1. Saint Francis realized that he was an exile from the Lord’s presence as long as he was at home in the body (cf. 2 Cor 5:6, 8), and his love of Christ had left him with no desire for the things of this earth. Therefore, he tried to keep his spirit always in the presence of God, by praying to him without intermission, so that he might not be without some comfort from his Beloved. Prayer was his chief comfort in this life of contemplation in which he became a fellow-citizen of the angels, as he penetrated the dwelling places of heaven in his eager search for his Beloved, from whom he was separated only by a partition of flesh. Prayer was his sure refuge in everything he did; he never relied on his own efforts, but put his trust in God’s loving providence and cast the burden of his cares on him in insistent prayer. He was convinced that the grace of prayer was something a religious should long for above all else. No one, he declared, could make progress in God’s service without it, and he used every means he could to make the friars concentrate on it. Whether he was walking or sitting at home or abroad, whether he was working or resting, he was so fervently devoted to prayer that he seemed to have dedicated to it not only his heart and his soul, but all his efforts and all his time.

2. Francis would never let any call of the Spirit go unanswered; when he experienced it, he would make the most of it and enjoy the consolation afforded him in this way for as long as God permitted it. If he was on a journey, and felt the near approach of God’s Spirit, he would stop and let his companions go on, while he drank in the joy of this new inspiration; he refused to offer God’s grace an ineffectual welcome (cf. 2 Cor 6:1). He was often taken right out of himself in a rapture of contemplation, so that he was lost in ecstasy and had no idea what was going on about him, while he experienced things which were beyond all human understanding.

As he was passing through the crowded village of Borgo San Sepolcor on one occasion, the crowds rushed out to meet him in their excitement. He was riding an ass because he was not well and they pulled him and dragged him this way and that and crowded all about him, pushing against him on every side, but he seemed insensible to it all and, like a dead body, noticing nothing that was going on. Long after they had passed the village and left the crowds behind, they came to a leper hospital and then, as if coming back from far away, he inquired anxiously when they would be near Borgo San Sepolcor. His mind was fixed on the glory of heaven and so he had lost all track of changes of place or time or people. His companions knew from their own experience that this often happened to him.

3. Francis learned in his prayer that the presence of the Holy Spirit for which he longed was granted more intimately, when he was far from the rush of worldly affairs. Therefore, he used to seek out lonely places in the wilderness and go into abandoned churches to pray at night. There he often had to endure frightful attacks from the Devil who fought hand-to-hand with him and tried to withdraw him from prayer. But Francis was armed with supernatural weapons and the more violently they attacked him, the more courageous he was in practicing virtue and the more fervent in prayer. He would say with all confidence to Christ, “Hide me under the shelter of your wings, safe from the evildoers who wrong me” (Ps 16:8), and to the demons, “Do what you can to me, wicked and deceitful spirits. You can do nothing beyond what God allows you and I will be more than happy to suffer everything that God has decided I should endure.” The devils in their pride could not stand such steadfast courage, and they retreated in confusion.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)
VISITOR’S MESSAGE
Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...
Feast of Saint Bartholomew
Reading (Revelation 21:9b-14) Gospel (St. John 1:45-51)

Today, as we celebrate the feast of Saint Bartholomew, remember that Nathaniel and Bartholomew are the same person. This is why we have this particular reading from the gospel of Saint John about Nathaniel and about what Jesus had to say regarding him, “Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him.” Now, Nathaniel initially says to Phillip, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Remember, the word Nazareth comes from the Hebrew word Nazer which means, “a shoot” as in “a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse.” And so, Nazareth was founded by a small group of people, the House of David, who believed fully well that the Messiah was going to come from among their number. Of course, the people of Israel thought that they were nuts and that is exactly why Nathaniel is asking the question he is asking. Nazareth is a little Podunk town out in the middle of nowhere with a bunch of people who they thought were pretty crazy. Yet, this is where God chose to send His Son.

