



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

The Lord is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia! He is truly risen!

By Fr. Volney DeRosia, Boston Fraternity

April brings us into the Easter Season. After the long weeks of Lent, I always rejoice to enter into this glorious season. I can't tell you how many times my eyes have welled up during the Easter Vigil as we sing the Easter Alleluias – over and over and over again – in a sense, welcoming it back after a seemingly endless absence. (Granted, the fact that I am usually exhausted by the end of Holy Week probably plays into the heightened emotions.)

This year, Lent has been rather grueling for me (please note that in order to get this article in on time, I'm actually writing this during Lent). The call to heightened fasting, prayer and almsgiving can leave me discouraged in my weakness and inconstancy. Of the ten disciplines of the Fraternity, fasting causes me the greatest problem. I confess that too often I forget (or choose to forget) the requirement to fast. (By the way, I hope you pardon my informal writing style; I find it much easier, and much more interesting for me, to write as I talk, instead of proper formality.)

There was a day this Lent that, in the midst of examining my complete failure at fasting, I

got discouraged and despondent. With both my parish men's group, and my local Fraternity, we have been studying Ralph Martin's *The Fulfillment of All Desire: A Guidebook for the Journey to God Based on the Wisdom of the Saints*. (Steubenville, OH; Emmaus Road Publishing; 2006) Despite this book's positive message of seeking God, as we went through the chapters on "The Purgative Way," so many times I felt myself left wanting and weak. Ever feel that way? I know, I know, Jesus told St. Faustina that "**the greatest obstacles to holiness are discouragement and an exaggerated anxiety. These will deprive you of the ability to practice virtue**" (Diary 1488). Yet, so often in the midst of "life" I forget this. Looking back, I realize that it was from inordinate self-love – I was more upset (subconsciously) that I had failed, than that I had not given the gift of my fast to Jesus. You know, I think this is what God has been trying to teach me: that I focus too much on myself, on my devotions, on my prayer, on my work as a priest, and not enough on God Himself.

In that moment of discouragement

and despondency, the Lord put it on my heart that I was to spend more time just gazing upon His Holy Face. Like my hero of the Little Way (because I'm such a little soul), St. Thérèse of Lisieux, I have been consecrated to the Holy Face of Jesus. Yet, in the craziness of ministerial life, I lost focus, I forget that we are sometimes just called to look with love upon Jesus. I think about how St. John Paul II called the Church to spend time gazing on the suffering and glorified Face of Christ (see *Novo Millennio Ineunte*). As I began to spend time (again) just gazing upon the Lord's suffering Face, I began to rekindle the love I first had (see Revelation 2:4-5).



You see, I had been feeling this malaise for a while. I had felt the loss of love for the Lord as I tended in my prayer time to focus more on "doing" and less on "being." Yet, it is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees to spend all of our time doing external actions which have no love. As St. Paul says, even if I handed my body over for martyrdom, but have not love, I gain nothing (see I Corinthians 13:3). At the heart of all our devotions must be... well...

...continued on page 3

May 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Rev. Terry Brenon San Angelo, TX	Rev. Robert Bush San Angelo, TX	For the souls of our deceased FOP members	For prayer requests received	For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. Bernard Gully San Angelo, TX	Rev. Santiago Udayar San Angelo, TX	Rev. William McCarthy Sioux City, IA	Rev. Edward Burian Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. John Helmueller Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Joseph Vogel Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Richard Baumberger Sioux Falls, SD
Rev. Charles Duman Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Rodney Farke Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Edward Pierce Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. John Rasmussen Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Joseph Short Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Gregory Frankman Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Roger Geditz Sioux Falls, SD
Rev. Randy Phillips Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Jerome Ranek Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Robert Hamel St. Cloud, MN	Rev. Peter Kirchner St. Cloud, MN	Rev. Gerald Mischke St. Cloud, MN	Rev. Gregory Paffel St. Cloud, MN	Rev. Todd Schneider St. Cloud, MN
Rev. Mark Stang St. Cloud, MN	Rev. James Statz St. Cloud, MN	Rev. Albert Danter Saint Louis, MO	Rev. Anthony Dattilo Saint Louis, MO	Rev. James Dyer Saint Louis, MO		

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.

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
PO Box 442
Steubenville, OH 43952-5442
Phone: (740) 283-4400
Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

Please cut and return this form with your donation.

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

Name _____
Street _____
City, State and Zip _____

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.

Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

EPISCOPAL ADVISORS

Archbishop John Myers
Newark, NJ

Bishop Sam Jacobs
Houma-Thibodaux, LA

Bishop Paul Bemile
Wa, Ghana

DIRECTORS

Fr. Bob Franco
Cleveland, Ohio
Chairman

Fr. Jim Hobert
Tucson, Arizona

Fr. Larry Van Damme
Marquette, Michigan

Fr. Volney DeRosia
Manchester, New Hampshire

Fr. Robert Giardina
Providence, Rhode Island

Fr. Dwight Merrick
Trinidad

Fr. Bob Hilz, TOR
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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!

It was the first day of the week when two heartbroken disciples of Jesus set off for the little town of Emmaus, seven miles for Jerusalem. They were commiserating with each other. All their hopes were nailed to a cross just outside of Jerusalem. Now what...

