



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Mary, Mother and Model of the Priest

Excerpts from Father Raniero Cantalamessa

How we all admired the stamina and strength of that man who provided such inspiration and leadership for our Church! Recently Pope Benedict celebrated Mass on the fifth anniversary of John Paul II's death and on that occasion he said "My predecessor's progressive physical weakness never affected his rock-like faith, his luminous hope and his fervent charity. He let himself be consumed by Christ for the Church."

What was it that sustained him? Perhaps we should, as did the Preacher to the Papal Household, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, look to the earliest days of John Paul's Petrine ministry to discover the well spring of his perseverance. Much of this article is made up of excerpts from a talk that he gave on December 21, 2009 in the Vatican.

In his letter to priests on the occasion of Holy Thursday in 1979, the first of a series during his pontificate, John Paul II wrote: "I ask each of you to entrust your priesthood to Mary, the Mother of Priests, in a way that is dictated to you by your own heart and especially by your love for Christ the Priest, and also by your awareness of your own weakness which goes hand in

hand with our desire for service and holiness."

"Look to her with exceptional hope and love as you endeavor to proclaim in your vocation, ministry and mission Christ who is her Son; who will better communicate the truth to you about him than his Mother? *In our ministerial priesthood there is the wonderful and penetrating dimension of nearness to the Mother of Christ.* So let us try to live in that dimension. I will say to you that in this regard **I am referring especially to my own personal experience.**"

Fr. Cantalamessa, aware of how powerful an influence Mary had on the spirituality of this remarkable churchman, goes on to apply this "closeness" between Mary and priests in the following paragraphs. The center of this meditation is found in this question: "What can we priests learn from Mary's faith?"

Mary Believed

The personal contribution which Mary and the priest have in common is summed up in faith. St. Augustine tells us that Mary "by faith conceived and by faith gave birth."

The verb with which Mary expresses her consent, and which is translated as "fiat" or as "let it be done." In the original Greek it

appears in the optative mood ("genoito"), which is used to express desire and even joyful impatience that a certain thing should happen. It is as if the Virgin said: "I also want, with all my being, what God wants; may what he wishes be fulfilled soon." In truth, as St. Augustine said, before conceiving him in her body, she conceived him in her heart.

However, Mary did not actually say "fiat" as she didn't speak Latin, and she didn't even say "genoito," which is a Greek word. What did she say then? What is the word, which in the language spoken by Mary, corresponds most closely to this expression?

When a Jew wished to say to God, "yes, so be it," he said "amen!" If we try to go back to the exact word that came from Mary's lips, we arrive precisely at the word "amen." Those Psalms that in the Latin Vulgate ended with the expression "fiat, fiat", and in the Greek, end with "genoito, genoito", in the original Hebrew known by Mary end with "amen, amen."

Amen is a Hebrew word, the root of which means to be solid, to be certain; it was used in the liturgy as a response of faith to the Word of God. With "amen" one recognizes what has been said as firm, stable, valid and binding. Its

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John Brown he was a spry and dapper man in his early nineties. He still counted money on Sunday mornings at the parish. However, time catches up with everyone. When I saw John at the hospital in his final days, he asked me for a rosary. I said to him, "You want to meditate on the mysteries." John answered, "Father, those mysteries are a part of my life." It struck me that John's life was not simply long in years. It was deep in grace.

One of the gifts of Jesus to his Church from the cross was his mother:

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19:26-27)

Taken at face value, Jesus is making sure that his mother would be cared for after he is gone. However, at a deeper level, Mary (addressed here as "woman") is the new Eve, an image of the Church and mother of all Christians.

Tradition tells that this "beloved disciple" was the newly ordained priest and Apostle John. Scholars tell us that he is simply referred to as the beloved disciples so that all disciples may see themselves as beloved.

I believe that it is especially important for priests to accept Jesus' gift of Mary and be close to her. She was with the Lord and the Church at their most important moments: the nativity, the crucifixion and Pentecost. As priests, we need to call upon our Lady as we serve the Church. Are we giving birth to new projects in our service of the Church? Let us invoke our Lady's intercession. She gave birth to the Word made Flesh. Her prayers make our labors fruitful.

Are we experiencing the cross in some way? Again, our Lady was there. She witnessed the crucifixion of her Son and shared his sufferings. Yet Mary believed, hoped and loved. Surely her prayers on

our behalf can make our trials reveal the glory of God.

