

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

| November 2006                            |   |   |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| Sunday                                   | Monday                                      | Tuesday                                     | Wednesday                               | Thursday                                 | Friday  | Saturday                               |
|  |   |   | Rev. Stephen Johnson<br>Worcester, MA 1 | Rev. Michael Roy<br>Worcester, MA 2      | Rev. George Dunkley<br>Worcester, MA 3              | Pope Benedict XVI 4                    |
| Rev. Jean-Paul Gagnon<br>Worcester, MA 5 | Rev. Gerald Bordelon<br>Alexandria, LA 6    | Rev. Harold Imamshah<br>Alexandria, LA 7    | Rev. Peter Grant<br>Alexandria, LA 8    | Rev. Daniel Cook<br>Alexandria, LA 9     | Rev. George Pookkattu<br>C.M.I<br>Alexandria, LA 10 | Rev. Ron Matthews<br>Alexandria, LA 11 |
| Rev. Ferre D'cruz<br>Alexandria, LA 12   | Rev. James Nellikunnel<br>Alexandria, LA 13 | Dcn. Norman Gremillion<br>Alexandria, LA 14 | Rev. Greg Downes<br>Alexandria, LA 15   | Rev. John Perdue<br>Alexandria, LA 16    | Rev. Vincent Manuel<br>Alexandria, LA 17            | Rev. Larry Hess<br>Allentown, PA 18    |
| Rev. Patrick Gilbert<br>Boston, MA 19    | Rev. Paul Gilbert<br>Boston, MA 20          | Rev. Ross Frey<br>Boston, MA 21             | Rev. Gerry Fraser<br>Boston, MA 22      | Rev. Maurice Larochelle<br>Boston, MA 23 | Padre Paul McManus<br>Boston, MA 24                 | Rev. Donald Clinton<br>Boston, MA 25   |
| Rev. John Kiley<br>Boston, MA 26         | Rev. James O'Driscoll<br>Boston, MA 27      | Rev. David Ziomek<br>Boston, MA 28          | Rev. Richard Hoch<br>R.I.P. 29          | Rev. Denis Pickert<br>R.I.P. 30          |   |  |

**A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS**

*O 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.*

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

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 \$10  \$25  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Fraternity of Priests pledge of financial accountability: We take very seriously the trust you put in us when you send a gift. We stand accountable before God and you to honor that trust. We pledge: **To use your gift carefully and wisely, and not to ask for money that is not needed.**



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

**THE VISITATION**

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

**It Is All About Being With Christ**

Pope Benedict XVI

This is a Vatican translation of the address Benedict XVI prepared, but did not deliver — as he preferred to give a spontaneous reflection — to the priests and deacons whom he met with on September 16, 2006 in the cathedral of Freising.

Christ sees the world as “God’s field” (cf. Matthew 13:38-43), in which a rich harvest is growing and there is need of reapers. Something similar is to be found also in Mark’s Gospel (4:26-29). The fundamental approach of Jesus emerging from these different sayings is one of optimism, based on confidence in the power of the Father, the “Lord of the harvest” (Matthew 9:38).

Jesus’ confidence becomes for us a source of hope, since he is capable of looking beyond the veil of appearances to the mysterious yet irresistible workings of the Father. The seed of the Word of God always bears fruit. And so the harvest of God is growing, even when to merely human eyes, this does not seem to be the case.

Like the sower of the parable, he sowed the seed with apparently reckless generosity, and part of it has fallen on the road, on rocky soil, or among thorns (cf. Matthew 13:3-8).

Underlying this generosity is a confidence in the power of the Father to change rocky or thorny

ground into fertile soil. Each priest must let himself be filled with the same confidence in the power of grace, since he himself was a piece of ground needing to be cleared by the divine sower so that the seed could take root and ripen into a mature and fully-grown response, the response of “Here I am” which we made at our ordination and renew each day in communion with Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist.

