



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

The Fraternity Originates from Renewal

By Fr. Bob Franco

Fraternity Origins

The modern charismatic renewal splashed on the scene in February of 1967. During a retreat for college students at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA people began to experience the presence, power and gifts of the Holy Spirit in a new and more tangible manner. From this retreat, these college students shared their experience with others. In a few short years an international movement called *charismatic renewal* sprouted.

Around 1975 the College of Steubenville (now known as Franciscan University of Steubenville) hosted a conference of the charismatic renewal for priests and deacons. Over nine hundred priests and permanent deacons gathered for common prayer, teaching, small group sharing and fellowship. The conference has been ongoing since that time.

However, after a few years some of the leaders of the conference (Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR, Fr. Jim Ferry and Ralph Martin) began to sense that conference seemed to be a week that was isolated from the rest of the year. As the old saying goes-at the conference it was "Glory to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Spirit!" When participants came

home it was, "As it was in beginning, is now and ever shall be..." Granted a conference or retreat experience was bound to be different from the grind of daily life. Yet, was their a way to continue a deepening of the life in the Spirit one experienced at Steubenville?

In 1983 Fr. Michael Scanlan and Ralph Martin arranged to have a team of priests come together in community and prayerfully develop a response to this need to connect the Steubenville experience with the daily life and ministry of priests. Frs. Jim Ferry, George Kosicki, John Dreher and Ed Wade moved into what would become Visitation House in the fall of 1983 and laid the foundation for Fraternity of Priests. They entered into a series of agreements to pray and live as brothers on November 1, 1983 and began to visit dioceses that fall and winter, establishing local Fraternities. Two groups that quickly became affiliated with the Fraternity were the priest prayer groups of Providence and Pittsburgh, which predated the establishment of Fraternity of Priests. Other groups began to be established throughout the United States and Canada: from Tucson AZ to Boston MA and many dioceses in between. North of the border Fraternities were established in Winnipeg (Manitoba) and Ottawa

(Ontario). Invitations came from overseas: Trinidad and Tobago and Honduras. In time the Fraternity would spread to places like Ghana, Slovenia, Ukraine, India and American Samoa.

Again, the goal of the Fraternity was to assist priests live out their vocations in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In order for priests to do this, there were certain things they needed to do. Some were personal-they need to pray, become rooted in Sacred Scripture, fast and tithes. Other things they needed to do were brotherly in focus-they need to meet with like minded priests to pray with them, receive teaching and share their lives with each other. Finally, their personal and brotherly commitments were to issue forth in apostolic activity-the building up of God's people in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

What is the Fraternity charism?

We look back on the work that God has done with gratitude. Priests have experienced many fruits through Fraternity of Priests. Some have testified that belonging to the Fraternity has saved their priesthood. Other priests know that their lives and ministries are more focused on Jesus Christ. They are less caught up in the mere administration of an institution (important as this is) and

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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!

The feast day of St. Louis IX is August 25. He lived from 1215 to 1270 AD. Upon the death of his father in 1226 he became the King of France, though he did not assume those responsibilities until his marriage to Marguerite at the age of 19. They had eleven children.

Much of his biography deals with the ordinary life (if there is such a thing) of kings: wars, peace negotiations, the administering of justice, et cetera. St. Louis was also a patron of architecture and education (the Sorbonne has its roots in his reign). Here is how the Catholic Encyclopedia described his life of devotion:

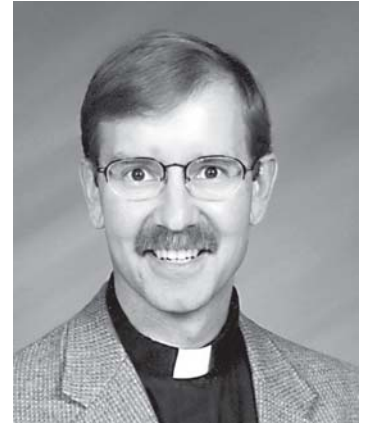
St. Louis led an exemplary life, bearing constantly in mind his mother's words: "I would rather see you dead at my feet than guilty of a mortal sin." His biographers have told us of the long hours he spent in prayer, fasting, and penance, without the knowledge of his subjects. The French king was a great lover of justice...St. Louis to have been a man of sound common sense, possessing indefatigable energy, graciously kind and of playful humor, and constantly guarding against the temptation to be imperious (proud).

