



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

April 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. Robert Boyle Pittsburgh, PA 1	Rev. Thomas Federline Pittsburgh, PA 2	Rev. Tony Gargotta Pittsburgh, PA 3	Rev. Stan Gregorek Pittsburgh, PA 4	Rev. James Holland Pittsburgh, PA 5	Rev. Thomas Kredel Pittsburgh, PA 6	Pope Benedict XVI 7
Rev. John Lynam Pittsburgh, PA 8	Rev. Daniel Mahoney Pittsburgh, PA 9	Rev. Nicholas Mastrangelo Pittsburgh, PA 10	Rev. Thomas Sparacino Pittsburgh, PA 11	Rev. John Sweeney Pittsburgh, PA 12	Rev. Paul Zywan Pittsburgh, PA 13	Rev. Trevor Nathasingh Port-of-Spain 14
Msgr. Cuthbert Alexander Port-of-Spain 15	Rev. George Lewis Port-of-Spain 16	Rev. Donie McMahon Port-of-Spain 17	Rev. Dwight Merrick Port-of-Spain 18	Rev. Neil Rodriguez, CSSP Port-of-Spain 19	Rev. Ian Taylor Port-of-Spain 20	Rev. John Theodore Port-of-Spain 21
Msgr. John Allard Providence, RI 22	Rev. Gerard Caron Providence, RI 23	Rev. John Dreher Providence, RI 24	Rev. Robert Giardina Providence, RI 25	Rev. Wilfrid Gregoire Providence, RI 26	Rev. Francis Guidice Providence, RI 27	Rev. Robert Shaldone, SOLT Providence, RI 28
Rev. Michael Sisco Providence, RI 29	Rev. B. Samuel Turillo Providence, RI 30					

John Paul Directing Us to the Spirit

By Fr. Mike Roy

If there was one last reflection that I could leave with you my Brothers in Fraternity, it would be that we have been greatly blessed during these challenging days for our Church and our priesthood. Blessed by the exceptionally wise and holy people that our good God has given us to guide and sustain us during a time when some of our most fundamental beliefs and practices have been shaken. Blessed to have been given the structure and the fraternal support of our committed Brotherhood. These two blessings coincide in the person of Blessed John Paul the great Shepherd under whom many of us have lived the majority of our priestly service. Time and again he has, in his encyclicals and letters, endorsed the Kingdom Disciplines and the vision upon which we have been founded. This was especially true in his annual Letter to My Brother Priests written each year on the occasion of Holy Thursday.

In this month's article I would like to give a synopsis of the Letter he wrote to us in 1998. Its central theme is "The Holy Spirit". It is most certainly worth our prayerful reflection, perhaps during several of our daily holy hours before the Blessed Sacrament. He writes:

"An intimate bond unites our priesthood to the Holy Spirit and to his mission. On the day of our

priestly ordination, by virtue of a unique out pouring of the Paraclete, the Risen One, accomplished again in each of us what he accomplished in his disciples on the evening of Easter, and set us in the world as those who continue his mission. The gift of the Spirit, with its mysterious sanctifying power, is the source and root of the special task of evangelization and of sanctification which is entrusted to us.

On Holy Thursday we contemplate Jesus, the Servant obedient unto death, who institutes the Eucharist and Holy Orders as the supreme signs of his love. Is there a more appropriate and evocative moment than this for us priests to contemplate the work of the Holy Spirit in us and to implore his gifts in order to conform ourselves all the more to Christ the Priest of the New Covenant?"

The Holy Spirit, Creator and Sanctifier

"Every priest on his day of ordination makes the commitment to be completely open to the action of the Holy Spirit. This hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, reminds him of the Paraclete's special assistance, of the many moments of grace, joy, intimacy which the Lord has granted him to enjoy on life's journey.

The Holy Spirit called in the Creed "The Lord and Giver of Life", expresses well the role the Holy

Spirit plays in the events of human life, particularly in accompanying the Lord's disciples on the way to salvation. Think of how he directed the earthly life of Jesus toward the Father. a) the mysterious intervention by which the Son of God is conceived in the womb of Mary. b) he descended on Jesus in the form of a dove at baptism. c) drives Jesus into the desert. d) Jesus begins his mission "in the power of the Spirit" and by the Spirit's power he drives out demons. e) at the cross Jesus offers himself "through the eternal Spirit". f) through whom he rose and was "designated Son of God in power". g) on the evening of Easter in the Upper Room he said "Receive the Holy Spirit" h) and finally he entrusts the salvation of all when he says "Go, Teach and Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." In our time as well the Spirit is the principal agent of the new evangelization.

Eucharist and Orders, Fruits of the Spirit

"Through the anointing of the Spirit in the immaculate womb of Mary, the Father consecrated Christ the Eternal High Priest of the New Covenant who wished to share his priesthood with us, calling us to be his presence in history for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. Giving thanks with the whole community for the Eucharist which

...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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Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
Franciscan University
Steubenville, OH 43952-9671
Phone: (740) 283-4400
Fax: (740) 283-3622
Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
http://www.fraternityofpriests.org



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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!

In early February my bishop sent the priests of the Diocese of Cleveland Pope Benedict's *Message for Lent 2012*. Though, I have been recently reading more papal writings, I confess to Almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have not regularly read this annual letter of the Pope. However, I did read this year's *Message for Lent*.

