



...IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT, FOR CHRIST!

BONAVENTURE AND HIS LESSONS ON ST. FRANCIS:

Some of the miracles which took place after St. Francis' death

II. The Dead Who Were Raised to Life

6. At Suessa Aurunca a house in the street called Alle Colonne collapsed and buried a young man who was killed instantly. The people who had heard the noise came running from all sides and lifted up the beams and stones and gave the dead man back to his mother. She was overcome with bitter sobbing and cried out as best she could, "St. Francis, St. Francis, give me back my son!" The bystanders joined with her, begging St. Francis' aid, but the victim never opened his mouth or gave any sign of life, and so they laid the remains on a bed and prepared to bury him the following day. However, his mother put her trust in God and the merits of his saint and she vowed that she would cover St. Francis' altar with a new cloth, if he restored her son to life. Then about midnight, the young man began to yawn and, as his body became warm, he got up alive and well and began to praise God. He gave the clergy and all the people reason to praise God and thank him and St. Francis joyfully.

7. A young boy named Gerlandino from Ragusa went out to the vineyard at vintage-time. He wanted to fill some flasks of wine from the vat and he bent down under the wine-press. Suddenly the wooden supports gave way and the heavy stones crashed down upon him, crushing his head fatally.



His father immediately came running, but he had no hope and made no move to help him; instead he left him where he had fallen under the weight. The vine-dressers heard his cries of anguish' they shared his sorrow and pulled his son from the wreckage, but he was already dead. His father cast himself at Jesus' feet and begged him humbly to give him back his son, through the merits of St. Francis whose feastday was near. He redoubled his prayers and vowed a number of good works, promising that he would visit the tomb of St. Francis with his son, if he were raised from the dead. Immediately the boy whose whole body had been crushed was restored to life and perfect health. He stood up before them all, rejoicing, and reproached them for mourning, saying that he had been restored to life by the prayers of St. Francis.

8. St. Francis also raised another man to life in Germany, as Pope Gregory stated in an apostolic letter addressed to the friars who had convened for a chapter at the time the saint's body was transferred. I have not included an account of this miracle because I have no knowledge of it and I trust that the pope's testimony will be worth more than my written description.

Bonaventure—Major Life of St. Francis (1263)





VISITOR'S MESSAGE

Homily by Fr. Robert Altier...

Mary, Mother of God January 1, 2006

Reading I (Numbers 6:22-27) Reading II (Galatians 4:4-7) Gospel (St. Luke 2:16-21)

Today as we celebrate this great solemnity of the Divine Maternity of our Blessed Lady, we first of all have to understand this is a feast that tragically we do not share with many people who call themselves Christian. The vast majority of Protestant Christians do not believe that Mary is the Mother of God. They believe, in essence, in a heresy that is called Nestorianism. This is a heresy that was condemned back in the year 431. It was at the Council of Ephesus in 431 that Mary was infallibly proclaimed to be the Mother of God. And so we see that what has been continues to be. The heresies continue to be recycled and brought forth into our own day.

Yet if we look around at what is going on in our own time, we can all clearly see that things continue to get worse. It is pretty evident, if you follow anything in the news. The number of hurricanes and tropical storms set a record this year; the number of earthquakes set a record this year; the number of natural disasters is beyond what anybody can seem to comprehend. But these things are only reflecting what is going on in the spiritual order.

Remember back in 1917, Our Lady came to three little children in Fatima and she asked specifically that reparation would be made for crimes and blasphemies against her Immaculate Heart. Back in 1917, one might say, "What does that mean?" Today what we see is that the blasphemies against Our Lady are increasing and running rampant, even to the point where recently (and, I suspect, unsuspectingly) a Catholic (or so-called Catholic) publication was actually advertising some statues of Our Lady that were so completely blasphemous that I cannot even describe to you what it was they were trying to sell. Once this particular magazine caught on to what it was they were advertising, they pulled the advertisement. Unfortunately, the damage had already been done. Remember back a few years ago, there was some unfortunate soul who called himself an artist who took a picture of our Blessed Lady and flung elephant dung upon it and called it "artwork." Someone took a crucifix and put it upside down in a bottle of urine and called it "art." These are the kinds of blasphemies that the world has never heard of before that are going on in our own day, and they are getting worse.

