

March 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Rev. 1 Robert Carr Boston, MA	2 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	3 For prayer requests received	4 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 5 Jurgen Liias Boston, MA	Rev. 6 William Carroll Boston, MA	Rev. 7 Donald Clinton Boston, MA	Rev. 8 Richard Kelley Boston, MA	Rev. 9 Patrick Gilbert Boston, MA	Rev. 10 Volney DeRosia Boston, MA	Rev. 11 Maurice Laroche Boston, MA
Rev. 12 James Lawrence Burlington, VT	Rev. 13 Donald Roy Burlington, VT	Rev. 14 Andy Bord Cardiff, UK	Rev. 15 Matthew Jones Cardiff, UK	Rev. 16 Donal Gillespie Cardiff, UK	Rev. 17 Paul Millar Cardiff, UK	Rev. 18 David O'Donnell Cardiff, UK
Canon 19 John Griffiths Cardiff, UK	Rev. 20 Barnabas Page Cardiff, UK	Rev. 21 Barry English Cardiff, UK	Rev. 22 Michael Cronin Cardiff, UK	Rev. 23 Robert Franco Cleveland, OH	Rev. 24 Kevin Elbert Cleveland, OH	Rev. 25 James Mazanec Cleveland, OH
Rev. 26 Ryan Cubera Cleveland, OH	Rev. 27 Tom Dunphy Cleveland, OH	Rev. 28 Homer Blubaugh Columbus, OH				



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Jesus Our Friend

By Father Vlado Bizjak

The Incarnation is one of the most fascinating truths of our faith, at least for me. It gives me so much inspiration, especially in the last period of my life. During Christmas especially is there an opportunity to think, meditate and pray about it.

One of many consequences of the incarnation for us to meditate upon is the fact that Jesus is our friend. Our friendship with Jesus should be also a model and a fundamental element of all our human friendships.

Jesus is, as we know the second person of the Trinity, uncreated Wisdom of God (Logos), Son of God, Messiah (Christ, the Anointed One), Lord (Kyrios) who "is seated at the right hand of the Father" and will "judge the living and the dead". These are all transcendent characteristics of Jesus' nature.

This is all true, but our sight this time will be pointed more towards his human nature, even though we cannot split him apart. Jesus' human body, his human nature clothes the eternal Word. Jesus was and still is a real man, a real human being. His divine nature refined the human one to perfection. But quite so he, as human being, experienced joy, pain, suffering, temptations and slow growth (Luke 2:52).

At first sight or just rationally we would consider friendship with Christ or relationship with him as friend to be nonsense. In

relationship with him we first think about worship, subordination, obedience, service, imitation and following him. Surely, we wouldn't dare to think about the friendship with him if he himself wouldn't propose it or wouldn't act as friend towards us and wouldn't search friendships with human beings. He is not something in between God and human or only apparently human, but a real human being, God incarnated in a man. This is a common ground for the possibility of friendship between Jesus and us. His human nature is the connection point between his divinity and our humanity. Christ already reconciled and "made friends" between both natures in himself. Therefore, for us divine nature shouldn't be something totally different and something beyond us or intangible.

Ancient time

This culture was not in favor of god as a friend of a man. The old Greek concept of god is remote, superior, just too high and too perfect. People in this concept are too selfish for friendship with a perfect god. This god himself also has no interest to cope with people and to waste time with them. Aristotle doubts that friendship with god and human is possible. There would be lack of equality which is fundamental for a friendship. Friendly relationship with an unmoved mover of all is

not possible. Greek gods, capricious and human like, can do something for mankind and have relationships with him. But they are generally separated from the human race. They keep their distance and they have nothing genuinely in common with them, otherwise their divinity would suffer. Plato spoke of some kind friendship between gods and people, but only the good ones, virtuous ones. The problem is that in the Greek concept gods and people are rivals in the same universe. People had to fight for their freedom by force against the gods so they cannot be their friends.

