



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

With the Holy Spirit - We are Everything But Ordinary

By Fr. John Sweeney

We have just celebrated again the Feast of Pentecost - for about the 2000th time - since the first Pentecost in Jerusalem, which began all we still are as the Church. Many of you may remember previous times - when we used to call these Sundays after Pentecost - the "Second - Third - Sunday after Pentecost" etc. (Maybe - along with all the new translations for the Mass which are coming - we may find that this is a better name than "ordinary time.") Catholics so need the mystery of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit. Pentecost offer us so much to look at about the Third Person of the Holy Trinity - the Holy Spirit.

In the Mass Scriptures between the Ascension and Pentecost, we heard that the Apostles were still "holed up" in the Upper Room - afraid to go out - afraid for their lives. But after the Ascension, they had the wisdom enough to pray - they had learned something from what Jesus always did - in their three years with Him - about going off and praying. And so they went back to the room and prayed together for those ten days. And they also had enough wisdom to gather in the presence of Mary, the Blessed Mother. Apparently they had also listened to John, the Beloved Disciple, who would have told

them that Jesus had given His Mother to them, as He died on the Cross. And so they gathered with Mary. And they waited for the coming of that Advocate - the Holy Spirit - just as Jesus had told them to do - they waited for that first Pentecost Sunday.

Perhaps you prayed before Pentecost - maybe you made a "Pentecost Novena."

If you did, you were praying as the original disciples did - in those ten days - for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And I am sure that is what happened - that you and your family, and your Parish, and all the Church were blessed with the Holy Spirit.

Catholics can never be encouraged enough to think about the Holy Spirit - to know about Him. Because we can be like Church in Ephesus that St. Paul speaks about who said: "we have never even heard of the Holy Spirit." Many Catholics may know of the Holy Spirit - but don't know much about Him - they don't pray to Him much - that is why it is good that Pentecost comes again every year. The Holy Spirit is THE Person of God, who is present to us and to the Church now. The Holy Spirit shows us who Jesus is, what He means for our life - that Jesus is our life.

St. Basil in one of the pre-Pentecost office of readings - a

beautiful reading - says the Holy Spirit is like the sunshine - the sun shines on, and is enjoyed by each person as if it was only for him/ her. It is the same with Holy Spirit. We have a hard time believing that - that He is with each of us - loves us - fills us - as if we were the only one. But the Holy Spirit does shine on each of us - just as the sun shines on people and they become bright - have a new radiance. So the light of the Holy Spirit shines on us - and from us - and we become a source of grace for others.

The Holy Spirit has been given to each one of us - He is within each one of us. He came into us the day we were baptized. His life in us was confirmed the day the Bishop Confirmed us - and prayed, with the imposition of hands, and anointed us - that we would receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many of us have been prayed over - for a "baptism of the Holy Spirit," which is the "release" of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit stirs in us every time we pray, every time we read the Word of God, or hear it proclaimed at Mass - and especially every time we take the Sacred Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus into us - the Holy Spirit is "released" in us. We can't doubt - we need to see - that you and I - all Catholics - are a

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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 final line of an old Pentecostal chorus goes like this: *There's power, power, wonder working power in the precious Blood of the Lamb.* Wonder working power in the precious blood of the Lamb? What does this mean?

To answer this question we need to recall one of the spiritual laws of the universe: sin has consequences. This truth is easy for us to forget. People tend to think that breaking God's commandments is sort of like breaking the speed limit. One can get away with it most of the time.

Though most of the consequences of sin are initially invisible and often not immediately felt, they are nonetheless real. The consequences of sin include: alienation from God (perhaps for eternity), disfigurement of the soul, strained or broken human relationships and a spiritual blindness that justifies human pride and sin. How can we repair these consequences and get right with our thrice Holy God?

Throughout history, people have dealt with the consequences of sin by sacrificing to God. Beginning with Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) and throughout God's dealings with humanity, people have offered sacrifices to deal with this alienation with God. However, all of these sacrifices point to the one sacrifice that ultimately does deal with the transgressions of human beings: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.


Jesus said that his "blood will be shed...for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28). It is written Hebrews 9:14, "how much more will the blood of Christ...cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God." St. Peter reminds us that we "were ransomed from [our] futile conduct...not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ." (I Peter 1:17-18). The book of Revelation tells us that the saints "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." and that they have conquered Satan "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." (Revelation 7:14, 12:11) *Yes!*

There is "wonder working power in the precious blood of the Lamb!"

The first Sunday in July used to be dedicated to celebrating the Precious

Blood of Jesus Christ. This feast was joined to Corpus Christi in 1970 and is now called "The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ." And though the Church does not have a special feast day dedicated solely to the Blood of Christ (there is a votive mass in the Sacramentary), we would do well to pray that the saving effects of the Blood of Christ be upon us and our loved ones.