We have lots of people who are denying articles of

the Faith with great regularity. It is getting to the point now in our society where among those who wish to call themselves Catholic, we find ourselves to be fewer and fewer who really believe in much of what the Church actually teaches. It has become kind of a popular thing for people who want to call themselves Catholic to be interviewed by various news organizations in order to bash the Church, because the fact that they call themselves Catholic somehow gives them some sense of credibility when they want to try to undermine and deny what the Church teaches.

We see these various things that are happening around us, and all we can say is that things are getting a lot worse; they are getting a lot closer. Over the years, I have likened the situation that we are going through to a woman in labor. If you liken it to that, as we all know, in labor the labor pains get closer together and they get more intense. They are certainly doing that. They are now at a point where there are major things happening less than every two weeks in the world. That is getting close. Now the birth of the baby does not come until there is no distinction between the labor pains, one on top of the next so that the labor is constant. We have not gotten quite to that point, but it is coming.

If we look at some of the bizarre things going on in the world that have happened over the last year, back around Easter time there is a convent of nuns over in England that, once again, put up something they call "art." It was down in their crypt where they bury the nuns; and in the very place where they put the nuns for the wake, they put up an entire "art project" (or whatever you want to call it) that was devoted to what they called "Saint Judas of Iscariot." They claimed that Judas did not really betray Jesus, that he did not kill himself, but rather he was killed by the other apostles, and so therefore he is really a saint—but the Church has "covered all that up over the years." This is in a Roman Catholic convent of nuns.

Just in the last couple of weeks, we have seen all kinds of weird things going on: a man out in California who heads up some group that is determined to try to eliminate human beings from the face of the earth, telling us that the biggest problem on earth right now is humanity, that all of these various species of animals and plants that are going extinct or are endangered is all because of us,

so plants and animals would succeed quite well if we would just get rid of human beings. I mentioned that on the radio and suggested that perhaps it would be best if he started with himself because his recommendation is that people start killing themselves in order to reduce the population of humanity so we can allow the plants and animals to grow. You see the idiocy of the things that are going on, but it keeps getting worse. Just a couple of days ago over in Israel, in a very, very beautiful place called Eilat (if you look at a map of Israel, at the very southern tip of Israel right at the Red Sea before you cross the border into Egypt, that is where Eilat is) a woman married a dolphin. I am not kidding. This is the kind of nonsense that we have going on in the world.

Now things are going to continue to get worse. I just heard recently (but have not been able to confirm) that this unfortunate character who runs around calling himself "Maitreya" has manifested himself just in the last couple of days out in California. Maitreya is a Buddhist word that means "Messiah." He is calling himself "The Teacher," "The Awaited One," the Second Coming of Christ, the one whom the Jews are waiting for, the return of Mohammed, the return of Buddha, the return of Zoroaster, and every other goofy clown who has come along claiming himself to be anything of importance. This man is a figure of the Antichrist. He claims that when everything goes belly-up in the world, which is to come fairly soon, he will speak telepathically to the mind of every person on the face of the earth. And if you are watching TV, you will see his ugly mug on the TV because every network in the world, he claims, will be united at that moment and show his face on the TV set. Whether you are watching TV or not, you will hear him speak to you, so he claims. It is purely diabolical. And remember that just a few months ago a Jewish rabbi who is the head rabbi of the Kabbalah, which is the occult group over in Israel (they are not true Jews; they are occultists), publicly announced—it was verified on the radio; in fact, he signed a form that was in the newspaper over in Israel—that the Messiah is now alive and is living in Israel. If the occult Jews think the Messiah is alive, my first thought is "This must be a figure of the Antichrist." These are the not the



ordinary Jews who are suggesting this; these are people who are into some very strange things. So we see that the time we are living in continues to get worse. We continue to progress forward.

Now the thing that we can do, of course, is to panic when we look at some of these things, but there is no need to panic. All you need to do is remember what Saint Therese of Lisieux pointed out with regard to the apostles. When Jesus was sleeping in the boat with the apostles and the water was coming

over the sides and the apostles were panicking because of the storm, Jesus was sound asleep. They woke Him up, and Our Lord rebuked them and said, You of little faith. But Saint Therese simply commented on it and said, "Did they really think with Jesus in the boat that the boat was going to sink?" That should be self-evident to any of us. In this last year, we have witnessed the death of one of the greatest Popes who has

ever lived and the election of a new Pope. Recall that this new Pope, before he was elected, went to the Coliseum in Rome on Good Friday (just a couple of weeks before his election to the papacy) and in one of the reflections of the Stations of the Cross he said that right now the Church is like a boat that is taking in water on all sides. It is sinking. But Jesus is in the boat, and as long as you are in the boat with Jesus, the boat will not sink. Jesus promised us that the jaws of hell will not prevail against the Church. That is a guarantee from the mouth of Almighty God. So as long as you are in the boat, you have absolutely nothing to fear.

