



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

January 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Rev. Robert Franco Cleveland, OH	Rev. James Mazanec Cleveland, OH	Rev. Homer Blubaugh Columbus, OH	For the souls of our deceased FOP members	For prayer requests received	For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. Richard Engle Columbus, OH	Rev. Joseph Losh Columbus, OH	Rev. Justin Reis Columbus, OH	Rev. Peter Gregor Comayagua	Most Rev. Paul Bemile Episcopal Advisor	Most Rev. Sam Jacobs D.D. Episcopal Advisor	Very Rev. Franc Kromberger Episcopal Advisor
Most Rev. John Myers Episcopal Advisor	Rev. Duaine Cote Fargo, ND	Very Rev. Dale Kinzler Fargo, ND	Rev. Msgr. Robert Laliberte Fargo, ND	Rev. Donald Leiphon Fargo, ND	Rev. Claude Seeberger OSB Fargo, ND	Rev. Msgr. Dennis Skonseng Fargo, ND
Rev. Edmund Sylvia CSC Bend, IN	Rev. Peter Donzing Ghana	Rev. Robert Sackey Ghana	Rev. Charles Antekeier Grand Rapids	Rev. James Bozung Grand Rapids	Rev. George Fekete Grand Rapids	Rev. Thomas Hack Grand Rapids
Rev. Donald Lomasiewicz Grand Rapids	Rev. Mark Mitchell Grand Rapids	Rev. Ayub Nasar Grand Rapids	Rev. Michael Shea CM Grand Rapids			

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.
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 The Fraternity of Priests pledge of financial accountability: We take very seriously the trust you put in us when you send a gift. We stand accountable before God and you to honor that trust. We pledge: To use your gift care-fully and wisely, and not to ask for money that is not needed.

In 2013, Pope Francis authorized that the name of St. Joseph be included in all the Eucharistic prayers, following Pope John XXIII's inclusion of St. Joseph in the first Eucharistic prayer of the Mass. What is the importance of St. Joseph today?

Recently, I read a book by Dr. Rosalie A. Turton, *St. Joseph As Seen by Mystics and Historians*. She compiles quotes from theologians and spiritual authors throughout history concerning St. Joseph. The book is interesting because Dr. Turton makes no attempt to reconcile contradictions. For example, she will include a quote from one writer arguing that St. Joseph must have been old when he married Mary, and immediately after she quotes another author who asserts that Joseph was young when he wed. Here is some of what I gained.

First, St. Joseph is a model of what it means to be right with God. During Advent, we read that Joseph was "just" or "righteous" or "upright" or "good" or "decent" or "always did what was right" (Matthew 1:19), all translations of the same Greek word found in different Bibles. The sense in other parts of the Scripture is "rightful

observance of the law." The word is even used for God, who is faithful to his "law" of love for us. The word is also used for Jesus, whose whole life conformed completely to God's will. How does St. Joseph follow God's law? With a spirit of mercy! When Joseph finds that Mary is pregnant, he believes he must follow the law by divorcing her. But he seeks to do it quietly, showing the greatest possible compassion to her. Pope Francis must have jumped at the chance to include Joseph in all the Eucharistic prayers—he agrees with the saint that God's law is founded on mercy! The Pope has Joseph's spirit in his efforts to get us to interpret the Law with mercy for those who struggle.

Another striking feature for me in the book is the focus on Joseph's suffering. There are hints of this in the Scriptures themselves. The story of the family not being able to find "room in the inn" and Jesus being born in a manger suggest that the Holy Family lived in poverty. If they had had enough money, the innkeeper would have let them sleep in his room! The family had to flee as refugees in order to escape the murderous persecution of King Herod. They had the immigrant experience of being in foreign

country, with a different language, having to seek work to survive.

Maria Valtorta, in her work *Poem of the Man God*, writes: "Along the royal highway of the Cross, the Lord led the spouse of His blessed Mother, St. Joseph, whom He loved above all the sons of men. In order to increase his merits and crown, before the time of meriting should come to an end, He visited him in the last years of his life with certain sicknesses, such as fever, violent headaches, and very painful rheumatisms, which greatly afflicted and weakened him."

Other mystics meditate on the criticism Joseph must have received for putting his young wife and newborn son at risk through the dangerous trek to Egypt and life as a displaced family. They also contemplate the distress he must have felt at not being able to explain himself, lest agents of King Herod hear of it. There is a devotion to the "Sorrows of St. Joseph," focusing on how he suffered out of loving awareness of the needs of others. If it wasn't for Joseph, and the sacrifices he made, Mary and Jesus would not have survived. Thus, Joseph is the patron of the marginalized, immigrants, refugees, and those discriminated against.

St. Joseph is also important for us

Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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Editor's Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org

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

I recently heard the story of the prisoner Claude Newman (1923-1944). He was convicted of murdering his grandmother's abusive husband in January of 1943. While on death row he noticed a fellow inmate wearing a Miraculous Medal of our Lady. Claude asked what that was. His fellow inmate did not say much about it but simply gave it to him. Claude began to wear it.

Some sources indicate that Claude was awakened that night by the most beautiful woman he had seen. She said to him, "If you would like me to be your mother, and you would like to be my child, send for a priest of the Catholic Church." The woman disappeared. Claude began to shout "A ghost! A ghost!" and asked to see a priest.

The next day Fr. O'Leary came to see Claude. He nervously told the priest what happened the night before. Fr. O'Leary began giving instructions to Claude and his cell mates who were moved by Claude's story. Fr. O'Leary quickly surmised that Claude knew almost nothing about God.

