives of others, people for whom we are praying, people for whom we are offering our suffering. It is made very clear in the Scriptures that this is the way the apostles did things, it is the way things were done in the early Church, it is the way things have been done for centuries, and it is more than ever necessary today.

Now when we hear what Our Lord sent His apostles to do – “Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons” – well, the Lord told them exactly what He wanted them to do. He does not necessarily do that with us in quite as clear a way, but yet each one of us is being called by God. For each one of us, we have to realize that the Holy Spirit is speaking to say, “Set aside this person for the work for which I have called him or her to do.” You have been called by God, and He is asking of you something very specific, but we do not know what it is.

Sometimes it may simply be to pray. That is the single most important thing in the entire world. There is nothing that is more important than that. It does not matter what the needs of the world are, there is nothing more important than prayer because the people who are being called to do those other works will not be able to accomplish them if they do not have people praying. God did not call everyone in Antioch to go out and become missionaries, but He called them all to pray for the missionaries that were sent out. And so we all have to pray. If you have a specific apostolate that you know of, you need to pray so you can do it. But if your call is simply to pray, it is so that others will be able to do what they are supposed to do, so that souls will be converted, so that others will be saved, and that those who are out in the field doing the work are going to have the grace they need to be able to work.

Perhaps God is calling you to a certain kind of suffering to share in His Passion, to share in the Cross. Then it is to accept it and offer it up rather than to fight it. Perhaps He is asking something that is very specific. There are some people who have a gift of being able to talk to others to invite them, to bring others to the Church and to conversion, to pull them back to Confession. He may not be asking that you go to a foreign country or anyplace other than your own surroundings, but maybe just to talk to people, to be a good example to them. Maybe it is to help the poor, to feed the hungry, to take care of specific things, whatever it may be.

But, once again, if it is not deeply rooted in prayer, it is going to be a failure because if it is not what God wants (because you did not pray it through to know if it was what God wanted) then you are doing what you want. And if you do not have prayer – even to do what God wants you to do – you are not going to be able to accomplish the task. It would be like deciding that you are going to build a house, and you quit your job so that you can build a house. Well, you will run out of money real quickly and you are going to wonder why you cannot build your house. It is because you did not have anything to pay for it. The same is true with the work we are called to do. If we are doing God’s work and we are not praying, we are going to run out of gas and wonder why the car is not moving when we did not pull into a gas station. Well, if we do not fuel up, we are not going anywhere. We have a real fancy car and it can go real fast, but if there is no gas in it, it is not going anywhere.

God is calling you, and He is calling you to something specific. The question that each one of us has to ask is – What is it? That will only be answered in prayer, and it will only be supported by prayer. So regardless of what it is, the means is the same: Prayer. Deep, profound, interior prayer is the only way we are going to know what God wants and it is the only way we are going to be able to fulfill what God is asking of us. And so that is what is laid out for us – prayer and fasting – so that we can know the Will of God and do it.

* This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier with minimal editing.
“You will suffer in the world. But take courage! I have overcome the world.”

(John 16:33)

The gospel, from the Seventh Sunday in Easter holds a very special and dear message for us penitents. Since we are one with Christ we will experience in our hearts and souls what happened to Christ, and He is with us. We need to be confident in this as we live our Rule day to day and move forward in this very evil world in a true spirit of peace. This peace will come to us just from living our Rule for to live the Rule is to live our Faith in a very real way. In this Faith we belong to Christ, who is the eternal head of the Catholic Church, and as members of His body the doors of heaven swing open for us. In our Rule we overcome the world, and in our Rule we withdraw from the world to do this and so are in the world, but not of the world, for Christ.

Later in the Gospel of John Jesus says: “They are not of the world any more than I am of the world.” (John 17:16)

We overcome the world first and foremost by avoiding sin, and living our Faith to the full. This is really conversion in its first stages. We must turn from a life of sin and seek the Lord and his way. Father Val, our first Visitor, once said the minimum we must do as Catholics is go to Church on Sundays and Holy days and live the commandments of God and the Church. We, of course, are striving to do more than the minimum as BSP members, professed or otherwise.

