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

3. Like the wise trader in the Gospel, Francis was anxious to profit by every possible occasion and use all his time to gain merit, and so he wished to live in obedience to another rather than be a superior, and obey rather than command. He resigned his position as general of the Order and asked for a guardian whom he could obey constantly. He was convinced that the fruits of obedience are so abundant that anyone who submits to it can never spend a moment without drawing some profit from it. He always used to promise to obey the friar who happened to be with him on his journeys, and he once remarked to his companions, “Among the many graces which God has given me in his goodness is this: I would obey a novice only one hour in the Order, if he were my guardian, just as willingly as if he were the oldest and most experienced friar in the Order. A subject should never look upon his superior as a man; he should remember God for love of whom he is subject. The more contemptible the superior, the more valuable is the humility of him who obeys.

He was asked on one occasion who was a truly obedient person and he gave the example of a dead body. “Take a corpse,” he said, “and put it wherever you like. You will see that it does not object to being transferred, does not complain about where it is put, and does not protest when cast aside. If you set it on a throne, it will look down, not up; if you dress it in royal robes, it will only seem paler than ever. A person like that is truly obedient; he does not mind where he is put, and he makes no effort to be sent elsewhere. If he is promoted to office, he preserves his humility, and the more he is honored, the more unworthy he thinks himself.”

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)

**VISITOR’S MESSAGE**

**Homily by Fr. Robert Altier…**

**The Folly of the Cross**

Reading (1 Corinthians 1:17-25)

Gospel (St. Matthew 25:1-13)

At the very beginning of Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, he told the Corinthians, as we saw yesterday, that they have received all of the gifts of God. Today, he tells us exactly what that is. It is the Cross of Christ. The Cross of Christ, he tells us, is foolishness to the Gentiles and it is something that the Jews will not accept, but for those who believe it is the power of Christ. It is the power of God at work within us. Now, that is a difficult thing for people to be able to accept. We know that it is the truth and yet, at the same time, when it comes to really being able to believe it and embrace it we do not like it, because to be on the Cross is to suffer with Christ. However, that is the only means of salvation—the Cross of Christ.

Saint Paul tells us very clearly that what we would like to be able to do is remove what he calls the “folly of the
Cross.” But he would not do that because if he had spoken with human eloquence, if he had come in some kind of power and authority, then people might have thought that it was something other than what it really was. And so, he decided he was going to preach only the Cross of Christ and that is what brought the Corinthians to faith. Yet, it was because they did not want the Cross that they were willing to split up into different factions—because they did not want to be able to live the Cross. It is like those who would say, “Well, yes, the Cross was necessary for us to be saved and, thankfully, Jesus did that for us, but it is all done now so I do not need that.” So they want to have the Cross as a reminder of what Our Lord did and yet they do not want anything to do with the Cross. However, we are members of Jesus Christ and so how can we claim to be a member of Jesus Christ without going to the Cross. They want to be able to say, “Well, Jesus is risen for the dead now and so if I am a member of Christ, then I am in the Resurrection and I do not need the Cross. He did that for us so therefore we can all just be part of the Resurrection.” It does not work that way. Jesus did not go to the Resurrection without the Cross and neither will we.

Therefore, as we consider this in the light of the Gospel, we see that the Lord lit a fire within each one of us. It is the fire of faith and it is the fire of love. Sometimes, as the Bridegroom is long-delayed in coming, we begin to think that maybe He will not be returning. Or, at least, we think before He does return we are going to have time to get things turned around. After a while, the fire of our love for God, the fire of our faith, begins to wane and to flicker. We are running out of fuel for it because we are not doing what we need to do to be able to increase that flame, and so when the Bridegroom comes He will find us doing all kinds of worldly things. He will find us, as Saint Paul tells us, being enemies of the Cross because we decided that living a true Catholic life was just a little bit too difficult. It was not popular. It was not acceptable in this world and we wanted to be like everyone else and wanted to fit in. And so, the fire of our love is going out. That is the worldly wisdom. That is the wisdom that Saint Paul rejects because he tells us that God, Himself, has set it aside.