Right now it will appear to many that Jesus is sound asleep. If you have been watching, it will seem that people's prayers do not seem to have much effect. It is a constant complaint that we hear. You will notice there are all kinds of new and bizarre diseases that people are coming down with, things that doctors cannot seem to explain. The suffering that people are enduring is becoming more and more manifest by the day, and getting more extreme. These are great gifts from God. And while it may not seem that He is answering our prayers or listening, He is indeed. But perhaps He is sleeping in the bow of the boat. If He is asleep, why do we want to wake Him up? He is God; the boat will not sink. All we need to do is have faith and stay in the boat. Do not be stupid

and try to jump out of the boat and see if you can swim through the waves and the wind and all the enemies that are out there. The waters are shark-infested and it is not going to be a pleasant swim. Stay in the boat and you have absolutely nothing to fear.

In the first reading that we heard, we heard about a blessing that God was going to give to His chosen people. In that blessing, it says: The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His countenance shine upon you, and be gracious unto you! This is exactly what is happening. We need to understand that this is a great gift. It is such a gift to be alive today. People look back at things and say, "Oh, wouldn't it have been nice to be alive in this time or in that time!" No, this is the best time in history to be a Catholic. There is no better time ever to be a Catholic. We are going to see things that, as Our Lord said, kings and prophets longed to see but did not see them. We are going to see in our day events that people have sought after for centuries and begged God to intervene, but He has chosen us to be alive at this time. You can be guaranteed that if He has chosen us to be alive at this time He will also provide every single grace we need to be able to be faithful, every single grace we need to be able to become saints. Never in the history of Christianity has there been a better time to be a saint, and God has chosen us to be able to do just that.

Now the question, of course, is: Are we willing to cooperate with Him? That is the problem. When you think about what was happening with the apostles out on the Sea of Galilee, their little tiny boat was pretty small compared to the sea. So too, the Church might appear to be small by comparison to all of the wind and the waves and attacks and enemies and everything else that surrounds us. It might seem to be a better thing to jump ship and join the enemy. Our Holy Father has told us that the remnant is going to be exceedingly small, much smaller, he said, than what most people would ever assume. And so, number one, what that means is do not trust yourself. It is easy to sit here today and say, "Oh, I won't jump ship!" Do not count on it.

The only way we are not going to jump ship is if we keep our focus on Jesus. The only way—and I mean the only way—we are going to remain faithful is if we pray. If you do not know Jesus Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, you will not make it. It is just that simple. If you are not spending time with Jesus in prayer, you are not going to make it. Jesus is right

here in the bow of the ship, in the tabernacle, silent, passive, one could say "sleeping" in the Eucharist. But He is right there in the boat, and as long as we are with Jesus, we are going to be fine. But if we take our focus off of Him, we are in serious trouble. Ask Peter when he tried to walk across the water. As long as he was focused on Jesus, he was just fine. As soon as he took his focus off of Jesus and watched the wind and the waves, he began to sink. We will be no different. Stay in the boat and keep your focus on Jesus. Spend time in prayer every single day. I do not mean while you are stuffing your face and watching TV, cranking off a little prayer on your way out the door. Throw the stupid TV away, first of all, and pray. How much time every day do you spend in front of the TV? How much time every day do you spend in front of the tabernacle? Who is your God? That is what we really need to ask

"If you are going to say, 'As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord,' then prove it."

ourselves.

This is not a time for mediocrity. This is not a time for those who want to be able to hedge their bets. We need to make a choice. The prophet Elijah, when he went to Mount Carmel when the people had strayed from God, looked at the people and challenged them. He said, If Baal is God, follow him; if the Lord is God, follow Him. Which are you going to do? And the people refused to respond because they wanted to play both sides, just in case: "We're not sure." We are sure. The Lord is God. Period. Joshua, a thousand years before Elijah came along, looked at the people and said, Choose today whom you will serve, the gods your fathers served, or the Lord. He went on to say, As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Each one of us needs to make that same choice.