Our Rule calls us to dress for our work in the world. So, we are to overcome the world, and not be in it or of it, in the way we dress. It is a simple way to witness to more important things. For the most part people will not even notice if we dress humbly, but it will serve as a constant reminder to us as to what we say we want to be, for the Lord. Every time we look in the mirror we will be reminded of our Rule and can, just for that moment, ponder again how it is we want to live, for the love of God.

We overcome the world, and are not in it, in the way we eat. We fast and abstain to open our hearts more to the things of God by subduing the tendencies of our bodies. In a sense, in this way, we put a whip to our weaknesses and they actually become spiritual strengths. By saying ‘no’ to ourselves on food we learn to say ‘no’ to all the things we must avoid in our lives to lead holy lives. Discipline is good for the soul, and necessary for salvation. The Rule teaches us routine discipline.

We overcome the world, and are definitely not in it, in the way we pray. We say the prayers of the Church, or more, and the Rule calls us to live holy lives. The world will never do that, but if we live the Rule we will learn to pray, more and better, as prayer grows with use and time.

And, of course, as we live the Rule we overcome the world, and are not in it, in the way we treat our neighbors. By diminishing ourselves at every turn, in the way we dress, eat, and pray, we open our hearts to others more easily. This is what it means to be a Christian of course. We need to love God with our whole heart, mind, and soul, and our neighbors as ourselves, for the love of God. This is easier said than done, but easier to do when you are trying on a daily basis to live closer to the Lord, which we do when we try to live the Rule on a daily basis for love of Him.

In the final analysis, when all is said and done, we need to focus on our life to come with Jesus, in heaven. We have and observe greater dedication to our duty and our families as we prepare and work endlessly and tirelessly for the good of our souls and the souls of others, and in the Church, but keep our eyes on the eternal rest and joys of heaven that await us. The Rule was given to us to get to heaven, so our Rule of life, given to us by St. Francis, is the key we all hold to turning away from this world and turning towards the things of heaven. To live our Rule is to live the gospel more perfectly in today’s world. What a wonderful objective we have! Our Rule is the narrow path to eternal life. Blessed are we who follow it.

Praised be Jesus forever.

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators
Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota
NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery BSP

“Some man wrestled with Jacob until the break of dawn. The man said, ‘Let me go, for it is daybreak.’ Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go until you bless me.’ The man said, ‘You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel, because you have contended with divine and human beings and have prevailed.’”

(Gen 32:24, 26-28)

Francis Thompson in his poem “The Hound of Heaven,” understands what it is to wrestle with God, though seemingly more in terms of flight than fight. In this poem he articulates so well the drama of the creature alternately seeking after, and then running from, its Creator. There are consequences that befall us when we run, often out of shame for betraying Him. The lesson is humility.

Chapter 14 of Luke’s Gospel is called “A lesson in humility.” Jesus refers to those who seek to learn this most important lesson. First is the invitation to a wedding party and taking the last place: “for he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Then he said to the one who invited him:

“Whensoever you give a lunch or dinner, do not invite your friends or brothers or relatives or wealthy neighbors. They might invite you in return and thus repay you. No, when you have a reception, invite beggars and the crippled, the lame and the blind. You should be pleased that they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid in the resurrection of the just.”

And the same phrase is repeated shortly thereafter: “bring in the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.” The point is, WE are the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame! How can we possibly repay the One who invited us to His banquet? With Original Sin we are born poor and crippled, blind and lame! We can even realize the radical nature of our ineptitude, and the need for complete dependence on God, yet fail to apply that lesson.

I guess it’s not part of our makeup. Pride goes before the fall. Pride caused the Fall. It’s quite amazing how we have so little reason to be proud of ourselves in our daily response to following the will of God, but it still gets in the way (speaking for myself, of course). We live near a center for the blind, and often see people walking along the sidewalks with their sticks in front of them. I think, how do they do that? Could I do that if I were blind? Imagine not being able to see a thing, yet navigating busy city streets, walking straight along the sidewalk, crossing at a busy intersection when the only clue is listening to the traffic pattern. It must be a daunting challenge.