The Cross is the only way. But if we are going to live it we are not going to be acceptable in the eyes of the world. The Jews reject it because they are looking for a sign, as if we need something more than the Cross. The Greeks reject it because it is foolishness, because they cannot grasp the concept of God becoming man and loving us so much that He would die for us. But, for those who believe, it [the Cross] is the power and the wisdom of God. There is nothing wiser and there is nothing more powerful than the Cross. If we are truly going to believe, then, we have to accept that wisdom of God and we have to live it in all power. That means to unite ourselves fully with Jesus Christ and to be with Him on His Cross.

* This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier with minimal editing.
and we become what the name implies. In time, amidst that same turmoil and labor.

When we become parents we get new names. We become fathers and mothers. With these names come huge new responsibilities. We need to devote our selves to those God brings into the world through us. These responsibilities change as time goes on, but then never go away and they do not become easier. There are pains we bear due to these new names. Joys too. The joys and pains become a permanent part of our life, like Jacob’s pains, and we bear them in anguish, amidst turmoil, hard work, and, often, tears. Jacob’s story becomes ours.

And we all love to be called ‘friend’. We often celebrate that name.

And it is no different in the spiritual life, or in the Church. We become Christians by saying we believe in and are following Christ. The name carries a huge responsibility to change. Change is never easy, yet change we must, to live up to the name. This name will usually result in us being persecuted in some sense, for persecution we have been promised if we live our commitment. Maybe we will die, for some will need to die physically to live this name out. Everyone will be persecuted in some sense, even if that sense is just being marginalized by our society or our employer or our family. This pain we will carry for all of our life. We have been promised persecution by Jesus. It comes with the name: Christian.

And in this Association we all get a new name, whether we profess or not. We become penitents. The new name carries new responsibilities. They are life-changing responsibilities. We acquire a new job, that is, to more seriously seek holiness. To avoid the world and its call, and to stand out in the midst of life as being in the world but not of the world, without telling a soul.

Every new name calls us to something new. Hopefully something better, but not without a price tag. The price tag often is commitment. The joy is the accomplishment of becoming something new, of getting the new name, and the feeling of success often associated with it, though perhaps no one will tell us we are successful. No one, that is, until we leave this life permanently and come to Judgment before the Lord, our Just Judge, who we hope will give us a new name that we can carry without pain or penalty forever. We hope to hear words like:

“Come now, good and faithful servant, and enter the life prepared for you by my Father.”

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP Administrators
Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota

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**NO GREATER LOVE by Paul Beery, BSP**

"The Lord said, 'The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me.'” (Genesis 18:20-21)

And of course, when the Lord sent down His two angels to visit Lot in Sodom, He found it was not as bad as He had heard, it was worse! (Gn 19:1-12) What would the two angels report to the Lord today? It seems like we are living in Sodom. Only one thing is certain: there must be a similar outcry to the Lord in our day as there was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Where is the outcry?

Well, there is plenty of it coming from these quarters, but I am questioning, how appropriate is that? For I have a personal confession to make. Fr. Altier touched on the problem in last month’s newsletter. He said that as we advance 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...angry at the world because of all the evil and sin, frustrated that people in the Church are not getting rid of the problems...” as well as people in the Church who are contributing to the problems! Not to mention personal failures galore. I confess to harboring such anger, and seek a good BSP Franciscan solution.

God knows in every age there is cause for righteous anger. Jesus showed it many times, especially in the least read and quoted chapter in the Gospels, Matthew chapter 23. But Jesus knew the heart of man. I don’t, and can only judge by objective standards. “If you love me, keep my commandments.” What about those who don’t know or love God? Are they exempt from keeping the commandments?

Being a fervent pro-life person, I look at the devastating blows to the pro-life cause within the past year, both nationally and locally. Nationally with the election of the most pro-abort and pro-gay president the country has ever seen, and the likely slide of America into virtual third-world Secular Socialist status. Locally, in Minnesota with the defeat of a Constitutional Amendment protecting the sanctity of marriage, the complete takeover of State government by the pro-abort party, and its immediate passage of a law permitting same-sex “marriage.” Add to
that the support of multitudes of followers of Jesus to this un-God-ly cause, including members of one’s own family, friends and neighbors, and one doesn’t have to look far for sources of anger and frustration for the faithful.

Dale Ahlquist put his finger on one of the major reasons why some of us are so agitated in a recent article titled: “The Challenge of Defending the Normal.” “Normal” also meaning “Natural.”

