

January 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Prayer Requests Received	2 Pope Francis
Rev. Raymond Zeugner Marquette 3	Rev. Darryl Pepin Marquette 4	Rev. Larry Van Damme Marquette 5	Rev. Brandon Oman Marquette 6	7 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	Rev. Jeff Johnson Marquette 8	Rev. Michael Steber Marquette 9
Rev. Christopher Gardiner Marquette 10	Rev. Timothy Ekaitis Marquette 11	Rev. Benjamin Hasse Marquette 12	Rev. Normal Clisch Marquette 13	Rev. Ryan Ford Marquette 14	Rev. Paul O'Donnell Duggan New Jersey 15	Rev. Timothy Graff New Jersey 16
Rev. Msgr. John Demkovic New Jersey 17	Rev. William Halbing New Jersey 18	Rev. Paul Lehman New Jersey 19	Rev. Joseph Meagher New Jersey 20	Rev. John Gordon New Jersey 21	Rev. Stephen Toth New Jersey 22	Rev. Paul Cannariato New Jersey 23
Rev. Eugene Bettinger, O.Carm New Jersey 24	Rev. Brenden Murray New Jersey 25	Rev. Lewis Patera New Jersey 26	Rev. John Primich New Jersey 27	Rev. Jim Cassidy New Jersey 28	Rev. Tom Devery New York 29	Rev. William Cosgrove New York 30
Rev. Alan Shnob Ogdensburg 31						

**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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Street \_\_\_\_\_

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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.



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

**THE VISITATION**

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

**Advent Is Not About Christmas Carols**

By Fr. Robert J. Carr, Boston Fraternity

Advent is the time many of our parishioners look forward to and prepare for the celebration of Christmas, but as we know that is not the real reason for advent. It is instead actually the time we have the invitation to focus on our ultimate encounter with Christ. It is an interesting challenge for us because the secular world is not only pushing its understanding of Christmas; it is pushing a virtual atheist culture in Christ's name.

Advent is not about Christmas shopping or even preparing ourselves for one day of the year where everyone is supposed to be nice to one another. Advent, as we know, is about preparing ourselves for the second coming of Christ and preparing our parishioners for the same.

This is why St. John the Baptist is so important a figure for ourselves as priests, for he demonstrates the urgency of that preparation and our call to participate in it. I often remind my parishioners that the minute the Baptist appears, they can begin a huge clock that counts down around 40 years to the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Jewish political state until 1948. I am sure St. John understood something cataclysmic was coming if not exactly what. Looking back at that time, we can see how much John's announcement began a

radical change in our world that centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus. We see also, that God's plan of salvation, announced by the prophets, then entered its stage of worldwide propagation.

Advent is a reminder that just as the Old Testament predictions came true, so will those of the New Testament that Christ will come again. We have a call to prepare our parishioners for that encounter and to guide them to be evangelizers to the world for that moment. None of this mission is even hinted about in the secular ideas of Christmas, which ignores Advent altogether. In fact, as we know, the Christmas Season actually seems to begin right after and sometimes before Hallowe'en, leaving Advent in Thanksgiving's wake.

Further, the secular Christmas idea proclaims a world of peace, but the world cannot have peace without it being under the lordship of Christ. To say the spirit of Christmas is about peace in the world, outside of the Kingdom of God, is to miss the whole point of everything to do with Christmas. However, this idea is more in the minds and hearts of our parishioners than we would want to admit.

We can warn people not to X out Christmas, but we might as well do it ourselves if we separate Christmas from the Kingdom of God and Advent from His second coming.

We by default X out Christmas even if we do not use the term Xmas or Holiday tree. The secular world cannot offer Christ's peace; therefore, we cannot separate true peace from Christ's kingdom.

As a member of the Canção Nova community of Brazil, I practice the community founder's form of Bible study. It was there that I found an ominous verse in the seventh chapter of Luke. Jesus explains that since the scribes and the Pharisees rejected John's baptism, they put themselves outside God's plan for them. I never noticed those words before but they reveal a stark reality that is now often lost to our own people.

Infected with a universalist concept of Catholicism that says that nothing we do matters because all are saved anyway, we have a lazy man's concept of Jesus' words and John's proclamation. However, Jesus made it clear in Luke that those who sought a way out of their sinful life, the tax collectors and sinners, came to hear the words of Jesus, the complacent did not.

As priests, we are going through some quite difficult times, but that is because there is a lot at stake in what we do. We need to be aware and understand the awesomeness of the task at hand. It needs to be addressed humbly and with great support, both in our own prayer life and in the

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# 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!

There is no other holiday like Christmas. For many, it is "the most wonderful time of the year..." as the song goes. They anticipate gathering with family and friends. They look forward to gifts exchanges and holiday meals. They may even have some time off around the holidays.

However, for others it is the worst time of the year. They grieve loved ones who have passed. Family tensions make gatherings awkward. They are more aware of financial constraints. Still others, especially those in the retail industry, work longer hours with greater demands.

Yet neither of these scenarios captures the essence of Christmas. Hopefully our circumstances lend themselves to the joys of this season. But even if they do not, we know the real reason of the season: Jesus! In fact, we believe no other holiday reveals God's heart more fully than Christmas.