The time is near. The birth pangs are getting closer together. Any mother whose labor pains would be closer together understands exactly what that means. At that point, she is not goofing around trying to see if she can get a few last minute details accomplished, and she is certainly not wondering if there might be some way that she could skirt around having a baby at that time. What are we doing with our heads up in the clouds, wandering around aimlessly, wondering if we should serve the Lord or not, looking at the stupid bumper sticker that says: "How much can I get away with and still get to heaven"? Forget it. There is only one way, and He made it clear: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If we are not united with Him, we are going to fall off the boat. So it is very clear what we need to do.

It does not take a genius to be able to look around and see what is happening in the world. Things are progressing very, very rapidly, and we have a radical choice that we need to make. We have all been warned, and none of us will be with excuse. We have to choose today whom we will serve. Words are cheap. Put it into practice. Jesus Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament. Spend time with Him. Get to

know Him. Get accustomed to the way that He deals with things, and then be at peace, because even if He does not seem to answer your prayers, even if He seems like He is sound asleep in the bow, it does not matter. He is God. As long as He is in the boat, it will not sink; and as long as we remain in the boat, we will be saved.

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



ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE... LET US BEGIN...

We love those words and use them often in our family sharing. We are all on this path to heaven, which is narrow, and requires often that we readjust our travels, assess our position, and begin anew.

This is the fun of living the Christian life in this very dark age of ours. Always till now we have done nothing.

The Lord said that. "When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'" (LK 17:10)

What have we been commanded to do? Put simply, to live the Gospel. In order to advance in prayer and a holy life we need to live it generously too. Not with mediocrity. Not with indifference. We need to advance in knowledge of the things of God. To do this we need to pray, and study and know the things of God. These things were given to us by Christ. We cannot come upon them ourselves. We don't need to come upon them ourselves. They have been given to us, and blessed are we if we know them. Blessed still more are we if we live them.

If you read the Gospel, literally it impacts every aspect of our life. The Lord left nothing undone. We don't have to wonder what else we can do in our life. We need simply to open our hearts to God, in prayer, to ask him to give us BIG hearts, GENEROUS hearts, and a BIG love with which to love Him. That love that His Mother had. That love that the Saints had. He is generous and will not deny us the good things we need to advance in a holy life. His Spirit will come upon us and, in a manner so gentle, guide us to become more than we dreamed for love of Him. To begin always anew to add more things to our life that please Him, more thoughts, words, and actions that overcome our ongoing and ever-persistent

weaknesses, and open the door to holiness for us, the door to heaven.

Jesus is the keeper of that door. St. Peter has the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Our Sainly brothers and sisters in the full spirit of their eternal generosity and perpetual love want us there, with them, forever in the sight, the love, the power and joy of God's presence. Do you think they would deny us a prayer to become better? To do more? Not likely.

The Rule we live is a generous response to the Gospel. It is not an accident. It was given to St. Francis for us, the laity, so we could follow in the footsteps of Christ, as St. Francis did, in our own lives which are vastly different, and in many ways more demanding and dangerous, than the lives of priests and sisters in the Church who live in a more protected and directed environment. Our call is special.

We walk on the battlegrounds of life. We walk among sinners while fighting the call to sin in ourselves in a unique way. Out amongst the sheep. In the world but not of it. We are not shepherds, but what we have that is different than others is knowledge of the call to follow Christ that is special and different than so many we walk amongst. When we can, when we see, when we feel called, to witness to God with others we need to do that. To be a light to those around us. To begin to shine brighter, to call openly and loudly to a world darkened by lust and the lure of the flesh. To begin anew, and with a peaceful serenity and enthusiasm, to always be open to what God wants of us.

Let us begin in this new year to shine. Let us begin, for until now we have done nothing.

Happy New Year!

Yours in Christ, His Mother, and St. Francis who loved them both as we should.



Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP, Administrators, Morning Star Chapter, Minnesota



Grace upon grace...

by Janet Klasson, BSP



From the Second Reading, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus

Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:11-14)

Grace. God's gratuitous gift to humanity. Ever undeserved, often un-requested, sometimes unappreciated, but always worth pondering. The Catechism tells us:

"Grace is a participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an "adopted son" he can henceforth call God "Father," in union with the only Son. He receives the life of the Spirit who breathes charity into him and who forms the Church.

