



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

A Founder Revisits the Vision

By Fr. John Dreher

When we propose what is normative for Catholic Christian Life we sometimes settle for the minimum observance of what's needed. This standard practice has the flavor of the Old Testament's emphasis on the observance of the law and in large part depends on a Christian culture.

What is the practice of Catholic Christian Life as it is proposed in the New Testament? Paul tells us in Colossians 2:6-7 "*Live in Christ Jesus the Lord, in the spirit in which you received him. Be rooted in him, built up in him, growing ever stronger in faith, and overflowing with gratitude*". Paul's vision is that we live in Christ! He has a very graphic sense of the indwelling of God in the Christian. This was an enormous leap in faith for this strict observant brilliant pupil of Gamaliel. The indwelling of God in the person of Jesus (the Incarnation) and then Jesus' indwelling in his Body, the Church, his disciples: these two beliefs occupied the zealous heart and brilliant mind of Paul for the rest of his life.

Christ is now the norm for living the Christian life! The Son of God did not become man to give us a few new behavioral prescriptions. He came to make of us a whole New Creation.

When the Fraternity of Priests was being founded we talked about "re-rooting our priesthood in Christ." We priests were called to more than managing the staff and administering the temporal affairs of the parish. More than building a community and handing on Catholic culture. Even more than preaching and teaching the word of God, or celebrating the sacraments. **We are to bring people to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ to People.**

While these concerns of parish life are necessary aspects of our lives and ministry, they are not the ends in themselves. They are not the sources of power needed for the Christian life but the means of bringing in the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is the Source of the Christian life. To be in his company is for us, as it was for the Twelve, to have a personal relationship with the Master, and to have, through him, a relationship with one another. He is the Lord! He alone can shepherd people's whole lives.

The brunt of Jesus' mission can be found in the opening words of his first sermon as he began his public life, "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15) Through his passion, death, resurrection and the sending of the Spirit, Jesus perfected in his own humanity the grace (power) that inaugurated the

Kingdom on Earth and perfected It in Heaven.

In a word of knowledge that came to me (Fr. John Dreher), quite unexpectedly, I heard the following: "the Kingdom of God is the rule of God, the life of God and the love of God."

The Rule of God is present in partial and fragmentary ways whenever the truths of God's word are obeyed and the goodness of God is served, and this is embodied in everything God has created. The created world points us to the Creator and his greatness, wisdom and goodness. The human person brings to completion and gives meaning to the physical universe.

Sinful humanity has great difficulty sorting out truth from error and the worship of God from the worship of idols. Therefore the revealed word of God is necessary if we are to know the purpose of our lives in the created world and a correct understanding of our place in it.

The Life of God was a most radical intervention of God in human affairs – the Incarnation! Man in his created nature was meant to be a sign pointing to God. But two characteristics complicated this; a) he is self-determining and can make choices that contradict his high calling and b) he is a developing

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Why the ordained priesthood? Though this question is not often asked in such a forthright manner, it lingers in the minds of many people. The ordained priesthood creates a permanent relationship between the ordained priest, Jesus Christ and the Church. It is not a matter of function. It is not embracing a certain set of duties or a term of office. The ordained priesthood is a gift of Jesus Christ to the Church so that his pastoral charity may be expressed in a flesh and blood manner to the Church.

The ordained priesthood arises because it flies in the face of our current secular culture. Relationships of convenience have replaced the notion of permanent commitment. Utilitarian functionalism is valued more than one's being with the Lord. Because personal pleasure is so highly valued, celibacy is misunderstood and derided. Approaching the ordained priesthood with a this kind of mindset makes it incomprehensible.

My personal bible reading has me in the book of Leviticus. It may seem like a bit of a "yawner" among the books of the Bible. However, it does deal with the priesthood of the Israelite people, which influenced the development of the ordained priesthood of the Church. Among other things, it deals with the ordination rite for the Aaronic priesthood. Only the direct descendents of Aaron were eligible for this priesthood. These priests were to offer sacrifices for the community, teach them the Law and exercise authority in religious matters. The ordained priesthood brought order and unity to the religious life of the people of God.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he did not simply focus on doing ministerial things: preaching, healing, forgiving sinners, et cetera. Right off the bat he began concentrating on calling and forming a group of disciples who would perpetuate his ministry. All four of the gospels highlight this aspect Jesus' ministry in the early chapters of the gospels. He called men to become his disciples. Eventually he would choose some of them to be his apostles.

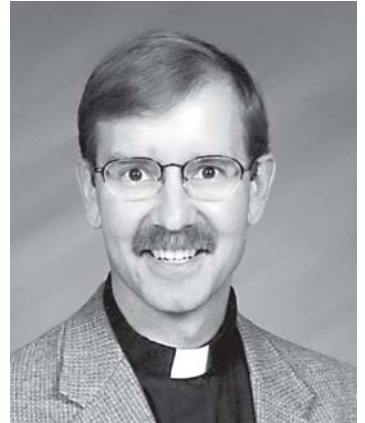
Mark 3:14 eloquently described it by saying that "he chose them to be *with* him, and to preach..." Before their *missio*, there was a *relatio* with the Master, Jesus Christ.

In time, they would be commissioned to preside at the Eucharist ("Do this in remembrance of me"), teach in the Name of Jesus ("He who hears you, hears Me...") and lead God's people with authority ("Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"). All of these things were to be done with a pastoral charity that reflected the heart of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

One of the things Fraternity of Priests does is help priests stay rooted in their vocation. Your prayers and donations support our efforts to strengthen priests in their vocation. Your prayers and gifts are greatly appreciated.

