

## What the Fraternity has Meant for Me

By Fr. Bennette Tang Bacheyie, Wa Fraternity

“I cannot forget all you shared with me...from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:5). These words have become very true for me ever since I joined the Fraternity of Priests. My experience with the Fraternity has greatly enriched my spiritual life and my ministry.

I was ordained on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, 1991. I have served the Diocese of Wa, Ghana, West Africa, since then. I got to know about the Fraternity two years after ordination through my spiritual director, Msgr. Irenaeus B. Songliedong, may he rest in peace. He was then the Vicar General of our diocese and the leader of the fraternity.

Ever since I joined the Fraternity, I have experienced an inner love and zeal for the Lord through living the Kingdom Disciplines. These have drawn me closer to the Lord and to my confreres. For instance, I keep the discipline of praying one hour a day. I read scripture daily and keep a journal of the spiritual thoughts and inspirations that come up in my meditation. Every Friday I have a day of fast, taking only dinner. I also give one-tenth of what I earn in a month for the material support of our local fraternity. I have tried to be present at all our Fraternity meetings despite my apostolate as a chaplain and teacher in a secondary school in my parish. My brothers in the Fraternity have helped me discern both spiritual and material matters. I have experienced a closer sense of belonging and being appreciated.

All of this was reflected in the invitation that was extended to me by Fr. Timothy Graff when he invited me to take part in this year’s annual meeting of the

Fraternity of Priests in Trinidad, and to visit the United States for two months.

This experience has been an exposure for me into the international dimension of our brotherhood. I got to meet the directors of the Fraternity personally, and to interact with them. I now know some of the brothers from the U.S., India, and the Caribbean. My



perspective of life relating to Trinidad, and the United States has been broadened. For example, I learned about the history and culture of the people in the Caribbean which has been very revealing. Before this visit I thought of the United States as a “paradise”, a land free from difficulties. I have seen that this is totally not the case. I have learned that material prosperity has been achieved through hard work, so there are problems in family life as a result. I also learned there is an urgent need for evangelization. They need more local workers and those from abroad. There is a great need for vocations to the priestly

and religious life.

The warmth and love that I received from the brothers as I visited was tremendous. This was true everywhere I went. In Trinidad I was invited by some brothers to stay with them for several days after the conference. In all I spent ten days there. Fr. George Lewis took me to his parish in Erin for four days. He had no cook, which was surprising for me, since we have cooks in all our rectories in our diocese. He prepared all the meals, treating me to very spicy African food. I remarked one day, “George, if I stay here another week, I will be a chef by the time I return.”

Next I spent three days with Fr. Dwight Merrick in his parish at Blanchisseuse. He took me along to every village he went to minister to the people. I got the chance to celebrate the Eucharist, attend meetings, and to counsel some young people. They wanted to drop out of school, because they were asked to repeat a grade.

My experience with Fr. Cuthbert Alexander in his parish in Diego Martin was equally pleasant and enjoyable. He offered me the chance to celebrate and preach at masses. He invited me to go along with him to visit and give communion to the sick and aged at their homes. How could one be a brother to the other more than this!

In the United States my experiences were not different. Brothers received me with warm and loving hearts. At ungodly hours brothers picked me up from and to the airport. All the brothers I met were