Now we can look at what the angel says to Saint John, “Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” We are each the bride of the Lamb and we can say, “Can anything good come out of this?” Look at whom He has chosen to be His bride. It is the new Jerusalem, but we are the members of the new Jerusalem. In baptism, we have been made members of Jesus Christ, and, just as in marriage, the two shall become one, so we have become fully incorporated into Christ Himself. We, together, make up the bride of Christ; we are to be united with Him; we are to be faithful to Him; we are to love Him and to serve Him. And, of course, we know, too, that God has chosen (for those whom He has called to Himself) not the ones whom the world would consider the greatest but the ones the world considers the least. If we were to line up a whole bunch of people and say, “Now which ones here most deserve to be members of the bride of Christ?” we would probably not be among those who were chosen by the worldly types. And, so, people can look and say, “Can anything good come out of this? Out of this group of people? Out of the Church?”

Of course, on the natural level the answer is pretty doubtful. But this is not on the natural level because the Bridegroom of our souls is not natural but is supernatural. He is God, and if we are united with Him as a bride and a bridegroom are united, the two become one. Therefore, we share in His divine nature and in His divine life. The good comes out of Christ and not out of us. It is His life and it is His love in us that He is giving to us. We, then, are able to turn and offer this back so that we can live in a divine way; we can serve in a divine way; we can love in a divine way. This, not because of anything within ourselves that is so good, but rather because of Him who is perfectly good who is united to us. What a blessing! What a gift that God has given to us to call us to this kind of glory, to this union with Christ!

But that means that He wants from us the same thing that he saw in the apostle, Bartholomew (Nathaniel). That is, He wants us to be true Israelites with no duplicity, to be single-heartedly in love with Him. It does not mean to be pulled here and there or to be seeking our own will while giving lip service to Him. But, rather, to be seeking Him alone; to be seeking perfect union with Him; to be offering ourselves in every way for Him; to be loving Him at every moment of every day. Because we are members of the new Israel, of the new Jerusalem, we are called to that single-hearted nature of love. We are to be perfectly united to the bridegroom of our souls and to be completely in love with Him. That is what it means to a member of the new Israel without duplicity, without anything standing between Him and ourselves because we are united with Him perfectly and completely.

Therefore, we want to open ourselves, that is, to open our hearts entirely to Him; to hold nothing back; to have nothing in the way and to get ourselves out of the way because we have given ourselves completely to Him and we have received Him completely to ourselves. We are to live His life and we are to allow Him to live in us and through us. We are to be single-heartedly devoted to Him alone. That is our glory. That is our call and it is something supernatural. If you sit back and say, “I cannot do it”, then you are right - by yourself, that is. But, Jesus can do it in you because He can do all things and with Him nothing is impossible. It is even possible for Him to take the likes of us and make us the bride of the Lamb and to make us the new Israel with no duplicity in our hearts. Only He can do that in us, and only if we cooperate since He is not going to force it on us. What is more, we have to see that he has done this in us. Let the people of the world look and say, “Can anything good come out of this?” and let them see that the good which is coming out of us is the love of Jesus Christ Himself, which is perfectly good.

This text was transcribed from the audio recording of a homily by Father Robert Altier with minimal editing.
ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE...

The Harvest is Good...

Jesus said to His disciples: "The harvest is good but the laborers are scarce. Beg the harvest master to send out laborers to gather his harvest." (Matthew 9:38) - Tuesday of the Fourteenth Week of the Year.

At Mass that morning at our local church, the only extra Mass we have in any week, our pastor, Father Thomas Garlarneault, gave his homily on this Scripture. He said this challenge of Our Lord's was to the leaders in the Church, certainly, the Pope, bishops, priests, and sisters. He then said it was also to everyone else in the Church, including all of us at the Mass. The whole Church. It was a call to every single member of the Church to reach out to others. To join in gathering the harvest, of souls that is, for the Lord. This is a real challenge to all of us in the BSP.

Our Rule calls us to live holy lives. It is interesting that nowhere does the Rule say we should promote the Rule. St. Francis must have assumed that those who felt called to live holy lives would come to him and that must have seemed sufficient to him. So the challenges the Rule issues, and they are multitude, were to be lived by those, and only those, who wished to live them. In this way he responded fully to the inquiries that the people were making to him to give them a holy life. Yet he does not say anywhere in that Rule that they should 'spread the word' or promote the Rule or even the Faith.