“We continue to reel from the blows dealt by the Culture of Death. The attack on life, and particularly on the family, that institution which is the incubator and nourisher of life, continues relentlessly. Our states and our courts have now given the name of “marriage” to a fundamentally unnatural and barren relationship that was once unmentionable in polite company. Being pummeled like this can be disorienting, and even good people are starting to talk like they’ve been hit in the head too many times.”

I guess that pretty well sums it up—not only hit in the head too many times, but in the heart also! Abraham could not find ten righteous people in Sodom. There’s a reason. There is nothing like the “fundamentally unnatural and barren relationship” of homosexuality to completely corrupt society. The gay rights agenda did to Sodom what it is doing to the world today, with same-sex “marriage” being the latest sacrilege. Ahlquist said we have gotten cornered by language. So why can’t everyone who “loves” marry? Marriage should be called HOLY MATRIMONY, a sacred action before God, blessed by God, and entered into for the purpose for which God created the basic unit of society, the family!

We must get the discussion back to the principle of what a family is and what is its role in society. Through all of human history, from the ancient world to the modern, the family is the basic brick of civilization. It is what builds not only the four walls of the home but also the walls that protect the city. To destroy the family is to destroy the society, and redefining the family is in essence destroying it.

If we really want to win the fight, well, we should read a lot more G.K. Chesterton, and so should everybody else. He is a defender of the faith, of the family, of life, and, what is especially needed these days, a defender of the normal. It is normal to believe in God. It is normal to believe that a family is composed of a father, mother, and children. It is normal to protect life. But it is surprisingly difficult to defend the normal. It is challenging to state the obvious.

How did we get to this point? Chesterton saw it coming over a century ago. The modern breakdown of the family, he says, is due to “sex emancipation.” This term covers many things that are all connected: the loss of the distinct roles of man and woman, husband and wife, father and mother; the dishonoring of the vow, which has led to divorce and remarriage and children with one parent or three parents; the unwillingness even to make the vow, which has spread into the epidemic of “cohabitation,” which perpetuates infidelity, illegitimacy, and violent abuse; the plague of pornography which tries to make sex something solitary, and now, the latest, the mockery called “same-sex marriage.” It is all part of “sex emancipation” which is “sexless sex,” the vain attempt to free ourselves not only from the marital bond but from the consequences and responsibilities of the marital embrace. It is also the flat denial of the obvious fact that sex makes babies and the best place for babies is in a family.

But we have destroyed the family, and we have done so without thinking about what will replace it. Chesterton writes, “Nobody has really discussed the alternative to the Family. The only obvious alternative is the State.... The frightful punishment of mere sex emancipation is not anarchy but (government) bureaucracy.”

Yes, that is what we must make people realize. When a society is inflamed with lust, it must find a way to keep order even while it gratifies itself. At first it is subtle, then suddenly it is official. Sex emancipation leads to slavery. While slavery to lust is a personal imprisonment, sex emancipation on a wide scale puts the entire society in state of servitude. The growth of government means the loss of liberty as the state replaces the role of the parent. But it also means further assaults on those who are still functioning as families, as the state forces private businesses to provide contraception and abortion, as state education forces falsehoods into minds of our school children, and now as new laws and layers of bureaucracy enforce the redefinition of marriage and family. The new law will insinuate itself into every aspect of our lives, especially into the most sacred and important part of our life: our relationship with God. Sex emancipation is an enemy of freedom; it is especially the enemy of religious freedom.

This is why the Church defends the family. The family is the basic brick of society, but religion is the cement that holds the bricks together. The Holy Family is the model for the human family, and the Holy Family, too, was attacked by the state almost immediately. The Church is in the thankless position of having to save souls when a godless society is bent on destroying them. “Take away the god,” says Chesterton, “and the government becomes the god.” But this is not the god we will worship.

This is no time to despair. We not only have the one, true God on our side, we have each other. Chesterton reminds us that there are more parents than policemen. In other words, the family is still bigger than the state. It is a time for courage, sacrifice, and the joy of battle.”

The joy of battle! Spiritual warfare is not the typical type of warfare. Father Altier says we need to take our focus off the problems and put it on the Lord. “We can be really angry, and what good is it going to do? How much change has it brought? How many people has it brought to the Lord? It is the Lord Who will help us endure the difficulties of life, Who will give us joy even in the midst of suffering because we are united with Him.”