Pray for us, as we pray for you.
Sincerely in Christ,

F. Bob Franco



Editor's Box:

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!

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: **\$4,482.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): (**\$268.00**)

Current as of January 31, 2011.

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being. He becomes by knowledge, decision and action what he is by nature. As a result he can become a counter sign.

Fallen man, severed from the state of grace and disassociated from God, cannot fulfill his calling to be a servant of God. Only in the Incarnate One could humanity once again become an outward sign revealing the presence, action and love of God.

This is only accomplished by grace; habitual grace, that facility to act in a regular and purposeful way in and with Christ and sanctifying grace. This grace works from and with habitual grace to enable us to act from God and in interaction with God to make connection with God and have our lives transformed into the likeness of Christ. We are to live in Christ, from Christ, with Christ and for Christ. We lowly creatures made of clay can have communion with God in our daily lives! We are called to live the Life of Christ! Who would want to give this up, even if it meant ruling over nations?

This is the strong antidote to our flat secular culture. We priests need to be the first to grasp this Reality so that we can liberate God's people enabling them to see the radical new reality that we can be in Jesus Christ. This marvelous universe with its billions of years and billions of miles into space is a pale small reality in comparison to the Reality of God in human flesh. The universe is a child's sand castle in comparison to the Kingdom of God.

The Love of God is a matter of relationships, relationships that preserve the dignity and freedom

of the person while building up life together. The interactive reciprocal relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the source and standard of this love. Jesus lived his life in dynamic interaction with the Father, a sacrificial offering to the Father. Obedient to the Father's will, he gives his life for our redemption, the atonement.

The model for this reciprocal interactive relationship within God is given us in the Gospel account of Jesus' relationship with the Twelve. Like them we are invited into the high privilege and great adventure of discipleship.

If we are to live the Life of Christ we cannot stop growing until we see the face of God. What can at times retard this growth is that we have achieved certain accomplishments. In many ways modern culture has turned from God with the achievements of science and technology. God may be using this moment to force Christians to go deeper.

God has built a divine imperative in us that we become what he has created us to be. Jesus Christ, the Word Made Flesh, is the key to who we are. This divine imperative accounts for the creative energy and relentless drive that enables people to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Sin and evil are built upon lies and misconceptions of reality and when the Reality of God is neglected and fades from sight we become as gods. When we accomplish some interim goals that once filled our horizon we feel we have arrived. We do not look to God to receive more.

There is a Church version of truncating the Reality of God. The riches and accomplishments of the Catholic Church are great indeed! Paradoxically they can become obstacles of living the Life of Christ when they are pursued on a merely human level and by merely human energies. Such ecclesiastical life and work can be very impressive and we can rely on them apart from Christ!

When Christian life and our priesthood is pursued as a set of behaviors, activities and programs our religious observances (our prayer life) becomes only one small slice out of the whole day or week. Our relationship with Jesus is only one among many. The impact is twofold: 1) Jesus is unable to exercise his full power in our lives 2) we become weak in the face of sin and the world.

How often were the prophets sent to warn against outward religion without the inner Reality of God? How often had God sent our heavenly Mother through her appearances in modern times to call us to faith, repentance, prayer and Eucharistic adoration?

Do we live in the Church and go to the world or do we live in the world and go to the Church?

The charism of the Fraternity of Priests has always been "to gather priests to Christ and one another to proclaim the visitation message." The great visitation is the Incarnation, the Kingdom Disciplines gather us to Christ by keeping prayer our priority and to one another in the great privilege and adventure of discipleship by holding us accountable to one another and to the conviction that "relatio comes before missio!"

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

April 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Rev. Timothy Ekaitis Upper Michigan 1	Pope Benedict XVI 2
Rev. Daniel Moll Upper Michigan 3	Rev. Norm Clisch Upper Michigan 4	Rev. Darryl Pepin Upper Michigan 5	Rev. Raymond Zeugner Upper Michigan 6	Rev. Raymond Hoefgen Upper Michigan 7	Rev. Michael Steber Upper Michigan 8	Rev. Christopher Gardiner Upper Michigan 9
Rev. Larry VanDamme Upper Michigan 10	Rev. Stephen Kantubog Wa, West Africa 11	Rev. Evarist Kuuwulong Wa, West Africa 12	Rev. John Kpan Wa, West Africa 13	Rev. Sylvester Nankpi Wa, West Africa 14	Rev. Benette Tang Wa, West Africa 15	Rev. Matthew Tuurosog Wa, West Africa 16
Rev. Augustine Ten Wa, West Africa 17	Rev. Zachary Kokole Wa, West Africa 18	Rev. Gervase Angsotinge Wa, West Africa 19	Rev. Peter Paul Langnedomah Wa, West Africa 20	Most Rev. Paul Bemile Wa, West Africa 21	Rev. Fidelis Vielu Wa, West Africa 22	Rev. Cyracus Tang Wa, West Africa 23
Rev. Martin Ninnang Wa, West Africa 24	Rev. Stephen Kangmennaang Wa, West Africa 25	Rev. Romanus Tampah Wa, West Africa 26	Rev. Michael Tanzile Wa, West Africa 27	Rev. John Bosco Eledi Wa, West Africa 28	Rev. Luke Kale Wa, West Africa 29	Rev. Leo Dabuoh Wa, West Africa 30

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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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