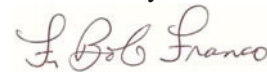
Does our ministry seem listless? Mary was in the Upper Room, praying for the coming of the Spirit at

Pentecost. By enlisting her intercession, our lives, parishes and the whole Church will be more animated by the Holy Spirit.

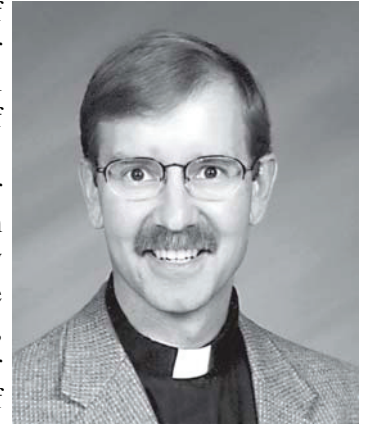
A parishioner recently questioned me about the rosary. He felt he prayed better by simply baring his heart to God instead of mindlessly repeating words over and over. I agreed that prayer should never be mindless. However, by meditating on the mysteries of the rosary, our minds and hearts are bound up with Jesus, Mary and the events that saved the world.

May our devotion to Mary help us grow in the grace of her Son.

Fraternally,



Father 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: **\$3,740.00**
Budget Surplus (shortage): **(\$1,010.00)**

Current as of March 31, 2010.

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exact translation, when it is a response to the Word of God, is..."So it is, and so be it."

Let Us Also Believe

We move now from Mary to the priest. St. Augustine wrote: "Mary believed, and in her what was believed came to pass. Let's also believe so that what came to pass in her can also happen to us". Let us also believe! The contemplation of Mary should bring us to renew above all our personal act of faith and abandonment to God.

What the faithful capture immediately in a priest, in a pastor, is if he believes in what he says and in what he celebrates. Those who seek God above all in the priest, realize immediately; those who do not seek God in him can be easily fooled and even fool the priest himself, making him seem important, brilliant, in step with the trends, when in reality he is a "resounding gong or a clashing cymbal."

What puts one in a healthy crisis is...an encounter with one who truly believes with all his being. Faith is contagious. One does not catch something by hearing someone speak of a virus or by studying it, but rather by entering into contact with someone who has it. This is faith.

At times we suffer and even complain in prayer to God, because people abandon the Church...We talk, and talk... and nothing happens. One day the apostles attempted to expel a demon from a young man, but they couldn't do it. After Jesus expelled the demon

from the young boy, they approached Christ and...asked: "Why could we not drive it out?" Jesus responded: "Because of your little faith" (Matthew 17:19-20)...

There are two simple words that Maria said in the moment of the Annunciation, and that the priest says in the moment of his ordination: "Here I am," and "Amen" or "Yes." I remember the moment of my ordination...when my name was called. I responded with emotion, "Here I Am!"

During the rite, they ask us some questions: "Do you want to exercise the priestly ministry during your entire life?", and "Do you want to undertake faithfully and with dignity the ministry of the word through preaching?" "Do you want to celebrate with devotion and fidelity the mysteries of Christ?" To each question we respond: "Yes, I do."

The spiritual renewal of the Catholic priesthood, desired by the Holy Father, will be proportional to the enthusiasm with which each one of us, priests and bishops of the Church, will be capable of pronouncing again a joyful "I am here" and "yes, I do," making one relive the anointing received in the ordination.

Jesus entered the world saying: "Behold, I come to do your will" (Hebrews 10:7). Let's welcome him...saying these same words: "I have come, Lord Jesus, to do your will!"

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Pentecost Sequence

Come, O Holy Spirit, come!
From Your bright and blissful
Home
Rays of healing light impart.
Come, Father of the poor.
Source of gifts that will endure
Light of ev'ry human heart.

You of all consolers best,
Of the soul most kindly Guest,
Quick'ning courage do bestow.
In hard labor You are rest,
In the heat You refresh best,
And solace give in our woe.

O most blessed Light divine,
Let Your radiance in us shine,
And our inmost being fill.
Nothing good by man is thought,
Nothing right by him is wrought,
When he spurns Your gracious
Will.

Cleanse our souls from sinful
stain,
Lave our dryness with Your rain,
Heal our wounds and mend our
way.
Bend the stubborn heart and will,
Melt the frozen, warm the chill,
Guide the steps that go astray.