Fr. Romano Guardini, in reflecting on the Incarnation, says this:

...this journey of God from the everlasting into the transitory, this stride across the border into history, is something no human intellect can altogether grasp. The mind might even oppose the apparently fortuitous, human aspect of this interpretation with its own purer idea of godliness; yet precisely her lies the hidden kernel of Christianity. Before such an unheard of thought the human intellect bogs down. Once at this point a friend gave me a clue that helped my understanding more than any measure of reason. He said, "But love does such things." (*The Lord*, page 17, Regnery Publishing Inc., 1954, renewed 1982 by Elinor C. Briefs)

Christianity is the love of God in Jesus Christ, God made man, born of Mary in Bethlehem. From this revelation of love would come the commands of Christ to love God and neighbor. From his descent into our messiness would come his embrace of the cross and death on our behalf. His love proved unconquerable. Jesus rose from the dead. Victorious over sin, death and Satan, Jesus

shares this victory with all who believe and are baptized.

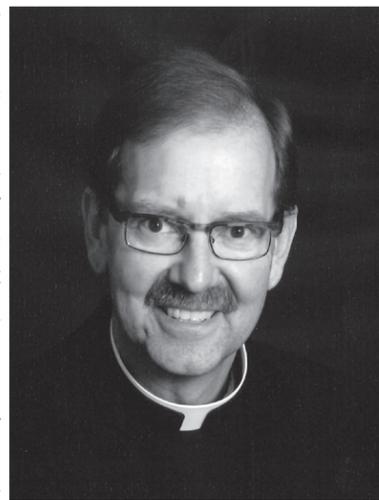
We have begun the Jubilee Year of Mercy. We see this mercy first and foremost in the Lord Jesus who, for our sake, "became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty (we) might become rich." (II Corinthians 8:9) By his coming as man, Jesus enriches us all so that we might "...do good, be rich in good works... be generous, ready to share." (I Timothy 6:18) The Incarnation of God's mercy is to transform us into a people of mercy.

As we enter this holy season I ask you to do two things. Pray for your priests and parishes. This season gives us a unique opportunity to minister to those who do not normally attend Mass. Secondly, please consider sending a gift to Fraternity of Priests. We have been relying on savings to meet our expenses over the last few months.

I pray God's blessings on you and your loved ones.



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: \$ 2,229.00

Budget Surplus (shortage): (\$ 2,521.00)

Current as of October 31, 2015.

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support of others so inclined, such as our brother priests in the Fraternity.

There is a great warning all leaders in the Church give and that is not to be lone rangers, but seek the support of brother priests. When we understand what is at stake, we can see that the lone ranger is an easy target. However, so is the warrior who is demoralized in the wrong division. There are those who lose their vision and zeal because they do not see others who have the same vision or zeal but seem to be promoting the secularist ideas of a universal salvation and an Advent season focused on being nice to one another, but not on encountering Christ. This is also what support must address, to build ourselves in zeal and vision that is the call of the Catholic priest.

As a baby-boomer I am, like others my age, familiar with the famous Bob Dylan Christian album from his short time in Christianity. He makes the announcement in the song of the same name that we have to "Serve Somebody". He warns us that it may be the devil or it may be the Lord but we have to serve someone. The problem is that if we lose our zeal for the mission of priest and even our vision we may look at the collar we don and say we are serving the Lord when in fact we are not. The scribes and pharisees may have felt the same, but indeed, Jesus warns they are not serving the God they claim they do. It is dangerous to allow ourselves to be overcome by a secular standard of the faith, one that preaches being good and not reforming our lives or preparing for our ultimate encounter with Christ. We risk falling into a false sense of security.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One of the greatest messages that we can keep in mind on the importance of not only our work, but in encouraging others to deepen their commitment to Christ is the admonition to Abraham from God about Sodom and Gomorrah. Many believe those two cities were destroyed because of their sinfulness. It is not fully true. We see in that bargaining conversation that they were destroyed because of a lack of righteous people. There is no place that describes what happened to the righteous who must have been there at one time, except to say that outside of Lot and Abraham they no longer exist.

That message must encourage us to proclaim ours for we as the community of God's people have a call to be the righteous of today. What happens if we fall in that vocation? It can easily happen when we lose a sense of our vocation to such concepts of building a world of peace without God or defining goodness in terms of being nice to one another. Then our faith is transformed and absorbed into the secular definitions of goodness and universalist understandings of salvation. The righteousness of the Godly disappears.

Advent is a powerful time for all to experience, as long as they emphasize its true focus. Advent is not about preparing for Christ's coming the first time, but the second. It is not about being nice to one another until the 26th, nor is it about the children. It is about living the powerful call to ready ourselves for the coming of Christ.

Our Advent time is a good one to inspect our lives, see what we want to change during the unfolding liturgical

year. We can build new habits of devotion and seek to eliminate old habits of worldliness. It is a great time to respond to the Pope's call to begin a year of good Bible reading using a well laid out plan that obviously does not include front to back reading. It is a good time to build or restore new habits of prayer and new practices to lead us closer to Christ and to strengthen our witness.

Take this Advent in the spirit that John the Baptist presents. Prepare the way of the Lord in your heart this year. Get yourself ready to encounter Him every day and live the message in a way that shows you truly are a member of His Kingdom. Do not get sucked into the worldly ways of Advent and avoid preaching it at mass. But seek to embody John the Baptist and call people to prepare.

Let us live Advent well.

*Father Bob Carr is a member of the Boston Fraternity and a priest from the Archdiocese of Boston.*

The Fraternity of Priests is grateful for the spiritual and financial support of our lay supporters and priest members throughout this past year.

The board of the Fraternity will keep you and your families in our prayers and masses during the Christmas season.

May our newly born Savior, Jesus Christ, bless you abundantly this holy season of Advent and into the New Year!