He continues; “We can bring forth the Word of God, or the anger that is within. We need to make sure we are seeking the Lord and not justifying our own anger. Let
Jesus Christ be the joy and happiness of our hearts, and then we will stand in the Lord’s presence; we will be at peace with God. He Himself will be our strength and set us free from the hands of the violent so that in all things we will be joyful and do His Will.” Amen!

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota

Confidence in Prayer
A MEDITATION by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Second Reading for the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

By faith Sarah herself, though barren, received power to conceive, even when she was too old, because she considered him faithful who had promised. (Hebrews 11:11)

It seems to me we are too easily discouraged in prayer. When God does not answer in the way or the time we would prefer, our faith is weakened. We start to wonder if God is really listening. Does he really answer prayers? Then why doesn’t he answer mine?

Let us take the example of Abraham. When Abraham was 75 years old, God promised him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. But Isaac and Sarah had to wait another 25 years before Isaac was born! Their faith was certainly tested!

St. Paul extols the faith of Abraham: “Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become ‘the father of many nations’, according to what was said, ‘So numerous shall your descendants be.’ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore, his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness.” (Rom 4:18-22)

Two sisters in the BSP and I try to meet monthly by phone. One of the things we do is discuss an ongoing reading from the life of St. Francis. We are making our way through the Omnibus of Sources and are finding treasure on every page. Our latest discussion was on a section in Volume I, pages 746-763, where St. Bonaventure describes some of the astounding miracles worked by St. Francis after his death, most particularly through the grace of his stigmata. St. Francis is the first recorded stigmatic and after his death many doubted his gift. He took great pains to hide it when he was alive, but many of the friars were witnesses of it, especially after his death. St. Clare, too, was a witness after his death.

One thing that struck me in this section is the confidence that these people placed in the intercession of St. Francis, and the importance that confidence played in the miracles worked.

One story tells of a man named John who was very devoted to St. Francis. Once while travelling he was ambushed by someone who had mistaken him for an enemy. His shoulder was severed almost completely and his chest was pierced. While the wounds did not kill him immediately, the consensus was that there was nothing that could be done.

“His wounds were festering and the smell was so bad that even his wife could hardly stand it. No human remedy could do anything for him and so he had recourse to St. Francis, begging his intercession as fervently as he could. Even while he was being attacked, he had commended himself to him and to the Blessed Virgin. As he lay there alone on his bed of pain, fully conscious and repeating the name Francis continually, a man dressed in the habit of the Friars Minor entered by the window and stood beside him, as it seemed to him. He addressed him by name and said, ‘You had confidence in me, and so God will save you.’ When the dying man asked him who he was, he replied that he was St. Francis and immediately bent over him and unwound his bandages. Then he seemed to anoint all of those holy wounds with ointment. The moment John felt the touch from our Savior’s stigmata, his flesh was renewed and the pus disappeared, so that his wounds closed up and he was completely restored to health.”

In another example, a seven-year-old boy fell out of a high window and was killed instantly. The mother found him and began to scream uncontrollably.

“A friar called Raho, of the Order of Friars Minor, was on his way to the church to preach and he went up to the boy and asked his father confidently, ‘Do you believe that St. Francis can raise your child from the dead because of the love he had for Christ who gave back life to men by his crucifixion?’ The child’s father replied that he did believe and was prepared to profess it faithfully, adding that he would serve the saint for the rest of his life if he were found worthy to receive such a favor from God through his intercession. Then the friar prostrated himself in prayer with his companion and called on the bystanders to join them. At that, the boy began to yawn. Then he opened his eyes and raised his arms and got up.”
Then there was the woman in Rome who had chosen St. Francis as her advocate. She kept a painting of him in her prayer room. The artist of the painting had left out all sign of the stigmata, which surprised and upset the woman tremendously. Then one day the stigmata appeared in the painting. The woman was overjoyed, and discussed it at length with her daughter. But very soon she began to doubt that they had been left out in the first place. St. Bonaventure tells what happened next.

“In order to prevent the miracle which had been performed from being treated lightly, God in his omnipotence now worked another; the marks immediately disappeared and the picture was left shorn of its privileges so that this second miracle proved the first one.”