Old testament

The Old Testament is quite reserved about friendship with God. People of God should live in fear of God and love him with their whole heart, because God loves them first as his chosen people. But friendship? God does not descend to the same level with human beings, he must keep his transcendent divine nature intact, otherwise monotheism would be jeopardized.

However, in later Greek books of the Old testament we find some sort of friendship between God and man. This is because there is a real love between God and man. In the book of Wisdom of Solomon, we find a mediate figure, wisdom as such, who makes possible friendship with God. Wisdom "enters the

...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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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!

2017 is a year of anniversaries: the 100th anniversary of our Lady's appearance to three children in Fatima, Portugal and the 50th anniversary of a lesser known intervention of God now called the Duquesne weekend. Later this year I will reflect on our Lady of Fatima. Since the Duquesne weekend took place in February of 1967, I want reflect on the significance of this event.

On the weekend of February 17-19, 1967 a group of Catholic college students from Duquesne University gathered at a small retreat house in the north hills of Pittsburgh called *The Ark and the Dove*. They prepared for the retreat by studying the Acts of the Apostles chapters one through four. Some of them had read a book called *The Cross and the Switchblade* by Rev. David Wilkerson, an Assembly of God minister.

The weekend focused on the Holy Spirit. Among those who had prayerfully prepared for this weekend were Patti Gallagher Mansfield and David Mangan. At one point Patti wrote in her notebook "I want a miracle." She tore it out and pinned to the bulletin board.

On Saturday evening of the retreat Patti's prayers were answered. She went to the upper level of the retreat house (where the chapel was) to invite other retreatants downstairs for a birthday celebration of some of the retreatants. However, she felt drawn the chapel. In her own words:

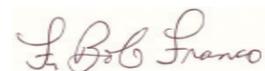
I prayed, "Father, I give my life to you. Whatever you ask of me, I accept. And if it means suffering, I accept that too. Just teach me to follow Jesus and to love as He loves." In the next moment, I found myself prostrate, flat on my face, and flooded with an experience of the merciful love of God...a love that is totally undeserved, yet lavishly given...I ran down to tell our chaplain what had happened and he said that David Mangan had been in the chapel before me and had encountered God's presence in the same way. (By Patti Gallagher

Mansfield, The Duquesne Weekend, as seen on <http://www.arlingtonrenewal.org/duquesne-weekend.html>)

There were other retreatants who had the same experience. The gifts (charisms) of the Holy Spirit such as praying in tongues and prophecy were experienced. Shortly after this weekend, this "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and the gifts of the Spirit became the hallmark of an international movement known in the English speaking world as "charismatic renewal" that has touched tens of millions of Catholics. Fraternity of Priests itself was an inspiration of this movement, flowing out of the charismatic Priest Conferences at Franciscan University in 1983.

As many mark this Jubilee of the charismatic renewal pray that Fraternity of Priests may ever more be led by the Holy Spirit.

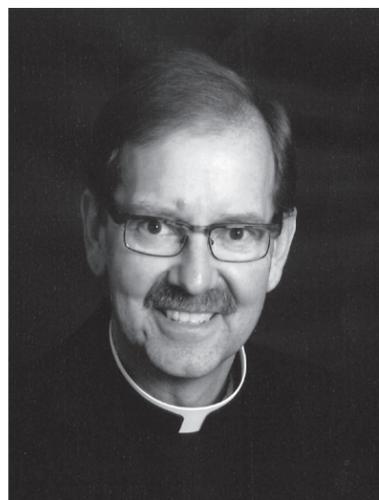
In Christ,



Fr. Bob

PS: Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR died on January 7th after a lengthy illness. The former President of Franciscan University of Steubenville was part of the inspiration for Fraternity of Priests. In the summer of 1982, Fr. Scanlan and Ralph Martin discussed some sort of follow up for priests who attended the annual summer conference. In the fall of 1983, Fraternity of Priests was born.

Fr. Michael, pray for us!



Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Donation Budget: \$ 4,750.00

Actual Donations: \$ 2,000.00

Budget Surplus/Deficit: (\$ 2,750.00)

Current as of November 30, 2016.

...continued from page 1

souls of the faithful, making them into prophets and friends of God" (Wis 7:27). God himself restores the friendship. He uses wisdom as a medium to make the friendship possible. Of course, the question remains: is this friendship any more than a general expression of love towards God? In Jewish theology and philosophy Philo of Alexandria (25 BC – 50 AD) comes most close to it. He finds friendship between God and Abraham in Is 41:8: "Israel, you are my servant. I chose you, the family of my friend Abraham." Neoplatonist theology helps him to explain that God comes to meet man not directly but indirectly through Logos (Wisdom). But this is something extraordinary and reserved for people who transcend themselves out from this world in the unimagined depths of their souls.

New testament

Finally and only with Jesus there comes the breakthrough: God becomes friend of man. This is a fact. The Gospel does not allow any doubt about it: Jesus wants to be our friend. This is what we should meditate about and admire this God's decision. It is indeed unbelievable, moving (heart-breaking). St. Ignatius puts the biggest emphasis on the meditation of incarnation to point out this big truth. The person praying should imagine in his spirit the conversation between Father and Son how they see humanity perishing, left to damnation. The Son decides to go to the earth out of love to the people to save them. But he won't do this somehow from outside or above. He decides to step down into our situation, to become one of us, to accept human nature

and all its misery and finally accept also the burden of all our sins and guilt. He decides to step into the depths of the fallen human nature.

Jesus' friendship in us

Jesus loved us and became one of us. We forget that he likes more to dwell amongst humans than he likes to reign over the angels. This must shake us. This longing of his to be near to us, to dwell and reign over our hearts, to live in intimacy of our poor souls. How is it then possible that we remain to be some sort of lonely people? We feed ourselves with his body and blood in the Eucharist and we cleanse our souls with his blood in the confession and yet still we consider our Lord to be somewhere far away. We don't open our hearts to him from two reasons (two extremes): we have fear of him as of hard judge or we have him for an acquaintance who can cheaply arrange everything in our lives, but we don't want to have him too close. We don't like him to interfere in our personal life. So, our heart stays closed to his presence.

But Jesus wants to be our intimate and best friend in the best meaning of the word. Because he is true man, he as such can be a good human friend and he understands well what human friendship means.

The Gospel is full of testimonies of this truth. A good practical case is the family of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary: "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and brother" (Jn 11:5). Jesus as man experienced and lived friendship love, he had emotions as we all have. We all can also experience his same friendship today. Jesus didn't stop to be human. He will draw us close to himself, not only

in glory, but already in the shame of his crucified humanity on the cross. There he is close to us in the most real way and we close to him. We can admire him performing miracles and extraordinary things, wisely teaching etc. But we can imagine also how exhausted he is from walking. He rests in the shadow of a tree where he meets the Samaritan woman or how he reproaches his disciples with not being awake with him for an hour in Gethsemane or how he calls his traitor, Judas, a friend. In all these and other cases we can see that besides all worship he gets from the angels he likes most human friendship and affection, human compassion, intimacy of human heart. So, he finally states in Jn 15:15: "I don't speak to you as my servants. I speak to you as my friends."

There is no doubt in the gospels: Jesus wants to be our friend! This is how he acts even in reproach. The secret of the saint is this: friendship (intimacy) with Jesus. Average people live an empty life, they strive for transitory things. They may consider the commandments and have fear of God and hell. But we cannot make any progress in our spiritual life if Jesus is not our friend. This is what makes a saint so different from other Christians. They stop somewhere along the way in formalism. Holiness instead is a story of love, friendship, not just living per rules. Dear brothers, let us open our hearts again to our best friend Jesus and let him draw us near to him and make us holy.

Fr Vlado Bizjak is on the FOP Board of Directors and writes from the Slovenia Fraternity.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____