

| May 2016 | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| Rev. Joel Almendras Tucson 1 | Rev. Henry Dauphinais Tucson 2 | Rev. Mark Long Tucson 3 | Rev. Ray Ratzenberger Tucson 4 | For the souls of our deceased FOP members 5 | Prayer Requests Received 6 | Pope Francis 7 |
| Rev. Pietro Hewlet Ukraine 8 | Most Rev. Vitalij Skomarovski Ukraine 9 | Rev. Lance Harlow Vermont 10 | Rev. Gervase Angsotinge Wa, West Africa 11 | Rev. Leo Dabuoh Wa, West Africa 12 | Rev. John Bosco Eledi Wa, West Africa 13 | Rev. Stephen Kangmennaang Wa, West Africa 14 |
| Rev. Stephen Kantubog Wa, West Africa 15 | Rev. John Kpan Wa, West Africa 16 | Rev. Evarist Kuuwulong Wa, West Africa 17 | Rev. Peter Paul Langnedomah Wa, West Africa 18 | Rev. Sylvester Nankpi Wa, West Africa 19 | Rev. Martin Ninnang Wa, West Africa 20 | Rev. Romanus Tampah Wa, West Africa 21 |
| Rev. Cyrus Tang Wa, West Africa 22 | Rev. Benette Tang Wa, West Africa 23 | Rev. Matthew Tuurosong Wa, West Africa 24 | Rev. Fidelis Vielu Wa, West Africa 25 | Rev. Robert DeGrandis, SJ Washington DC 26 | Rev. Giles Dimmock, OP Washington DC 27 | Msgr. Stan Jaworski Winnipeg 28 |
| Rev. Maurice Jeanneau Winnipeg 29 | Rev. Michael Nault Winnipeg 30 | Rev. Francois Paradis, OMI Winnipeg 31 | | | | |



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Things Are Not Always What They Seem

By Father Jeff Johnson of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan Fraternity

Malaria was from ancient times a horrible and fearsome disease. Outbreaks struck without warning and brought suffering and death on a vast scale, disrupting societies and economies and inflicting lasting damage upon even its survivors. The horrors of malaria lead to dread and fear.

From Roman times people were convinced that Malaria was caused by the bad air of swamps and lowlands (hence the name "malaria"). Everyone could see the association: malaria happened near swampy areas when the hot weather made them "vaporous"; the wind off of them would often be foul smelling. Awful things followed with terrible consequence, but there was no other rational pattern.

Yet what everyone "knew" by association, the association they clung to in fear because it helped at least ease their sense of powerlessness, we now know to be utterly false: the disease is not caused by swamps or their air or their smell, but by specific parasites, species of the microorganism *Plasmodium* that infect the blood. It is spread by, but not caused by a mosquito. And only one species of mosquito, not all mosquitos, spread it. Indeed, only a small percent of the individual mosquitos of the vector species transmits the parasite; most are harmless. Health

officials have learned that rational and effective control of malaria requires practical measures that appreciate these distinctions and at the same time help people overcome their fears and misconceptions.

There is in this a parallel to the phenomenon of terrorism we are experiencing throughout the world today. Terrorists too strike without warning, disrupting lives and society like a scourge, leaving fear and damage in their wake. But how should we as Christians understand and approach the problem?

Islam itself is often blamed and vilified. As in the malaria analogy, everyone can see the association: Islamic terrorists strike innocent victims without warning, bringing death and destruction, disrupting societies, spreading fear and destruction, all in the name of Allah, Sharia, or Jihad. But while blaming Islam may have the appeal of a simple way to make sense of the fearful (let us even say evil!) reality of terrorism, and to come to terms with and address it, is it *actually true* that terrorism is simply the product of a "Religion of Hate"? That terrorism is an act of zeal in the theological sense?