Yet that’s how it seems in the spiritual life. Janet wrote a wonderful piece last month on overcoming sinful obsessions. She talked about an obsession over dieting. There are so many obsessions/addictions, in fact, that I wonder if everyone doesn’t have one or more of them to deal with. How else will God bring us to our knees if there is not something in our life that we cannot control without His aid? If we only have one, that’s a grace in itself. I know I have at least two to deal with, which is why I could instantly relate to her article. Being a keen observer of people’s behavior, I see how others struggle with their obsessions/addictions, and how it is so difficult to conquer them, especially if unaided by the grace of God.

It’s always easier to see other people’s problems and possible solutions than our own. We say, “Well, why don’t you just do this or that, and your troubles are over?” They could say to us, “Well, why don’t you just do this or that, and your troubles are over?” Yes, but I’m different. My troubles are much more difficult than yours, don’t you see? Or we make some similar excuse. Those excuses will not hold water before the Lord at the time of judgment. They may sound good to us at the time, but look pretty lame in the light of other people’s problems, and especially in the light of eternity. What am I willing to do for God?

And that’s the benefit of the Rule. (Special thanks to Bruce and Shelley for following the promptings of the Holy Spirit in bringing the Rule of St. Francis of 1221 to life!) The Rule is prescriptive. It forces us to deal with our sins and failings, and not cover them up, or put them off indefinitely. “If today you hear His Voice, harden not your heart!” What is more difficult to
change than bad habits? Thanks be to God, if we show any signs of life, of a desire to please God, He will be infinitely patient with us as we try to deal with our wretchedness. And this can become a real wrestling match! God wants only the best for us, the fullness of life, and that comes at a price. I think many people ultimately give up along the way, having tried and failed so many times, sometimes for an entire lifetime. That’s a daunting task, to keep striving to do the will of God in the midst of failure, of continuously falling short. Life is a test. We fervently begin to run the race, but to our utter dismay it turns out to be a marathon instead of a sprint! And we’re not in shape to run a marathon!

Yet we never give up the fight. We persevere to the end. I think Jesus actually had to see firsthand how frail and dense we humans can be. I love to see His dismay at the constant limitations of His disciples (and hence ours): “O ye of little faith, how could you doubt?” How could they have run away and hide? How could Peter deny that he even knew Jesus? Would we have done any better? I bet not. Yet there has to be something wonderful in the eyes of God when He sees us continually picking ourselves up off the floor, and refusing to get discouraged.

There are some wonderful passages from the prayer of St. Bridget. One of them goes: “O Jesus, deep abyss of mercy, draw me, a miserable sinner, overwhelmed by my offenses, away from sin. Hide me from Thy Face justly irritated against me. Hide me in Thy Wounds, until Thy anger and just indignation shall have passed away. Amen.”

What is the message of Jesus for today? Divine Mercy! Jesus wants to hide us in His Wounds! That’s the price He paid for our salvation. Love beckons to all, and it’s not impossible to obey His Commandments—in spite of our human weakness! Paul the Apostle tells us specifically that His Power is made perfect in our weakness. That’s how it’s supposed to work! That’s how we realize our complete dependence on God, and then seek a solution, a way out of the dilemma. This mystery is still overwhelming to me—how God’s love has to penetrate through the darkness of our mind and soul, cracking the hardness of our hearts to let the light of the Holy Spirit penetrate the depths of our being, and guide us along the Way as we wrestle with a Divine Being.

Now of that long pursuit, Comes at hand the bruit. That Voice is round me like a bursting Sea: ‘And is thy Earth so marred, Shattered in shard on shard?’

