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

3. Francis often behaved like this, so that others might regard him as something worthless, fit only to be cast aside, and he might preserve true holiness of heart. He was careful to conceal the gifts which God showered upon him as closely guarded secrets and refused to expose them to the praise of others, which might lead to a fall. When he was acclaimed as a saint by the crowds, he would say, "I might have sons and daughters yet. Don’t praise me as if I were safe. You should never praise anyone until you see how he turned out in the end." That was what he said to others and then, addressing himself, he would add, "If almighty God had done so much for a criminal, he would be more thankful than you, Francis." He used to often tell the friars, "No one should flatter himself for anything a sinner is capable of doing. A sinner can fast, pray, weep, and do physical penance. The one thing he cannot do is to remain faithful to God. Anyone who gives back to God the praise which belongs to him really has something to boast about, if he serves him faithfully and attributes to him the gifts he bestows."

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)

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

Reading (Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21)
Gospel (St. Matthew 13:44-46)

The Gospel tells us exactly how precious the kingdom of heaven is: It is worth selling absolutely everything we have in order to obtain it. At the same time, Our Lord in speaking to the prophet Jeremiah tells him, If you bring forth the precious without the vile then you will stand in My presence. In other words, what we have to be doing is not only seeking the kingdom of God from within, but we have to make sure that what we are doing is bringing forth the kingdom of God into this world.

Now that has a little bit of a risk involved. That is, either we do not really want to get rid of everything in order to obtain the kingdom of God, which causes an interior tension and therefore we get frustrated and angry because we are trying to hang on to all the worldly things while at the same time trying to serve God (You cannot do both; it does not work); or the other part that becomes a problem, and it is a serious problem for anyone who really wants to take up the spiritual life, is that as we begin to move forward in the spiritual life there comes a point where most people get really angry because they are looking at God and then they are looking at the mess that surrounds them and they get really frustrated and angry about what is going on, sometimes angry at God because of the suffering He is allowing them to endure, angry at the world because of all the evil and all the sin, frustrated because people in the Church are not getting rid of the problems or because...
God is allowing them to happen or whatever it might be. What happens is that these individuals will feel completely justified in their anger because, after all, what they are looking at is true. There is no doubt about it; objectively, what they are saying is true. “Look at this violation, look at this abuse, look at this problem, look at these things…” They are all true.

That is exactly what happened to Jeremiah. He had sought the Word of God, he had devoured the Word of God, and he says that it became the joy and the happiness of his heart. But all of a sudden he is angry. Well, if you read the story of Jeremiah, one can understand why he would be a little upset. But then God tells him, If you do this the right way then I’m going to be with you. I will make you a solid wall of brass; I will deliver you from the hands of the violent. Now that did not mean He was not going to allow Jeremiah to suffer, because He did. Again, just read the Book of Jeremiah and you will find what he had to endure at the hands of the people, and then of course he was eventually put to death. But God is the One Who gave him the grace to be able to embrace these things and no longer to get angry because of it.

He will do the same for us if we are willing. What that requires is that we need to take our eyes off all of the problems, as real and as true as they are, and we need to put them on the Lord. If in devouring the words of God Jeremiah found the joy and the happiness of his heart, then the obvious question would be “Why did he take his eyes off the Word of God and put them onto all the problems and get angry?” Well, because he is human. But he knew where he needed to go to be able to find the joy and happiness of his heart once again – to the Word of God. The Word of God is in your heart if you are in the state of grace. The Word of God is Jesus Christ and He dwells within. He is right there to be the joy and the happiness of your heart. There are lots of problems in the world and lots of problems in the Church and lots of problems in our own personal lives, and they are all real and they are all true. We can be really angry and what good is it going to do? Just look back over your life and ask yourself, “How much good has all my anger done? How much change has it brought? How many people has it brought to the Lord? What good has it accomplished for me or for anyone else?” If you have no fingers on your hand, you could count the number of times it has helped you on your fingers – none. It never does and it never will. So what we need to do is get our focus off of that stuff and put it on the Lord, Who will help us to endure the difficulties and the problems of life, Who will give us joy even in the midst of the suffering because we are united with Him. Those are the two alternatives and there is not any other.

