



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Are We Travelers or Builders?

by Father Michael Roy

"He was intelligent and shrewd. An extraordinarily gifted man with a very keen intuition. He was endowed with a fiery and generous imagination, limitless zeal, vitality beyond compare, truly a veritable volcano of interior energy and at the same time inclined to the loftiest spiritual meditations." It may be difficult to believe that the person being described in these lines bubbling with enthusiasm and energy is none other than the Cure of Ars, John Mary Vianney. Yet this is how Father Bally, a contemporary of the humble Cure who has so recently been declared Patron Saint of All Priests, describes him. Too often we picture John Mary Vianney as an emaciated priest with long white hair and pale from the many hours he was "imprisoned" in the dark confessional.

Fr. Bally, however, gives us the image of a man of boundless energy, and Fr. Bally knew him well. He was the parish priest who saw the potential of the struggling seminarian Vianney and took him into his home to personally-tutor him through his studies.

As has been mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Cure of Ars was the focus of our recent Fraternity Conference held in the beginning of August in Ipswich, Massachusetts with much of the reflections based on the encyclical

letter written about him by Pope John XXIII fifty years ago for the centennial of his death.

Appreciating the timeless wisdom and insights of Blessed John XXIII's encyclical, I choose to begin by focusing on the most contemporary encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, "Caritas in Veritate". He poses a question that Fr. Vianney would have understood in his day of the Enlightenment following the French Revolution. The Pope asks "Is man a product of his own labors or does he owe his existence to God?" Science and technology have forced a choice between two types of our understanding humanity. Are we open to the transcendent or are we in a closed universe that is based solely on reason and does not go beyond the self?

In a closed system we are the ultimate authority and so we can justify creating categories of people and using other human beings for our own purposes. Human cloning, embryonic research, human hybrids are ethically okay in a closed system. The man being given as a model for all priests today lived in a world that was radically transcendent. He lived and taught that every choice, every reflection, every moment of our lives must be seen in terms of our

relationship with God who calls us through this world to that which lies beyond.

The question posed to the Fraternity members is an absolutely fundamental one: Are you a builder or a traveler? And as we spend our lives as priests today what do the real life priorities that we have chosen witness to our answer to that question?

In order to not only be establishing the Kingdom of God in our midst, but also to be bringing others with us to our final destination, heaven, St. John Mary Vianney understood that "the priest must first of all be a man of prayer." Everyone knows of the long nights of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament that were spent by the pastor of Ars when he first arrived at this village that as that time was not very Christian. "The tabernacle of the church soon became the fireside of his personal life and of his apostolate."

Blessed John XXIII goes on to say so very much aware of the tensions that priests need to deal with: "How timely and how profitable this example of constant prayer on the part of a man completely dedicated to caring for the needs of souls is for priests in Our own day, who are likely to

...continued on page 3

Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Like the last chair person of the Fraternity, I too have recently taken another assignment. After serving a smaller, country-like parish named St. Teresa's, I was recently asked to become pastor of St. Peter Parish in North Ridgeville, Ohio.

Most transfers are somewhat stressful. The most popular phrases on my lips at this time are "It's still up in the air" and "I have lots of loose ends to tie up". This is common when any one moves. When a parish priest moves, things are little more complex.

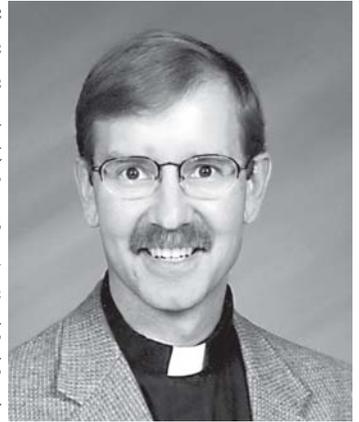
The priest has to say goodbye and hello to hundreds of people all at once. That sounds simple. However, it really is quite complex depending on how the priest related to the people he is leaving. It can be complex on the other end too, depending on what the people's experience was of the priest who was leaving.

There are administrative details to wrap up at the old place and new ones to become acquainted with at the new place. Most likely the priest's personal schedule will change. He will be establishing relationships with a new set of co-laborers. If the parish has a cook, his diet will change. The priest will probably have to become acquainted with a different city or area. And, of course, there is dubious task of packing up one's stuff and getting it to the new place. (Some asked me if the diocese helped move us. After a hearty laugh, I said "No.")

There is a non-biblical beatitude that I cling to when all seems up in the air: ***Blessed are the flexible, they shall not get bent out of shape!*** Though not scriptural, this beatitude does highlight one's need for faith. If Jesus is Lord, we need to trust him as we slog through the quagmire of moving.

Moving also reminds us to cultivate the virtue of detachment. "Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (Matthew 6:21) and "In the same way, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33) As I sorted through my stuff I heard the call to divest myself of many

of these things. There is "...a time to keep, and a time to cast away." (Ecclesiastes 3:6b) Even more challenging is the saying good-bye to a flock that one



has shared life with for many years. I take hope in eternal reunion of heaven where it is always "Hello!" and never "Good-bye."

Finally, belonging to Fraternity of Priests, meeting with priests on a regular basis to pray and share my life, have been a blessing for me during this transition. Our mutual encouragement has helped me to persevere during transfers.