On the faithful who in You,
Trust with childlike piety,
Deign Your sevenfold gift to
send.
Give them virtue's rich increase,
Saving grace to die in peace,
Give them joys that never end.
Amen. Alleluia.

Please send us your prayer intentions:

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

June 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Rev. 1 Franklin Darling Springfield, MA	Rev. 2 Gerald Brady Springfield, MA	Rev. 3 Pesamino Victor Samoa	Rev. 4 David Maciej St Cloud, MN	Rev. 5 Pope Benedict XVI
Rev. 6 Todd Schneider St Cloud, MN	Rev. 7 Peter Kirchner St Cloud, MN	Rev. 8 Greg Paffel St Cloud, MN	Rev. 9 Alvin Quade St Cloud, MN	Rev. 10 Gerald Mischke St Cloud, MN	Rev. 11 Elmer Torborg St Cloud, MN	Rev. 12 Robert Hamel St Cloud, MN
Rev. 13 Mark Stang St Cloud, MN	Rev. 14 Anthony Dattilo St Louis, MO	Rev. 15 Aaron Nord St Louis, MO	Rev. 16 John-Paul Hopping St Louis, MO	Rev. 17 David Novak St Louis, MO	Rev. 18 Charles Tichacek St Louis, MO	Rev. 19 Matthew Bonk, CSSR St Louis, MO
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Rev. 27 Edward Littelmann Toledo, OH	Rev. 28 James Brown Toledo, OH	Rev. 29 Jerome Nowakowski Toledo, OH	Rev. 30 Nicholas Weibl Toledo, OH			

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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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 Lord Assures and Invites

You have heard it said that the Catholic Church must be divinely instituted or how else could it have survived! Well, in much the same way this statement can be applied to the Fraternity of Priests. It is truly remarkable that this association which means so much to many priests can survive with such a minimum amount of organization. Just a few days ago the Board gathered for our once a year three day meeting. The camaraderie was great, the prayer time powerful and it all went by much too fast.

The Lord spoke clearly and with great love and support for us as individuals and for the Fraternity as a whole. There was also a noticeable cohesion and consistency in the word that we shared with each other. We would like to share some of that with all of you now.



My Brothers,

You are called to walk and not grow weary. Do you find yourselves on “islands” because you have proclaimed God’s word and have given testimony to Me? Know that with your brothers you will share the distress, the kingdom and the endurance you have in Me. Write down what you see and hear.



My Sons,

Many of your brothers are in distress and are growing weary. I, the Lord, desire to bring them together to refresh and renew them. I wish to give them new strength and new vision because the battles will become more intense and difficult. Only in spending time with Me, with their brothers, in being filled anew with the Spirit will they be able to minister effectively.



Brothers,

As you open your heart and mind to Me – my Holy Spirit will guide you – to speak to your brothers a word which will rouse them, and call them in to greater faithfulness and wisdom in their priesthood. Speak My words to your brothers, as I give them to you. Be a channel of the gifts of strength and courage – with which I want to fortify them for the work – the task which lies ahead. It is not to be an easy road ahead – but I strengthen you for the task – and yes – My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Trust in Me, my brothers – be that channel of My light and My truth – and My strength – to your brothers. They need to know that I am with them in the task I call them to – for My Church – for My people, who need your work, your faithfulness to My call on your life.



Turn to Me in faith. Believe in Me and do not yield to anxiety. Trust Me. I am with you more than you realize. Do the work of My kingdom and do not fret.

Be close to your brothers. This will keep the fire of My love, the vision of My truth, the peace of My victory alive in you. Be humble and honest before your brothers. This will be your protection and peace. Be faith-filled and faithful. I will lead you.

All of these words were powerfully confirmed by the Scripture passages that were received, some of which are:

*Hebrews 4:12-16; Revelation 1:9-19; 2nd Timothy 1:6-8; John 14:1; Esther 4
1 Thes.1:7-8; Daniel 2:17,18; Isaiah 58:9-10*

Registration Form for Annual Meeting

We Share With One Another
- the Distress, the Kingdom, the Endurance

(Rev 1:9)

Following the Distress our Church has suffered by attacks of darkness from within and without we need to share with one another the vision of the Kingdom still being built by signs and works, Rejoicing that the Lord has given us, one another, within the Fraternity for the sake of Endurance.

July 25 - 30, 2010

Columbus, Ohio - St. Therese's Retreat Center,
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