Jesus is the One Who is precious. We can bring forth the Word of God or we can bring forth the vile, the anger, the filth, all of the garbage that is within. It will do no one any good, but it will push people away from Christ because they will use that as their rationalization to not come to Christ. “If that’s what it means to be a Christian and a follower of the Lord, why would I want to do that? I can be a pagan and be angry too.” So we need to make sure we are seeking the Lord and not justifying our own anger because the things that we are looking at are real. Bring forth the precious without the vile, the Lord says. Let the Word of God, Jesus Christ, be the true joy and happiness of our hearts, and then we will stand in the Lord’s presence, He tells us; then He will make us a solid wall of brass. None of that stuff will penetrate us. We will acknowledge it, but it is not going to cause us a problem anymore because we will be at peace with God. Then He Himself will be our strength and He Himself will free us from all of the garbage and from the hand of the violent so that we will be able in all things to be joyful and to do His Will.

* This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier with minimal editing.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...**

The Examen Prayer

Dear Friends,

Part of our Rule is to examine our conscience daily. Normally at the end of our day, but we can do that anytime actually and should do it more often if we are busy or have a lot of stress in our lives. One day our local priest suggested we use the Examen Prayer by St. Ignatius to do this. We had never heard of it, and we found it very helpful. So we would like to share it with everyone for their consideration. It is a wonderful way to examine your life every day, and even several times a day.

The elements of the Examen Prayer are very simple:

**THE EXAMEN PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS**

**TRANSITION:** I become aware of the love with which God looks upon me as I begin this examen.

**STEP ONE: GRATITUDE.** I note the gifts that God’s love has given me this day, and I give thanks to God for them.
STEP TWO: PETITION. I ask God for an insight and a strength that will make this examen a work of grace, fruitful beyond my human capacity alone.

STEP THREE: REVIEW. With my God I review the day. I look for the stirrings in my heart and the thoughts that God has given me this day. I look also for those that have not been of God. I review my choices in response to both, and throughout the day in general.

STEP FOUR: FORGIVENESS. I ask for the healing touch of the forgiving God who, with love and respect for me, removes my hearts burdens.

STEP FIVE: RENEWAL. I look to the following day and, with God, plan concretely how to live it in accord with God’s loving desire for my life.

TRANSITION: Aware of God’s presence with me, I prayerfully conclude the examen.

The Examen Prayer can be very transforming in that through it you look at yourself and your relationship with God. We hope you find it useful. The prayer is outlined in a book written by Timothy M. Gallagher, printed by Crossroad Publishing Company, which can be found at: www.CrossroadPublishing.com. It is probably available at most Catholic bookstores too.

May the Lord bless and lead us all.

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators
Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota

NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP

“Jesus said to His disciples: ‘Do not give what is sacred to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces.’”
(Matthew 7:6)

“We like it here. We were asked to leave.” Unknown to me, the young men had indeed been asked to leave one of our apartments by management. “I can understand that,” said I, sensing an embarrassing situation had developed. I was showing their apartment to prospective renters, so I quickly changed the subject. The young men were not hostile, fortunately, as sometimes happens when residents are asked to leave, but more bewildered at the situation they found themselves in. They were indeed told to leave after only one month. Our rental agency has a month-to-month lease, and this is one of the benefits of that type of lease. Residents can give notice that they are leaving in a month, no reason given, and we can do the same.

After some time of reflection, I realized this situation tied in with last month’s article on human weakness, and for some of us, the virtue of humility and dependence on God that follows from it. Our rental business has a zero-tolerance policy on drug use in our apartment buildings, including marijuana. If prospective residents have had some drug use in the past, we think long and hard whether to rent to them. Some have reformed and will not return to the habit. How do we know that? How are we to know if a person is now determined to remain clean, or just say the words to get what they want?

Turns out these two were given a stern lecture something along the lines of: “Do drugs in this apartment and you will be given notice.” So, their very first month in the apartment they did drugs and were given notice. I thought, how dumb can you get? They shrugged it off as if they were the victims of some conspiracy over “a little smoke.” What’s the big deal? Following are two possible explanations.

The first was that they had never been confronted by the consequences of their actions. In the secular world we live in, personal responsibility is banished. The ever-expanding Nanny-State, through one or other of its far-reaching bureaucratic tentacles, continually “saves” unfortunates from the consequences of their “mistakes,” usually bad or downright evil actions. “Druggies” are put on Medicaid, their drugs paid by the State. They have a “disability.”