To respond to those such as Christopher Hitchens who blame religion *per se* as the source of oppression, violence, and intolerance, we need only recall

the whole regimes and campaigns of terror waged by professed atheists in the name of the "national interest", in the name of "the proletariat", in the name of "security", in the name of "national Purity", in the name of Class Struggle: the Soviet Gulags, Nazi Death Camps, Spanish Civil war massacres, the Dissaparados of Chile, and on and on.

In contrast, the behaviors of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi - the very iconic heroes of liberation, nonviolence, and solidarity - arose from what they openly acknowledged to be the explicit implications of their religious convictions.

We must candidly acknowledge that modern times have seen terrorism not only in the name of Islam, but also of Hinduism, and even of Christianity (recall the bloody "Time of Troubles" in Northern Ireland, or the atrocities perpetrated by self-professed Christians in the Hutu-Tutsi struggles in Africa). Nonetheless, while religion is brought into association with terrorism, it is not its *cause*. The bombing of school busses in Northern Ireland and the "ethnic cleansing" in Africa do not represent the teachings of Christ or Christianity (Catholic or protestant). In the same way, neither do the vicious assaults and rioting in certain Indian provinces express the *Ahimsa* ("benevolence, never harming") which is at the heart of

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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)

Name _____

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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 \$ _____

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

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

The human race was created for communion. We are meant to be in holy and loving human relationships. It was that way in the beginning when God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone..." It will be that way in the end when the saved are fully joined to the Communion of Saints.

Fraternity of Priests exists to promote communion. Some of our disciplines highlight our communion with God. We pray an hour a day. We prayerfully read Sacred Scripture. We also highlight communion with our ministry to the Church. Empowered by the Holy Spirit we seek to bring people to a deeper communion with Jesus Christ and each other.

Yet the communion characterizes Fraternity of Priests most deeply is called *Brotherhood*. By brotherhood we mean a network of relationships characterized by: commitment (we meet with brothers whether convenient or inconvenient), mutual trust and openness (we share the good, bad and ugly with our brother priests in the Fraternity) and holy conversation (we share our hopes and joys, fears and disappointments with each other, without clergy gossip and negativity.) This kind of communion, *brotherhood*, empowers priests to live their vocations in vibrant and fruitful ways.

Without brotherhood one's approach to the priesthood may be plagued with doubt and discouragement.

It was only when Thomas reconnected with his brother apostles, that he came to meet the risen Lord and profess his faith with conviction: *My Lord and my God* (John 20:28) It was when St. Thomas gathered with his brothers that his ability to believe was restored.

Besides our local gathering with brother priests, Fraternity of Priests sponsors an annual meeting. This international gathering of priests is a great source of encouragement for those who participate. The week includes joyful corporate prayer, edifying talks and a time to see the sights of the area. We do this with brothers priests in the Fraternity from different parts of the United States and world.

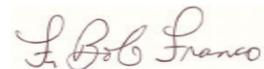
The 2016 Annual Fraternity Meeting will

be from Sunday evening, July 31st through Friday, August 5th at noon. The conference will be hosted by the Kansas City Fraternity. Our presenter this year is Mr. Peter Herbeck, the vice-president and director of missions for

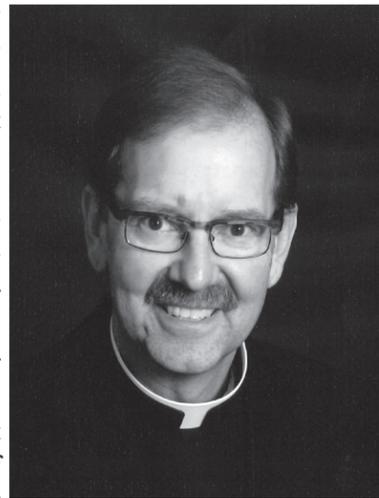
Renewal Ministries and co-host of the popular EWTN television programs *The Choices We Make* and *Crossing the Goal*. For more information and registration material, please visit the Fraternity of Priests website at fraternityofpriests.org.

I also invite the laity who graciously read this newsletter to continue your prayer filled support of Fraternity of Priests. Your prayers and donations make for channels of grace that bless Fraternity of Priests.

