

July 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Most Rev. Paul Bemile Ghana 31					Prayer Requests Received 1	Pope Francis 2
Rev. Robert Carr Boston 3	Rev. Richard Kelley Boston 4	Rev. James Lawrence Burlington 5	Rev. Gerard Leclerc Burlington 6	For the souls of our deceased FOP members 7	Rev. Donald Roy Burlington 8	Rev. Andy Bord Cardiff, UK 9
Rev. Matthew Jones Cardiff, UK 10	Rev. Donal Gillespie Cardiff, UK 11	Rev. Paul Millar Cardiff, UK 12	Rev. David O'Donnell Cardiff, UK 13	Canon John Griffiths Cardiff, UK 14	Rev. Barnabas Page Cardiff, UK 15	Rev. Barry English Cardiff, UK 16
Rev. Michael Cronin Cardiff, UK 17	Rev. Robert Franco Cleveland 18	Rev. Kevin Elbert Cleveland 19	Rev. James Mazanec Cleveland 20	Rev. Ryan Cubera Cleveland 21	Rev. Tom Dunphy Cleveland 22	Rev. Homer Blubaugh Columbus 23
Rev. Richard Engle Columbus 24	Rev. Joseph Losh Columbus 25	Rev. Justin Reis Columbus 26	Rev. Peter Gregor Comayagua 27	Cardinal Donald Weurl Washington, DC 28	Most Rev. Sam Jacobs Houma, LA 29	Most Rev. John Meyers Newark, NJ 30



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Things Are Not Always What They Seem

By Fr. Jeff Johnson of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan Fraternity

Malaria was from ancient times a horrible and fearsome disease. Outbreaks struck without warning and brought suffering and death on a vast scale, disrupting societies and economies and inflicting lasting damage upon even its survivors. The horrors of malaria lead to dread and fear. From Roman times people were convinced that Malaria was caused by the bad air of swamps and lowlands (hence the name "mal aria"). Everyone could see the association: malaria happened near swampy areas when the hot weather made them "vaporous"; the wind off of them would often be foul smelling. Awful things followed with terrible consequence, but there was no other rational pattern.

Yet what everyone "knew" by association, the association they clung to fearfully because it helped at least ease their sense of powerlessness, we now know to be utterly false: the disease is not caused by swamps or their air or their smell, but by specific parasites, species of the microorganism *Plasmodium* that infect the blood. It is spread by, but not caused by a mosquito. And only one species of mosquito, *not all mosquitos*, spread it. Indeed, only a small percent of the individual mosquitos of the vector species transmits the parasite; most are harmless. Health officials have learned that rational

and effective control of malaria requires practical measures that appreciate these distinctions and at the same time help people overcome their fears and misconceptions.

There is in this a parallel to the phenomenon of terrorism we are experiencing throughout the world today. Terrorists too strike without warning, disrupting lives and society like a scourge, leaving fear and damage in their wake. But how should we as Christians understand and approach the problem?

Islam itself is often blamed and vilified. As in the malaria analogy, everyone can see the association: Islamic terrorists strike innocent victims without warning, bringing death and destruction, disrupting societies, spreading fear and destruction, all in the name of Allah, Sharia, or Jihad. But while blaming Islam may have the appeal of a simple way to make sense of the fearful (let us even say evil!) reality of terrorism, and to come to terms with and address it, is it *actually true* that terrorism is simply the product of a "Religion of Hate"? That terrorism is an act of zeal in the theological sense?

To respond to those such as Christopher Hitchens who blame religion *per se as the source* of oppression, violence, and intolerance, we need only recall the whole regimes and campaigns of

terror waged by professed atheists in the name of the "national interest", in the name of "the proletariat", in the name of "security", in the name of "national Purity", in the name of Class Struggle: the Soviet Gulags, Nazi Death Camps, Spanish Civil war massacres, the Dissaparados of Chile, and on and on.

