



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

# THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

November 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. James Lawrence Burlington, VT 1	Rev. Donald Roy Burlington, VT 2	Rev. Andy Bord Cardiff, UK 3	Rev. Matthew Jones Cardiff, UK 4	For the souls of our deceased FOP members 5	Prayer Requests Received 6	Pope Francis 7
Rev. Donal Gillespie Cardiff, UK 8	Rev. Paul Millar Cardiff, UK 9	Rev. David O'Donnell Cardiff, UK 10	Canon John Griffiths Cardiff, UK 11	Rev. Barnabas Page Cardiff, UK 12	Rev. Barry English Cardiff, UK 13	Rev. Michael Cronin Cardiff, UK 14
Rev. Robert Franco Cleveland, OH 15	Rev. James Mazanec Cleveland, OH 16	Rev. Tom Dunphy Cleveland, OH 17	Rev. Homer Blubaugh Columbus, OH 18	Rev. Richard Engle Columbus, OH 19	Rev. Joseph Losh Columbus, OH 20	Rev. Justin Reis Columbus, OH 21
Rev. Peter Gregor Comayagua 22	Rev. Msgr. Dennis Skonseng Fargo, ND 23	Rev. Claude Seeberger Fargo, ND 24	Rev. Duaine Cote Fargo, ND 25	Rev. Msgr. Robert Laliberte Fargo, ND 26	Very Rev. Dale Kinzler Fargo, ND 27	Rev. Donald Leiphon Fargo, ND 28
Rev. Edmund Sylvia South Bend, IN 29	Rev. Robert Sackey Ghana 30					

## 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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**Do you know anyone who would like to receive our Newsletter?**

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.

## More Ministry to Men

By Fr. Dwight Merrick, Trinidad Fraternity

Ministry to men might be more or less difficult around the Catholic world depending on several factors. Here in the Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean generally, the struggle many men endure to define their masculinity has created an enormous challenge to all Christian Churches especially those where gender roles are not strictly defined and enforced; that's us. In Trinidad for instance the ratio of men to women (according to a survey a few years ago) attending weekend Holy Mass is about 1:5. Throughout the region the picture is much the same and some places even much worse. To put it frankly, many Caribbean men seem to feel that it's a sign of weakness to need God or spirituality in their life and thus their absence from Church. Interestingly, this phenomenon is also felt by the protestant churches as well, even with their fundamentalist positions on the roles of men and women; such is the prevalence and dominance of this "feeling" plaguing many Caribbean men.

One study conducted in a Scandinavian country which I read some years ago, investigated the possible relationships between the practice of their Catholic faith by children (male and female) and that of their fathers and mothers. The conclusions were most interesting.

The findings suggested that regardless of how devout a mother might be in the practice of her Catholic faith, her children seemed not to be influenced very strongly toward keeping their Catholic faith when they grew up. On the other hand and most interestingly, Catholic children in that country continued practicing their Catholic faith as they matured at least as well as their fathers. If a father was irregularly attending Church, his children attended Church at least as frequently if not more than he did.

At the recently concluded World Conference on Family life in Philadelphia (Sept '15), it was reported that one recent study found that among devout Catholic mothers, only 17% of them had all the family members practicing their faith seriously. Among devout Catholic fathers however, over 90% of them had all their family members practicing their faith seriously.

The phenomenon of men having an aversion to religion and Church is therefore one in need of urgent attention if only because fathers seem to have a controlling influence over the practice of the faith in their families and in particular over the children in their homes. So what pastoring is taking place toward Catholic men in your neck of the woods? Fr Philip Merdinger, founder of Brotherhood of Hope,

had shared with me around the year 2000 that in the US at that time there were just a few Catholic Men's Conferences taking place in the entire country. By the year 2010 however, there were about fifty around the US with Bishops (I'm told) all wanting a men's conference in their dioceses. Surely we are seeing here a move of God's Spirit within the Church. Could our Fraternities be instrumental in supporting men's ministry in general and conferences in particular throughout our dioceses?

Surprised by truth is certainly one way I could describe being drawn into a ministry which I surely resisted for several years. A ministry to married couples was certainly something which I resisted and avoided simply because I felt that I had nothing to say to couples in terms of living out the challenges attending couple. It has been three and a half years since I've been working with a growing group of married couples and realizing that this is not only a critical ministry in the life of the church but also one unnoticed or ignored by most priests; and maybe for reasons that I certainly had. Again, to my great surprise, many men who were never interested in a men's group were most interested in the couples ministry. Initially as a ministry to couples who were less than ten years married and who numbered ten for the first year, this

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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!

One of our early September gospel readings described Jesus expulsing demonic forces from a man in the synagogue. (Luke 4:31-37) At that daily Mass I polled my congregation, asking them, "How many of you would like to never have to engage in spiritual warfare?" Many raised their hands. I said, "So would I...but we can't!" We are called the Church militant for a reason. We are engaged in spiritual warfare simply being part of a fallen race in fallen world. Satan and his minions hate God and seek to enslave and destroy those made in God's image and likeness. While we are on this earth we cannot opt out of this war.

Though we must engage in spiritual warfare while on earth, Jesus Christ shares with us his victory. He has defeated Satan and his forces by his saving death and glorious resurrection. In John 16:33, Jesus both reminds and assures us. "...In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world." (John 16:33)

The Lord has also given us weapons by which we wage battle. St. Paul describes the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-20. Some of these weapons provide protection for us: truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, faith and salvation. Other weapons take the offense: the word of God, prayer and fasting.