We must always keep in mind the words of our biblical text: It is the “Lord of the harvest” who “sends” laborers into his harvest. Jesus did not give his disciples the task of calling other volunteers or organizing promotional campaigns aimed at gathering new members; he told them to “pray” to God. What does this mean? Should our vocational work limit itself to prayer? Obviously not.

“Pray to the Lord of the harvest” means something more profound: Only by remaining in intimate communion with the Lord of the harvest, by living immersed as it were in his “heart” full of love and compassion for humanity, can we bring other laborers to share in the work of the Kingdom of God. Ours is not a mind-set of numbers and efficiency, but one of gratuity

and self-giving. It is that of the grain of wheat which bears fruit precisely when it falls to the ground and dies.

The laborers in God’s harvest are those who follow in the footsteps of Christ. This requires self-detachment and being fully “attuned” to his will. This task is not easy, for it goes against a “force of gravity” deep within us, leading us to become self-centered. We can only overcome this force if we undertake an Easter journey of death and resurrection.

Through this Easter journey, the disciple becomes a true witness of the Lord. And what is the task of a witness? In what does his service consist? St. Augustine tried to explain the essence of the ordained minister’s task by means of two definitions which have become classic. He described the minister above all as “servus Christi” (cf. Sermo Guelf. 9:4; Ep. 130; Ep. 228:2, etc.).

Now, the term “servant” implies a concept of relation: To be a servant is to be in relation to a master. To describe the priest as “servus Christi” is to emphasize that his life has an essential “relational connotation”: With every fiber of his being he is in relation to Christ. This

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# Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor, Fr. John Gordon via e-mail at [editor@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org) or fax to 740-283-6377.

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted. Any submissions will help make each issue better!

The Second Vatican Council reminded us that ALL members of the church were to hear the "call to holiness". Holiness was not a state in life reserved for the pope, bishops, priests and sisters only but for children, single men and women, married couples, widows and widowers alike.

We who are members of the body of Christ in the Roman Catholic Church are very fortunate to have such a great "cloud of witnesses" interceding before the throne of God for all those still in pilgrimage on this earth. One of the richest times of the liturgical year is the month of October when we celebrate people like Mary (Our Lady of the Rosary), St. Francis, Sts. Simon and Jude, St. Luke the Evangelist, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and of course the patron saint of my own parish St. Denis (first bishop of Paris and martyr).

Each of these men and women lived in different times with different challenges to being a faithful and committed Catholic until death. Sometimes we think that they had it easier than we do. Yet, each era and each person experienced the challenges of faith in their own unique way.

Having returned from my week long retreat in Ars France and seeing the location and size of Ars (then and now) I found myself saying that Jeanee Marie Vianney had it "easy". He had only a couple of hundred people in his village and I have over 2,500 families. The complexities of ministering in an American parish is so different from just 125 years ago in France. Yet, in reading his biography I began to see the challenges, both physical and spiritual, that I would not want in my priesthood.

The incredible challenge (then and now) to live out the call to holiness in the priesthood is still amazing. Priests, like all men, like a good challenge, whether physical or spiritual. As priests we need to keep our eyes on our great

high priest and to make sure that our priestly lives are rooted in Christ and not merely in our pastoral ministry.

We are most grateful to you, our friends in the Fraternity, who continually offer prayerful intercession to the Father on our behalf.

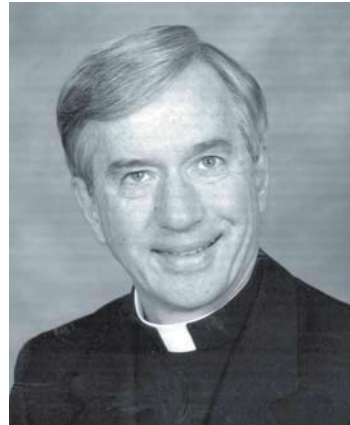
All of us recognize that we would not respond well to the call of God if it were not for the faithful prayers of our intercessors.

As you journey with the church through the liturgical calendar this month, delight in how God works out His divine plan of holiness through such varied individuals and trust "that He who has begun the good work in you will bring it to completion."