Therefore, the call of the Lord does that for us. We are to reach out to others. We are to call them into the Faith, and tell them about Jesus. We can do that in many ways, but we need to keep this admonition in mind, which came from some holy person, maybe St. Francis, "Go, spread the Gospel, and use words only if you must."

We need to be examples of Christian living that people see without being told. There are a number of ways that happens of course. One way is that we go to Church. Just that says to those that see us, or know we are going if we must tell them, as is sometimes the case, that God is important to us. If they ask we can confirm that, but even if they do not ask we have confirmed that, by going to Church. This is the simplest and most obvious way we represent God to others and if we get to explain things we can confirm that Jesus is God and Savior to us all. Very nice.

There are other ways we can do this though, too. We can promote our Rule, which is really the Mission of the BSP. We should not promote it by bragging about how we are living it. That violates the spirit of the Rule even. However, we can promote it on a global basis just by explaining to others that it is available and what its purpose is. That is, to make us holy, to get us to heaven, and as a way to live a holy life in response to the Gospel. We CAN explain that it is the 'narrow way' that the Lord said was the way to heaven, that few find, for it is obvious to us that live this Rule that few find it, and most of those who find it don’t want to live it after they try it.

Another way we can promote the BSP is to form Chapters of the BSP. Just forming a Chapter requires that we explain what it is, and what the guidelines of being in it are. That REQUIRES that we explain the Rule, the origin of the Rule, and the nature of the Rule. That it is penance, pure and simple, and that to live it makes one a permanent penitent. Our prayers and Christian lives are supposed to be permanent, for those serious about them, and so we automatically become a laborer for the Lord when we try to form Chapters without making a big fanfare about ourselves or the way that we live the Rule, unless someone asks. If they ask then we can tell them how we live the Rule, with gentility and respect and without bragging in any way, and invite them to consider joining the Association if they want to do penance. People can easily understand the penance of the Rule. So, if they are serious about doing penance it could be the Rule will appeal to them.

So, in these ways, and we are sure many others you might think about if you ponder the message this month, we can join the Lord in harvesting souls. We can enter into this Scripture and become laborers who help gather the harvest for the Lord! Praised be Jesus forever!

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

“All mankind is grass, and all their glory like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower wilts when the breath of the Lord blows upon us. Here comes with power the Lord God, who rules by His strong arm. Who has cupped His hands in the waters of the sea, and marked off the heavens with a span? Who has held in a measure the dust of the earth, weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or instructed Him as His counselor?” (Isaiah 40:7-8, 12-13)

Who indeed has directed the Spirit of the Lord? Starting next month, some real meat on getting to know the Lord better, notes on “Difficulties in Mental Prayer” from the BSP Retreat. I think it’s safe to say we all need instruction from His counselor, receiving perhaps even the gift of infused knowledge.

For now, more leafy vegetables, a final look at the environment. As one close to the dust of the earth, with a farming and forestry background, I never lose interest in this subject. I know what it is to work with God to beautify His creation. “Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them.” (Mt. 6:26) I think many today run the risk of separating the Creator from His creation. St. Francis would never have done that, nor should we.

It takes a graduate course in discernment to sort out massive amounts of conflicting information in seeking the truth. Who is trustworthy? A safe place to start: God is still in charge of the earth! Yet all we hear from the worldly is how impotent, pipsqueak mankind is all-powerful, is running the show and ruining the planet, a rather gross exaggeration! They use the environment, God’s creation, as a pretext to promote a God-less, anti-human agenda. That agenda, a Satanic attack on the human family, on human ecology, is far worse than physical abuses of mankind upon the dust of the earth. God has given the earth remarkable restorative powers, as is fitting for a Creator knowing the failings inherent in the human species. Environmental ecological abuses are easily restored to health in days, months, or even a few years. Human ecological abuses have consequences that can last forever, for all eternity.