"This vocation to eternal life is supernatural. It depends entirely on God's gratuitous initiative, for he alone can reveal and give himself. It surpasses the power of human intellect and will, as that of every other creature. (CCC #1997, 1998)

I write this reflection on the feast day of Mary, Mother of God, whom the angel Gabriel hailed as "Full of Grace". We know that every word spoken by an angel comes directly from God, and each word has weight of its own. "Full of Grace". These three simple words, applied to this simple peasant girl, enraptured all of heaven.

Take the little invisible word, "of", defined as expressing the relationship between a scale or measure and a value. What was the measure? Full. What was the value? Grace.

How full is full? When something is full, there is no room in it for anything else. Mary had emptied herself of all that was not God, and so made room in her humble heart for all that God wanted to give her, which was everything, including his own Beloved Son. How empty must she have been to make room for the infinite God to dwell in her. What humility! No spec of a space left where her own will reigned, but her Fiat! was unconditional and unlimited. Therefore,

the grace she received was unconditional and unlimited. Full measure given, full value received. What can we learn from this as penitents in the world?

Just as salvation history could not proceed without the cooperation of a humble soul—Mary—so too are we called in our own time to cooperate with grace for the salvation of souls. If we take this seriously—and we must—our own wills must be tied, like hers, to the foot of the cross. Our fiat like hers must be unconditional and unlimited. For us this is impossible, but for God all things are possible.

The Rule we follow is itself a great grace that helps us to die to self, one desire at a time. The longer we live the rule, the more we empty ourselves, and the more we desire to. This too is grace. Our Lord would not call us to this self-emptying if the world were not in such dire need of the grace that he wishes to pour on it through us, whether we see it or not.

Of course, the principle grace, as St. Paul tells us in the above scripture passage, is Our Lord, Jesus Christ himself, "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds."

January is the time of new beginnings. The world calls them resolutions, but I like the way St. Francis put it. St. Bonaventure tells us that towards the end of his life St. Francis would tell the other friars: "Let us begin again, brothers, for up until now, we have done little or nothing."

Let us, too, begin anew to empty ourselves, that we may be conduits of as much grace as God desires to pour into the world through us.

Blessed New Year to you and yours in Our Lord, Jesus Christ and his most Immaculate Mother. St. Francis and St. Clare, pray for us!

Janet Klasson BSP, Divine Mercy Chapter, Canada



TO KNOW, TO LOVE, TO SERVE

(A SYMPOSIUM WITH CARDINAL COLLINS AND BISHOP KASUN, CSB)

As a member of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, St Clare Chapter in the Toronto Archdiocese, I and our new Postulant received an invitation to attend the yearly Symposium sponsored by Bishop Kasun, CSB who is Vicar of Lay Associations in the Archdiocese.

Very interesting points were made, in the presentations as well as an opportunity to share with other Associations about their beginnings and ministries. There are about 100 Associations existing in this Archdiocese, so the Symposium was well-attended.

Highlighting some of the points made by the Cardinal, Bishop, and Laity may touch home with our Penitents as they serve God in their vocation of prayer, fasting and penance as well as ministries in their local parishes.

We are indeed in difficult times in the Church and this makes it a time of renewal. Who is the Church? We are all the Church! Sometimes it seems we may never see past the current evils, but in prayer we will remain close to God. Examining our conscience daily will also keep us on track should we be tempted to fall away or be led astray.

One can see through the many Lay Associations, that Christian Witness is flourishing, and the vibrancy is

like cut diamonds fitting together to form community—in the Trinity. In the 1st Letter of John, we breathe excitement and joy in our relationship with God and each other which offers fellowship; a fellowship together in Christ, not isolated. We accompany each other on our journey just as Jesus accompanied the Apostles on the Road to Emmaus. The Apostles were travelling along in despair and discouragement, however having the Divine Companion, they become rooted in Scripture—the Word of God.

The true source involves challenge! Why? To keep us on the right path doing good works. The Gospels invite us to stay with Jesus and we are free to respond. When this all took place on the Road to Emmaus, the Apostles finally recognized Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread, just as we are continually called/invited to share a Sacramental meal with Jesus.

These are all beautiful thoughts to help us continue our journey with endurance and hope.

Soon the light of Christ will be celebrated as the Epiphany and we can be very thankful for the blessings we have through, with and in Jesus and the Eucharist!