In contrast, the behaviors of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi - the very iconic heroes of liberation, nonviolence, and solidarity - arose from what they openly acknowledged to be the explicit implications of their religious convictions.

We must candidly acknowledge that modern times have seen terrorism not only in the name of Islam, but also of Hinduism, and even of Christianity (recall the bloody "Time of Troubles" in Northern Ireland, or the atrocities perpetrated by self-professed Christians in the Hutu-Tutsi struggles in Africa). Nonetheless, while religion is brought into association with terrorism, it is not its *cause*. The bombing of school busses in Northern Ireland and the "ethnic cleansing" in Africa do not represent the teachings of Christ or Christianity (Catholic or protestant). In the same way, neither do the vicious assaults and rioting in certain Indian provinces express the *Ahimsa* ("benevolence, never harming") which is at the heart of Hinduism. The same is true regarding Islam.

...continued on page 3

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!

We have heard the call to a "New Evangelization" for decades now. First articulated by St. Pope John Paul II, the new evangelization was not to be preached to lands that never heard the gospel. It was to peoples and cultures that were once permeated with the message of Christ but have become secularized. Many people in the Europe, America and Australia have become lukewarm toward Christ, the Church and their faith. Their minds, hearts and energies are more devoted toward their own comforts on earth and less focused on the cross of Jesus Christ and the life he promises. St. Pope John Paul II and subsequent popes have called the Church to "re-evangelize" peoples and cultures with "new ardor, methods and expressions."

Pope Francis recently published the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (better known as *The Joy of Love*), his summary of the two Synods of Bishops that looked into marriage and family life in our time. Perhaps this is the key to the "New Evangelization." Chapter 3, entitled "Looking to Jesus: The Vocation of the Family", begins with this way:

58. *In and among families, the Gospel message should always resound; the core of that message, the kerygma, is what is "most beautiful, most excellent, most appealing and at the same time most necessary". This message "has to occupy the center of all evangelizing activity". It is the first and most important proclamation, "which we must hear again and again in different ways, and which we must always announce in one form or another". Indeed, "nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wise than that message". In effect, "all Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma".*

The four quotes are from Pope Francis' other Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*). Pope Francis reminds that **the kerygma**, the Greek word for "proclamation" that has come to mean the good news of God's love revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who saves us, **should always resound in and among families. Does it? If not, how can this basic**

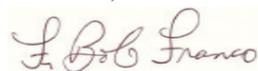
gospel message resound again in and among our families?

The old theological axiom tells us that "grace builds on nature." If I could summarize nature of family in one word it would be "together". Husbands, wives, parents, children are **to be together and to work together**. This is the fabric of family where human and Christian formation takes place.

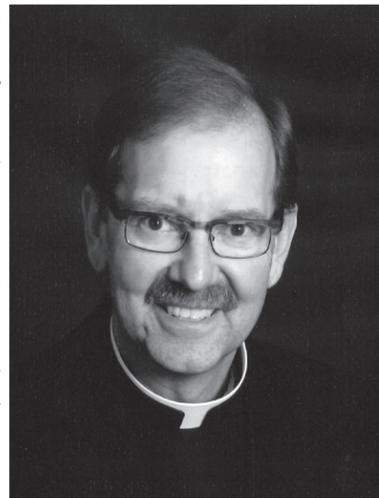
Many families have a problem *being together*. With both parents working and children participating in countless after school interests, coupled with video games and smart phones, family members become isolated from each other. Human and Christian formation is greatly weakened when everyone is "in their own world."

In this Year of Mercy, let us pray that families come together. May this natural foundation become the place where the grace of the gospel can again resound in and among families.

In Christ,



Fr. Bob



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: \$ 3,695.00

Budget Surplus/Deficit: (\$ 1,055.00)

Current as of April 30, 2016.