In Christ,



Father Bill Cosgrove



## Fraternity Financial Report

One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Monthly Donation Budget:  | <b>\$6,500.00</b> |
| Actual Donations:         | <b>\$7,031.00</b> |
| Budget Surplus (shortage) | <b>\$ 531.00</b>  |

Current as of August 31, 2006.

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takes nothing away from his relation to the community, indeed it provides the foundation for it: Precisely as "Christ's servant" he is "in his name, servant of his servants" (title of Ep. 217 to Vitale; cf. also De pecc. mer. et rem. III; Ep. 130; Sermo Guelf. 32:3, etc.).

By virtue of the sacramental character received at ordination, he belongs to Christ and shares his unreserved dedication to the "body" of the Church. This ontological aspect of the priestly ministry, which reaches to the very being of the individual concerned, creates in him the presuppositions of a radical form of service unimaginable in the secular sphere.

The other definition of the ordained minister to which Augustine frequently returns is "vox Christi." He develops his reflection on this topic by meditating on the figure of John the Baptist (cf. Serm. 288; 293:3; Serm. Dolbeau 3, etc.). The Precursor of Jesus defines himself as a simple "voice" sent to proclaim Christ who is the "Word"; likewise the minister, according to Augustine, has the task of being "vox Verbi" (cf. Serm. 46:30-32), "praedicator Verbi" (cf. Serm. 71:13/22), "Verbi prolator" (cf. En. in Ps. 134:1; Serm 23:1, etc.).

It is an idea that recurs frequently in Augustine; it brings out once more the "relational connotation" of the minister: As the "voice" he stands in relation to the "Word" who is Christ. The greatness and the humility of the ordained ministry are here revealed. Like St. John the Baptist,

the priest and the deacon are merely the precursors, the servants of the Word. It is not they who are at the center, but Christ, whose "voice" they must be with their whole existence.

It is from this reflection that the answer emerges to a question that no responsible pastor of souls can fail to ask himself, especially in the current situation of an increasing shortage of priests: how to preserve interior unity amid the often frenetic activity of ministry?

The way toward a solution to this problem lies in intimate communion with Christ, whose food was to do the will of the Father (cf. John 4:34). It is important that the ontological relationship with Christ, given at ordination, should come to life in his consciousness and consequently in his actions: All the things I do, I do in communion with him. It is in doing them that I am united with him.

However diverse and even, seen from outside, mutually opposed my activities may be, they are unified at the level of underlying motivation: It is all about being with Christ, acting as an instrument in communion with him. From this emerges a new vision of priestly asceticism. This is not to be placed alongside pastoral activity as an extra burden, another task which further weighs down upon my day.

In the action itself I learn self-mastery, I learn to give my life with serenity; in disappointment and in failure I learn renunciation, I learn to accept sorrow, I learn detachment from myself. In the joy of success I learn gratitude. In

administering the sacraments I receive them interiorly myself.... This asceticism of service, service itself as the true asceticism of my life, is undoubtedly a most important motive that nevertheless requires a constant interior reinterpretation of action based upon being.

Even if the priest seeks to live out his service as asceticism and his sacramental activity as personal encounter with Christ, he will still need moments to catch his breath, so that this inner directedness can become real and effective. Jesus himself, when his disciples returned from their first missionary journey, said to them: "Come away, to a lonely place, and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31).

Generous self-giving for others is impossible without discipline and constant recovery of true faith-filled interiority. The effectiveness of pastoral action depends, ultimately, upon prayer; otherwise, service becomes empty activism.

Therefore the time spent in direct encounter with God in prayer can rightly be described as the pastoral priority par excellence: It is the soul's breath, without which the priest necessarily remains "breathless," deprived of the "oxygen" of optimism and joy, which he needs if he is to allow himself to be sent, day by day, as a worker into the Lord's harvest. Amen!

[Translation of German original issued by the Holy See; adapted]

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Please send us your prayer intentions: \_\_\_\_\_

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