Pope Francis said he wants to further the dialogue “On Care for our Common Home.” On the key issue of alleged “climate change” he said: “The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics. I want to encourage an honest and open debate, so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good.”

Cardinal Pell, one of the highest ranking Vatican officials to comment on the pope’s encyclical, said: “It’s got many, many interesting elements. There are parts of it which are beautiful. But the Church has no particular expertise in science ... the Church has got no mandate from the Lord to pronounce on scientific matters. We believe in the autonomy of science.” (Cardinal Pell to the Financial Times)

But that’s the whole point: the autonomy of science has been hijacked by leftist ideology that is not subject to the truth, but whose agenda—population control through the use of a “climate crisis”—is filled with lies and distortions of the truth that are easily refuted! But the world, with its bullhorn of the media continually promoting this distorted worldview, keeps repeating the same old tired lies about an alleged “consensus” of scientists bowing to the will of a single UN committee fantasy climate report. And opposing voices are silenced, as they were even at the Vatican, as the pope’s chief science advisor, an atheist/pantheist who wants to reduce the earth’s population to one billion, is in on the fix.

As a life-long faithful Catholic, I have great regard for the Magisterium of the Church. The pope is infallible in matters of faith and morals, but not the economy or science. I see the attempt by many—even in the Church—to make the environment into a great moral crusade. They want a new moral code not dependent on God’s revelation, but on the whims of mankind. They want infallible teaching on the environment! Am I going to hell because I do not recycle? Because I use too much fossil fuel? Most of all because I am a “climate skeptic?” I find that whole scenario appalling, especially when brought forth by people who completely reject the real moral issues that put their salvation in grave jeopardy. We exist for the praise of His Glory, not the rejection of His divine revelation, or endless complaints about His Creation, like the Chosen People wandering in the desert—wandering because of their complaints!

Environmentalists give us a completely unbalanced and paranoid worldview based on extreme radical leftist fantasies and fallacies. God has given us a perfect world in which to know, love and serve Him. Recent warming has made it even better (cf. benefits of global warming, especially increased food production). And instead of praising and thanking God for His blessings, we join with these ingrates in endless complaints. Are we going to follow the secular crowd, or witness to transcendent truth?

Where is the Gospel mandate to ban fossil fuels? Which Evangelist highlighted our Carbon Footprint? Where did the idea come from that we are no longer to use the resources of the earth for the benefit of mankind? It came from a secular theory blaming mankind for global warming. We may be guilty of a lot of sins, but that’s not one of them! What should be done with theories?
Test them, to see if they are true. “Test the spirits, to see if they are from God.” No sir, not this theory, not on your life!

In his new book, “The Deliberate Corruption of Climate Science,” Dr. Tim Ball takes on this question.

“Science works by creating theories based on assumptions,” he notes, “then other scientists—performing their skeptical role—test them. The structure and mandate of the UN IPCC was in direct contradiction of this scientific method. They set out to prove the theory rather than disprove it.”

Dr. Ball, a climatologist for more than forty years, was one of the earliest critics of the global warming theory initiated by the United Nations environmental program established in 1972 and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established in 1988. He said:

“Several UN conferences set in motion the hoax that is based on the assertion that carbon dioxide (CO2) was causing a dramatic surge in heating the Earth. IPCC reports have continued to spread this lie through their summaries for policy makers that influenced policies that have caused nations worldwide to spend billions to reduce and restrict CO2 emissions. Manmade climate change—called anthropogenic global warming—continues to be the message though mankind plays no role whatever. It is the greatest deception in history and the extent of the damage has yet to be exposed and measured.”

There is no scientific support for the UN theory.

“CO2, despite being a minor element of the Earth’s atmosphere, is essential for all life on Earth because it is the food that nourishes all vegetation. The Earth has passed through many periods of high levels of CO2 and many cycles of warming and cooling that are part of the life of the planet. The atmosphere,” Dr. Ball notes, “is three-dimensional and dynamic, so building a computer model that even approximates reality requires far more data than exists and much greater understanding of an extremely turbulent and complex system. No computer model put forth by the IPCC in support of global warming has been accurate, nor ever could be.”