*...continued on page 3*

# Dear Friends of the Priesthood

## EPISCOPAL ADVISORS

Bishop Sam Jacobs  
*Alexandria, LA*

Bishop Paul Bemile  
*Wa, Ghana*

Bishop Gilbert Sheldon  
*Steubenville, OH*

Bishop Donald Wuertl  
*Pittsburgh, PA*

Bishop Paul Dudley, Ret.  
*Northfield, MI*

Bishop Thomas Daily  
*Brooklyn, NY*

Bishop John Myers  
*Peoria, IL*

Bishop Thomas Dupre  
*Springfield, MA*

## TRUSTEES

Msgr. James Cassidy  
*New York*

Very Rev. Les Ivers  
*New York*

## DIRECTORS

Msgr. John Allard  
*Chairman*

Rev. Tim Graff  
*Newark, New Jersey*

Rev. Ray Ratzenberger  
*Tucson, AZ*

Rev. Cuthbert Alexander  
*Port of Spain, Trinidad*

Rev. Bob Giardina  
*Providence, Rhode Island*

## Editor's Box:

Please send all articles, comments and photos to the editor, Fr. Ray Ratzenberger, [ratz@theriver.com](mailto:ratz@theriver.com), or, P.O. Box 2198, Benson, AZ 85602, U.S.A., or, Fax: (520) 586-3919.

Newsletter Co-editor, Rev. Cuthbert Alexander, can be emailed at [cuttya1@tstt.net.tt](mailto:cuttya1@tstt.net.tt).

Dear Friends of the Priesthood,

As I look out at the Autumn landscape here in New England I can't help but marvel, and stand in awe of the creative hand of God; the colors of the trees, the clear blue skies, the cool breezes and bountiful harvest—all Autumn's gift to us. What a fantastic imagination our God has! He who created everything (even the imagination) is never outdone in His overwhelming beauty. When I think of the limitless expanse of space, millions of light years in size, and how on this almost miniscule planet He has created with such diversity and variety, I am amazed.

I have a couple of hobbies that always direct my thoughts this way. The first is gardening. When I look at the limitless variety of plants and flowers in their varied colors, my mind is boggled. I also have two aquaria, a salt-water tank and a fresh. Just the varieties of fish and sea life astound the imagination; the colors, shapes, habits, etc., are limitless in beauty. Did you ever "people watch" at the Mall at Christmas time and see all the "variations on the theme" of people—we are all different, all unique. All this by the design of the loving Creator who wants to be called "Abba". I stand amazed and humbled.

As the year begins to wane toward Winter, as the liturgical calendar draws to a close and Ordinary Time points to the "last things" with the coming of Advent, I am struck by how faithful from season to season our God is; how He loves us! In the midst of all this bounteous creation He sent His Son Jesus to be one like us so that we could become like Him. How His generosity far surpasses our imaginings—Jesus loved us to death. All this glorious creation pales before the incredible events of our salvation. And all this is for you and for me! Why? Because He loves us so. I am so amazed—so unworthy, but so, so grateful! What joy all this permeates within, what a sense of specialness. This is the great news we Christians are called to share and spread.

This past August I went on pilgrimage to Italy with sixty-two people. The holy places and basilicas were surely awe-inspiring. On the last leg of our journey we were in Sicily. We scaled 9,100ft up Mt. Etna. It was 97 degrees at the volcano's base and 37 degrees at our summit. The

devastation was incredible. We looked into a crater which last erupted in 1809, and is only now beginning to put forth little tufts of vegetation. The black and barren earth reached up into the clouds where the air was so thin our lungs ached and walking just a few feet was an ordeal.



Watching the steam escape from the presently active crater (a good mile and a half from us) was truly spectacular. As the sunset in colorful display, and a sliver of the moon appeared, once again I was struck by the unbelievable imagination of God. There is just so much to celebrate and praise the Creator for!

I believe we of the Fraternity should be ministers of celebration and praise of our awesome Creator, God, the Father whose love escapes definition. How can we not help but rise above the negativity of life when we see the majesty of life's Author and His fingerprints everywhere we look? I believe the Fraternity is a great institution of hope for the world and for the Church. Thank you, our readers, for your help and prayers; thank you, Father, for our benefactors and intercessors.

Please remember to pray for your parish priest, especially if he is hurting. Send his name to us so that we can join you in prayer. Please know how appreciated you are; you make the Fraternity possible. Be assured of our prayers for you intentions.

In Jesus,

Fr. John

## Editorial Correction

At the recent international gathering in Trinidad it came to our attention that there was a mistake made in reference to the founder of the Wa fraternity. In the lead article on the death of Fr. Irenaeus Songliedong it was stated that he was the founder of the fraternity there. This is incorrect. The founder of the Wa Fraternity was Fr. Stephen B. Kantubog. We are sorry for this mistake.