May the priesthood of Jesus Christ, by which the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is made present on earth, know the wonder working power of the Precious Blood of the Lamb!



Fr. Bob Franco

PS: Please pray for our Annual Fraternity Meeting in Slovenia, July 25-29. Ask the Lord to guide and inspire this gathering!

Fraternity Financial Report

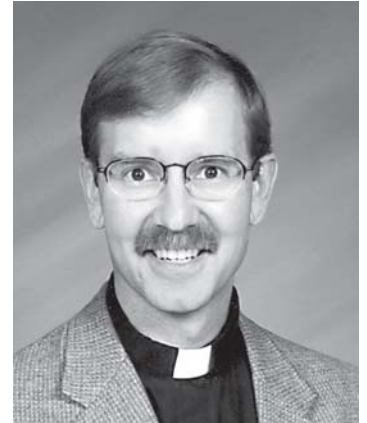
One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Monthly Donation Budget: **\$4,750**

Actual Donations: **\$6,578**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$1,828**

Current as of May 31, 2011.



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source of God's presence, and Jesus' love – and the light of the Holy Spirit - to others. And the more we are praying – as we need to learn from Jesus, and invite Mary to pray with us – and are open to the Holy Spirit's light - the more we will shine that light on others. And even if we do not always see a dramatic expression of that – it is still happening. However - there are times we can see a more observable manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence. As prophet Joel prophesied centuries before Jesus and Pentecost: "I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity – your sons and daughters shall prophesy- your old people shall dream dreams - your young people shall see visions."

This is what the Father has done. We see the gifts of the Holy Spirit – in Paul's letter to the Corinthians - the charisms- from which the Charismatic renewal in the Church took its name. Paul talks of those gifts – prophesy - like Joel's, words of knowledge , healing , praying in tongues , the gift of discerning spirits - whether those spirits are Holy or human - or evil - are given to us. And these gifts do continue in our days.

Just this morning - a lady at my Parish, who has been a part of charismatic renewal for forty years, was telling me about a retreat her community had last weekend - and that some of the young people who were prayed over for the release of the Holy Spirit began to pray in tongues, a few "prophesized," as Joel did - which is speaking God's words to others. These gifts have been re-discovered in the Catholic Church - since the beginning of this

Charismatic Renewal - which, as you may know began here in my Diocese - Pittsburgh, with a retreat for Duquesne University students – in the late sixties, and has been experienced by millions of Catholics throughout the world for these past almost fifty years.

The Holy Spirit is the only One who will show us what it means, as St. Peter said, to "sanctify Jesus in our hearts."

What a novena, and our celebration of Pentecost - and any prayer we do - does – is to release the Holy Spirit within us, and within our everyday lives. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can show us who Jesus is, what He does in our lives. The One who can give us the faith, the trust that Jesus is with us always- and that nothing will overcome us - no fears, no anxiety, no struggle, no pain, no loneliness, no suffering - will overcome us. The Holy Spirit is the only One who will show us what it means, as St. Peter said, to "sanctify Jesus in our hearts." We can do that every day just by our Morning Offering prayer - when we ask Jesus to be with us at every moment - and He will - no matter how little we may think of Him that day - He is always there with us, thinking of us. The Holy Spirit is the One who will give us the courage to be the disciple Jesus asks us to be. The fire of the Holy Spirit can purify us - will burn away anything which is not as the Lord has made us to be. We can glow with His

light, as St Basil said. His light can shine from us to others. The more His love fills us, the more His love will flow to others.

When the Apostles, after they had received the Holy Spirit, began to speak about Jesus - "signs and wonders" began to be seen. And then what happened? It says that the people "began to pay attention" – and many of them accepted Jesus, and were baptized. I think we should pray for the Holy Spirit to do some "signs and wonders" through us – so that more people would start "paying attention" to Jesus. The world is not "paying much attention" to Jesus now, is it? Pray for the fire of the Holy Spirit - which is Love - to fill us more - to overflowing. Love would get people's attention! And as Blessed Mother Teresa said: "we cannot do great things - but we can do small things with great love."

As you continue to pray in these "Sundays after Pentecost" - know that this is not just "ordinary time." You might pray very simply every day: "Come, Holy Spirit - fall afresh on me." Ask the Holy Spirit, if you haven't already, for a "new prayer language" - beyond your words and thoughts – which is what praying in tongues is – as the Holy Spirit prays in you. Ask Him for the words of prophecy – or knowledge - for you, or for another. Ask Him to heal people as you pray for them or with them. Ask Him to give you the gift of discernment of spirits. Jesus promises us that Advocate - He will give Him always - He does not ration Him. He is fresh and new every day. And of course - pray with Mary, the spouse of the Holy Spirit - that she will bring you the Holy Spirit - His gifts in this continuing "Pentecost season."

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

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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