



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Novo Millennio Ineunte - Ten Years Later

by Father Robert Franco

On January 6, 2001, at the close of the Great Jubilee, Pope John Paul II laid out a vision for the Church at the beginning of the Third millennium of Christ. The Apostolic Letter is called *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. This article will review Pope John Paul's vision. By refreshing our understanding of his vision we can evaluate the last ten years and embrace the vision afresh.

Put Out into the Deep

The primary image of NMI (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*) comes from Luke 5:1-10. After Jesus finished teaching from Simon Peter's boat, he commanded him to "put out into the deep" and lower their nets for a catch. Pope John Paul II challenged individual Christians, as well as the Church as a whole, to go deeper: deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ and deeper into the mission of the Church.

He reminded us that the Jubilee was not simply a remembrance of the past 2000 years. It was also a prophecy of the future. Christianity is a religion rooted in history and the Lord meets us in our day. After recalling a variety of events during the Jubilee year and the need for a purification of memory, the Pope directed us to contemplate the face of Christ.

This only makes sense. The Jubilee was a celebration of the

birth of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, born in time of the Virgin Mary. The Pope recalled that Jesus is both God and man, one who suffered and one who is Risen.

Starting Afresh from Christ

Having spoken of the need to root ourselves in Jesus Christ by contemplating Him who Jubilee it was, the Pope began to outline a pastoral plan for the beginning of the new millennium. The Pope's pastoral plan began with the call to holiness. The Pope acknowledged, that though this sounded somewhat intangible, holiness must be the starting place for the pastoral plan for the new millennium.

He called for Christian communities to become genuine schools of prayer. He spoke of the renewal that was needed for the Sunday Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He acknowledged the supreme reliance upon *grace*. One cannot program the Kingdom of God into existence. We depend on God's grace and intervention.

The Pope spoke of the need to listen to and proclaim the word of God. This hearing and proclaiming the word of God required both inculturation and faithfulness. The process of integrating a gospel way of life into modern culture must not stray from its message. In fact, the

Pope reminded us that we need to be faithful to the word of God, even to the point to death. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Witnesses to Love

Finally, the Pope described the need to foster a spirituality of communion. Members at every level of the Church need to foster relationships that are characterized by love and respect. The diversity of vocations and charisms demands that there be unity, not uniformity.

This witness of love is to inspire an ecumenical commitment, inter-religious dialogue and the meeting of the challenges of our day: respecting human life, ecological issues and the concept of the fundamental rights of people. These initiatives are to be carried out in light of the Second Vatican Council.

The Pope concluded NMI by reminding all that, though the Jubilee Door has closed, the door to Christ is wide open, beckoning us to *put out into the deep*.

The First Decade

There have been many significant events in the last ten years. Here are three events and how they match up with NMI.

The first is the *clergy sex abuse scandal*. The revelations of 2002 have rippled throughout the Church.

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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March is the month most drenched in purple. Often the whole of the month falls within the season of Lent. March 2010 is such a month. It begins and ends in Lent. However, the Church has three important feast days during March. These not only give variety to our liturgies. These three celebrations frame the essence of Fraternity of Priests.

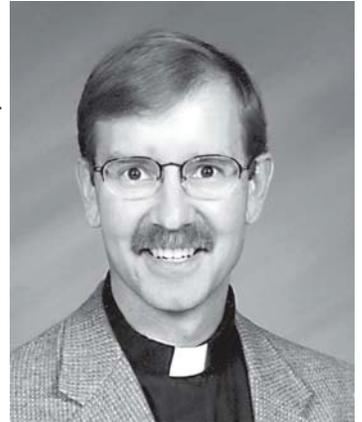
When people ask me about Fraternity of Priests I often summarize it by grouping our Kingdom disciplines into three categories. Priests in the Fraternity make commitments that are *personal, brotherly and ministry oriented*.

Our personal commitments focus on prayer, study, tithing and fasting. The feast day that highlights the personal side of our faith is March 25, the Annunciation. When the Angel Gabriel declared God's message to Mary and she was conceived by the Holy Spirit, God's love came to us in a most *personal* way. The Son of God became a man to reestablish our personal relationship with God. The Christian life without a personal relationship with God is an oxymoron. Priests, indeed all Christians, need to nurture this aspect of their life in Christ.

Our brotherly commitments focus on meeting regularly with other priests and sharing our lives with each other in an open manner. The feast day that highlights these *brotherly* aspects of the Fraternity is March 19, the feast of St. Joseph. Although no words of Joseph are recorded in Scripture, he is the one who shared in life and conversation with Jesus and Mary in a most intimate way. His intimate and familial relationship with Jesus and Mary highlight the ideal of *priests sharing with priests* their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears as a brotherhood of men serving the Church.

Finally, our ministry commitments focus on living in and calling others to a fuller life in the Spirit, thus renewing the Church. The feast day that highlights these *ministry commitments* is March 17, St. Patrick's Day. Though our modern culture associates his day with green beer and parades, Saint

Patrick was an amazing missionary to the people of Ireland. His zeal to bring Christ to those who enslaved him began the transformation a pagan society into a land of scholars and missionaries.



Through this Lenten season, let us pray for the Fraternity of Priests. As Chaucer said in the *Canterbury Tales*, "If that gold rust then, what should iron do?" Chaucer implies that if the clergy fall short, what of the people? Men of the Fraternity of Priests earnestly desire to grow in the holiness appropriate to their vocation. They want to foster their personal relationship with God and their brotherly relationships with each other. In this way, they hope to transform our culture and call all people to the holiness of their vocations, and thus renew the Church.