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest me. Strange, piteous, futile thing; Wherefore should any set thee love apart? Seeing none but I makes much of Naught’ (He said). ‘And human love needs human meriting ---

How hast thou merited, Of all Man’s clotted clay, the dingiest clot. Alack! Thou knowest not How little worthy of any love thou art. Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee, Save me, save only me? All which I took from thee, I did’st but take, Not for thy harms, But just that thou might’st seek it in my arms. All which thy child’s mistake fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at Home. Rise, clasp my hand, and come.’ Halts by me that Footfall. Is my gloom, after all, Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly? ‘Ah, Fondest, Blindest, Weakest, I am He whom thou seekest. Thou drove Love from thee who drove Me (away).’

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota

Holy Poverty: Giving all to God A MEDITATION by Janet Klasson BSP

From the Gospel Reading for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi

But Jesus said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish...” [...] And taking the five loaves and the two fish (Jesus) looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

(Luke 9:13, 16-17)
The donor in the scripture passage above could have had no idea of the magnitude of the miracle that would take place as a result of giving all he had to God. All of us, but especially us penitents are called to the same generosity of spirit exhibited by the boy in the scripture passage. However, as Franciscans living “in the world” there are constant temptations to keep something for ourselves rather than give it all to God. One need only read the story of Annanias and his wife Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 to see where that attitude will get us. They sold their land to give the money to their community but secretly kept back a portion. When Peter confronted them about it (he had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit about their deed) they each in turn fell down dead! That story should certainly give us pause!

Something else that challenges me to go farther on the path of penance is that each month I have a phone meeting with two other penitents and we discuss an ongoing reading from the life of St. Francis taken from the Omnibus of Sources. As we know, St. Francis literally “gave it all away”. After his conversion, there was nothing he did not give to God of himself or of all he had. And it seemed that the more he detached himself from material goods, the more spiritual goods he acquired. This was no coincidence, but was a direct consequence of St. Francis’ embrace of Lady Poverty.

St. Bonaventure tells us a great deal about St. Francis’ love for the Lady:

“The memory of the poverty felt by Christ and his Mother often reduced him to tears and he called poverty the Queen of the Virtues because it was so evident in the life of the King of Kings and of the Queen, his Mother. When the friars asked him privately what virtue made one dearest to Christ, he replied as if revealing his closest secret, ‘Believe me, my brothers, poverty is the special way of salvation. It is the source of humility and the root of all perfection and its fruit is manifold, though unseen. This is the treasure hidden in the field in the Gospel, to buy which we must sell all—and anything that cannot be sold should be abandoned for love of it.’

“Anyone who wants to practice perfect poverty,’ he said, ‘must renounce all worldly wisdom and even secular learning, to a certain extent....Anyone who clings to his own opinions in the depths of his heart has not renounced the world perfectly.’”

As I said, if we find ourselves becoming complacent in the life of penance, we need only pick up the Omnibus of Sources and start reading! As penitents living in the world, we need to pray much and ask the Lord for guidance in living a life of poverty according to our station in life.

Of course the Third Orders are not required to live the radical poverty of the friars. However, it would be fruitful for all of us to pray and discern (with a spiritual director if we are blessed to have one) in what way we are each called to detach ourselves from the material world.

There is a form of poverty that is a call to voluntary detachment from all that we have, a total surrender of the distribution of our material possessions to the designs of God. So whether we have, or we have not, it is all the same to us.

In the words of St. John of the Cross: “We are not discussing the mere lack of things; this lack will not divest the soul if it craves for all these objects. We are dealing with the denudation of the soul's appetites and gratifications. This is what leaves it free and empty of all things, even though it possesses them.

Sometimes our poverty is imposed on us by health or circumstances. In Ralph Martin’s book, Fulfillment of All Desire the author makes a distinction between voluntary and involuntary poverty. About involuntary poverty he says that “it presents an opportunity to eliminate self-will from such poverty and to more purely accept it as God’s will.” He also says that “since the involuntary poverty of lay people is not highly praised, it can in fact even be poorer than the voluntary poverty of religious whose life is often praised.”

As a model St. Francis pondered often the poverty of the Holy Family. Certainly Mary is a perfect model of living a life of detachment, she who kept nothing for herself, and now from the infinite bounty of heaven, she continues the practice. She understands and embraces holy poverty, even in heaven, and indeed it is the source of her riches in grace. She is full of grace because she keeps giving it away to all who ask, and in response, Jesus keeps filling her up—with more and more each time.

