



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Dr. Ralph Martin's Message to Fraternity of Priests, Part 2.

By Fr. Jim Hobert

On the second day of the Annual Fraternity conference, Dr. Ralph Martin urged us to take seriously our responsibility to the New Evangelization of the Church.

He began by sharing his conversion experience on a Cursillo retreat in his college years. He was moved to hear lay people talking about Christ, being able to say something personal to Christ in prayer. He realized, "They've got something!" and could no longer deny that Christ was there. But if Christ is Lord, he realized that half-hearted responses don't cut it. He gave to Jesus his life as a blank check, to let him fill it out, and he heard Jesus saying: I want everything! Later, he realized he needed to point his life to Christ on a daily basis, by committing to personal prayer every day. (For lay people, Dr. Martin recommended the daily prayer regimen in the monthly publication Magnificat, in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, who sought to help busy lay people develop a pattern of prayer in their lives). A serious life of prayer is necessary for us to be evangelizers.

What then is evangelization? Some say, "Everything the Church does is evangelization." But this leads to "confusion" and confusion.

The true definition is from John Paul II, in Mission of the Redeemer, #46: "The proclamation of the word of God has Christian conversion as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel through faith."

Conversion is to accept Jesus as Redeemer by personal choice, and become his disciple. Many parishes have the goal, "Get people to church!" But it is possible to be active in the church, and not converted! For example, people sing in the choir because they like to sing, yet do not believe in church teaching, and are living in sin. Let's preach to the choir, to activate them as apostles!

This evangelizing proclamation of the word is not proselytism, a tactic which is rightly condemned. Proselytizing is using unfair means to manipulate people and move their will. The historical example of this was Christian missionaries offering rice to hungry people in China to get them to become Christians. We indeed have permission to preach and to witness to our faith in Jesus. The goal of our witness is to invite others to a complete conversion, recognizing the link between Christ and the Gospel.

Jesus is still popular in our

culture. But the culture wants to create Jesus in our image, influenced by the flesh and the devil. We hear it often said, "My Christ would never say that!" But from the Gospels, we know who Christ is, and exactly what he says! We can't separate Christ from his teaching and his Church. By our witness, we call others to a personal decision for Christ, to Pope Benedict's "friendship with Jesus," to Pope Francis' "encounter with Christ." This is so necessary because Christian culture is collapsing, as families, communities, and the society that supported church attendance fall apart. Add to that our mobile society, and there is no more "faith by osmosis." It is no longer enough to receive the sacraments. People must answer for themselves, "Who do you say that I am?" It is monumentally important for the flourishing of the Church to have our Catholic faithful truly accept Christ.

What is the NEW Evangelization? Evangelization has always been the mission of the Church. But with the Christianization of the West, we became focused solely on foreign missions. Now, the mission field is all around us. One target of the New Evangelization is the baptized person who is not living the life of Christ. Who does the New Evangelization?

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November 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Rev. 1 Peter Langnedomah Wa, West Africa	2 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	3 For prayer requests received	4 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 5 Sylvester Nankpi Wa, West Africa	Rev. 6 Martin Ninnang Wa, West Africa	Rev. 7 Romanus Tampah Wa, West Africa	Rev. 8 Cyracus Tang Wa, West Africa	Rev. 9 Benette Tang Wa, West Africa	Rev. 10 Matthew Tuurosang Wa, West Africa	Rev. 11 Fidelis Vielu Wa, West Africa
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Rev. 26 John O'Brien Alexandria, LA	Rev. 27 William Okot AJ Alexandria, LA	Rev. 28 John Pardue Alexandria, LA	Rev. 29 Thomas Paul Alexandria, LA	Msgr. 30 John Mraz Allentown, PA		

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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This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

Dear Father Bob Franco,

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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!

On Saturday, June 21, 2014 Pope Francis gave a brief address to the priests of the Diocese of Cassano all'Jonio in the Calabria region of southern Italy. Pope Francis touched on two things central to Fraternity of Priests.

He first touched on our relationship with the Lord:

“When we priests are before the tabernacle, and we pause there for a moment, in silence, we then feel Jesus’ gaze upon us and once more, this gaze renews us, reinvigorates us...Of course, at times it’s not easy to be before the Lord; it’s not easy because we have so many things to do, so many people...But at times it is not easy because we feel a certain discomfort, Jesus’ gaze is a little unsettling, even causes distress...But this is good for us! In the silence of prayer Jesus shows us whether we are working well, like good workmen, or whether we may have become more like ‘employees’.”

The first pillar of Fraternity of Priests is to spend an hour of day before the Lord in prayer. Pope Francis acknowledges that this is difficult because of our schedules and duties. However, he also touches on something more like spiritual direction. At times we neglect prayer because we see the Lord more as an employer than as our brother, teacher and friend. I pray that our relationship with the Lord be such that his gaze reinvigorates us.

Pope Francis went on:

“And the second thing I should like to share with you is the beauty of fraternity : of being priests together, of following the Lord not alone, not one by one, but together... This is neither easy or immediate...we priests are immersed in the subjectivistic overlay of today’s culture...and then due to a certain pastoral individualism which is, unfortunately, widespread in our dioceses. This is why we have to react by choosing fraternity. I am intentionally speaking about “choice.” This cannot be left to chance, to fortuitous circumstances...