Again, I thank you for your support of the Fraternity of Priests.

Faternally,

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: **\$7,425.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$2,645.00**

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Editor's Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor,

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508-943-2213.

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted. Any submissions will help make each issue better!

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Catholics and non-Catholics have been scandalized. Dioceses have gone bankrupt. Leaders have resigned in disgrace. Pain has been felt on every level of the Church.

In the midst of these tragic situations, some good fruit is blossoming. All dioceses have policies and procedures to protect children. The priesthood has undergone purification. And *the call to holiness* that Pope John Paul II spoke of in NMI seems more pertinent than ever. All people need to be enrolled in the *school of prayer*. Both shepherds and flock realize that it is all about Jesus and his agenda.

The second event is the *death of Pope John Paul II*. This wise and holy shepherd, whose ministry in some ways redefined the Papacy, went home. One of the many beautiful things about his passing was the peaceful way the Papacy was passed on to his successor, Pope Benedict XVI. Pope John Paul's words about a *spirituality of communion* were incarnated through this peaceful transition.

The third event that perhaps most defined the first ten years of the third millennium of Christ was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Most people quickly learned a new vocabulary: Islam, Shiite, Sunni, Al Qaeda, Islamic fundamentalism, et cetera. Material resources were quickly channeled into security and war efforts.

This event highlights the need for the whole program of NMI. We must become ever more deeply rooted in Jesus Christ. There is a place for *interreligious dialogue*. People do have *fundamental rights*,

one of which is right to worship God without having civil penalties. There is also a need for the Church to be *faithful to its mission of proclaiming the gospel* to all nations. We who contemplate the face of Christ must make Him known in deed and word.

As we embrace the second decade of this new millennium, let us pray to become the prophetic people God calls us to be. By our manner of life, seasoned with words of truth and grace (Colossians 4:2), may the Church be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matthew 5:13-16).

Pope Benedict Speaks on Priestly Fraternity

Let these words of our Holy Father affirm the sound teaching and practice we have proclaimed for more than twenty-five years.

“And it is therefore important to live in the reality of priestly fraternity, of the community of priests who help one another, who are journeying on together with solidarity in their common faith. This also seems to me to be important, for if young people see priests who are very lonely, sad and tired, they will think: ‘If this is my future, then it is not for me.’ A real communion of life that shows your people: ‘Yes this can be a future for me too, it is possible to live like this,’ must be created.”

“Priests, even if they live far apart, are a true community of brothers who should support and help one another. This communion among priests is as important today as ever. In order not to drift into isolation, into loneliness with its sorrows, it is important for us to meet one another regularly.”

Annual Fraternity Conference

This year, our Annual Conference is a week earlier than usual. Plan on the week of July 25th to 30th, 2010. The Columbus Ohio Fraternity will be our hosts. We will be staying at St. Therese's Retreat Center, Columbus. The cost for the entire week will be \$350.00 (Three Hundred, Fifty Dollars). The regular registration mailing will be forthcoming. If you would like to register ahead of time, please send your registration information and check to the Fraternity of Priests, Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio, 43952-9671. For those who are flying, use Port Columbus International Airport.

If you would like to assist our brother priests from overseas to attend this conference, please make your checks out to Fraternity of Priests and mail them to the address listed above.

Thank you for your support of the International Fraternity of Priests!

Please also remember to keep our gathering in prayer. Pray for our travels, our time spent together in support and unity, our brotherhood as priests, and our parishoners whom we serve. Pray especially that this gathering would be filled with grace to strengthen us in our ministerial priesthood and empower us to serve the Church with even greater joy and zeal!

Thank you for your prayers and support!

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

April 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Rev. Alan Shnob Ogdensburg, NY 1	Rev. Joe Muldoon Ottawa, Canada 2	Pope Benedict XVI 3
Rev. Tom Sparacino Pittsburgh, PA 4	Rev. Thomas Galvin Pittsburgh, PA 5	Rev. Thomas Federline Pittsburgh, PA 6	Rev. Nicholas Mastrangelo Pittsburgh, PA 7	Rev. Tom Sparacino Pittsburgh, PA 8	Rev. John Sweeney Pittsburgh, PA 9	Rev. Thomas Kredel Pittsburgh, PA 10
Rev. Robert Boyle Pittsburgh, PA 11	Rev. Kenneth Oldenski Pittsburgh, PA 12	Rev. Stan Gregorek Pittsburgh, PA 13	Rev. Daniel Mahoney Pittsburgh, PA 14	Rev. Joseph Luisi Pittsburgh, PA 15	Rev. Paul Zywan Pittsburgh, PA 16	Rev. John Lynam Pittsburgh, PA 17
Rev. James Holland Pittsburgh, PA 18	Rev. Tony Gargotta Pittsburgh, PA 19	Rev. Clifford Graham Port-of-Spain 20	Rev. David Khan Port-of-Spain 21	Rev. Muliau Stowers Port-of-Spain 22	Rev. Neil Rodriguez CSSP Port-of-Spain 23	Rev. Vincent Compton PP Port-of-Spain 24
Rev. John Theodore CSSP Port-of-Spain 25	Rev. Msgr. Cuthbert Alexander Port-of-Spain 26	Rev. Ian Taylor Port-of-Spain 27	Rev. Dwight Merrick Port-of-Spain 28	Rev. George Lewis Port-of-Spain 29	Rev. Donie McMahon Port-of-Spain 30	

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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