



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Speaking the Truth With Love

By Fr. John Sweeney

By the time you read this, we will have entered a new year, and the Christmas season is behind us. As Pope Benedict has said in his writings, the seasons of Advent and Christmas are meant to "awaken the most profound and basic memory within us - namely the memory of God who became a child. This is a healing memory - it brings hope." I pray that this Christmas awakened in you the memory of God who became a child. I pray that this Child blesses you and those you love with a deeper knowledge of His love, and that you are carrying that love with you into this New Year.

We continue to ask - and depend on - your prayers for us, as priests of that Child, our Lord Jesus Christ. We need your prayers, your support, for us - in this new year - so that we may continue to speak the Truth of Jesus Christ, and His love, to those whom we serve. We need your prayers and support so that we can continue to bring the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to you, His people. We need your prayers that we, as priests, may receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit we need - to bring the Truth and the love of Jesus - especially to the young people - the ones whose lives we are able to touch. We are all under attack from the evil one - the Prince of Darkness - the one "who prowls about the world, seeking the ruin of souls." Our young people are

especially vulnerable to the attacks of this evil one. His darkness surrounds them - in a culture saturated with drugs, alcohol, pornography, and sexual immorality - a darkness which surrounds us all, and before which we are all prey. But the light and the Love of the Lord Jesus shines more brightly and powerfully before us - calling our young people - and all of us - away from darkness. We the Church - Pope, Bishops, priests and people - religious, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, friends, need to ask the Lord's graces, so that we may witness to Him, in this new year - by our faith in Him, our love for Him, and our love for others - to draw others to the Lord.

The "Church Militant" is realizing more and more in our days, that Satan is furiously attacking us. The family is especially under that attack. Priests are especially under that attack. And the more effective Satan sees our ministry to be - the stronger, and more insidious, that attack is becoming. I find this especially true for our younger priests. Those who are truly dedicated - and seeking to live the Priesthood of Jesus Christ with integrity and fervor, are the ones most coming under Satan's attack. But we know that the power of Jesus Christ - the power of the Sacrament of Holy Orders - and the protection of our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary - is

supreme, and will conquer all the strongholds of the enemy. Again - we depend on your prayers - to hold us up in this New Year. We are looking forward to our summer meeting with the priests from around the world - in Slovenia. We see that the Lord Jesus is moving among His priests in all nations - to bring them together for support and Fraternity. Pray for us - that we may allow the Lord Jesus to renew His Priesthood - to make us all His holy priests. We thank you for your prayers.

Father Sweeney at the introduction of this month's Newsletter, speaks about the challenge before priests to speak clearly the Truth of Jesus Christ confronting the deception of the evil one. Taking to heart the sound advice that Fr. Bob Franco gives us in his letter this month let us look to the sound teaching our Church gives us in these critical times. How wonderfully Pope Benedict does this in his third encyclical "Caritas in Veritate" speaking the truth with love. Consider how on target these teachings are which are found in paragraphs 43 and 44 of this encyclical.

Human solidarity is both a benefit and an obligation imposing on us a duty. "Many people today claim they owe nothing to anyone except themselves. Concerned only with their own rights they have difficulty in taking responsibility for their own and

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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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!

The feast of St. Angela Merici is on January 27. The passage from her Spiritual Testament in the Liturgy of the Hours begins with these words, "...in the first place strive with all your power and zeal to be open." Knowing the habits of the fallen human heart, easily closed to new ideas, she counseled her sisters to strive to be open to the leading of the Lord, often manifested through those he has placed in their lives.

Late last year I participated in a retreat sponsored by the Providence Fraternity. Our retreat director was Ralph Martin. His talks focused on our call to holiness as well as our participation in the New Evangelization. Near the end of the retreat we broke into small groups and discussed how to concretely implement what we had heard. Fr. Mike Kelley of the Providence Diocese shared a challenge that someone had given him shortly before he was ordained. The challenge was to spend ten minutes a day reading Church documents.

It had been a desire of mine to read Church documents on a more regular basis. The Liturgy of the Hours is the anchor of my prayer and reading. I have also developed the habit of reading the Sacred Scriptures on a daily basis. However, I have not developed the habit of regularly reading Church documents. My brother priest planted the seed. I thought, "Perhaps I will begin to do this."

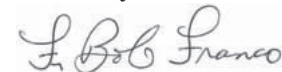
When I arrived at the Providence Airport to return to Cleveland I notice a priest just ahead of me in the security line. One thing led to another and we ended up having a quick lunch together before our flights. Fr. Roger Landry, a pastor from the Fall River diocese and editor of their local Catholic paper, shared with me his regular reading of Church documents. He said he was looking forward to re-reading *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict's second encyclical on hope, during Advent. If Fr. Kelly planted the seed, Fr. Landry watered it.

I began this discipline of reading Church documents with the commencing of the new Church year. It is my goal to read these writings (I too read *Spe Salvi* during Advent) at least ten minutes day. I pray that this become a good habit that will feed my soul and the people God has given me to serve.

