

September 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	2 For prayer requests received	3 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. George Joseph Nangachiveetill Indianapolis	Rev. Harold Knueven Indianapolis	Rev. Thomas Cawley C.M. Kansas City	Rev. Roderic Giller, O.S.B. Kansas City	Rev. Earl Dekat Kansas City	Rev. Bob Hasenkamp Kansas City	Rev. Rheel Forest Manitoba
Rev. Raymond J. Zuegner Marquette	Rev. Ryan Ford Marquette	Rev. Darryl Pepin Marquette	Rev. Larry Van Damme Marquette	Rev. Michael Steber Marquette	Rev. Jeff Johnson Marquette	Rev. Brandon Oman Marquette
Rev. Christopher Gardiner Marquette	Rev. Timothy Ekaitis Marquette	Rev. Benjamin Hasse Marquette	Rev. Norman Clisch Marquette	Rev. Paul O'Donnell Duggan New Jersey	Rev. Timothy Graff New Jersey	Rev. Msgr. John Demkovich New Jersey
Rev. William Halbing New Jersey	Rev. Paul Lehman New Jersey	Rev. Joseph Meagher New Jersey	Rev. John Gordon New Jersey	Rev. Stephen Toth New Jersey	Rev. Paul Cannariato New Jersey	



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Spiritual Growth and Disappointment

By Fr. Vlado Bizjak, Slovenian Fraternity & Board Member

One contemporary social myth is to be successful, anytime and everywhere. Politicians have to be perfect or they have to resign, products must work perfectly or business crashes; children must not disappoint their parents – they have to fulfill all their expectations. In our country it is not so rare to learn of the case that an adolescent kills himself, usually at the end of school year. He cannot bear the pressure of failure. It is easier for him to die than to present himself as a failure before his family and friends. He cannot accept or bear the burden of disappointment.

Then it is the Church. Also she must be perfect, especially bishops and priests, they should not disappoint the world who wants and needs an example of holiness.

Maybe we are Catholics as children of our time also infected with this virus in the way how we look on our spiritual or everyday life. We know about the pressure to be good and to be successful in the eyes of our brother priests, bishops, parents etc.

First comes fascination

Every human being is and has to be first fascinated. Animals cannot do it, they cannot admire, wonder and be fascinated. Man can and should do it. Some say that wondering is the beginning of philosophy. A child admires the almightiness of his parents. They are ideal and represent the ideal world. They teach him to

be good, virtuous, successful and holy. At first he doesn't distinguish between illusion and reality. Maybe it is a child's first disappointment when he realizes that Santa Claus isn't real.

Later on people are fascinated many times, by a wonderful experience of traveling or of pilgrimage, by knowing a new inspiring man or woman who they want to follow or to be their friend.

When someone falls in love, he is fascinated by the other. A boy loses his mind, his girl loses hers as well; he is her Prince Charming. Their brain produces an image of a perfect man or woman with whom they are ready not only spend their entire life, but also die for. Anyhow, they will be quite happy with this person for their entire life and there is nothing imperfect in this human being.

Some people are totally fascinated by an ideology or religion. There were parents desperate about their daughter who joined a sect: "She was brainwashed!" they claimed. But she wasn't sharing their opinion. She was fascinated, she moved at their community, changed clothes, cut her hair and sang with them on the streets.

When a young man starts to think about being a priest, he has to be fascinated in some way. How could he decide for something he is not attracted to? He has to see a priest who is a good example, a good Church with future. Seminary in his mind

is a community of perfect, holy and fervent young men, enthusiastic about following Christ. But is there also an upper limit for this extreme excitement about idealized image of seminarians, priests, bishops and Church?

Why are some people just too excited and too fascinated? There are many reasons. Among them also some not really incentive. A reason behind can be dissatisfaction with themselves, bad selfimage, weak, unstable identity. Feeling of their own weakness or incapacity pushes them to search for an ideal solution or promise outside. All their hopes and dreams are idealized in a perfect image, created by their own. Common sense is out, reason has no effect. There is an ideal other person (partner, brother, saint, bishop or God) or an ideal thing (money, miracle) that can solve all problems with an ease.