...continued from page 1

exceptionally good to me. They exposed me to all that would make me feel at home. For example, in New Jersey through the arrangement of Fr. Timothy Graff, I spent ten days with the youth at a youth camp in Pennsylvania, a ministry I love. And, "will you believe that I was in the Arthur Ashe Stadium on August 27<sup>th</sup> watching the U.S. Open?" This was a remark I made to a brother in my excitement of being part of this historic event and experience.

I spent five weeks in Arizona, staying with Fr. Ray Ratzenberger in Benson.

### From the Editor

By the time you receive this newsletter the terrible events, which have taken place in New York and Washington, would have happened a few weeks ago. However, this newsletter is prepared almost a month before it is sent.

Yesterday, September 11, 2001, I was awoken by a phone call from my secretary: "Fr. put on the television, we are being attacked!"

Arizona is 3 hours behind New York time, so we were awakening to find a surrealistic scene on T.V. It looked like something one would see from an action film portrayed by Hollywood, but this was real. We were in shock. The peace has been shattered by an act of war upon our nation.

Presently we are all "glued" to our T.V. sets, anxious for any news of survivors. Slowly we are beginning to conceptualize the horror of these acts

What a brother I found in Fr. Ray! As he picked me up from the airport in Phoenix, and drove 165 miles to his rectory, he told me upon arrival, "Fr. Bennette, this is your home." These words made me feel relaxed throughout my stay with him. He gave me occasion to celebrate the Eucharist, and to visit the sick in the hospital. He took me around the beautiful landscape of Tucson and Benson. He introduced me to a Ghanaian priest, a member of the Tucson fraternity, who is a chaplain in a hospital in Tucson. I was taught how to use a computer, operate a washer and a dryer, a microwave, and to drive an automatic car. These are

of terrorism on innocent civilians. And we are becoming very angry.

Please pray for the United States. Pray for those who lost their lives, and the heroes who saved lives. Pray that this tragedy will cause the U.S. to turn back to God, the true source of her liberty. Please pray for justice. Pray for an end to terrorism, and the prejudice that motivates it. For it has brought so much sorrow into this world.

#### *This message was received via email just after the events of Sept. 11th.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

What a day of disaster to reckon with: The terrible airplane attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, in Pennsylvania, and the ground attack on Capitol Hill have shocked us all.

I wish to express my sorrow for all who perished, or were injured, and my sympathy to my brothers and sisters in the US. We are with you in prayer.

experiences I never had before, and which were more than exciting for me.

All these visits enabled me to have physical contacts with priests and other people. I have been enriched by their lives, faith, and work. These experiences are all due to the love and generosity of my brother priests in the Fraternity.

In closing, I have been profoundly touched and renewed through the Fraternity of Priests. I truly appreciate the gift of all my brothers in the Fraternity. May the good Lord strengthen our bounds of support, brotherhood, and love.

Yet while I was in the United States two weeks ago I got Luke 19:41-44, *Jesus laments over Jerusalem*. It was going to be attacked by its enemies, smashed to the ground, and its children within it, "because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Again this morning I got this, just before the terrorist incidents occurred in New York: "This is a wake up call for all of us. God is calling for Repentance and Conversion to Jesus."

In Christ Jesus,

Fr. Ian Taylor  
Port of Spain Fraternity

Please join us in offering masses, prayers, rosaries, and other corporal works of mercy for the victims, their families, and those responsible for these attacks.

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you know anyone who would like to receive our Newsletter?**  
*(Please print legibly)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State and Zip

# 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.*

Please cut and return this form with your donation



**Fraternity of Priests, Inc.**  
Franciscan University  
Stuebenville, OH 43952-9671  
Phone: (740) 283-4400  
Fax: (740) 283-3622  
Email: [contact@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:contact@fraternityofpriests.org)  
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

*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.***

**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_