



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

The Priesthood is Not a Job

By Benedict XVI and Archbishop Dolan

This article combines the thoughts of two great churchmen of our time. The first few paragraphs are taken from the address delivered by Pope Benedict XVI at the Mass marking the end of the Year for Priests. Following this are some reflections given by Archbishop Dolan of New York when he spoke to the bishops and priests of Ireland at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth in May of this year during the high crisis period of the clergy sex abuse scandal in that country.

While their style is quite different the fundamental content of each is remarkably focused and springs from the same vision of priesthood. It is at the same time in harmony with one of the most fundamental charisms of the Fraternity of Priests that has been proclaimed from the beginning, Relationship comes before Ministry. Who we are is not determined by what we do, but by the company we keep!

From Pope Benedict's Homily: "The priest is not a mere office-holder, like those which every society needs in order to carry out certain functions. Instead, he does something which no human being can do of his own power: in Christ's name he speaks the words which absolve us of our

sins and in this way he changes our entire life. Over the offerings of bread and wine he speaks Christ's words of thanksgiving – words which make Christ himself present, the Risen One, his Body and Blood – words which thus transform the elements of the world, which open the world to God and unite it to him.

The priesthood, then, is not simply 'office' but sacrament: This audacity of God who entrusts himself to human beings – who, conscious of our weaknesses, nonetheless considers men capable of acting and being present in his stead – this audacity of God is the true grandeur concealed in the word 'priesthood'. That God thinks that we are capable of this; that in this way he calls men to his service and thus from within binds himself to them: this is what we wanted to reflect upon and appreciate anew over the course of the past year."

"It was to be expected that this new radiance of the priesthood would not be pleasing to the 'enemy'. He would have rather preferred to see it disappear, so that God would ultimately be driven out of the world. So it happened that, in this very year of joy the sins of priests came to light.

Had the Year for Priests been a glorification of our individual human performance it would have been ruined by these events. But for

us what happened was precisely the opposite: we grew in gratitude for God's gift; concealed in 'earthen vessels', a summons to purification. His gift becomes a commitment to respond to God's courage and humility by our own courage and humility."

Now the reflections of Archbishop Dolan:

"At the height of the crisis I asked one of our priests 'How are you doing?' He answered 'Considering all we've been through, thank God, I'm doing pretty good. I find myself more grounded than ever. Grounded, because the trauma has literally dropped me to my knees in more and better prayer. Grounded, because I have grown in humility which comes from the Latin word for soil, earth, ground. Grounded, because I've had to rediscover the foundation, the ground of my very life: my faith in and love for God, saved by His Son, reconfigured to Jesus as the very grounding of my being as a priest.

Lightening has struck, but I'm fine! I'm grounded."

(These three groundings, prayer, humility and a rediscovery of identity are what can guide us on this summons to purification.)

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Jesus said, "...every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old." (Matthew 13:52)

Today's priest needs to imitate those scribes of old. Rooted in the changeless message of the gospel, yet embracing what is good in current culture, priests today must present the message of the gospel in all its glory to the people of today. This is a challenge.

Some priests may get caught up in the spirit of the age. Without discriminating between the good and evil in current culture, they have embraced every new thing. And they become frustrated with the Church, which they believe is irrelevant and out of steps with the times.

On the other hand, some priests want to join with Barbara Streisand and sing, "The Way We Were". Their ideal Church was formed a couple of generations ago. They think, "Wouldn't be great if we could go back to that time?"

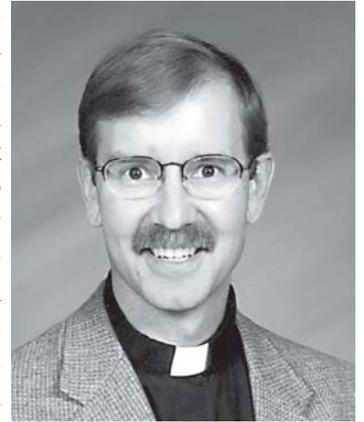
The "scribe" priest of our day needs to be rooted in the revelation of Jesus Christ and Church tradition, and yet open to the innovations of our day. Here are two examples.

St. Maximilian Kolbe, whose Feast Day is August 14 and who was inspired to fight evil for the honor of our Immaculate Queen, began publishing the *Knight of the Immaculate* in 1922. As this apostolate grew, Maximilian embraced the modern technology of his time.

...More modern machinery had been installed, including three machines which could produce 16,000 copies of the review in an hour. New techniques of type, photogravure and binding were adopted.

Monthly circulation increased to 750,000. His friary went on to print a daily newspaper which increased its circulation to 225,000 on Sunday's and feast days. On December 8, 1938, Maximilian's friary began radio broadcasting. St. Maximilian used the cutting edge means of his day to lift up our Lord and Lady.

This second example comes from an interview that Archbishop Dolan of New York gave to Brenda Drumm of the Catholic Communications Office in Ireland earlier



this year. She asked the Archbishop about his use of modern communication tools such as blogging, YouTube and Facebook. Archbishop Dolan said that though he was not an expert in such communication techniques, he was committed to using them. The Archbishop's blog enables him to comment immediately on the current events, giving a gospel perspective that would not be highlighted in the secular press.

The Fraternity of Priests exists "to give priests the vision, the formation and the support to respond with enthusiasm to the fullness of the priesthood." By God's grace, may we become scribes of the New Covenant, taking from both the old and the new, in order to evangelize the world.

