

| November 2016                                      |   |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Sunday   | Monday                                      | Tuesday  | Wednesday                                      | Thursday                                  | Friday                                       | Saturday                                     |
|  |   | Rev. George Lewis<br><i>Port-of-Spain</i> 1      | Rev. Clifford Graham<br><i>Port-of-Spain</i> 2 | For the souls of our deceased FOP members | For prayer requests received 4               | For our Holy Father, Pope Francis 5          |
| Msgr. Cuthbert Alexander<br><i>Port-of-Spain</i> 6 | Rev. Michael Roy<br><i>Providence</i> 7     | Rev. Msgr. John Allard<br><i>Providence</i> 8    | Rev. Roland Lepire<br><i>Providence</i> 9      | Rev. Gerry Sabourin<br><i>Providence</i>  | Rev. Francis Guidice<br><i>Providence</i> 10 | Rev. Robert Giardina<br><i>Providence</i> 12 |
| Rev. Wilfred Gregoire<br><i>Providence</i> 13      | Rev. Michael Kelley<br><i>Providence</i> 14 | Rev. John Dreher<br><i>Providence</i> 15         | Rev. Robert Bush<br><i>San Angelo</i> 16       | Rev. Terry Brenon<br><i>San Angelo</i>    | Rev. Bernard Gully<br><i>San Angelo</i> 18   | Rev. Santiago Udayar<br><i>San Angelo</i> 19 |
| Rev. William McCarthy<br><i>Sioux City</i> 20      | Rev. Edward Burian<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 21 | Rev. John Helmueller<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 22    | Rev. Joseph Vogel<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 23     | Rev. Joseph Short<br><i>Sioux Falls</i>   | Rev. Rodney Farke<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 25   | Rev. John Rasmussen<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 26 |
| Rev. Edward Pierce<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 27        | Rev. Charles Duman<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 28 | Rev. Richard Baumberger<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 29 | Rev. Randy Phillips<br><i>Sioux Falls</i> 30   |   |  |  |



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

# THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

## The Powerful Role of the Priest

By Fr. Robert J. Carr, Boston Fraternity

Timothy P. Shriver, chairman of the Special Olympics, speaking at the Celebration of the Priesthood Dinner in Boston last month cited the words of one nun explaining why numbers of religious vocations seemed to drop soon after Vatican II began. Prior to Vatican II she explained to him, the focus was perfection and after Vatican II the focus was on the presence of God.

If we look back to the writings of the centuries before Vatican II we can see strong literature, especially from the saints the certainly back up his words. There were powerful explanations of striving to be the best at our service to Christ and when we failed we could trust in His mercy and love. However, there were also strong words of what we would call today 'Fire and Brimstone' that indicated those who would go to Hell for the slightest infraction.

These strong words of the past also reflected in the people such a deep fear of eternal damnation that the concept of mercy often got lost. Of course, if we lose a concept of striving to be good saints which is the call of every Catholic through fear as a response to the strong talk on Hell then we lose a sense of the Mercy and love of God.

Here in Massachusetts, we have in our history the famous

the sermon "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God" delivered by Jonathan Edwards, not in Catholic circles, but in a Protestant church in Northampton, Massachusetts. However, many good Catholics by default in the past may have believed something about God that was not that different than Edwards. He gave the image of his congregation held over the fires of Hell by a thread, an image that is not one for Catholic circles.

Our role today as priests is to bring a good balance between the love and mercy of God and the judgement of God. God's mercy is always there for those who seek it and even the most severe of ancient Catholic preachers proclaimed this, but they would also add that his judgement was there for those who rejected Him.

When we speak of God's judgement without His mercy as a backdrop we leave people believing that God is just waiting to flick them into Hell, as Pastor Jonathan Edwards would say to his congregation. But if we leave them believing his mercy is there despite their turning a blind eye to God in their lives then we open the door to presumption.