Finally, “Most of the UN reports were created by a small group of men working within the Climate Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia and all were members of the IPCC. The result was a totally false picture supposedly based on science.” (cf. “Climategate” to see the fraud and deception of this small, isolated group that has caused such hysteria. They are now falsifying temperature records to keep the hysteria going with no basis in fact.) Some facts: 90% of the world’s ice is in the Antarctic, which has never been more solidly frozen. Where glaciers are calving there is due to undersea volcanos and ocean currents, and has nothing to do with global warming. A third of the Arctic has re-frozen, much to the dismay of Environmentalists. (Climate Depot) There are five times more polar bears in the Arctic today than in the 1950’s. Terrible storms are supposed to be happening, but there have been almost no hurricanes in the United States the past ten years. There is now a nearly 20 year “Pause” in significant global warming, causing honest scientists to theorize just where the heat is “hiding,” maybe in the Pacific Ocean? But no, it’s not there. Maybe the Indian Ocean? Any more straws left? Have any Environmentalist computer model projections been true? Does the truth even matter anymore?

I found a letter to the editor in a local Catholic newspaper which left me feeling better about Laudato Si’. According to him, the pope’s goal is the evangelization of environmental extremists by challenging them to broaden their perspective. He presented their views better than they could themselves. Now they need to explain why “the global environment can be saved only by polluting the human environment.”

That’s an interesting theory. But joining with the enemies of God and humanity in common cause for the promotion of the common good seems rather risky. It blurs the distinction between good and evil when people desperately need moral clarity to tell the difference. Time will tell who converts who...

The letter writer concludes: “Laudato Si’ exposes the hypocrisy of global-warming alarmists. Pope Francis showcased how they cherry-pick their environmental concerns to serve their political agenda – population control aimed at vastly reducing the third world population. He even exposed how first world governments bully third world governments by denying assistance unless they implement population control plans. Demanding unlimited abortion is treating humanity like a pestilence to be eradicated, especially in the third world. This exposes them as racist elitists.”

“Laudato Si’ ties all these things together in a holistic way that respects the dignity of every human being, acknowledges God as Master of His own creation, and reminds us our only legitimate role is to be His servants in protecting His creation in its totality. God so loves His creation that He designed it to mirror His own existence as One God in Three Divine Persons, even becoming physically part of it in the Incarnation, and His ultimate goal is to unite each one of us, and our environment, perfected far beyond our capacity to imagine, with Him for all eternity.”

Paul Beery BSP, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota
Crosses…
by Janet Klasson, BSP

From the Second Reading, Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

We all have crosses. And indeed, as Franciscan penitents, we are exhorted to take the words of Christ to heart and live them: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Mt. 16:24) Knowing that this is our call, and living it, however, are two different matters. How often, when a cross is given to us, do we turn our faces, pray for deliverance, tell the Lord, “Not this cross, Lord. It is much too heavy for me! I will carry a cross, just not this one.” How fickle and frail we are! I was struggling last week with a cross of my own when I felt led to pick up the writings of Luisa Piccarreta. Here is what I read:

“This morning, while seeing my adorable Jesus nailed to the Cross, I interiorly questioned myself: ’What were Jesus’ thoughts in receiving the Cross?'

”Jesus then said, ’My daughter, I embraced the Cross as if it were my most dear treasure. This is because in the Cross I gave a dowry to souls; I espoused them to Me. Then, in looking at the Cross—observing its length and width—I took pleasure in it, because I saw in it the sufficient dowries for all my spouses. Moreover, none of them could fear to marry Me, because in my own hands I had the Cross and the price of their dowry.

”’For this reason I wed the soul with only one condition: That if she accepts the small gifts that I send to her, meaning the crosses, it is a sign that she accepts Me as her Spouse. The wedding is executed, and I make the donation of a dowry to the soul.