When this fascination passes – and this, as a rule, happens every time – people are like woken up from a dream. If until now nobody or nothing has disappointed us, maybe we are still in a dream of childish idealization. The battle to grow spiritually and personally still didn't begin.

Then comes disappointment

Only what fascinated us first, can really disappoint us. Something what we hoped in and what we idealized. Soap bubble of perfect produced in our mind bursts and rainbow colors end up in a drop on the floor.

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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 cut and return this form with your donation.

Do you know anyone who would like to receive our Newsletter? (Please print legibly)

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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. _____ \$ \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

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.

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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!

Why do I need Fraternity of Priests? I've got enough to do!" Though priests would rarely say it this way, this is the attitude of many priests regarding Fraternity of Priests and organizations like it. Before I attempt to answer that question, I want to raise a more fundamental question: *Why the priesthood at all?*

Mark 3:14 reads, "He (Jesus) appointed twelve [whom he also named apostles] that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach." The Apostles' identity (they were to *be with him*) and their mission (sent *forth to preach*) are rooted in the person of Jesus Christ. Relatively quickly, the apostles needed to ordain other co-laborers in the churches they established. As the Church grew, these co-laborers and successors to the Apostles (the *Bishops and presbyter*, deacons and priests) to assist in them in the role of caring for the flock. The priesthood exists to extend the mission of Jesus Christ.

Priests too know that their identity is rooted in the person of Jesus Christ (Mark 3:14 to *be with him*) and that they share in the mission of the Lord by preaching, celebrating the sacraments and governing with the heart of the Shepherd. This is what we are to be about. Sounds simple, right?

I think of Fr. John Lesniak, a deceased priest from my diocese. He often said, "It's not easy. You may think it's easy. It may look easy to you. But it's not easy." Living the Catholic faith is difficult. Leading the Catholic faith in our times is especially challenging. We are surrounded by enough creature comforts to lull us into maintenance mode. However, we know that our mission is establish the reign of God in the hearts, minds and lives of our flock, encouraging them to win others for Christ and transform our culture. It is not easy.

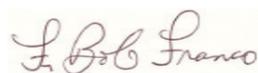
Fraternity of Priests exists to strengthen the priesthood of its members so that they can fulfill the mission of the Lord. We need more

than personal disciplines to do this. We need the encouragement and wisdom of brother priests.

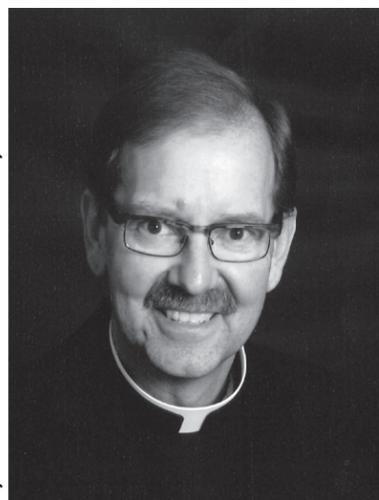
An oft quoted African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Fraternity of Priests provides the structure to enable priests to go farther. We priests might be able to get more done if we did not take time for Fraternity meetings. Perhaps our lives would be a tad more efficient. However, by communally reflecting on Christ's work in our lives, sharing our need for wisdom and opening our hearts to brother priests, we are empowered to *go farther*, not just get more stuff done.

On behalf of the members of Fraternity of Priests, I want to express our gratitude for your faithful prayers on behalf of the priesthood. I am also grateful for your financial support which enables Fraternity of Priests to fulfill its mission of gathering priests to Christ and to one another.