...continued from page 1

As in the relationship of malaria and swamps, we see an *association*, but not a causal one. The current wave of violent terrorism is undeniably located *within* Islamic cultures, but *Islam itself* is not its **cause**. And, continuing our malaria analogy, we need to acknowledge that while a certain movement of Islamic Fundamentalist thought is indeed the *vector* of terrorism - that is, it can sometimes be the means of its dispersal as some mosquitos may be vectors of malaria - *Islamic Fundamentalism itself does not cause terrorism*. Most fundamentalist Muslims neither promote nor condone terrorism.

It is disturbing to hear passages from the Koran quoted as "proof" of the "hate mongering" and "intolerance" of Islam, when these are taken entirely out of context and without any of the textural critical study necessary to understand what they are intending to convey. This is entirely unjust if we are examining Islam itself *as a Religion* (as contrasted with the agenda of terrorists). The interpretation of such texts is not a straightforward one (even for those who choose a "fundamentalist" approach to reading of scriptures!) any more than it is in Christianity. Christians, and especially clergy, should recognize this (After all, what about the deprecatory Psalms? Or the passages from Kings or Exodus that seem to incite violence? Or Jesus telling you to cut off your hand if it is an occasion for sin? Or that the Bible was used to justify Apartheid?) In the case of terrorism, as in other abhorrent misreading of Scripture, it is not the text which leads to violence, but a preexistent mindset that becomes the lens through which the text is seen,

and which then uses the text for one's own self-justification.

What then is it that corresponds to the *Plasmodium* parasite of our analogy? What is *the thing itself* which actually generates the problem? Whence the *real cause* of terrorism?

The true root cause of "Islamic terrorism" is a parasite of the soul, an irrational hatred deeply rooted in sin, both individual and societal. The societal sins are centuries of imperialistic cultural, political, and economic conflict and oppression, and modern secularist and materialist cultural attack on primal (and authentic!) values: chastity, temperance, the sanctity of marriage and family, life in the womb. The personal sin is responding to these evils with evil, rather than with mercy. An ideology of hatred and anger in the name of *God the Merciful* replaces the central tenant of Islam, which is *obedience to God the most Merciful*. In the hands of terrorists, religion is not the *cause* but the victim and unwitting vector of the *disease* of hate. (Pope Benedict, in his much misunderstood Regensburg address, "Faith, Reason and the University - Memories and Reflections", gave an excellent discussion of this).

To my brother priests, I submit that appreciating the distinction between Islam *as a religion per se* and this "religious-ized" anger of terrorists and terrorist organizations and movements is important. Our obligation to truth and charity demand we take care not to fall into the "Islam equals hate" paradigm. We need to dispel fears and misconceptions, proclaiming instead the truth *dogmatically asserted by the Church* that Islam as a religion is **not** intrinsically evil. On the contrary, Muslims participate *by their faith* in

a relationship with the one true God and are associated together with us in the order of Grace in a sharing in God's mercy in Christ (see *Gaudium et Spes*).

In confronting terrorism, we need to realize the real enemy in the spiritual battle, which is neither Islam nor the terrorists themselves, but the spiritual disease of irrational hatred and self-righteous anger. We are dealing here with the mystery of sin and evil. To fight it effectively we need to use God's spiritual weapons: prayer, fasting, and works of mercy. Christ calls us as his disciples to employ the only truly effective medicine for the disease of hatred and sin: the Mercy of God.

When thinking of the New Evangelization, do not forget the old one. What I mean by that is that our Church has two thousand years of history and teaching. Some of our most powerful teachers lived centuries ago. For example, one of the greatest books I ever read on prayer, I discovered from a fellow Catholic on Google+. The book is How to Converse with God by St. Alphonsus Liguori (Tan). I loved it so much I ordered one for every member of our class at the end of their mass for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

If you want to talk about the old evangelization, well St. Alphonsus died two years before the Constitution was enacted in our own country. Just like the Bible, however, his words and the words of all the saints are still relevant. So in seeking to live the New Evangelization do not forget the resources in the old one. -- ed.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