I often preach about the past understanding of God as the Wizard of Oz in the original movie. I am not talking about the man behind the curtain, but the holographic image that was angry and demanding.

Some parishioners came explaining that this was exactly how they felt priests presented God in the past. This image as the saints warn can lead people into despair, the exact opposite vice to presumption.

However, if we offer the idea that we can all presume on God's mercy no matter what, even if we choose to live a life outside of what God does demand of us. Or even if people believe they no longer have to attend mass or live the faith because God is all merciful then we give them a false hope.

I like to say, Bostonian that I am, that between 1918 and 2004 the Red Sox could presume that they would win the World Series. If you know American baseball, the 1918 World Champion baseball franchise was next world champion eighty-six years later in 2004. Presumption makes us pursue our goals with less a sense of urgency and excellence.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, who for his time had a good balance between judgement and mercy, taught that priests needed to be the most devout because we are the models that others follow. So even simple practices that others do with impunity, we have to be careful to avoid; that includes something as simple as watching our language. It is because just as we have preach a good balance between judgement and mercy, we have to live it as well.

...continued on page 3

### 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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Please cut and return this form with your donation.

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

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Dear Father Bob Franco,

This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$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 care-fully and wisely, and not to ask for money that is not needed.

# Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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### Editor's Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to [editor@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org)

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

Last month I wrote on the *trellis of Fraternal Life*. The commitments we make personally, brotherly and pastorally make our life as members of the Fraternity possible. They are formative commitments that help us grow in holiness, brotherliness and fruitfulness.

This month I want to briefly address what I am calling the *engine of Fraternity: commitment*. The online internet definition is twofold. It says that commitment is:

1. The state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, etc.
2. An engagement or obligation that restricts freedom of action:

As priests we all want to be known by the first definition. We are committed to Christ, his mission and the Church.

However, we become a bit more reluctant regarding the second part of the definition. We feel we have more than enough obligations. Yet the commitments made by Fraternity members are meant to bring peace into our lives.

One of the personal commitments of the Fraternity is to pray one hour a day. For some priests, this sounds overwhelming. Priests tend to burn the candle at both ends. Yet making this one hour meeting with the Lord a non-negotiable will bring peace into our lives. We need to remember: when the Lord chose his disciples he called them to "be with him and...to preach." (Mark 3:13). The relationship precedes the ministry.

For some priests, this will call for a change in scheduling. It may entail going to bed earlier in order to rise earlier to pray. Other priests may find another time suitable for their hour of prayer. The goal is to deepen one's relationship with the Lord in prayer. The engine that makes it happen is *commitment*.

On another topic: For quite some time the Fraternity of Priests board and members have wrestled with what to do with Visitation House. Originally, it was the home for a *team* of priests (it has seven bedrooms and three bathrooms). It became the house for the priest leader and then a place for priests' sabbaticals. At one point it was rented

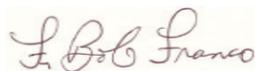
by Franciscan University.

Over the years, the house has been used less and less. It seemed prudent to move our office to a more efficient space in Steubenville and pass the house on. This is what has transpired.

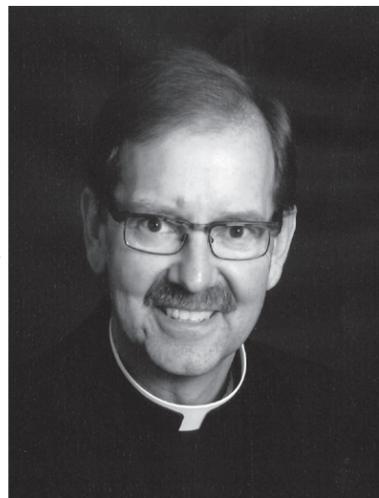
In early 2016, a new religious community in Steubenville called *The Family of Jacopa* inquired about purchasing Visitation House. After much prayer and reflection, the board of Fraternity of Priests gave the house to The Family of Jacopa. Fraternity of Priests was given Visitation House 33 years ago. Though we have invested much in the house over the years it seemed appropriate that we hand it over free of charge to The Family of Jacopa. Jesus said, "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give." (Matthew 10:8b)

To our members and supporters, be assured that our phone number and our post office box remain the same. And your prayers and contributions are greatly cherished.