”’If on the other hand, the soul does not accept these small gifts, which means she does not resign herself to my Will, it all becomes annulled; and though I want to give her a dowry, I cannot. This is because in order to perform the wedding it is necessary that both parties, the soul and I, be in agreement. So if the soul does not accept my gifts, it means that she does not want to accept my betrothal.‘” Touché! This passage describes exactly what our Seraphic Father Francis lived while he was on earth. After his conversion, he embraced every cross and asked for more of them. He couldn't get enough of crosses because he understood better than we ever could that betrothal to Christ makes every cross sweet, every pain glorious.

I have very little to add to the words of Jesus here. I believe they must be pondered deeply and applied to our lives in a new and more fervent way. In the words of Father Francis, “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up until now we have done little or nothing.” Amen!

From www.pelianito.stblogs.com

Nahum 1:12-13 Thus says the Lord, ‘Though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more. And now I will break off his yoke from you and snap the bonds that bind you.’

”My children, remember this well when you are afflicted. My anger lasts but a moment, but my favor on those who cling to me lasts for a lifetime. Beloved little ones, you do not understand, but my afflictions—those I send you—are often signs of my favor. Do you doubt this? Study the life of my Son and the lives of the saints. Who was more afflicted than my Son and my Mother? Yet these afflictions were not the whole story and neither are they with you. Bear your afflictions with patience, praying for the grace to endure them with holy joy. In this way you turn afflictions into great graces for yourself and those for whom you offer them. My little ones, the more tightly you cling to me in your afflictions, the more grace you will receive. If you do not know how to pray, then just call out to me—’Father!’—and I will be there before the sound has faded. Children I am with you and I love you. Draw near.”

Beloved Father of my heart, how little we deserve such loving attention from you. Yet, do not look on our weakness, but on the sign of Christ into which we were baptized. If you see Christ when you look at us, then we will be lifted up with him and be made worthy to cling to our beloved Abba. Father! Father! Father!

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/)
Peace my little sparrow friends! The story of the Prodigal Son is very appropriate to most prisoners but it should also be one that the people that are not prisoners consider very seriously. After all we are all sinners and have "fallen short of the glory of God." Some people describe that they are not that much of a sinner and thereby distance themselves from the Prodigal Son as a story that does not concern them as much as it does to people like prisoners. They miss out on the point of God's tremendous mercy that He offers to all of us. That is a shame and a terrible loss to those who don't realize their great need of His mercy and pardon.

The Prodigal Son gives us a beautiful glimpse into the Father's heart! In the story the father sees his prodigal son a long way off because he has been looking and watching for him. He feels powerful compassion and takes immediate action to restore and show kindness to his long-lost son.

Jesus uses this specific word for compassion only two other times in His parables. Both times illustrate the Father's deepest love for those who are truly hopeless and admit their need. The merciful king, confronted with a debt that could not be repaid, compassionately forgives all that was owed—a vast fortune! The Good Samaritan, too, takes immediate, compassionate action to bandage the wounds of a traveler near death.

Do you feel lost, hopeless at times, maybe even unworthy of God’s compassion? If so, know that the Father still is watching and waiting for you. Our merciful King longs to forgive every sin, your every debt, for Jesus’ sake. Out of compassion and truest love, He even offered up the life of His beloved Son to heal the deep mortal wounds of your soul. How will He not also, along with Him, graciously give you all things my little sparrow friends?

**Light Penetrates Darkness...**

Peace to my little sparrow friends! Today I had an unusual sparrow insight...a small insight but an insight nonetheless. Try not to laugh at my little self as I share this unique insight...little truths sometimes have big effects on me.

Light has the ability to penetrate darkness, but darkness cannot penetrate light! (That is my insight...but before you dismiss this thought think about it a little deeper!) Try this one evening: After dark, turn off all the lights in your house. With closed doors in adjacent rooms, turn on a light and open one door. What happens? Light shines into the darkness. But consider the opposite. Does darkness ever penetrate the light? No. In the same way, God is light, and darkness can find absolutely no place in Him.