As with all of Pope Benedict's writings, they are insightful and inspiring. He based his reflection on Hebrews 10:22-25. The Pope wrote:

Embracing Christ bears fruit in a life structured by the three theological virtues: it means approaching the Lord "sincere in heart and filled with faith" (v. 22), keeping firm "in the hope we profess" (v. 23) and ever mindful of living a life of "love and good works" (v. 24) together with our brothers and sisters. (Introduction, paragraph 2)

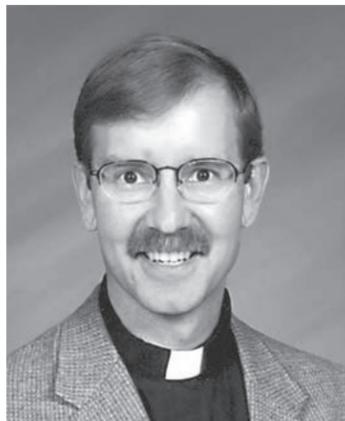
Pope Benedict's message highlighted our need to be "concerned for one another". (Hebrews 10:24) He focused on two aspects of our concern for others. The Pope first reminded us that we need to be concerned for the poor among us. He alluded to the "spiritual amnesia" that blocks us from recognizing Jesus Christ among us in the persons of the needy. Without a spiritual vision, the needy seem merely a burden. With a spiritual vision, they take the place of Christ.

A second aspect of our "concern for one another" focused on the spiritual dimension of humanity. The Pope reminded us of our eternal destiny. We will give an account of ourselves before Jesus Christ.

Because of this destiny, Pope Benedict strongly urged us to relearn the spiritual work of mercy called "admonishing the sinner". I cannot help but think that this may be the most neglected of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Pope Benedict put it this way:

It is important to recover this dimension of Christian charity. We must not remain silent before evil. I am thinking of all those Christians who, out of human regard or

purely personal convenience, adapt to the prevailing mentality, rather than warning their brothers and sisters against ways of thinking and acting



that are contrary to the truth and that do not follow the path of goodness.

Let us remember: our goal in life is not merely to eke through this world in a comfortable manner until we pass away. Our destiny is eternal life with God in Jesus Christ. We need to prepare for this encounter while we have the power of choice in this world of time and space. May our every choice be based on truth and express the goodness of God.

As we complete our Lenten penances, let us, with the Risen Lord, truly be concerned for one another. With a concern for body and spirit, let us help each other along the way to God.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. 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: **\$7,070.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$2,320.00**

Current as of January 31, 2012.

...continued from page 1

renews our sense of the grace of our unique vocation."

The Lord at table with his disciples "having loved his own who were in this world, loved them to the end." Thus in the Upper Room and without the shedding of blood, Christ completes the sacrifice of the New Covenant, which will be accomplished in blood the following day, when he will say at the end - "It is accomplished".

By the power of the Holy Spirit, this sacrifice, offered once and for all on Calvary, is entrusted to the Apostles as the most blessed sacrament of the Church. Seeking the mysterious intervention of the Spirit, the Church begs before the words of consecration: "and so Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Holy Spirit, that they may become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist". Without the power of God's Spirit how could human lips ever make the bread and wine the Body and Blood of the Lord, even to the end of time?

The Gifts of the Spirit in the Life of the Priest

"The Holy Spirit reestablishes in the human heart full harmony with God and, assuring him victory over the Evil One, opens him to the boundless measure of divine love which prompts him, by means of the sevenfold gift, to make his own life a gift, wholly configured to Christ.

This is the path upon which the Spirit gently urges each of the baptized; but in order that they may

exercise their demanding ministry with profit, the Spirit reserves a special attention for those who have received Holy Orders. With the gift of *wisdom*, therefore, the Spirit leads the priest to evaluate all things in the light of the gospel, helping him to read in his own experience and the experience of the Church the mysterious and loving plan of the Father. With the gift of *understanding*, the Spirit fosters in the priest a deeper insight into revealed truth, pressing him to proclaim with conviction and power the Good News of salvation. With the gift of *counsel*, the Spirit illuminates the ministry of Christ so that the priest may direct his activities according to the perspectives of Providence, never allowing himself to be swayed by the judgments of the world. With the gift of *strength*, the priest is sustained in the hardships of his ministry and provided with the boldness required for the proclamation of the gospel. With the gift of *knowledge*, the priest is able to understand and accept the sometimes mysterious interweaving of secondary causes with the First cause on the turn of events in the universe. With the gift of *piety*, the Spirit revives in the priest the relationship of intimate communion with God and of trusting surrender to his providence. Finally, with the gift of the *fear of the Lord*, last in the hierarchy of gifts, the Spirit gives the priest a stronger sense of his own human weakness and of the indispensable role of divine grace, since "neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who give the growth."

Therefore, among the joys and anxieties, the suffering and hopes of the ministry we priests learn to put our trust in the final victory of love, which overcomes human sins and shortcomings. In time of trial we invoke the Spirit more urgently. This allows us to return with all our heart to the Upper Room where, persevering in prayer with Mary and the other disciples we can rekindle the enthusiasm we need in order to resume the toil of apostolic service.

With these words the Pope concludes this letter which he sent to us priests on March 25, 1998 during the twentieth year of his service as Chief Pastor of the Universal Church. "The priest is called to match the *fiat* of Mary at all times allowing himself to be led by the Spirit as she was. In the silence of Nazareth Mary became ever more open to the Lord and by the power of the Holy Spirit she continued to conceive the Word made Flesh." So too in our dedicated daily hour of prayer before the Most Holy Eucharist we priests of the Fraternity become more docile to the Holy Spirit, allowing the Word made Flesh to be realized in our will and our work.

REMINDER!

Mark your calendar now for the Summer of 2012 and our Annual Fraternity Retreat. Our annual brotherhood event will be held in Marquette, Michigan, USA over the dates of July 22-27, 2012. More information will be available soon!

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