A young girl gets pregnant. She is not responsible, nor is the father of her child, nor is her family. The government is. That is, the rest of us who live responsibly will rescue her and give her a free apartment with all the trimmings. Who can resist such an offer for a sometimes permanent vacation from reality, from the consequences of one’s actions? The real kicker is that, after funding this unknown act of “charity,” taxpayers are then accused of being judgmental when we question the morality of the welfare state funding vice, and its devastating effect on personal virtue and responsibility in the sight of God.

So the conclusion to the first explanation was that the
young men had never before suffered the consequences of their “mistakes.” That’s why they couldn’t understand why so harsh a penalty had descended upon them for such a trivial thing as “a little smoke.”

The second explanation follows directly from the discussion the past two months on human weakness: give them the benefit of the doubt. If we can excuse ourselves for failing to follow the Rule, the duties of our state in life, or continually falling for the same old sin, how can we not excuse others for doing the same thing? They are also weak, fellow members of the Fallen Race, and most likely a good deal weaker for not having the same access to the grace of God as we have. Perhaps they started out with good intentions, but fell prey to human weakness as we all do. That’s why it’s so difficult to make objective judgments with all the subjective elements present in the human condition.

Well, in this case, I have it on good authority that the first explanation is indeed correct. Smoking pot wasn’t a “mistake” in their eyes. The young men decided to buy a house along with a third individual, and their payments are about the same as the rent they were paying. They freely admitted that soon they would be better able to pursue their lifestyle, and we had unwittingly helped them find their Shangri-La. Now they can create “a little smoke” to their hearts content in their own home, and plaster their weird art on all the walls, and ceilings too if they want. Now there will be no restraints. Does anyone think they care about what’s happening to their nation, when all they can think about is the pursuit of their own pleasure, and which political party will lower standards to their level?

They felt fully justified in breaking the law—and our rules as clearly stated in the lease—for their own personal pleasure. They were “entitled” to the pursuit of pleasure regardless of any law or other encumbrance standing in their way. They learned from college-educated, liberal hippies in the sixties, that laws are made for other people who are either stupid or foolish enough to observe them. As a result, such widespread disrespect for the Rule of Law has made America—virtually—a lawless nation. This is proven beyond a doubt when even the president and his Administration choose which laws it will enforce and which it will not enforce. It chose to not enforce DOMA, the Defense of Marriage Act. It chose to not enforce gun laws which give stiffer penalties to criminals when guns are used in the commission of crimes, so as the keep the gun control issue alive. It chooses to not enforce immigration laws, and had the nerve to take Arizona to court when that State attempted to do what the federal government chose not to do. Keep in mind that the president is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the nation! But the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the nation will enforce his own HHS Mandate on the Catholic Church which violates the Constitution, Freedom of Religion, and individual consciences!

If the Rule of Law is not rescued and faithfully enforced, America looks forward to Banana Republic status. The courts have already ditched the Constitution, e.g. having created a right to abortion out of thin air, and will be nothing but an arm of the Administration. Congress will be too intimidated to stop the aggressive dismantling of traditional moral and ethical standards by attacks from the media and opposition party, who will accuse patriots of racism, homophobia, bigotry and any other epitaph that the PC language police dream up, experts all in the art of demonization. It already sounds like the strident voices of a bunch of thugs are running the country, shouting down compliant citizens.

In our rental business we would be out of business if we said anything that might offend someone. But the hatred and vitriol from the dogs and swine that is displayed towards conservatives/Christians goes unchecked. For any kind of parallel, one looks to what happened in Russia under the rise of Communism, or Germany under the rise of Hitler. Freedom of speech was the first thing to go, and those who objected were de-humanized. I still get chills thinking about the time I listened to a political commercial during the last election in Chicago, where a member of the Pro-Abort, Culture of Death party demonized a Pro-Life Christian. That’s us, folks! Pro-God and Pro-Life forces are suddenly the enemy! In America! And it’s going to get worse before it gets better.

