



"To gather priests to Christ and to one another to proclaim..."

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

The Board of Directors Meet

Fr. Ray Ratzenberger

The Board of directors, Fr. John Allard, Fr. Cuthbert Alexander, Fr. Timothy Graff, Fr. Bob Giardina, and Fr. Ray Ratzenberger had their annual meeting at Visitation House in Steubenville, Ohio, U.S.A. to discuss the up-coming conference in Tucson and other matters of concern.

On Monday morning, May 6, 2002, during the praise time, the Lord spoke through scripture and prophetic utterances to us in a very clear way. The following are the prophecies we received for the Fraternity, and Church in its present time of difficulty.

Fr. Ray Ratzenberger received the scriptures: Zephaniah 3:1-13, 1Corinthians 6:1-11, Luke 17:1-6, & Wisdom 1:1-7. With these scriptures he received this prophecy: *"Judgment begins first with the House of God. I am purifying you so that you may be ready to help the world when its time of purification comes. Before judgment comes to the world, it must first come to My Church. The Church must then be an undimmed light to the world. When the world is plunged into darkness, it will appear as a beacon in the night leading one to safety, to a*

place of harbor (refuge)."

Fr. Timothy Graff received, 1 Timothy 6:11-16. Which exhorts: Pursue righteousness and virtue. Keep the commandments without stain. We are called to personal holiness, not to be distracted, and to give good witness. He also got, 2 Chronicles 34:29-33 that talks about the rebuilding of the temple, and the finding of the book of Deuteronomy. At that time the people realized that they were not following the Lord the way they should. We are called to take seriously the Lord's decrees. He was also reminded of the Pope's recent letter entitled, Final Communiqué of the Interdicasterial Meeting of the American Cardinals, that was written after their April meeting with the Pope as a response to the sexual sins of priests.

Fr. Bob Giardina received, John 17:9-26, which has the Lord praying to His Father to keep them (His disciples) safe from the evil one: "I do not ask you to take them out of the world." He also got, Psalm 40:12-17: "For all about me are evils beyond reckoning; my sins so overcome me that I cannot see;" (v. 13) then he received the following prophecy: *"The priesthood is being purified by fire. My brothers are wounded and hurt, sad and angry. Some are discouraged, some feel ashamed, and all feel hurt by the scandal. What are you going to do about it? What will you allow me to*



The Connecticut Fraternity, U.S.A. has met in the Hartford Diocese every Monday for over 15 years. Seated From Left to Right are: Fr. Guillermo Velez, Fr. Brian Jeffries (leader), standing Left to Right are: Fr. John Szantyr, Fr. Paul Hallovach, Fr. Bob Rousseau and Fr. Joe Looney.

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Editor's Box:

Please send all articles, comments and photos to the editor, Fr. Cuthbert Alexander, can be emailed at cuttya1@tstt.net.tt.

Submissions and articles are always appreciated from members. If you have events that are upcoming, please alert the editors so they can prepare a followup article on the event.

We have recently held our annual board of directors meeting at Visitation House. It is our yearly corporation meeting whose goal is to set the theme of the annual meeting (in Tucson, Arizona this year), to project the new budget, to meet with support staff, to talk about the state of fraternities around the world, and to do some planning for the future. In light of what is happening to priests in our country, we are hoping to step up our efforts at outreach to existing fraternities in a ministry of encouragement. The discerned theme for this year's annual meeting is: *"Compete well for the faith" (1Tim.6.12a)*. Our hope is to send "apostles" to our brothers to urge them to "compete well" and to be encouraged. Please pray for us in this critical time.

One of the concerns of the board of directors was the sharp decline in donations and tithes. There are probably many reasons for this (Sept. 11, a declining economy, the "crisis" in the Church), still we ask your help in these trying times so as to enable our ministries at home and abroad to continue. We are embarking on a campaign to broaden our donor base—if you know of someone who would be interested in being an intercessor and donor to the Fraternity of Priests, please send us their name and address.

In John.17.1ff, Jesus prays to His Father for His disciples and their future ministry. He asks that the Father glorify Him, knowing full well this means His death. His death shows the extent of His love, He holds nothing back, and He goes all the way and pours out His life. He also knew that His Father had a plan and Jesus trusted in this. When you look at Jesus' ministry from a worldly perspective, it sure seems to be a failure: rejected by the religious establishment, misunderstood and rejected by most people, betrayed, denied, and abandoned by His disciples. Yet, Jesus trusted His Father. With the Resurrection and the sending of the Spirit, we see God's plan prevail, and seeming

failure turned into events with eternal consequences.