St. Louis penned these words to his son: *"...my first instruction is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength...permit yourself to be tormented by every kind of martyrdom before you would allow yourself to commit a mortal sin...If the Lord has permitted you to have some trial, bear it willingly with gratitude...If he bestows on you any kind of prosperity, thank him humbly and see that you do become no worse for it, either through vain pride or anything else..." (Volume IV, Liturgy of the Hours, page 1347)*

His devotion to the Church led him to undertake the Crusades. He died near Tunis in northern Africa on August 25, 1270.

I cannot help but speculate what kind of influences the clergy had on him.

Certainly his mother's faith inspired him. However, I have got to believe that the clergy of his time helped him and his family to be rooted in Jesus Christ.



Fraternity of Priests exists to equip priests to live out their calling with zeal. Our commitments to pray, fast and tithe, as well as our brotherly relationships strengthen us to be faithful to the vocation Christ has given us. We do these things, not only for our personal sanctification, but rather to build up the Church. It is our sincere hope that by being close to Jesus Christ we can influence the St. Louis' of our time to be devout and just in a cheerfully holy manner.

Your prayers and support of Fraternity of Priests is greatly appreciated. May the Lord reward your faithfulness many times over.

Fr. Bob Franco

PS: Due to publication deadlines, the report on the Annual Fraternity Meeting in Slovenia will be in the September issue.

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**

Actual Donations: **\$1,580**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **(\$3,170)**

Current as of June 30, 2011.

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more focused on bringing people to Jesus Christ and living in the power of His Spirit. These fruits are the working of the Holy Spirit. Can we name this work?

The Greek word for spiritual gift is *charism*. St. Paul uses this word in the New Testament to describe the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some of these gifts are strictly supernatural in origin such as healing and mighty deeds, “there are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues” (I Corinthians 12:4-10), and other gifts seem to be the elevation of human activities and qualities to a level that clearly proclaims Christ, “for by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned. For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given

to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:3-8). These are gifts given to individuals for the building up of the Church.

Throughout the history of the Church the word *charism* has been used in another sense. It refers to a special gift that a religious community brings to the Church. The Franciscans and Poor Clares have the *charism* of poverty, living detached from the things of this world in order to be more fully united to Jesus Christ who lived his life on earth in uncomplaining poverty. The Jesuit *charism* has been described in a three fold manner: focused on God in the midst of the world, following Jesus Christ and serving the Church.

Does Fraternity of Priests have a *charism* in that same way? This is something for all of us to pray about. For sure the Fraternity of Priests was born from a *renewal of charisms*. It would seem that part of purpose of the Fraternity would be to keep its members open and exercising the gifts of the Spirit. Part of the vision of the Fraternity is to call the people we serve to a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ as Lord and baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

Two passages of Sacred Scripture come to mind as we prayerfully ponder the *charism* of Fraternity of Priests. St. Paul exhorted Timothy, “For this reason I remind you to stir into a flame the gift of God that you have through

the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.” (II Timothy 1:6-7) Our local fraternities assist in keeping the flame of the Spirit stirred up on our hearts.

The second passage deals with the apostolic work of priests. St. Paul exhorted the church in Corinth, “Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts...Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy.” (I Corinthians 12:31a & 14:1). St. Paul knew that if we did not strive after spiritual gifts, our openness to the Spirit’s work by these gifts, would be minimized. And yet, along with a lived faith and words of faith, *charisms* have marvelous evangelistic power.

As Fraternity of Priests moves forward in its building up of priests and service of the Church, pray that the Holy Spirit be our guide and strength as we discern God’s work in our midst.

A recap from our international fraternity gathering in Slovenia will be published in a forthcoming issue. Thank you for your prayers for our brothers who joined together for a week of fellowship and prayer!

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

Dear Father Bob Franco,