Welcome to the real world, some would say. Many seniors have had the privilege of living in a relatively Christian nation with a relatively Christian culture—within recent memory. But all that is unknown to our young people, who have experienced nothing but the ridicule of virtuous, Christ-like individuals, while the devious and deceitful are applauded. What chance do they have? It’s really an unfair fight. One side constantly attacking those told to turn the other cheek. But Jesus knows the ways of the world, and the mischievous human heart. The dogs and the swine will have their day. They will turn and tear the sacred to pieces, making the world a dark and forbidding place. But then the people of God will return to pick up the pieces and rebuild a broken society like so many of our forebears. St. Francis re-built the Church and the world in his day. He showed how holiness can be attained by living the Gospel to the fullest—a witness that will touch the hearts of those God calls—the young and the old. We have only to persevere in this great endeavor.

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota
The Cult of Opinion  
A MEDITATION by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Second Reading for the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Brothers and sisters: May I never boast of anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.  
(Galatians 6:14)

Talk shows, social media, the “like” button, opinion polls—there’s no denying we are living in cult of opinion. Everybody these days has an opinion, whether they have all the information or not. Sometimes opinions are delivered violently—tires get slashed, politicians get things thrown at them, peaceful protests turn ugly. It seems to me it’s time to step back and discern how a Christian is called to manage their opinions.

Opinion, as we have daily proof, is often based on emotion. It is reactionary. We see a perceived injustice and we react without getting all the facts. I once wrote an angry letter to my bishop, and when I received his humble reply I was deeply ashamed at what I had done, how I had added to his pain and made a distasteful situation worse for him. I learned at his expense that indignation and self-righteousness are not indicators that I am right, or that I should necessarily speak up.

Scripture is full of admonitions to hold our tongues. Matthew 5:37 says it plainly: “There are too many words. Let your speech be “yes” or “no”, anything more is from the Evil One.” Those are incredibly strong words, ones we would do well to ponder.

Shortly after I had chosen this topic for my newsletter article, two online friends had a discussion on the cult of opinion without knowing the topic of my article. Here is their conversation:

First friend: “The ME focus is coming earlier and earlier. Now we are teaching children how important our OPINION is. Fact is lost in opinion. We are encouraging everyone from an early age to have their own little kingdom, what THEY want. So we have a world of separate, disunified little Kingdoms of ME.”

Second friend: “One of the key problems in our culture—opinion—is I believe cultivating a climate of grievance. Everyone feels entitled and/or cheated depending on the situation. There’s such noise. I find I have to fast from TV and “talking heads” and even conversations now about politics and current events.”

It may seem ironic that I am using a conversational “opinion” to make my point, and probably it is ironic. Opinion is hard to avoid and even harder to avoid forming in our thoughts! But we need to examine our own thoughts and actions to see if we have joined this cult—intentionally or not. Our own opinion can be an idol and it is far better and less painful to smash that idol with our own two hands than to have God do it for us! Then when the idol has been smashed, our previously clouded vision is clear enough to focus on God’s holy Truth.

St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5 "We take every thought captive to obey Christ.” If we try to follow perfectly St. Paul’s example we will put to death any thought that does not originate in God’s holy Truth. One sure sign that we are not on the right path is that our thoughts or words flow out of negative emotions such as pride, anger, indignation, self-righteousness, etc. Injustice should spur us to compassion and tireless efforts to eradicate it, without the need to label others, or to see ourselves as any better than the worst of all sinners.

As the saying goes, instead of thinking twice before speaking, we often speak twice before thinking. We need to ponder more and speak less. We need to turn off the TV and spend time in contemplation. St. Francis used to say: “It often happens that an invaluable treasure is lost for the sake of a worthless reward, and God who bestowed his gift once will not be prevailed upon to give again so easily.” By spending more time in prayer and contemplation, we are communing with the Source of all Truth. In so doing, we will be less likely to settle for idle talk or pointless speculation.

Certainly we need to express ourselves when defending God’s holy Truth, but without discipline in our speech, we risk falling into the sin of pride. Humility must permeate every word. The words should come through us, from the Holy Spirit, not from us. That way we will be better able to speak the truth in love as scripture exhorts us to do (Ephesians 4:15).

By becoming aware of our thoughts, words, and emotions, we can begin the process of holding every thought captive to Christ, until we are able to say with St. Paul: “May I never boast of anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”
James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the cycle of nature, and set on fire by hell.