Finally, I want to thank all who support Fraternity of Priests with their prayers and donations. Your faithful support inspires we priests to be faithful in our service of Christ and his Church.

Faternally,

Father Bob

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: **\$8,956.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$4,206.00**

Current as of July 31, 2009.

...continued from page 1

attribute too much to the effectiveness of external activity and stand ready and eager to immerse themselves in the hustle and bustle of the ministry, to their own spiritual detriment! ‘The thing that keeps us priests from gaining sanctity’ – the Cure of Ars used to say – ‘is thoughtlessness. It annoys us to turn our minds away from external affairs; we don’t know what we really ought to do. What we need is deep reflection, together with prayer and an intimate union with God.’ The testimony of his life makes it clear that he always remained devoted to his prayers and that not even the duty of hearing confessions or any other pastoral office could cause him to neglect them. Even in the midst of tremendous labors, he never let up on his conversation with God. But listen to his own words; for he seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of them whenever he talked about the happiness or the advantages that he found in prayer: ‘We are beggars who must ask God for everything’; ‘How many people we can call back to God by our prayers!’ And he used to say over and over again: ‘Ardent prayer addressed to God: this is man’s greatest happiness on earth!’”

Not surprisingly we see how one of the fundamental disciplines of the Fraternity – that of spending one uninterrupted hour in prayer every day – is strongly endorsed by the example of the acclaimed Cure of Ars and the teaching of good Pope John. What stands in our way? The hustle and bustle, too great a belief that our mission is accomplished by the effectiveness

of our external activity! How applicable are these words of St. Paul “I urge you brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

To offer our bodies as a living sacrifice is to become an oblation. This is where something beautiful is destroyed or wasted for a purpose. I would propose that if we truly wanted to become, through our priesthood, an oblation for love of God, then the seed for this is found in the conscious and consistent “wasting” of an hour each day solely with Jesus for the love of Jesus. Benedict XVI tells us that before we preach, that is becoming the voice of the Word, which is a function, the priest must first lose himself in Christ, participating with his whole being in the mystery of

Christ’s death and resurrection; which is the transcendent aspect of ministry only gained through prayer. St. John Mary Vianney says, “How dreadful it is to be a priest! How a priest who celebrates Mass like an ordinary event is to be pitied. How unfortunate a priest with no inner life!”

I think that for us active priests of the 21st century this understanding of oblation can help resolve the tension that we deal with between the immanent and the transcendent, between the hustle and bustle and the need for an inner life. As an oblation, we become a living sacrifice. The only trouble with a living sacrifice is that it can crawl off the altar. Being connected to the Fraternity we are held accountable to one another through our regular meetings to our living out of the Kingdom Disciplines, to our remaining an oblation given out of love. We help each other stay on the altar and therefore at the altar.

Quotes from St John Vianney

“We ought always to devote at least a quarter of an hour to preparing ourselves to pray the Mass well; we ought to annihilate ourselves before God, after the profound example of His profound annihilation in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. We should make our examination of conscience, for we must be in a state of grace to be able to assist properly at Mass. If we knew the value of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass we would be much more zealous to assist at it.”

“After the Consecration, when I hold in my hands the most holy Body of Our Lord and when I am in discouragement, seeing myself worthy of nothing but Hell, I say to myself, “Ah, if I could at least take Him with me! Hell would be sweet with Him; I could be content to remain suffering there for all eternity, if we were together. But then there would be no more Hell; the flames of love would extinguish those of justice.”

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

October 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Rev. Alexander Mills OSB Tucson, AZ 1	Rev. Mark Long Tucson, AZ 2	Pope Benedict XVI 3
Rev. Domenico Pinti Tucson, AZ 4	Rev. Liam Leahy Tucson, AZ 5	Rev. Ray Ratzenberger Tucson, AZ 6	Rev. Henry Dauphinais M.S. Tucson, AZ 7	Rev. James Hobert Tucson, AZ 8	Rev. Isaac Fynn Tucson, AZ 9	Rev. Dale Branson Tucson, AZ 10
Most Rev. Vitalij Skomarovski Ukraine 11	Rev. O. Pietro Hewlet Ukraine 12	Rev. Stephen Kantubog Wa, West Africa 13	Rev. Evarist Kuuwulong Wa, West Africa 14	Rev. John Kpan Wa, West Africa 15	Rev. Sylvester Nankpi Wa, West Africa 16	Rev. Benette Tang Wa, West Africa 17
Rev. Matthew Tuurosong Wa, West Africa 18	Rev. Augustine Ten Wa, West Africa 19	Rev. Zachary Kokole Wa, West Africa 20	Rev. Gervase Angsotinge Wa, West Africa 21	Rev. Peter Paul Langnedomah Wa, West Africa 22	Rev. Fidelis Vielu Wa, West Africa 23	Rev. Cyracus Tang Wa, West Africa 24
Rev. Martin Ninnang Wa, West Africa 25	Rev. Stephen Kangmennaang Wa, West Africa 26	Rev. Romanus Tampah Wa, West Africa 27	Rev. Michael Tanzile Wa, West Africa 28	Rev. John Bosco Eledi Wa, West Africa 29	Rev. Luke Kale Wa, West Africa 30	Rev. Leo Dabuoh Wa, West Africa 31

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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This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests. Dear Father Bob Franco, \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____