Submitted by: Penitent



From the Desert Fathers

Abba Macarius the Great:

*"If we remember the wrongs which men have done to us,
we destroy the power of the remembrance of God."*

Submitted by: Penitent



FROM THE 'SPARROW' The Beggar

Peace dear sparrows! In solitude the reading of Lazarus came to me the last week of December. Like a haunting memory that comes at

times during the festive season...and so I delve off into this narrative.

The account of the rich man and Lazarus can easily arouse a sparrow's righteous indignation at the way

this wealthy man indulged in luxury while ignoring the suffering beggar at his gate. But as we sparrows study this Scripture some puzzling and even disturbing facts become evident. The rich man wore fine clothing and ate well daily. We can easily identify with that. The Bible certainly does NOT condemn riches as such, which is reassuring to those of us who live in the wealthiest countries the world has ever known, who dress in fine clothing (albeit simple and modest), and who eat heartily every day. Besides, there are no beggars at our gates.

Oh? Have we not read the newsletters or watched the news report on TV that report some of the desperate physical and spiritual needs of millions of people suffering throughout the world? What about spiritual beggars around us at work, in our communities, in our travels, and possibly in our own communities and homes? Are we content to ignore them or perhaps to feed them with a few natural and spiritual crumbs from our overflowing tables?

The Sacrifice

Peace to all the sparrows! As we have closed out the year of the Octave of Christmas we are reminded of the sober thoughts of the death of St. Stephen and the Holy Innocents and the great sacrifices they gave for the Lord. A counterpoint to those sacrifices will now be presented.

In the Old Testament, a sacrifice that was acceptable to the Lord was an animal that was valuable to its owner. It could not be lame or defective in any way. To be a true symbol of the sacrifice for sins, that animal would then be sacrificed on the altar of God. Today we are called to offer our own bodies as living sacrifices. (cf. Rom. 12:1) How is this possible, if a sacrifice means putting to death or giving up something that is valuable to us? It could sound as though we are asked to give up our bodies through death.

The story is told of a young girl in the early church whose brother had been martyred for his faith. She expressed her desire to also give her life for her Lord. In trying to dissuade her from turning herself in, an older person told her that although it may take courage to die for a cause, it may take even more

St. Paul gave some clear direction in Timothy 6:17-18. If we are "rich in this world," we also need to be "rich in good works." No one can help all the poor, but everyone is called to give "as God hath prospered him" (1 Corinthians 16:2) and "according as he purposeth in his heart," though "not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) As stewards under God, we have an opportunity to serve Him by serving others with the rich blessings He entrusted to us. If we indulge ourselves, as the rich man in the Lazarus story above, we will experience the same dreadful consequences as him. It's our choice.

"Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother; to thy brother; and to thy needy."

—Deuteronomy 15:11

As sparrows, let us keep St. Francis' message of sharing in like manner with all whom we meet as we live the Gospel of Our Lord in our daily lives.

courage to live for a cause. That is the kind of sacrifice we are talking about here.

It does take courage for a Christian to give his life for his faith, but usually that is soon over. Giving our bodies as living sacrifices may well take even more courage. That means giving up our will day after day, year after year, for the rest of our lives! Yet the New Testament Scriptures say this is our reasonable service; it is simply what is expected of us. Everything we receive from God is to be used for His service first of all. Our lives are truly to be given to Him as living sacrifices.

Even St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony of Padua both wanted to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for the Lord Jesus but were deprived of that glorious honor and instead had to make a living sacrifice of their lives by living out the destiny the Lord had planned out for each of them. In like obedience may we sparrows shoulder our respective crosses and heed His command to "Follow Me."

O King of the Elect, my place in heaven is among the Holy Innocents. Like them, O Jesus, I will kiss your sweet face.

—St. Therese, the Little Flower

pax et bonum, Bro. Sparrow
Bob Hall BSP, Little Flower Chapter, N. Carolina



MORNING STAR: NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATION...

STAY CONNECTED...PLEASE!

If you wish to connect with your Brothers and Sisters in the BSP, please remember that the **BSP Forums** at <http://bspenance.org/forum/>. Hope to see you there!

