



"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 1.

By Fr. Jim Hobert



Dr. Ralph Martin was the main speaker at this year's Annual Fraternity of Priests Conference, held August 6-11, at Our Lady of La Salette Retreat Center, in Attleboro, Massachusetts. Nearly 40 priests attended, representing Fraternities from Boston; Providence; Marquette, Michigan; Kansas City; St. Louis; Wa, Nigeria; Slovenia; Pittsburgh; Tucson; Cleveland; and Trinidad-Tobago.

Dr. Martin began by quoting from the talk given by then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla to the 1976 Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia: "We are now standing in the face of the greatest confrontation humanity has ever experienced. I do not think that the wide circle of the American society, or the whole wide circle of the Christian community, realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-church, between the Gospel and the anti-gospel, between Christ and the anti-Christ. The confrontation lies within the plans of divine providence. It is, therefore, within

God's plan, and must be a trial which the Church must take up, and face courageously." We can see how prophetic these words are today in the great rise of organized opposition to Christ and the Church, the open rebellion against morality and divine revelation, along with the uncertain response from many in Church leadership.

Dr. Martin then analyzed the argument in A Sign of Contradiction, also by Pope-to-be Cardinal Wojtyla, which contains an analysis of 2 Thessalonians 2, concerning the second coming of Christ. The chapter begins with a warning, "Let no one deceive you in any way" (v. 3) that the Lord has returned. For that day to come, two things must occur. First, the Great Apostasy—not a persecution by non-believers, but rather the turning away from Christ by believers. We see this in the collapse of Christian culture in Europe, something now happening in the U.S. In some places, this abandoning of the faith by the baptized is happening so precipitously and rapidly (e.g., Ireland and Malta), that it must have some supernatural cause.

Second, there will be removal of restraints on evil and "lawlessness." This can be seen today in the pulling away of moral restraints—

abortion, euthanasia, views on human sexuality. Dr. Martin referred to a recent editorial in the New York Times, which stated that the churches must remove homosexuality from the list of sins (the problem is, of course, that the list comes from God's word, and we really aren't qualified to remove it!). He also pointed out that there are now places in the world where the public announcing of the biblical and church teaching on homosexuality could result in jail time for the speaker. Only then, when "all hell breaks loose," will Christ return and the kingdom of God ushered in. The only way to know that it is the end is if Jesus returns.

2 Thes 2:9 then teaches that this moral breakdown will be accompanied by "pretended signs and wonders," false signs which do not lead to repentance and faith. Therefore we need true signs and wonders that lead to conversion and belief in the Gospel. The devil will use deception, through false teachings, to lead people to perish. Human beings make themselves vulnerable because "they refuse to open their hearts to the truth" (v. 10). Hence, the importance for sound guidance in the sacrament of Confession—priests need to help penitents avoid "strong delusion" (v. 11) about right and wrong.

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October 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. David Novak St. Louis, MO	Rev. Charles Tichacek St. Louis, MO	Rev. James Brown Toledo, OH	Rev. Norbert Howe Toledo, OH	For the souls of our deceased FOP members	For prayer requests received	For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. Gerald Knueven Toledo, OH	Rev. Edward Littelmann Toledo, OH	Rev. Jerome Nowakowski Toledo, OH	Rev. Thomas Oedy Toledo, OH	Rev. Nicholas Weibl Toledo, OH	Rev. Dale Branson Tucson, AZ	Rev. Henry Dauphinais M.S. Tucson, AZ
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Rev. Stephen Kantubog Wa, West Africa	Rev. John Kpan Wa, West Africa	Rev. Evarist Kuuwulong Wa, West Africa				

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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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!

Jesus said, "One does not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) The word of God is the food that enlightens the mind, feeds the soul and empowers the will. In a time when the culture persuasively opposes the message of Christ and the Church, we need to feed on the message of Christ. Rooted in this soil of truth, we will not be washed away by the tide of secularism that values pleasure and money more than God and people.

Thirty four members of the Fraternity gathered at the La Salette Retreat Center for a time of soaking in the word of God through Ralph Martin's teachings, liturgies and prayer times. All of us were grateful for this opportunity to be nourished in this manner. Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron is sharpened by iron; one person sharpens another." Our time together honed our ability to prophetically proclaim God's word.

However, since we cannot live at a retreat house and imbibe in conferences year round, how do we continue to feed on God's word? Though the secular media seems ubiquitous, we are also surrounded by a wealth of Catholic media. Catholic TV and radio through EWTN has solid content and is available not only through cable providers or through the air, but also on the internet.

There are a number of Catholic newspapers and a plethora of Catholic magazines. Material on the web abounds. My parish uses Formed.org. For a monthly fee the whole parish has access to top notch Catholic media including teaching seminars, bible studies, full length Catholic movies, downloadable e-books, mp3 talks and children's resources.

My local Fraternity has been using "The Wild Goose is Loose" by Fr. Dave Pivonka TOR for our teaching time. This set of videos (also on the web) focuses on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Using a many different settings, the videos are

pleasant to watch and wonderful in content.