In Christ our Risen Lord,



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: \$ 5,779.00

Budget Surplus: \$ 1,029.00

Current as of February 29 2016.

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Hinduism. The same is true regarding Islam.

As in the relationship of malaria and swamps, we see an *association*, but not a causal one. The current wave of violent terrorism is undeniably *located within* Islamic cultures, but *Islam itself* is not its **cause**. And, continuing our malaria analogy, we need to acknowledge that while a certain movement of Islamic Fundamentalist thought is indeed the *vector* of terrorism - that is, it can sometimes be the means of its dispersal as some mosquitos may be vectors of malaria - *Islamic Fundamentalism itself does not cause terrorism*. Most fundamentalist Muslims neither promote nor condone terrorism.

It is disturbing to hear passages from the Koran quoted as "proof" of the "hate mongering" and "intolerance" of Islam, when these are taken entirely out of context and without any of the textural critical study necessary to understand what they are intending to convey. This is entirely unjust if we are examining Islam itself *as a Religion* (as contrasted with the agenda of terrorists). The interpretation of such texts is not a straightforward one (even for those who choose a "fundamentalist" approach to reading of scriptures!) any more than it is in Christianity. Christians, and especially clergy, should recognize this (After all, what about the deprecatory Psalms? Or the passages from Kings or Exodus that seem to incite violence? Or Jesus telling you to cut off your hand if it is an occasion for sin? Or that the Bible was used to justify Apartheid?) In the case of terrorism, as in other abhorrent

misreading of Scripture, it is not the text which leads to violence, but a preexistent mindset that becomes the lens through which the text is seen, and which then uses the text for one's own self-justification.

What then is it that corresponds to the *Plasmodium* parasite of our analogy? What is the *thing itself* which actually generates the problem? Whence the *real cause* of terrorism?

The true root cause of "Islamic terrorism" is a parasite of the soul, an irrational hatred deeply rooted in sin, both individual and societal. The societal sins are centuries of imperialistic cultural, political, and economic conflict and oppression, and modern secularist and materialist cultural attack on primal (and authentic!) values: chastity, temperance, the sanctity of marriage and family, life in the womb. The personal sin is responding to these evils with evil, rather than with mercy. An ideology of hatred and anger *in the name of God the Merciful* replaces the central tenant of Islam, which is *obedience to God the most Merciful*. In the hands of terrorists, religion is not the *cause* but the victim and unwitting vector of the *disease* of hate. (Pope Benedict, in his much misunderstood Regensburg address, "Faith, Reason and the University - Memories and Reflections", gave an excellent discussion of this).

To my brother priests, I submit that appreciating the distinction between Islam *as a religion per se* and this "*religious-ized*" anger of terrorists and terrorist organizations and movements is important. Our obligation to truth and charity demand we take care not to fall into the "Islam equals hate" paradigm.

We need to dispel fears and misconceptions, proclaiming instead the truth *dogmatically asserted by the Church* that Islam as a religion is **not** intrinsically evil. On the contrary, Muslims participate *by their faith* in a relationship with the one true God and are associated together with us in the order of Grace in a sharing in God's mercy in Christ (see [Gaudium et Spes](#)).

In confronting terrorism, we need to realize the real enemy in the spiritual battle, which is neither Islam nor the terrorists themselves, but the spiritual disease of irrational hatred and self-righteous anger. We are dealing here with the mystery of sin and evil. To fight it effectively we need to use God's spiritual weapons: prayer, fasting, and works of mercy. Christ calls us as his disciples to employ the only truly effective medicine for the disease of hatred and sin: the Mercy of God.

Father Jeff Johnson writes from Michigan.

Annual Meeting for the Fraternity of Priests

Please save the dates of **July 31 to August 5, 2016** for the Annual Gathering for the Fraternity of Priests. We will be meeting in Kansas City, Missouri and look forward to a week of fellowship, brotherhood, prayer, and learning together.

More information is available on our website:
www.FraternityofPriests.org

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