"My children, let your speech be chosen with great care—it must be a light in the world. Know and believe that all you say has repercussions in time and eternity. Therefore, choose your words with wisdom and prudence, choosing to remain silent rather than fill the air with useless chatter or worse, gossip or virulent speech. Let your speech be a perfect mirror of your peaceful heart, a heart firmly grounded in the love of God and in complete trust in his goodness. Silence is often the more virtuous path. Bridle your tongue and you will be working for peace in the world."

Jesus and Mary, forgive me for all the times I have spoken out of turn or said too much. In the Divine Will I ask that you will heal the world of all the times I gave my tongue free rein. If I have hurt anyone I ask you to heal them in body, mind, and spirit, for your glory and for the sake of their souls. Lord, in your mercy, let not my sin set on fire the cycle of nature. Jesus I 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/)

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FRANCIS EXHORTS US: BECOME A SAINT!

By Christopher G. O’Donnell, BSP

In his sixth Admonition, entitled ‘The Imitation of Christ’, our blessed Seraphic Father Francis exhorts us to not simply look upon the merits and glories of those holy men and women who have gone before us marked by the sign of faith, but to strive to become saints ourselves. He writes:

"Look at the Good Shepherd, my brothers. To save his sheep he endured the agony of the cross. They followed him in trials and persecutions, in ignominy, hunger and thirst, in humiliations and temptations, and so on. And for this God rewarded them with eternal life. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves; the saints endured all that, but we who are servants of God try to win honor and glory by recounting and making known what they have done." (‘Admonition VI’ in Saint Francis of Assisi Omnibus of Sources, 81)

First of all we need to make it absolutely clear that Francis is not, in any way, denigrating the practice of devotion to the saints. He acknowledges wholeheartedly that "we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1a) who intercede on our behalf and who are exemplars of living the Catholic faith who we can emulate. Francis himself had a great devotion to our Lady, as well as to the Archangel Michael, and many other saints. So it is not the reverence given to the Communion of Saints that the Poverello is concerned with.

Instead, what concerns Saint Francis is the refusal to imitate their lives and actions in our own lives. It is for this reason that “we ought to be ashamed of ourselves” because we pray to the saints but we do not ourselves seek to enter into the life of the Gospel as they did and to “fight the good fight” (1 Tim. 6:12). Our Catholic faith is a way of life and not a spectator sport. The Christian life is a practical means of following Jesus and not simply a theory or doctrine but a path we travel along. We are called upon to experience personally the dying and rising of Christ in our daily life that has already occurred to us sacramentally. Like Francis himself, he calls us to “set out into the deep” (Lk. 5:4a) and see for ourselves the power of God’s love and mercy. Each of us is required, by virtue of our Baptism into Christ, to verify and relive the Tradition that we have received. In a sense the Creed and the Rule of 1221 do not really belong to us until we have concretely lived them out. We have been given the directions along the path (= our faith), we have been given signposts along the way (= the sacraments), and we have our companions along the journey (= the entire Communion of Saints). What is needed to really transform us, however, is to have a direct and personal encounter with Christ.

This is the real experience of faith that Francis calls us to enter into. Our faith and the Rule provide us with a map and key but the map, while infallibly true, is not itself the terrain and the key can only open the door but it is not itself the Kingdom of God. We are pilgrims travelling through the desert of this fallen creation en route to our true homeland in that heavenly Kingdom. Like Francis we live as those passing through, always on the move, not weighed down by possessions, but in simplicity so that we can make this journey into the depths of our heart and enter into the life of the Spirit. The Church’s first name for itself was the “Way” (cf. Acts 9:2; 18:25; 19:1,
9, 23; 24:14) for it understood itself as the community of those who follow Jesus the "way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6) along the "narrow way" of faithful and obedient love (cf. Mt. 7:13-14; Lk. 13:22-30; Dt. 30:15-20; Ps. 1:1-6). Francis calls us to leave behind our comfort zone, to step out upon the path, to commit ourselves to this way of life and see God for ourselves. And so let us have the courage to live as Francis himself did and to follow his admonition by living our lives every day so as to be a saint ourselves!

Pax et Bonum.
Chris O'Donnell BSP, St. Anthony Chapter, Escondido CA

Blog for Returning Catholics—and others too!