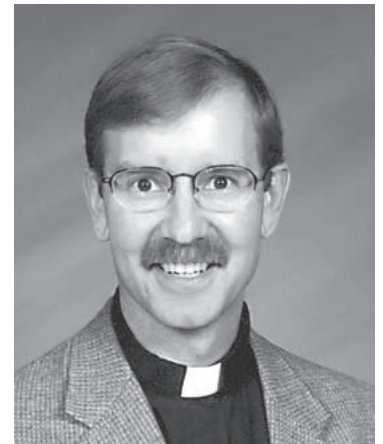
As we enter into 2011, let us strive to be open to the Lord. Whether it is developing a new habit or by being open to the Lord's prompting in other ways, our openness to the Lord Jesus will bear good fruit.

I want to end this letter with a short message to my brother priests in the Fraternity: Strive to be open to going to Slovenia for our International meeting. **PLAN NOW.** Information has been mailed to you and it is also on our website.

Sincerely in Christ,



Father 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: **\$4,405.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **(\$345.00)**

Current as of November 30, 2010.

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other people's development. It is important to call for a renewed reflection on how rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere license."

In this section of his encyclical Pope Benedict is helping us understand how we can fall victim to the deception of the Father of lies who always puts a veneer of goodness on his temptations. The demands of justice, recognition of what my rights are as a person of worth and deserving of respect (a good thing), need to be balanced with the teaching and example of Jesus who was a man concerned for the development and well being of the other. The Pope says: "Nowadays we are witnessing a grave inconsistency. On the one hand, appeals are made to alleged rights, arbitrary and non-essential in nature, accompanied by the demand that they be recognized and promoted by public structures, while, on the other hand, elementary and basic rights remain unacknowledged and are violated. Individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate."

This need – to balance rights and duties – applies to every aspect of our lives as human beings. But perhaps nowhere are we more susceptible to the tricks of Satan than in the area of sexuality. By the plan of our loving Creator our sexuality is a powerful and pleasurable part of our humanity intended to be the self-donation, the gift that a husband and wife give to each other to create both a common bond and a family.

From his unique perspective as Pastor of the World, Pope Benedict

says in *Caritas in Veritate*, "Due attention must obviously be given to responsible procreation ... The Church, in her concern for man's authentic development, urges the person to have full respect for human values in the exercise of sexuality. It cannot be reduced merely to pleasure or entertainment, nor can sex education be reduced to technical instructions aimed solely to protecting the interested parties from possible disease or the 'risk' of procreation. This would be to impoverish and disregard the deeper meaning of sexuality, a meaning which needs to be acknowledged and responsibly appropriated not only by individuals but also by the community. It is irresponsible to view sexuality merely as a source of pleasure, and likewise to regulate it through strategies of mandatory birth control."

"Populous nations have been able to emerge from poverty thanks not least to the size of their population and the talents of their people. On the other hand, formerly prosperous nations are presently passing through a phase of uncertainty and in some cases decline, precisely because of their falling birth rates; this has become a crucial problem for highly affluent societies. The decline in births, falling at times beneath the so-called 'replacement level', also puts a strain on social welfare systems, increases their cost, eats into savings and hence the financial resources needed for investment, reduces the availability of qualified laborers, and narrows the 'brain pool' upon which nations can draw for their needs. Furthermore, smaller and at times miniscule families run the risk of impoverishing social relations, and failing to ensure effective forms of solidarity. These situations are

symptomatic of scant confidence in the future and moral weariness. It is thus becoming a social and even economic necessity once more to hold up to future generations the beauty of marriage and the family, founded on marriage between a man and a woman, and the fact that these institutions correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person."

In this new year all of us, priests who are part of the Fraternity and our loyal lay benefactors and intercessors, can benefit from the sound guidance given us in the inspired documents of the Church coming from the pens of our recent Popes. John Paul's *Theology of the Body* is the truth about human sexuality that will correct the confusion of this age, the truth that sets us free.

When the media focuses obsessively on the teachings of the Church simply as a list of rules and prohibitions, we need to tell the truth that God's plan for sex is to make you happy, but only when it is truly generous and self-giving. In the plan of God marriage is the place where sex can express self-giving love without holding back the life giving consequences. "Our Catholic faith and ethics are not meant to stifle love, but to make it healthier, stronger and more truly free" (Benedict XVI). The intrinsic connection between sex, new life and self-giving love has been forgotten in our culture. In true and loving sex, the whole person gives his or her whole self, without reserve. If we hold back part of ourselves (like our fertility or our commitment), we are not really giving ourselves totally, and so we are not loving the way God has made us to love.

Fr. John Sweeney is a member of the Board of the Fraternity and is a Pastor in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

February 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Rev. 1 Santiago Udayar <i>San Angelo, TX</i>	Rev. 2 Bernard Gully <i>San Angelo, TX</i>	Rev. 3 Terry Brenon <i>San Angelo, TX</i>	Rev. 4 Barry McLean <i>San Angelo, TX</i>	Pope Benedict XVI 5
Rev. 6 Douglas Binsfield <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>	Rev. 7 Gregory Frankman <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>	Rev. 8 Charles Duman <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>	Rev. 9 Jerome Ranek <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>	Rev. 10 Roger Geditz <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>	Rev. 11 Edward Pierce <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>	Rev. 12 John Rasmussen <i>Sioux Falls, TX</i>
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A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

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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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