How tragic that this woman allowed doubt to rob her of a very special miracle!

All of these stories illustrate how necessary the virtues of faith, trust, and complete confidence in God are to prayer. One should also add the virtues of patience and an enduring belief in the infinite goodness, generosity and power of God. No matter what happens we should never doubt God’s goodness. No matter how distant he seems, we must never doubt that he showers us at all times with loving attention. Let us cultivate a sense of wonder and gratitude at the ordinary miracles of daily life, and pray with great confidence to our loving Abba who is always faithful even when we are not.

From www.pelianito.stblogs.com

Luke 1:37 ...nothing will be impossible for God.

"My child, keep this in mind when you are asked to pray. Have perfect confidence in your all-powerful, benevolent Father. Keep in mind that all prayers are answered according to the will of God. Maintain a desire to live within the will of God and you will see miracles.”

Lord, my all-powerful Father, I ask for the grace to remain in your will always, through Mary, who alone perfectly accomplished this in Jesus. May she lead me and guide me always, for I am her slave. Amen.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

"My beloved, do you not realize what I have already done for you—how much it cost me to ransom sinful humanity? Do you see how much farther I went? Not content merely to save you from death, it pleased me to elevate you with Christ and in Christ to the status of first-born sons. My children ponder this! The angels are in awe, for they are very much aware of the infinite distance between our two natures—yours the created human, mine the Divine Creator. Now, if I have been this generous with you so far, why do you now doubt my goodness? Why do you fail to trust in my mercy? If I have already given you this much, then have every confidence that those who love me and follow my ways have my rapt attention. Your prayers, dear children, fall softly on my heart. Those you love, those you beg me to save, do not doubt my love for them, but work and pray for their salvation as for your own. Children, love me, trust in me, have confidence. Remain in me and you will never be without joy.”

Heavenly Father, your love is boundless, your mercy and generosity endless! I praise and thank you for looking with love and kindness on such vile worms who merit not the lowest gaze from you. Your words of love give us hope and great joy. We trust in you dear, glorious Abba—save souls! Amen.

Matthew 8: 24 Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. 25 They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!” 26 He said to them, "Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?” Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm.

"Beloved, you know, don’t you, that I have the power to save?”

Yes, Lord, I believe with all my heart.

"Then child, when you pray for souls, pray with confidence to the God whom even the wind and the waves obey. Let none perish on account of your lack of faith. Swallow back or spit out any vile excuse or objection, any judgment you may be tempted to make in regard to souls. There is no one beyond the reach of my mercy. Pray for all, especially those whose sins are most repugnant to you. They are the ones most in danger of perishing, the ones most in need of my mercy. Pray with faith, dear child, knowing that I hear you and want to save all from eternal death. Be an instrument of my Divine Mercy and the final victory will be much sweeter.”
Lord, here I am, send me. Make me a willing instrument of your mercy. By the intercession of the Blessed Mother and the Gloriana*, increase the effectiveness of my prayers for the salvation of souls and for your glory. Amen.

(*The angels and saints in perfect union with the Trinity; the perfect unity of heaven.)

Luke 6: 19 Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.

"Beloved child, have you touched me?"

Yes, Lord, most especially when I receive you in the Eucharist.

"Then child, believe that the same power that went out from me when I physically walked the earth flows into you through the Eucharist. Do you believe this?"

Yes Lord! I do believe!

"Then child, when you pray, pray with the confidence of those who reached for the hem of my robe. For if they had had what you have, there would have been nothing but rejoicing in all of Judea."

Lord, I believe in your power at work in me. Give me strength and hope in you alone. Use me as you wish to bring healing of body, heart and soul to those you send me. Blessed Mother, pray for me. 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/.)

FRANCIS’ PRAISE OF THE VIRTUES
The Seraphic Father’s Teaching on the Six Great Virtues
By Christopher G. O’Donnell, BSP

In his Praise of the Virtues our Seraphic Father Francis specifies six specific characteristics of the soul that is aflame for God. He names three ‘leading’ virtues, each of which is attended to by a ‘sister’ virtue:

"Hail, Queen Wisdom! The Lord save you, with your sister, pure, holy Simplicity. Lady Holy Poverty, God keep you, with your sister, holy Humility. Lady Holy Love, God keep you, with your sister holy Obedience."