By Jim Mearns, BSP

My name is Jim Mearns and I am close to completing my second year novitiate. I live just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

I grew up as a Roman Catholic and left the church when I was about 20 years old. I wandered through life searching for "THE ANSWER" to life. Eventually, I attended seminary, received my Master of Divinity degree and became a Protestant pastor. Still, I was dissatisfied with life and my understanding of God. Then one day, a friend invited me to return to the Church. I missed the Church of my childhood! I missed most importantly the right celebration of the Eucharist! Still, I was afraid to return. I was divorced and I "thought" I knew the Church's teaching about that. I had run so far from the Catholic Church I assumed there was no returning to the Catholic Church. I was so wrong about that. I am back in good standing in the Catholic Church. I was so wrong about that. I am back in good standing in the Catholic Church. I have begun to strengthen my spirituality. I am in formation with the Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis. I am now offering a blog as a ministry/apostolate. The blog is entitled: Returning Catholics. Through this blog, I would like to offer others who left the Church the gifts I received from the Catholic Church.

The following is a sample from one of my most recent blogs in which I am looking at the Apostle's Creed line by line. I am making connections to my own return to the Catholic Church and how the various resources, prayers and beliefs within the Catholic Church can strengthen our spiritual life. While my blog has an audience of returning Catholics or those considering a return to the Catholic Church in mind; nevertheless, I hope my blog will benefit anyone in search of a deeper walk with God in Jesus Christ.

The following blog post can be found at: www.returning-catholics.blogspot.com

Creed Continued—CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

If I think about the concept of nothingness for too long my mind wanders too far. We really can't conceive of the absence of everything material and otherwise easily. Our first encounter of this nothingness in the Book of Genesis in the very first chapter: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss" (Gen 1:1-1:2a, NABRE). And God creates from this chaos. The term often used for this is the Latin term ex nihlo. This means that God creates something from nothing.

For me, this is an important aspect of God. Hope springs from this whole concept of an Almighty God who can create everything—all things visible and invisible. If God is Creator of all, then why could we not put all of our trust in God. I am sure that God allows us to use our free will to place our trust in Him, others or in ourselves. When I thought about trusting in God or others, I am always reminded of that old saying that suggests that the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. I sure have trusted often in my own decisions or taken advice of others around me, only to see sin and failure. Experience is clear for me in this. And when I have studied God's Word in Scripture, I have always found peace and holiness. There have been times when that peace or holiness took quite a while to happen, but it always has happened. St. Padre Pio once said, "You can't give God deadlines" (from the book, Padre Pio Under Investigation).

God has created heaven and earth and all that is. God created us as well. God knows each one of us inside and out. The Psalms remind us of this, "You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you" (Psalm 139:13-15, NABRE). How amazing this is! God knows our needs and desires. God also knows everyone else as well. Since we are not alone, God also knows how we can achieve those things we must achieve in order to make this world and our own lives the best they can be. Here is where we must trust in the power of God to create this perfection in and through us.

Each day I must place my whole life into God's hands. I pray you will trust God, too!

Jim Mearns BSP
REMINDER 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.

THE BSP IS NOW ON FACEBOOK!

Brothers and Sisters, Lisa Drago has created a Facebook page for the BSP. She says: “It’s a simple way of getting our name out to people who might be interested in finding out more about us and what we represent in the Church. If you’re on Facebook, please ‘like’ the page and ‘like’ the official posts that come up. You are also welcome to post appropriate items directly to the BSP page. When you do these things, your Facebook friends will see the page and perhaps ‘like’ it, too.

"This page in no way draws attention away from our regular website. In fact, it contains a direct link to our website. It simply gives us a bit of free advertising. The page is located at: [https://www.facebook.com/BrothersAndSistersOfPenanceOfStFrancisBsp?ref=hl](https://www.facebook.com/BrothersAndSistersOfPenanceOfStFrancisBsp?ref=hl). Of course, the easiest way to find the page is to type "Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis" into the Facebook search box. Please message me if you have any questions, concerns or comments."

Peace and love in the Lord and Our Lady,  
Lisa Drago, BSP

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.

"If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!"
-St. Catherine of Siena

"Charity is certainly greater than any rule.  
Moreover, all rules must lead to charity."
-St. Vincent de Paul

"You cannot be half a saint;  
you must be a whole saint or no saint at all."
-St. Therese of Lisieux
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)
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 minnc@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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