Our Catholic tradition reminds us that there are still more helps in this battle. Beginning with baptism, which transfers us out of the kingdom of darkness into God's kingdom of light (see Colossians 1:13), the sacraments strengthen us in the Lord and nourish our relationship with him. Sacramentals, like Holy Water and the Sign of the Cross, also assist us in our spiritual battle. The prayers of the saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, can be a great help to us in our battle.

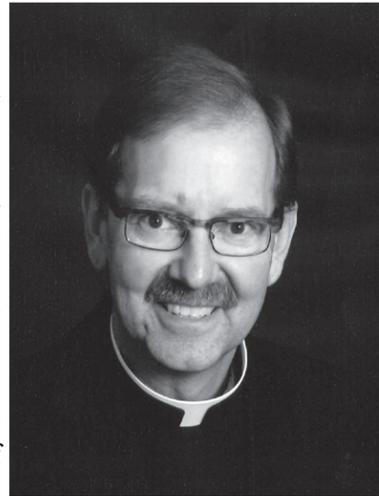
We need to remember our enemy's strategies and counter them by living in the Holy Spirit. One of the great works of the Holy Spirit is creating unity among God's people. The devil works for division and isolation. I recommend *Manual for Spiritual Warfare*

(Tan Books) by Dr. Paul Thigpen, which summarizes much Catholic teaching on this topic while providing prayers and devotions to assist us in this battle.

Finally, the Fraternity of Priests is both a military academy and a tower of refuge for priests in this battle. The personal and communal practices of the Fraternity provide priests with weapons that are both offensive and defensive, assisting us to victory.

So, though we cannot exempt ourselves from this battle, we can "...put on the armor of God, that (we) may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold (our) ground."

(Ephesians 6:13) I am grateful for all who support Fraternity of Priests financially and with their prayers. Pray that Fraternity members grow in holiness and that more priests would embrace this brotherhood.



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: \$ **1,912.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): (\$ **2,838.00**)

Current as of August 31, 2015.

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ministry has grown to include some twenty-one couples over the last few years once opened up to all couples. Thus far our monthly meeting is always very interesting with a brief teaching and most importantly the break-out sessions. Here the men and women tackle a discussion topic as men alone and women alone and are always noisy and engrossed in these sessions. It's here that the real value of the ministry seems to find its mark; men sharing with men and women sharing with women. Among most significant insights for me as a priest is the truth that couples are much more similar than they are different, a truth that they themselves were amazed to realize.

Men in general need great support, Catholic men need as much support as they can get, for their own development, their marriages and for the quality of marriages in our Church and society as a whole. Can we as Fraternity of Priests see the Lord's hand in supporting our Catholic men?

Fr. Dwight Merrick is a board member and active member of the Trinidad Fraternity.

## A Pastor's Perspective

When I worked in a parish that had an immigrant population, I often would receive requests from parishioners for letters for immigration cases. These were parishioners who either were looking for a "green card" or had a case of one type of another about their immigration status and they would

request that I would write a letter indicating that they attended mass.

Some would make the request and demonstrate to me that they never attended mass at the parish. They would never receive a letter. Others would attend sporadically, and I had a duty to indicate that in the letter or not write one at all. In those cases, I often suggested that they find someone else because the letter would not be helpful for they were not regular members of the community although they wanted me to claim they were.

Others were pillars of the community who attended mass regularly and participated weekly or more in mass. One man would open the church every morning to not only pray the rosary before work, but to lead others to do the same. This was at five-thirty, every morning. Obviously I would write their letters, but if the requester was also a man, I would always add another sentence stating how important it was for a man to attend mass regularly. It is a powerful service of witness to his family and the community.

The phenomenon of the man feeling he does not need to attend Mass, or that his wife and children attend for him is not unique to our country or culture. As Father Dwight indicated in his fine article, it is universal and has a universal result.

Men have an important role in the Church and when they attend mass regularly, that role reaches a spiritual dimension, but in our culture, it is almost considered a virtue to not attend mass so that one can work on Sunday.

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, is the ancient teaching and if we want to build a wise culture,

we need to foster that especially among the men. One of the starkest images I have from my ministry is the woman who explained that her father knelt down every night prior to going to bed and said his prayers. Maybe that is not a requirement, but it is an example of one man who knew where true wisdom came. In today's culture, with the lack of appreciation for things religious and the reverence and obedience we must give to God, we can see a stark loss of wisdom. It is the wise man who can be a great leader and history warns us to beware of the leader who is a fool.

The wise man sees things from an eternal perspective and the fool sees things temporally. The wise man is able to discern when to act and when to be patient and wait. It is the fool who acts impulsively. The wise knows and the fool is ignorant.

We draw our wisdom from the Lord and we cannot do that if we decide we are wiser than He is. One of the great problems in our country today is what people are calling an epidemic of drug use and overdose related deaths. You can say that only a fool would get into drugs, but who is there to teach wisdom if the source of all wisdom is rejected by the leaders of families and society? No one is. We clearly need to teach and bring into our parishes the understanding that the wise man seeks to be like Christ. The fool seeks someone else.

Fr. Bob Carr is the editor of *The Visitation* and contributes from the *Boston Fraternity*.

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

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