So we must possess Wisdom, which is grounded in Simplicity; Poverty, which springs from true Humility; and Love, which manifests itself in Obedience. These attributes are gifts of God that He grants to His beloved children. Francis praises them, saying, "All holy virtues, God keep you, God, from whom you proceed and come." Remade in the image and likeness of Christ and built into a temple for the Holy Spirit, we have the freedom to cooperate with God’s grace to be ever-more conformed to Jesus. This means that while God offers us the grace of these virtues we must accept the gift of them and put them into practice, as Saint Francis says:

"In all the world there is not a man who can possess any of you without first dying to himself. The man who practices one and does not offend against the others, possesses all. The man who offends against one, possesses none and violates all."

The life of the Spirit flows from the Father through Christ, united to us by the Incarnation, and is dispensed within us by the Spirit. That is why the life of virtue stands or falls together as Francis makes clear. We are either moving gradually to greater holiness or we are not. Since they stand or fall together real care must be taken to cultivate our hearts so as to live our lives in true imitation of Christ. Because the virtues are a real participation in the power (= virtus) of Christ himself manifested in us by the power of the Spirit that they constantly draw us to greater sanctity for they destroy the works and desires of the flesh within us: "Each and every one of you puts vice and sin to shame." The saint then goes on to enunciate the way in which these six virtues manifest that divine power in our concrete lives:

"Holy Wisdom puts satan and all his wiles to shame. Pure and holy Simplicity puts all the learning of this world, all natural wisdom, to shame. Holy Poverty puts to shame all greed, avarice, and all the anxieties of this life. Holy Humility puts pride to shame, and all the inhabitants of this world and all that is in the world. Holy Love puts to shame all the temptations of the devil and the flesh and all natural fear. Holy Obedience puts to shame all natural and selfish desires."

Together, these six virtues destroy the ‘three enemies of the soul’: the world, the flesh, and the devil [cf. Eph. 2:1-3]. Wisdom, which is the concrete application of the
Gospel to real life, together with Charity, the love of God within us, casts out the power of Satan and the fear he instills from our lives. Simplicity, a desire for simple joy rather than a cluttered life, and Humility, which is seeing oneself as God sees us, put to death all the enticements and vanities of the world. Finally, Poverty, which is the renunciation of things in order to serve God, and Obedience, the act of true surrender to God, overthrows the impulses of the flesh.

Francis ends the Praises of the Virtues with an extended reflection on the virtue of Holy Obedience because: “It mortifies our lower nature and makes it obey the spirit and our fellow men. Obedience subjects a man to everyone on earth, and not only to men, but to all the beasts as well and to the wild animals, so that they can do what they like with him, as far as God allows them.” Obedience is the life of Love, Simplicity, Poverty, and Humility made manifest in life. We humbly renounce our own will, thoughts, and desires to follow the Gospel as it is simply taught by the Catholic Church out of a deep love for God, and seek to divest ourselves of anything that stands in the way of our devotion. Thus Obedience is Wisdom in the flesh for Wisdom is the knowledge of what we should do to live the Gospel and Obedience is the actual doing of it.

Brothers and Sisters, let us strive to practice these six virtues as proclaimed by our Seraphic Father Francis so that we too, like him, can come to truly become instruments in the hand of God to “convert sinners, to sanctify souls, and to strengthen and renew the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, that God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may be glorified, praised, and adored by all mankind.” Pax et Bonum.

Chris O’Donnell BSP, St. Anthony Chapter, Escondido CA

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

Member websites

Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis facebook page by Lisa Drago, BSP
www.returning-catholics.blogspot.com Blog for Returning Catholics—and others too—by Jim Mearns, 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.

Quotes from St. Clare of Assisi

“Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! And transform your entire being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation.”

"I come, O Lord, unto Thy sanctuary to see the life and food of my soul. As I hope in Thee, O Lord, inspire me with that confidence which brings me to Thy holy mountain. Permit me, Divine Jesus, to come closer to Thee, that my whole soul may do homage to the greatness of Thy majesty; that my heart, with its tenderest affections, may acknowledge Thine infinite love; that my memory may dwell on the admirable mysteries here renewed every day, and that the sacrifice of my whole being may accompany Thine."
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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