A few weeks later, after enlisting the help of two religious sisters, Fr. O'Leary was explaining confession to his "convert class". At one point Claude burst out, "Oh, I know about that! The Lady told me that when we go to Confession, we're kneeling down not in front of a priest, but in front of the Cross of her Son. And that when we're truly sorry for our sins, and confess them, the Blood He shed flows down over us and washes us free from all sins." Fr. O'Leary and the nuns were stunned. Fr. O'Leary asked he if had seen the Lady again. Claude took the priest aside and said that the Lady was waiting for him to fulfill a promise Fr. O'Leary had made to her three years ago during WWII.

Claude was initiated that year. His date of execution came in January of 1944. When the governor ordered a stay of execution for two weeks, Claude was heartbroken. Fr. O'Leary convinced him to offer this "suffering" of two more weeks on

earth as penance for hard hearted prisoner named James Hughes. He too came to conversion before his execution three months later. (The information for this story came from a National Catholic Register internet

blog The Amazing Conversion of Death Row Inmate Claude Newman by A. Stragnaro, August 8, 2016.)

I share this story because I believe in the power of God to bring conversion to his people. Jesus said, "I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness." (John 12:46) As we celebrate the birth of Light in this world, let us pray that the light of Christ would penetrate darkened hearts and societies.

On behalf of Fraternity of Priests, I want to express my gratitude for your prayers and support in 2017. On behalf of the members of the Fraternity, I pray God's peace be with you and your loved ones during this Christmas season.

In Christ,



Fr. Robert J. Franco

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 thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Donation Budget: **\$ 4,750.00**

Actual Donations: **\$ 1,505.10**

Budget Surplus/Deficit: **(\$ 3,244.90)**

Current as of October 31, 2017.

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in his role as father. His fatherhood was critically important in Jesus' life. We can get a sense of how Joseph fulfilled these duties through Jesus' teachings. Jesus constantly proclaimed the love of God as Father, and some speculate Jesus had Joseph's love in view as his model for the Heavenly Father's love. When Jesus prayed, he addressed God with the word people of his time lovingly used for their earthly fathers, "Abba." Others believe that Jesus was remembering how Joseph had provided for the Holy Family when he asked, "What father would give his son a scorpion when he asked for a fish?" Still others see in the parable of the father who embraced his prodigal son, Jesus' own memory of Joseph hugging him tightly when the young Jesus was found after three days in the temple.

Today, in our culture, a loving, masculine image is lacking for countless children in many of our families. No matter how dedicated a woman may be as a mother, she can never completely fulfill the role of both mother and father to her children. It is the father who must instruct, defend, and model for his son what it needs to be a male adult—as Joseph did for Jesus. We see this in the wisdom of recent advertising campaigns to get men to take responsibility for their children: "Anyone can be a father, but it takes a real man to be a dad." Joseph was Jesus' "Dad."

Theologians defend Joseph's title as the real father of Jesus, and resist the idea of calling him foster father, or adoptive father, or stepfather.

St. Augustine notes that the fact that God gives Joseph a son by miraculous conception in Mary does not take away the reality of Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus. Otherwise, we would be forced to deny the reality of Mary's motherhood of Jesus, because it, too, was miraculous. Others point out that Joseph's fatherhood is legally valid. In law, we always recognize a man as the father whenever a child is born to him and his wife in marriage. That is one reason why we have the long list of Jesus' ancestors through Joseph's line in the Gospels. We moderns ask, "Why do this, since Joseph is not the actual father?" But for the Gospel writers, this was not a problem: Jesus, born to Joseph in a legal marriage, is 100% Joseph's son.

Joseph also teaches us about marriage. The writers of the church emphasize Joseph's and Mary's love for each other. God chose Joseph to be the husband to Mary, to be the only man to receive Mary's romantic love. Mary was called to love Joseph above all others because he was her husband. She would not have been perfect in her vocation as mother if she loved any person more than she loved her husband. Maria Valtorta writes: "Those who think that Mary did not love Joseph deeply, only because he was the spouse of Her soul and not of Her flesh, are also mistaken. Mary did love Joseph deeply, and She devoted 30 years of faithful life to him. [When Joseph died] She felt as lonely as the shoot of vine when the tree to which it is tied is cut down. It was as if Her house had been struck

by thunder." As husband and wife, they formed a team, giving each other the mutual support needed to run the family.

St. Joseph has also been known as Advocate for the dying. As earthly father of Jesus, Joseph has influence. What son would refuse a reasonable request from his loving father? On our death beds we ask Joseph's intercession to have Jesus judge us mercifully. Joseph also has the title "Terror of Demons." He saved Jesus from King Herod's satanic design to kill the child. That Joseph protected Jesus from the devil when Jesus was a child, means that Joseph now has the privilege to protect the dying from Satan's condemnation. St. Jerome speculated that St. Joseph's tomb was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and that was one of the reasons why Jesus went to pray there the night before he died. Thus we seek the intercession of Joseph when we are in our last agony—as Jesus himself did.

Finally, Joseph gives us a model of the virtue of being present to others. He was someone in the Scriptures who was just "there." What is important in is that we be available, that we simply are "there" for people. Our being is more important than our doing. He never speaks in Scripture. He is never mentioned during Jesus' public ministry. This suggests a quiet fulfillment of his role, his willingness to fade from the scene so as not to interfere with Jesus' mission. Silent in life, silent in death, he avoided all things not essential to God's glory.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