In Christ,



Fr. Bob



### 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: \$ **4,750.00**  
Actual Donations: \$ **870.00**  
Budget Surplus/Deficit: \$ **(3,880.00)**

Current as of August 31, 2016.

...continued from page 1

If we seek to pursue excellence in our priesthood, it will be reflected in the way we preach and say mass. If we live in presumption that too will be reflected similarly. We have a calling to pursue excellence which is a fancy way of saying true holiness that not only can we be saved, but also so can those we serve.

In fact, St. Alphonsus warns priests not to be focused only on their own salvation for they will not enter Heaven if they have done nothing to bring others to salvation as well. This was a warning he reserved for priests specifically.

In the Boston area, we see a great amount of effort expressed in getting people into college and, living in the shadow of Harvard University, I encounter people outside of the United States who dream of one day studying there. However, Brazilian priest Fr. Paulo Ricardo Azevedo, Jr. explains that the prime duty of the Catholic parent is to have as strong an effort in getting their children into Heaven. The same applies to priests. If people are not focused on the greatest destination to which we are called then no matter how successful they are in this world, their efforts will be a failure in light of the next.

St. Teresa of Avila in her "Way of Perfection" also reminds us that this is no easy task. She calls the concept of a road to eternal life that is free of thieves, marauders and obstacles to be a stupid idea. The road, actually, she reminds her readers is hard because the treasure at the end of it is so great.

We cannot assume the road there is easy and we cannot assume walking that road without putting in

a decent amount of effort is going to bear any fruit.

We know, of course, St. Paul, compares that same road to a road race in which the athletes work for the perishable crown and says that we have a calling to work for the greater imperishable crown. Over and over again, we learn that we have a calling to lead people to the greatest of treasures and that we cannot let them fall into the presumption of saying it is a cakewalk.

St. Alphonsus Liguori explained that we as priests have the greatest of powers for it is through our actions at the altar that bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. He explained that this power is greater than any other power on Earth. That we have a calling to live a life that is capable of bearing that power.

St. Jerome warned the we can celebrate the powers of ordination but to remember that two of those who first received those powers walked two opposite directions. He said as you note Peter do not forget Judas, both were bishops.

Each of the saints remind us that a call to holiness means a pursuit of excellence in our service to Christ. They warn, however, not to let that concept burden us into fear or despair. We cannot do it without daily prayer to the Lord and as many saints also explain a strong relationship with Our Lady especially through the rosary. The role of priest is not something that we can just "call in" nor take too lightly. For there is a special dignity in that call that leads our congregations to the greatest of all treasures.

Let us always remember this important lesson, especially if we are discouraged at times when we

see our own efforts seem to have no fruit. The fact is the fruit of those efforts may be there but only in the eyes of the Lord. As long as we are seeking to do our His will in our lives and remembering the dignity of that role, we are serving Him well.

The marathon runner who gives his best but does not come in first is still a marathon runner. The home run kings in baseball tend also to be the strikeout kings as well. Such names that headed the list of those who struck out at bat more than anyone else in their era include such figures as Babe Ruth and Mickey Mantle. It is because it is the one who seeks to be excellent at what he does who may fail many times, for he is also trying to do better. He never gives up. For us, we can never forget the dignity for which we are called and give it our best in prayer, in staying close to the sacraments, especially the Mass and Confession and living the Gospel of Christ in a powerful way that reflects our powerful call.

"God is not known through grand ideas and extensive study, but rather through the littleness of a humble and trusting heart."

- Pope Francis

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

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