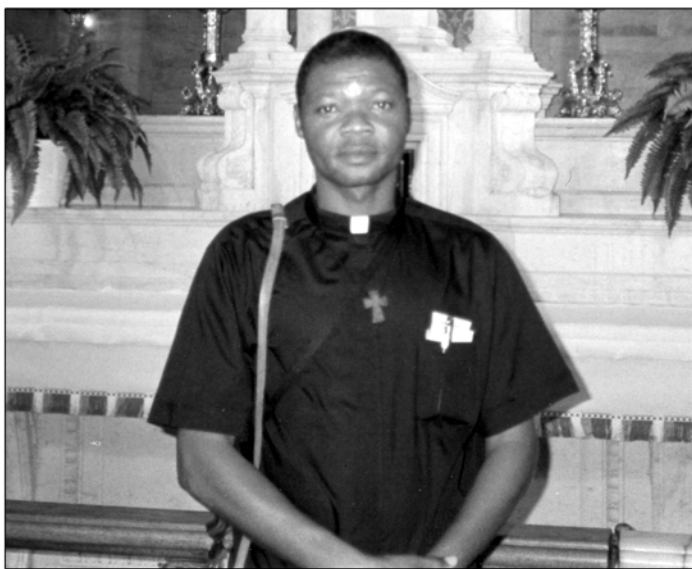


International Fraternity Retreat A Transforming Experience

by Fr. Paul Kapochina

In August 2003, the Fraternity of Priests in New York organized a retreat. I was invited to attend this retreat through the efforts of Fr. Paul O'Donnell Duggan. This retreat exposed me to experience a solemn encounter with God in a foreign land through committed and devout priests, making themselves totally present to their confreres. The atmosphere during the retreat can be likened to that of Acts: 4:32 "we were all of one heart and soul...we were available to each other and whatever was available was for all."



Fr. Paul Kapochina participated in the 2003 Annual Conference.

The theme of the retreat was "If anyone will come after me..." The first speaker, Fr. John Allard captured retreatants into the retreat mood when he said and I paraphrase "When Christ tells us to discipleship, he bids us come and die." My understanding of this statement was that the call to discipleship goes along with great sacrifices, with the hope of a future benefit. With this first talk the rest of the presentations fitted well into the theme which led participants into a very deep encounter with God.

Fr. Ray Ratzemberger left us a message of hope when he encouraged us, who are disciples, to see our trials as a means of growth—for the good undergo more trials than the wicked (Eccl. 8:10-17)

The ultimate abiding place for us disciples during our trials is in the Lord. If the Eucharist becomes the center of our ministry then we will be able to bear the cost of our discipleship. The various speakers

were inspired by God and delivered exactly the materials relevant for our spiritual consumption and growth.

What was so inspiring to me was the radiation of holiness from my brother priests. Each of us could describe the other like Jesus described Nathaniel in John 1:47 "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Jesus, in other words, wants to portray Nathaniel as transparent. The transparency with which Jesus described Nathaniel is the same as my brother priests at the Fraternity retreat.

Participants came from all parts of the world yet remained one in the Lord. There was never a sign of racial difference. Prompted by this universality, Fr. Timothy Graff described his experience in Tanzania with tears as he saw a large number of Africans genuinely seeking God in abject poverty.

The liturgy was awesome, so well organized that the ecelebrations led our souls to a closewr union with God. The prayer sessions gave me a lot, especially to pray in tongues. My only problem is that my tongue is not yet totally loosened to pray fluently.

Personally, I have had a tremendous transformation in my life with the experience of this retreat. No one who is sincerely seeking the Lord can afford to remain the same after such a retreat.

The vision of my vocation and apostolate has become clearer than

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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The co-editor of the newsletter, Fr. Bill Cosgrove, can also be reached via e-mail at frbill@optonline.com or fax to 845-227-3951.

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted!

As you gather in your parishes for this season of Lent I pray that you take full advantage of the grace of this season. The Lord continues to amaze me as he honors the liturgical year and our efforts to draw closer to Him. No matter what we try to decide to do for this Lent know that the Lord wants to use it all to deepen his relationship with you.

One of the exciting things happening in my own parish is the presence of those preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation at the upcoming Easter Vigil. We are honored to have children, teenagers and adults from several different countries preparing this year. Listening to their stories of how they have arrived at this point in their lives is a sign of God's constant faithfulness and His plan for each of our lives.

Often one of the most difficult things for people to believe is that God has a plan for them. That there is a way that they are called to live out their lives for the building up of the Kingdom of God right here in our midst. If they are not faithful in living out their discipleship somehow the plan of God for them is not brought to it's fullness.