I have a little ritual at the end of my Office prayers. I have some holy cards there, and at the end of my prayer, I kiss the Blessed Mother’s image three times and Jesus once. I kiss her three times—one for the Father, once for the Son, and once for the Holy Spirit, knowing that she never keeps anything for herself, and when she passes on the kisses to the Blessed Trinity on my behalf they will be much more reverent, holy, and wholly delightful to God having come from her. I kiss Jesus once so that Mary gets a kiss too, because he shares everything with her in a never-ending dance of reciprocal giving.

In our Holy Mother, in St. Francis, and in the Scripture passage above we have holy examples of the importance of giving it all to God. In the end, poverty in penitents boils down to surrender to the will of God.
Blessed Mother, St. Francis and St. Clare, teach me the ways of holy poverty. Heavenly Father, in poverty or plenty, I desire to live only and always in your most holy will. May your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

From www.pelianito.stblogs.com

Psalm 94:14 For the Lord will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage.

"My children, my faithful, my delight, how your faithfulness fills me with joy! Oh yes, I know your weakness, but for those who even desire to be faithful, my love fills in the gap. Indeed my love floods in and the weak little heart that to be faithful in spite of itself is lifted higher than it could ever have climbed on its own power. Do you see how merciful is your Lord? Do you see how the humble soul has nothing to fear, not even its own weakness? What does it cost me to be so generous? I tell you, not only am I undiminished by these acts of infinite mercy, but on the contrary, I am magnified in them and they add to my glory. The Blessed Virgin understood this perfectly and seized every opportunity to become littler and humbler. Therefore her soul 'magnified the Lord'. This is a mystery, yet it is possible for all my little ones to attain it to some degree. Be little, my children. Be humble. Throw yourself into the infinite fount of my mercy. Your weakness will be instantly dissolved and I will raise you higher than you have ever dreamed. Children when will you trust in me?"

O merciful Father, loving and good, how unimaginable is your love for your weak little ones. Lord, we place all our trust in your goodness and mercy, and give you our desire to be faithful, wrapped in every humble act of the Blessed Virgin, our Mother. Merciful Jesus, we trust in you! Amen

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada

(The messages on the Pelianito Journal blog are the fruit of Janet’s lectio divina. She submits all messages to her spiritual director, a Catholic priest. You may read his remarks here: http://pelianito.stblogs.com/on-private-revelation/.)

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

NEWS FROM ST. ANTHONY CHAPTER, ESCONDIDO CA – ANNUAL RETREAT!

The St. Anthony Chapter of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance will gather for their annual retreat on Saturday, July 13, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at the historic Mission San Luis Rey. The day will begin with Mass followed by prayer. The main topic Living in the Spirit of Francis and Clare in our daily lives. will be presented by retreat master Br Tom Herbst O.F.M. The day will also include quiet time for reflection and prayer. For more information, please contact Matthew Heffernan BSP at 619-208-9363.

NEW BSP CHAPTER IN CONNECTICUT NAMED FOR BROTHER GILES

Members of the Brother Giles Chapter of the BSP: Don Monju, Keith Maciolek, Helen Maciolek, Debra Comorata, Anna Kwapisinska, and Linda Baily.

Welcome to the BSP family!

Our Franciscan Journey

by Helen Maciolek, BSP

On October 7, 2009 we became professed Secular Franciscans. Little did we know where that would lead us.

Keith and I belonged to a Franciscan parish since our children were babies. It was only after 15 years that I understood that a Franciscan group (secular) met
there. This was when we inquired and started the three year process of becoming what I thought was a Third Order Franciscan. At some point I was told, "we don't call ourselves third order, we say secular Franciscan." In my naivety and excitement in growing to know and love Francis I just let that go and followed. So we professed on October 7th, 2009. I remember almost at the same time finding myself attending a different church. I remember discussing with the priest, "Was something wrong with me?" Here I spent three years studying to become a Franciscan and as soon as I professed I was drawn across two towns to a non-Franciscan parish. One Thursday during Adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament I heard in my heart, "Adoramus te Christe, Adoramus te Christe." These were not words that we spoke at our parish so I went home and looked them up on the internet I found something similar to this: Adoramus Te (We Adore Thee).