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Bob Franco

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: **\$7,424.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$2,674.00**

Current as of June 30, 2010.

Editor's Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor,

Fr. Michael Roy via e-mail at

editor@fraternityofpriests.org

or fax to

508-943-2213.

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

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The priest must be aware of his identity, that he is not a mere office holder but a sacrament.

“When the Nazi commandant of Auschwitz snickered, ‘Who is the Polish swine,’ at the prisoner who had raised his hand asking to take the place of the married man and father who has been chosen at random to be executed, the ‘Polish swine’ did not reply, ‘I am Maximilian Kolbe,’ nor ‘I am prisoner number 1408.’ No. He simply replied, ‘I am a Catholic priest.’

In answer to a literal life-or-death question, Maximilian Kolbe identified himself as a priest.

Priesthood is not, first and foremost, something we *do*, but someone we *are*.

While ministry – what we do – is very, very critical, *identity* – *who we are* – is even more so.

The late, great John Paul II went hoarse teaching us that the priesthood is a dramatic, radical reordering of a man’s very life, his soul, his heart, his identity, and that we’re much better off looking at fathers and husbands for metaphors of priesthood than we are at professions.

Thus, the priesthood is a *call*, not a career; a *redefinition* of self, not just a ministry; a *way of life*, not a job; a *state of being*, not a function; a permanent, lifelong *commitment*, not a temporary style of service; an *identity*, not a role.”

“If the very value of my priestly vocation depends on *what I do*, where I’m assigned, how the people affirm me, how my bishop treats me, what the newspapers report about us, what horrible sins brother

priests may have committed, what negligence was shown by their bishops – if the very value of our priesthood depends upon those external forces, if, in a word, my value depends on what I *do*, sooner or later we’ll get frustrated, cynical, exhausted, crabby, bored, and tempted. Our value must come from *who we are*.”

“When you think about it, Jesus much preferred the being words to the do words, didn’t He?

Did He summon us to plan with Him? To organize with Him? To draw up mission statements with Him? To write job descriptions with Him?

No, instead He did invite us to *remain* with Him, to *abide* with Him, to *rest* with Him, to *come* away with Him, to *stay* with Him, to *keep vigil* with Him.

Jesus preferred *being* to *having* and *doing*. Not, to be sure, because doing, actions, ministry, service were not important, but because, unless what we do flows from who we are, we’re shallow, empty functionaries.

Our rampant functionalism and utilitarianism defines our worth by that we get done, what we accomplish, what we earn, how useful we are, what we produce.

If our value comes from what we accomplish or how useful we might be, look out. But, when we recapture a sense of who we are humbly, joyfully aware that our value is within, that it comes from who we are, passionately and personally loved by our Father, destined for eternity with Him, redeemed by the precious blood of His own Son, reconfigured to that same Son at the “ground zero” of our being – ‘we can walk on water.’

As nebulous as all this sounds, our people sense it and know it intuitively. *God is the only treasure people desire to find in a priest.*”

“Yes, the priesthood has been struck by lightning, but, not to worry, we are okay; we are *grounded*: fallen to the ground, on our knees, thirsting for holiness; back to the soil, the ground, the *humus*, as *humble* priests; *grounded* on our joyful, confident *identity* as priest at the very core of our being.”

“Sometimes I wonder if we are being invited back to the Church of the *Acts of the Apostles*. Sometimes I wonder if we priests, bishops – indeed the entire Church – have been reduced to the utterly basic reply of Peter and John to the crippled beggar in Temple Square in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 3: ‘Silver and Gold have I not, but what I do have, I sure give you: In the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and walk!’

Pizzazz, glitter, gold, clout, prestige, power, property, wealth – we ain’t got! All we got is Jesus – and that’s the greatest treasure of all. That’s what people want! And we can’t give Him unless we got Him. And that’s called holiness.”

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers for our Annual Fraternity retreat held in late July in Columbus, Ohio. We will include a recap of our time together in a forthcoming issue of the newsletter.

Thank you also for your recent generosity to the Fraternity. We pray often for our supporters and appreciate your faithfulness to our mission to serve priests!

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

September 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Rev. 1 William Baker <i>Allentown, PA</i>	Rev. 2 John Mraz <i>Allentown, PA</i>	Rev. 3 George Winne <i>Allentown, PA</i>	4 Pope Benedict XVI
Rev. 5 Larry Hess <i>Allentown, PA</i>	Rev. 6 Patrick Gilbert <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 7 <i>Paul Gilbert</i> <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 8 Gerry Fraser <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 9 Maurice Larochelle <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 10 Paul McManus <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 11 Donald Clinton <i>Boston, MA</i>
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Rev. 19 Gerard LeClerc <i>Burlington, VT</i>	Rev. 20 David O'Donnell <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 21 Barnabas Page <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 22 Mark Rowles <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 23 Michael Cronin <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 24 Paul Millar <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 25 David Myers IC <i>Cardiff, UK</i>
Dcn. 26 Peter Reynolds IC <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 27 Andy Bord <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 28 James Kaniparampil CMI <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Canon 29 John Griffiths <i>Cardiff, UK</i>	Rev. 30 Gregory Matus <i>Cardiff, UK</i>		

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.

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
Franciscan University
Steubenville, OH 43952-9671
Phone: (740) 283-4400
Fax: (740) 283-3622
Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
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This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests. Dear Father Bob Franco, \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____