As Christians, we are called to be like a light on a hill. Such a light can be seen from far off. It is sad when the children of God allow their light to go completely out. This happens because the light is dim. If we are children of God we have every reason to let our light shine brightly around us.

If others follow the light we put forth in Jesus, we have done what the Lord requires of us as His true lights in the world. It is important not only that our life reflects spiritual values, but also that we leave a worthy example for others to follow.

**Dog Distraction...**

Peace my little sparrow friends! I was thinking, meditating really, about some of my previous life experiences. I thought about distractions and it brought the memory of my dog and how a distraction causes her to lose sight of walking and being with me one day.

My dog Kate was a gentle giant...she was a pretty good sized dog to say the least. Her tongue was big, she had sad eyes, and a very friendly wag to her tail. Her size was daunting, but her attitude put everyone at ease. She was in prime age at the time of this story and she loved to run and walk next to me.

In this particular neighborhood there were other dogs. These dogs were of average size and weight. When they saw Kate trotting past, it stirred their ire. They would follow along, barking and telling Kate how much they detested her.

At a certain place, a total of seven or eight dogs came out one morning to herald our passing. One brave canine dared to close in on Kate and nip her shoulder; then he backed off to join the rest. Kate usually looked neither left nor right. She focused on the road ahead. But I could tell that this bite had hurt her. It hurt badly. Kate lost focus, stopped and began snarling and snipping. Suddenly three, four, and five dogs entered the fray, and a genuine dog fight erupted. Kate was kept very busy as she struggled to stay on her four paws and to keep her own fur. As soon as possible, Kate left the fight and continued on her way.
At this time it made me think. Suppose we are attacked by an ugly rumor. Do we get distracted from our journey with the Lord and turn aside to bite back the slanderer? Do we stop and chase each “barking” antagonist to ensure that everyone knows how false the rumor is? Or do we quietly go on, never bothered by snapping onlookers?

Above all, let us beware lest we are in the barking crowd.

If others speak evil of you, so live that no one will believe it.

Pax et bonum
Brother Sparrow
Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, NC

The Portuincula Indulgence

(Excerpts taken from: http://www.franciscanfriarstor.com/archive/stfrancis/stf_portuncula_indulgence.htm)

The Portuincula is an ancient church dedicated to Mary under the title Our Lady of the Angels and is located in Assisi, Italy. It was a spot very dear to the heart of Saint Francis.

In 1216, in a vision, St Francis obtained from Jesus himself the Indulgence of the Pardon of Assisi that was approved by Pope Honorius III. This plenary indulgence may ordinarily be gained on August 2 and 15; pilgrims may gain it once a year on any day of the year.

CONDITIONS TO OBTAIN THE PLENARY INDULGENCE OF THE FORGIVENESS OF ASSISI (for oneself or for a departed soul)

• Sacramental Confession to be in God’s grace (during the eight days before or after);
• Participation in the Holy Mass and Eucharist;
• Visit to a Catholic Church, followed by PROFESSION OF FAITH, in order to reaffirm one's own Christian identity;
• Say the OUR FATHER, in order to reaffirm the dignity as child of God that one received in Baptism;
• A prayer for the Pope's intention, in order to reaffirm one's membership in the Church, of which the Roman Pontiff is the foundation and sign of visible unity.

MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

BSP MEMBER WEBSITES
Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis facebook page by Lisa Drago, BSP
The Joy of Penance by Janet Klasson www.joyofpenance.wordpress.com

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.
BSP Retreat: August 14-16, 2015

Friday 4:00 pm to Sunday 2:00 pm
at the Franciscan Retreat Center
Prior Lake MN

“Difficulties in Mental Prayer”

With Retreat Master
Fr. John Paul Erickson

Fr. John Paul Erickson was ordained in 2006 by Archbishop Harry Flynn. He is currently serving as Director of the Office of Worship for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Cost: $160.00
(includes accommodation & meals)

To reserve a place send $25 to:

BSP Retreat
c/o Paul Beery BSP
2108 Pleasant Ave, #114
Minneapolis, MN  55404

For more details on the retreat see the July BSP newsletter or call Paul Beery: 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