Week 5, November 11-17

The thought for this week is Evangelical Love. St. Bernard the Abbot stated: “Love is sufficient of itself; it gives pleasure by itself and because of itself. It is its own merit, its own reward. Love looks for no cause outside itself, no effect beyond itself. Its profit lies in its practice…. For when God loves, all he desires is to be loved in return; the sole purpose of his love is to be loved, in the knowledge that those who love him are made happy by their love of him.”

Unconditional love, or agape love, rooted in behavior toward others without regard to their due is the love with which Jesus loves and speaks; Gospel love: agape love. This is the love that expects nothing from the one loved. It is the love of deliberate choice.

The source of poverty pervaded the servant of God with such fulness and abundance that he seemed to possess a mother's heart for relieving the misery of suffering people. He had an inborn kindness doubled by the piety of Christ poured out on him. His soul melted for the poor and infirm, and to those to whom he could not extend a hand he extended his affection, with tenderness of a pious heart, he referred to Christ anyone he saw in need or deprivation. In all the poor he saw before him a portrait of Christ. He not only freely gave to those he met the necessities of life if these had been given to him, but he also resolved they should be returned as if they truly belonged to them. He spared nothing at all, neither mantels nor tunics, neither books nor even appointments of the altar, all these he gave to the poor when he could to fulfill his obligation of piety even to the utter privation of himself. [The Minor Legend of St. Francis, Bonaventure, 7th lesson]

Saint Francis went about loving the brothers and sisters of Assisi. He greeted each one with “Pace bene!” “Peace and good!” When you can greet another with the greeting of peace, then you will not have malice in your heart.

Psalm Fragment:
“The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;
The Lord raises those who are bowed down;
The Lord loves the righteous.” ~ Psalm 146:8

Reflection Question:
How many people have you acknowledged today with a greeting of peace?
Are you able or willing to give to another that which you no longer need; or that which you cherish, if another needs it more?

Action for this Week:
I will love as Jesus loves – expecting nothing in return and only wanting the best for the person loved. Journal how this experience affected you.
Prayer for the Week:
Lord Jesus,
I ask you for a new fullness of
The charism of Poverty. I ask you to
reveal to me my inordinate attachments,
my holding on to things or persons,
my “richness” that keeps me from saying
a more complete “yes” to you.
Teach me to surrender to You my excessive
search for material comforts, and
whatever material goods as I have that I
do not really need to serve You.
Lord, teach me to be poor in spirit,
always aware of and relying on Your presence
and power. Amen.