Our prayer for all of our members and benefactors this Lent is that you see the personal plan that God has for you during these days. This season is a time of great grace that the Lord gives us each year. Please remain faithful in seeking the Lord during these days. His greatest desire for you is to know His great personal love for you and the desire for you to know that in the depths of your hearts. Out of this love is a plan for life of love and service.

Please continue to pray for the Fraternity of Priests in these days. The Lord continues to pour out his blessings on us and opening new doors as we seek to play our part in His plan for the renewal of the priesthood. We have so many more invitations than we can accept but we try to seek God's will for us.

As we prepare for the glory of Christ's resurrection may we never take our eyes off the Lord and the desire He has for each of us to grow in holiness and the plan that He has for each of us to serve Him and His Church.



In Christ,

Fr. Timothy Graff

The Fraternity has been very blessed by the recent generosity of many friends, members, and lay supporters. This tremendous outpouring of financial support is very appreciated! As we give thanks for your kindness, rest assured that we will use these funds for the continued work of the Fraternity throughout the world. This issue reflects on the truly global outreach of the Fraternity and our important work. Your generosity will allow us to fulfill our mission and bring support to priests everywhere!

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: **\$7,467.00**

Actual Donations: **\$20,141.47**

Budget Surplus (shortage) **\$12,673.83**

Current as of January 31, 2004.

Midwest Fraternities Growing

by Fr. Bob Franco, Cleveland

Over the last couple of months I had the opportunity to speak with some of my brother priests in the Fraternities of Marquette, Grand Rapids, Saginaw, Indianapolis and St. Louis. I found our conversations encouraging, hope-filled and, at times, poignant.

Msgr. Harold Kneuen of **Indianapolis** has recently retired. However, he has found new ways of serving his diocese. He has become a long term fill-in priest. I caught up with him at a parish that had recently lost its pastor by a relatively sudden death. Msgr. Kneuen was filling in until the bishop appointed a new pastor. If that were not enough to keep him busy in retirement, he has begun taking piano lessons! This “hobby” is therapeutic for his arthritic fingers as well as giving joy to his soul. He reported that his Fraternity is a steady support for himself and the brother priests from Indianapolis.

Msgr. Ed Griesedieck of **St. Louis**, also recently retired, has taken up residence at Kenrick Seminary. There he is a senior priest in residence who offers spiritual direction and his perspective on ministry as a priest to the men in formation. He has reported that, with the return of **Fr. Marty Mannion** to the Archdiocese, the local Fraternity received an evangelistic outreach to the priests of St. Louis. They have had a couple of new priests

attending their local Fraternity meeting. However, the real story behind their growth is prayer. Each member of the Fraternity has committed **themselves to pray the Daytime Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours for the intention of the growth of the local Fraternity**. May we all follow their example! Ed also assured me that **plans for the annual meeting in August at St. Louis** are well under way. The retreat house has private air conditioned rooms and an indoor pool.

Fr. John Ederer of **Saginaw** has persevered in his service to God’s people as he adjusts to a new assignment. His local Fraternity has waned. However, he remains faithful to Lord and his vocation as a pastor in the diocese of Saginaw. He is also the spiritual director to the all Michigan charismatic conference planning team.

Fr. Ray Hoefgen of **Marquette** (the Upper Peninsula of Michigan), the leader of their local Fraternity, shared that he is recovering from heart surgery. The graces that come from medicine as well as the prayers of God’s people, have assisted him greatly. He reported that his Fraternity is doing well. They have been using a tape series from Jim “Butch” Murphy on The Will of God. The series has been a great encouragement to the brothers in the Fraternity.

Fr. Mark Mitchell of the diocese of **Grand Rapids**, has reported that their local Fraternity has grown by a couple of priests, though their ninety year old Franciscan priest had to stop coming to the meetings when his

community moved out of their diocese. They are meeting weekly and are encouraged by each others fellowship. Though there is reluctance among some to exercise prayer in tongues (two of them do exercise this gift regularly) they all do share the word of the Lord at the end of their prayer time. There is often a remarkable unity as to what God is saying to them. For some of their teachings they have used the writings of Pope John Paul II as the basis for their teachings. They are currently using a video series on the sacraments.

In general, the local fraternities in the Midwest have remained faithful in their commitment to pursue holiness, brotherly relationships and service to God’s people in the power of the Holy Spirit. A number of the local fraternities have added new members due to perseverance in reaching out to brothers and especially to prayer. May the Lord “extend (our) boundaries.” (I Chronicles 4:10-the prayer of Jabez)

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before. I can testify to this by the way I was transferred from my parish when I arrived and I accepted it with joy. After all, discipleship comes with a cost.

Luke 14:26 - “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife and children, sisters and brothers—yes, even life itself—such a person cannot be my disciple. And those who do not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

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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