Shortly before his death in October of 1226, St. Francis; wrote his Testament which contained his last thoughts concerning the order he founded. In it he urged his followers to remain faithful to the rules of the order and the prayer below is taken from this work. This prayer by St. Francis was inspired by the Antiphon: Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi; quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundi, which was part of the Liturgy for Good Friday. This Antiphon has a long and venerable history as a prayer in and of itself. St. Gregory the Great recommended it (Liber Responsalis, PL 78, 805) as did the monk Arnulphe (Documenta Vitae Religiosae, PL 184, 1177).

Adoramus te, sanctissime Domine Jesu Christe, hic et ad omnes Ecclesias tuas, quae sunt in toto mundo, et benedicimus tibi; quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum. Amen.

We adore Thee, most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Thy churches that are in the whole world, and we bless Thee; because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the World. Amen. (Original file by Michael Martin)

So I found myself reading everything I could find on this subject. This is where I learned that we weren't following his rule at all and that it had been discarded in the 1970s for this new rule. Something I didn't mention was that I this wonderful priest that I was drawn to celebrated a Latin Mass almost every morning and High Mass on Sunday. How could I not go? This journey was very painful for the both of us because day by day we grew father and farther away from our SFO brothers and sisters. Every free moment I would go on the internet and try to find out Francis' rule and who was still following it. The story goes on and on, but eventually I left the Franciscan parish and a year later Keith also left the parish. We found so many wonderful people who had great devotion to St. Francis and Our Blessed Mother. Frequently I spoke to our priest and expressed how we felt that Francis was guiding us to where we were now. One of the many people we contacted was Bruce and when we found out his association followed Francis' rule of 1221 and also followed under the Chair of Peter we figured this was the path we would travel. Eventually, we formally decided to start our own chapter unknowingly on the feast of Blessed Giles. So when we started looking to call ourselves something, I asked Keith to look up to see if a Franciscan saint was celebrated on April 23. He said Blessed Giles of Assisi and when we read about him we felt he probably would make the perfect patron. After bringing it up at our meeting we voted and now we are the Blessed Giles of Assisi chapter. That is our story in a nutshell.

Helen Maciolek, BSP, Brother Giles Chapter, Connecticut

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 homepage. You will need a credit card or a Paypal account to order. Cost is $10.00 plus shipping.

Bruce and Paul also have copies available.
BSP Retreat: August 16-18, 2013

Friday 4:00 PM to Sunday 2:00 PM

WHERE: Franciscan Retreat Center, Prior Lake, MN

The Brothers and Sisters of Penance, of St. Francis...

Present Retreat Master:

Father Michael Becker

Theme:

"To Fulfill All Righteousness"

"It comes from Jesus’ baptism. I will go into how ancient saints lived righteously and are in Jesus."

Fr. Michael Becker serves as...Rector of the St. John Vianney College Seminary. Fr. Becker graduated from the University of St. Thomas in 1987, with Bachelor degrees in theology and economics. For a number of years he engaged in ministry to Catholic high school and college students. In May of 1999 he was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. He is also a member of the Companions of Christ, a local community of diocesan priests. He served for seven years as Pastor of St. Michael Catholic Church in St. Michael, Minnesota. He was thereafter assigned to St. John Vianney College Seminary, becoming Rector on July 1, 2010.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Fr. Becker will celebrate Mass Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday morning.

Cost: $160.00

To reserve a place send $25 to:
BSP Retreat
c/o Paul Beery BSP
2108 Pleasant Ave, #114
Minneapolis, MN 55404

For more information call: 612-871-2852 (Home); 612-730-4500 (Cell)
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

The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE

of St. Francis

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