Though there are many other superb resources that nourish us with the word of God, there is no replacement to personally reading the Sacred Scriptures. As we approach the feast of St. Jerome on September 30th (+420), patron of bible scholars, let us invest ourselves personally in the word of God. Well-nourished in this manner, we will be equipped to proclaim Christ to the world because we know him. As St. Jerome said, "For if, as Paul says, 'Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God', and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." (Liturgy of the Hours, vol. IV, page 1448).

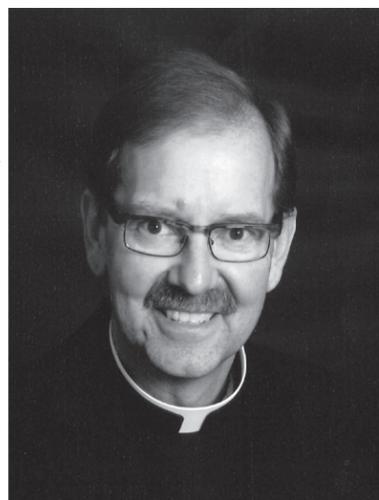
To conclude, let me quote the Scriptures. "I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with all joy in my every prayer for you, because of your partnership for the gospel." (Philippians 1:3-5a) Your prayerful support of the Fraternity makes you our partners. We are deeply grateful.

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: \$ 2,382.10

Budget Surplus/Deficit: (\$ 2,367.90)

Current as of July 31, 2017.

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There is much at stake—namely, the eternal destiny of everyone on earth! The truth must be proclaimed—but truth rooted in love. We priests need to have a zeal for souls, inspired by the Holy Spirit. A theme in the Marian Apparitions is that the final battle will be over marriage and the family, and the work of the devil will be seen even in the Church, with bishop opposing bishop, and priest contradicting priest. We are in a battle! What is to be our response? Three things.

First, We priests need holiness in our own lives, where the devil has no hold on us. Second, we need to realize the seriousness of reaching out to help others to be saved. That is the job of priests—not fund raising! Third, we will need to work with the faithful laity, whose simplicity and holiness of life will allow God to work, and heavenly power to descend on earth.

For all this, the Holy Spirit is needed. As Pope Saint John Paul II has stated in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, the Holy Spirit first helps us rediscover the universal call to holiness (it's not just for priests and nuns!). If the people of God could awaken to the holiness call of Christ, great things would happen in our church and world! Second, the Spirit helps us to rediscover the Church as a communion of love. We priests need to live with our parishioners in solidarity, without giving up our leadership role. Third, the Spirit leads us to rediscover the power of Pentecost and a renewed evangelization. The Catholic parish of the future will be

a place where holiness is explained and trained, where people will move from praying only for things for themselves, to praise, thanks, and contemplation. It will be a place where people encounter Jesus. Parish personnel are important in this, especially parish secretaries, who are the first face in the parish that many see. We need to make sure we hire the right people for the job.

The essence of holiness is love (Mk 12:28-32). Growth in holiness is not just multiplying rosaries, but allowing our hearts to be transformed and healed, so that they become like Christ's heart, doing the will of God. Holiness is not a burden, but a gift from God, who wants us to have greater freedom, greater love, greater power to be who we truly are. The reason God created human beings is to be one with God. We exist only because God loves us and wants us to be friends with him. When we are consumed with the world, that promise won't be fulfilled.

We are to look always for opportunities from the Holy Spirit to engage people and work for the Kingdom. But we can resist the Holy Spirit. Some typical excuses: "I'm lazy." No, you are someone created in God's image, for whom Christ died. You are destined for eternal glory. "I've got too many problems—money, family, health, etc." But all these difficulties are means to drive us to surrender to Jesus, showing us our dependence on power from on high. "I'll do it tomorrow." There is no better time than NOW to pursue holiness. "I'm not as bad as others." We

don't compare ourselves to those who are doing worse. Just keep our eyes on Jesus. This is also the danger of remaining on a plateau in our spiritual life. Our tradition has always spoken of the stages of the spiritual journey—there is always more. "I'm discouraged after reading the lives of the saints, I can't be as heroic as they were." But aim high like them! Don't settle just for purgatory. If we aim for purgatory, and miss that, the result is hell! Strive to be perfect as God is perfect. Let God transform you.

All this relates to the work of Dr. Martin's spiritual classic, *The Fulfillment of All Desire*, where he studied the writings of seven saints, all doctors of the Church, on the spiritual life. It has been called one of the best guides to holiness available. Many prominent religious leaders call it their favorite spiritual book. It is a great read, and is highly recommended. (Dr. Martin brought a number of copies of the book for sale to the brothers, and they sold out quickly).

Dr. Martin concluded his first presentation by turning again to the wisdom of Saint John Paul II, who summed up the wisdom of the doctors of the Church in four principles: 1. The spiritual journey is dependent on the grace of God—we can't make ourselves holy. 2. But our own effort is necessary. 3. There is pain in the process, which involves the purification of the soul. 4. The journey is worth taking, because the result is union with God, and we even enjoy the fruits of this union in this life.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