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: \$ **5,205.00**
Budget Surplus/Deficit: \$ **455.00**

*Note: donations reported reflect both May and June of 2016 combined.
Current as of June 30, 2016.*

...continued from page 1

Disappointment comes, as a rule, because of rational thinking. Fascination is mostly irrational emotional thing. Reason helps us to see that our ideals are relative, not absolute. Objects of our idealization don't solve our problems as we expected. We realize that we expected from something or someone things that he or she cannot give. This experience is hard, but very necessary.

We have to be skeptics in front of over exaggerated idealizations. Our world is not blackwhite and neither are people. There is no perfect saint or perfect sinner. There is one ideal alone – God. But even God can disappoint us. Not because he is not perfect, but because we have a distorted image of him and eventually he doesn't act as we idealistically want or hope. So he disappoints us.

Everything we hope in has to disappoint us, even God! It is a necessary step in our spiritual life. This is in a way the theology of the cross. There is no spiritual growth outside of the paschal mystery. And this paschal mystery passes, as we know, the passion and death. Only then the resurrection comes. There is no resurrection without death and in the same way disappointments have to come along the way for everything that fascinated us.

We have to be disappointed by the things we love the most. First we are disappointed by our parents, friends and other close people or those that we count on, our authorities, bishops, judges and politicians. We have to be in a way disappointed also by the Church, by the priesthood, by the charismatic movement, by different pastoral approaches we counted on and even by our Fraternity of Priest.

Finally, the hardest one is to be disappointed by God and faith.

Pope em. Benedict XVI. speaks about the politics. One of important roles of Christianity as separated from the state is to demythologize politics. The state and politics can quickly get attributes of omnipotence and promise the impossible. People love to believe in better future. Christianity sobers down politics and it shows, that we cannot expect too much from this world.

I personally expected too much from charismatic spirituality. I realized that my image of living this spirituality was too idealistic. After first fascination by manifestations of the Spirit I expected that this was it, a solution for all problems of the Church. Now it will be easy to convince everybody to become Catholic and join charismatic movement. But the things didn't work out as I thought. Not all were excited about praying in tongues, miracles didn't happen after every laying on hands, prophecies were fading out in time etc. I realized that there are no shortcuts in spiritual life, we cannot skip any step. The cross must come, paschal mystery must be there in its full dimension – disappointment has to come. No one was spared by this.

Final disappointment for man is God (Jesus) himself. Many people leave the faith because they have too idealistic an expectation from it. As soon as he stops fulfilling all their desires, they turn away. In the Bible itself we can find many bitter disappointments, even Jesus' closest friends were tempted. Mary wonders over Jesus' remaining behind in the Temple: "Son, why have you done this to us?" Judas in his disappointment betrays Jesus and then disappointed by himself and his sin and commits suicide.

Peter disappointed by Jesus' speaking about his suffering wants to stop him and finally ends denying him and so disappoints himself. Many disciples, disappointed by Jesus' speaking of eucharist, were grumbling and turned their backs on him. The cross was the final of Jesus' disappointment for all, only few people were left on the Calvary.

Integration

The cross, the disappointment, surely doesn't have to be the final word as it is not in the paschal mystery. But sadly many people stay there for the rest of their lives. Once disappointed they lose their faith and live in bitterness. This is the biggest mistake ever. We have to understand that disappointment must come as a step in our growth towards full spiritual and human maturity. It is nothing wrong with being disappointed, it is meant so. And it is meant to learn from such experience. We are still tempted to leave God, priesthood, charismatic spirituality, Fraternity etc. because we were disappointed. But we are called to grow up. Some of us are more prone to idealism and live in clouds, others are hard realists without any faith. We need to put together the emotional power of fascination and rational sober reality of life. We have to stop swinging between them.

Fascination is a gift. It gives us many beautiful experiences, people, feelings of being accepted and gifted. We have to be fascinated, emotionally fulfilled. This is a good and necessary legacy for hard times. Disappointment is also a gift, helping us to stay sober and rational. If we learn how to live in balance and acceptance of both, we will find Easter morning, the completion of the paschal mystery and new step in our spiritual maturity.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