The application to us is profound: a) we are the disciples of today, and

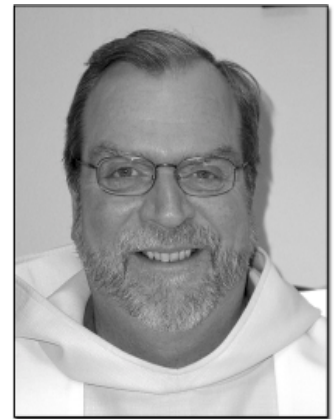
Jesus still prays for us; b) The incredible love of God exhibited in the death and resurrection of Jesus is love for us too, since Jesus died for all people of all time—He died for me! c) We are called on to trust in the Father the way Jesus did, even in the midst of seeming failure. I believe that this is the stance that Christians must have in the world today. In the midst of all the failure and sin around us, do we trust in our Father? He still has a plan. He, Jesus, and the Spirit are still with us! Cynicism, negativity, the spreading of bad news and gossip are not signs of trust in the Father. Will I trust in Tom Brokaw and the local paper, or in my Father? This is the message of encouragement we need to help all—"compete well for the faith."

Pray for priests and the priesthood. Pray for your parish priest. Encourage him in these days. On behalf of the Fraternity of Priests, thanks for your continued prayer and support. We need you more than ever. Together let us trust in our Almighty and Loving Father, and together we will "compete well for the faith." God bless you.

In Jesus,



Fr. John



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do about it through you? The priesthood is under attack. There is spiritual warfare being waged against me, and the Fraternity of Priests who are being called to proclaim the visitation message. You have been prepared. And I have given you the power of the Holy Spirit for these times of stress. My Church is wounded, my priests are wounded it is time for healing.”

Fr. Cuthbert Alexander received Wisdom 7:22-30 which speaks about wisdom as holy, unique, and humble. She is an aura of the might of God, image of His goodness. He also got, Isaiah 61: 1-3, where the Messiah states that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him. The sense he got from these scriptures was that we need the gift of the Spirit in a very special way now for the restoration, and for the ongoing mission of the Church.

Fr. John Allard turned to John 10:7-15: “The Good Shepherd.” And, Romans 4:18-21 that states that Abraham hoped against hope when he was told he would be the father of nations. Then he received these words from the Lord:

“I still lead my sheep. How critical it is that they hear my voice and recognize it as mine. I am still the gate. There is no other way of coming into an abundant life then through me. I will continue to lead even in the midst of wolves and marauders, like Abraham, hope against hope. Believe and trust in me. I am able to do what I promise, and I will do it. Place your trust in me. And pray my

protection for my priesthood. Be encouraged.”

The sense he had from the Lord: that we need to hear and recognize the Lord’s voice. There was also a general feeling of encouragement, protection and trust. We must pray for protection in these times.

The members of the Board felt that the Lord is not only purifying the priesthood, but also desires to encourage and build up His faithful priests now. We are going through a general restoration of the Church and priesthood at this present time. We are encouraged to keep running the race even though this is a time of persecution—the Church’s purification. Like Abraham, let us hope against hope, even when things seem so dismal.

DON'T FORGET!

Join us for the annual Fraternity Conference! August 4-9, 2002 in Tucson, Arizona.

This year’s retreat promises to be relaxing and rewarding. Mark your calendars now and stay tuned for more details!

Editor’s Note

In November of 1999 the Board of Directors entrusted me with the responsibility of editing the Newsletter. I hope I did a good job, seeing that this really is not my forte.

Since that time my responsibilities have increased within my own diocese. Putting together the newsletter became an added burden to the point of endangering my health. My doctor has asked me to cut back on work, and to spend more time with exercise.

So regretfully I resigned my position of co-editor with Fr. Cuthbert Alexander, and give him the whole “ball of wax”. Really, he is much more capable than I. He will need help though, for he also is a very busy man.

I hope this extra time will give me more opportunity to write, so you will still be hearing from me. God Bless, and thanks for all the encouragement you have given me in this endeavor.

—Fr. Ray Ratzenberger



Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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Dear Father John Allard,
This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.
 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____