This communion demands to be lived by seeking concrete forms adapted to the times and to the reality of the region, but always in an apostolic perspective, with a missionary lifestyle, with fraternity and simplicity of life.”

Close behind our relationship with the Lord is our relationship to our brothers priests. Fraternity of Priests recognizes that these fraternal bonds cannot be left to chance but must be chosen. I believe that the Fraternity is one of those concrete forms adapted to the times...apostolic in perspective, with a missionary lifestyle with fraternity and simplicity of life that fits the description of fraternity that Pope Francis describes.

I encourage my brother priests to continue to make time for the Lord. May His gaze may refresh us or correct us as needed! And let us continually and intentionally choose to build our bonds of fraternity. May we never neglect our brother priests! The encouragement we give to each other will reverberate in the souls we minister to.

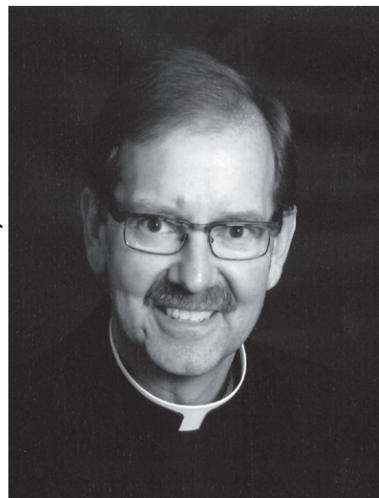
Finally, let me express our gratitude to those who support Fraternity of Priests. You are in our prayers.

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: **\$ 2,696.10**

Budget Surplus/Deficit: **(\$ 2,053.90)**

Current as of August 31, 2017.

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Not just priests and nuns, but it is for all baptized Catholics. This was the theme of the Second Vatican Council: the renewal of the theology of baptism, with the consequent revival of evangelization and the revitalization of the call to holiness. Evangelization will not happen unless more lay people get connected as disciples of Christ. Priests can’t be at every factory, every field, every family reunion. But when Catholics get awakened, great wonders will happen! They will reach out to others, to help them in their relation with the Lord.

We need the New Evangelization because our culture has changed. We can’t take for granted that our people will know Jesus, or the scriptures, or the teaching of the Church. In Acts 19, Paul sees something missing in the converts at Ephesus, who tell him, “We’ve never even heard of the Holy Spirit.” Paul discovers where they are at, and explains the true teaching. In the same way, we priests need to get into conversation with those in the pews to know what is going on with them.

Surveys done in the parish can work. Then there are programs where the faith can be taught to a parish, like Catholic Leadership Institute, ChristLife, or Life in the Spirit Seminars. The Lord is stirring in people’s hearts. Our call as pastors is to fan the flames. The need for the New Evangelization is painfully obvious, as we see parishes being closed, Catholic schools being shut down, and droves of people leaving the Church.

But there are obstacles to the New Evangelization. Frankly, many of us leaders and priests in the Church are indifferent to the decline of the Church. In addition, many priests feel overwhelmed: “I can’t add a new program to my already full agenda!” The solution is for us priests to encourage and enable the People of God to “step up to the plate.” This is biblical: Ephesians 4:1-16 tells us that the Ascended Christ gave gifts to the Church, to equip the saints to do the work of the Church. We have to get away from the old default position where leadership does it all. We leaders need to give people books to read, offer them scripture studies, form study circles, promote men’s groups, ask people to do their part. An example would be to invite lay people to run ChristLife in the parish. The personal invitation from the pastor is a powerful tool.

An important strategy is to have Catholics recover the treasure and gift of Scripture. It is for our salvation! We need to get people to take seriously Jesus’ words, in speaking of the last judgment (Mt 7:21): “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. This is repeated in the Vatican II document Lumen Gentium : Even those in the Church are not saved, if they lack charity, and if they do not respond to God’s grace in thought, word, and deed—in fact, they will be more severely judged.

An obstacle for the

New Evangelization is the misunderstanding of what Lumen Gentium teaches about the possibility of salvation for those outside the Church. This is possible if certain conditions are met, namely, they are ignorant of the Gospel through no fault of their own, they sincerely seek God, and they strive to live according to their conscience. Many have made the leap it is possible for them to be saved, to the idea it is certain they will be saved. This has made us indifferent to proclaiming the message to those who do not yet believe. We evangelize out of love for fellow believers, realizing that the environment around us is so toxic to the Gospel, that without being in church, salvation is difficult.

Dr. Martin also reminded us priests that it is important to help people persevere to the end. That is why sick calls in the middle of the night are important!

The charismatic renewal is an important part of the New Evangelization. The Renewal has as much papal support as anything. Pope Francis himself urged those in the Charismatic Renewal: “I expect you to share with everyone the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit.” All our recent popes have been calling for a new Pentecost, a pouring out of the Holy Spirit, as the completion and fulfillment of God’s plan. The Holy Spirit is for everyone. Our call is to get everyone ignited by the fire of God through surrender to Christ and the reception of the gifts of the Spirit.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