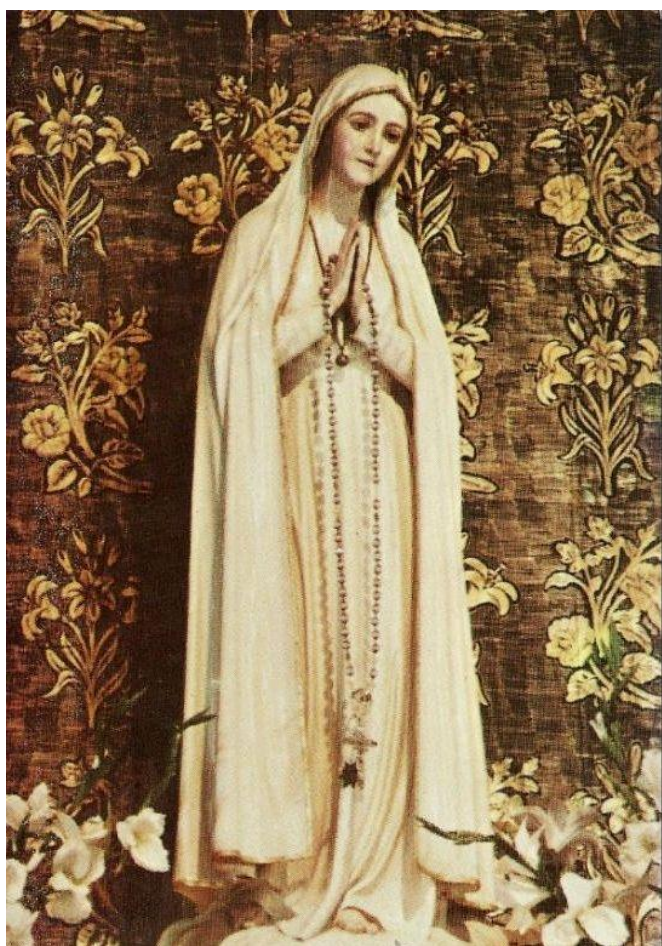
HANDBOOK OF THE ASSOCIATION...



The BSP Handbook, titled *Stella Matutina: Handbook of The Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis* is now available for order. 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.

ENTRUSTING OUR YEAR TO MARY

Act of Entrustment to Mary, Pope Francis, 13 October 2013



Blessed Virgin Mary of Fátima,
with renewed gratitude for your motherly presence
we join in the voice of all generations that call you blessed.

We celebrate in you the great works of God,
who never tires of lowering himself in mercy over
humanity,
afflicted by evil and wounded by sin,
to heal and to save it.

Accept with the benevolence of a Mother
this act of entrustment that we make in faith today,
before this your image, beloved to us.

We are certain that each one of us is precious in your eyes
and that nothing in our hearts has estranged you.

May that we allow your sweet gaze
to reach us and the perpetual warmth of your smile.

Guard our life with your embrace:
bless and strengthen every desire for good;
give new life and nourishment to faith;
sustain and enlighten hope;
awaken and animate charity;
guide us all on the path to holiness.

Teach us your own special love for the little and the poor,
for the excluded and the suffering,
for sinners and the wounded of heart:
gather all people under your protection
and give us all to your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

*Mary, Queen of
Peace, pray for us.*

The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE OF ST. FRANCIS

A.k.a. BSP, is a non-profit Private Association of the Faithful, which is dedicated to renewing the ancient way of penance as contained in the First Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis of 1221 for lay people in our modern world. We have the blessing of the Catholic Church to do this through several of its Archbishops, Bishops, and priests. If you are bound by another Rule of life in another profession of the way of St. Francis that does not permit you to enter other religious families you are nonetheless invited to add the elements of this beautiful way of life that Saint Francis of Assisi gave us to the lifestyle of your profession.

All members, and Franciscans, are welcome to submit articles for consideration for inclusion in this newsletter if they are directed towards the spiritual formation of members or are the outgrowth of the lifestyle of the Association. Just send them to the BSP at minncc@aol.com. Feel free to share this newsletter with your friends or neighbors. It is intended to be the primary monthly communication of the Association, and ongoing formation for all members and friends. And if you can find it in your heart and in your budget remember that donations to the BSP are used strictly to promote the lifestyle and are tax deductible.

We remain, always, sincerely yours in the love of Jesus Christ!

Bruce and Shelley Fahey BSP, Administrators
minncc03@gmail.com ~ www.bspenance.org



Welcome to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance!

In the world, but not of it, for Christ!



The BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
PENANCE



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