Jesus, in a disguised manner, joined them on that road. As these disciples shared with Him their disappointment and disillusionment, Jesus opened their hearts and minds to the Sacred Scriptures and enlightened them to what was really going on.

With a measure of hope restored, these disciples of Jesus eagerly pressed their travelling companion to join them for dinner. They wanted to keep the conversation going. However, when Jesus broke the bread for them, their eyes were really opened and their hearts leapt for joy. It was Him! Their unbounded joy impelled them to hasten back to Jerusalem only to find that their experience confirmed: Jesus Christ had risen from the dead!!!

The Emmaus account of the resurrection (Luke 24:13-35) has encouraged believers in every generation. However, it speaks in a special way to priests. Like Jesus we seek to set hearts on fire with His word. Like Jesus, we break the bread and give them our risen, yet disguised Lord. This is our role in the body of Christ.

More to the point for priests in the Fraternity, the road to Emmaus experience is what we often experience at our Fraternity meetings. Sometimes the hopes and dreams of a priest are shattered by the brokenness of our people. Sometimes a priest's best efforts are met with indifference. At other times those same efforts are met with resistance and negative social media campaigns. The Fraternity meeting is a place where priests can open their hearts to other priests in the Fraternity. These brothers can encourage, advise or simply listen without judgement. They can even pray with the priest that God would give him fresh courage to serve

God's people.

This season of spring is also the season of Holy Orders. It is the time of year when many transitional deacons are ordained to the priesthood. It is the time of year when many priests celebrate their anniversary

of ordination. Please pray that these servants of God, these earthen vessels that God has chosen to shepherd, teach and feed the flock of God would "tend the flock of God...not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it." (I Peter 5:2) We need encouraged, not disillusioned priests!

Finally, a reminder to my brother priests in the Fraternity: our annual meeting dates are a week later. We will be meeting from Sunday evening, August 6 through Friday, August 10th at noon. Our presenter, Deacon James Keating, is a faculty member of the Institute of Priestly Formation at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He brings a wealth of wisdom and experience to enrich our time together. Block out the time now! Be there or be square! (Forgive the faded phrase. *Be square means out of touch.*)

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: \$ 3,860.10

Budget Deficit: \$ 889.90

Current as of February 28, 2018.

...continued from page 1

devotion, love. At the heart of our ministerial work must be love. Everything must revolve around love of God. Back to St. Thérèse, and her definition of remaining a little child before God:

"It is to recognize our nothingness, to expect everything from God as a little child expects everything from its father; it is to be disquieted about nothing, and not to be set on gaining our living. Even among the poor, they give the child what is necessary, but as soon as he grows up, his father no longer wants to feed him and says: 'Work now, you can take care of yourself.'

"It was so as not to hear this that I never wanted to grow up, feeling that I was incapable of making my living, the eternal life of heaven. I've always remained little, therefore, having no other occupation but to gather flowers, the flowers of love and sacrifice, and of offering them to God in order to please Him.

"To be little is not attributing to oneself the virtues that one practices, believing oneself capable of anything, but to recognize that God places this treasure in the hands of His little child to be used when necessary; but it remains always God's treasure. Finally, it is not to become discouraged over one's faults, for children fall often, but they are too little to hurt themselves very much." (St. Therese of Lisieux, "The Yellow Notebook, 6 August 1897" *St.*

Therese of Lisieux: Her Last Conversations)

I have gone back to this over and over throughout my priesthood, and it always remains fresh. I forget too often to gather flowers, flowers of love and sacrifice! Why is it that I think I have to earn God's respect and love for my work in His Kingdom?! He's done it all already! I just have to love Him. Yet my fasts become an attempt at showing God (well... really myself) how strong I am, how dedicated I am, how holy I am... and in the end they end up showing just the opposite! I am NOT strong. I am NOT dedicated. I am NOT holy. And as long as I do everything for myself (the way the older brother in the "Prodigal Son" parable did, masking it as working for his father, see Luke 15:25-32) and not to gather flowers to *delight* our Lord, I will never attain holiness.

I'm still a relatively young priest (emphasis on relatively), and new to the Fraternity Board, so I'm sure you all have known this for a while – and I have, too. But I needed to be reminded by God in a way that would penetrate my soul, so I'm thinking you might need it as well, hence why I'm writing about it.

What was I saying? Oh yes, the devotion to the Holy Face. Over the last few weeks, I have found extraordinary grace in just spending time gazing upon Our Lord's Face. So present in His Holy Face is the pain He felt by all of the brutality; yet He chose to be brutalized for me. His Face is full of the agony of being betrayed, denied

and abandoned; yet He would never choose the easier path of indifference or stoicism. And I am the one who brutalizes Him, I am the one who abandons, denies and betrays Him with each sin – and He still chooses to love me! How can I not love Him more when I spend so much time looking at His infinite love for me?! I have begun to grow in that love again, spending time with Him just to spend time with Him! Isn't this what it's all about?!

And so we enter into the Easter Season. The Alleluias and "Glory to God in the Highest" (with bells on!) bid us to gaze upon the glorious Face of Christ! The second Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy Sunday – reminds me that love covers a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8) ... and weakness, and inconstancy. It reminds me that my life is not about me, and that I am not called to excel, but to trust in God and His love ("O Blood and water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You" Diary 84, 187). After all, "The cause of your falls is that you rely too much upon yourself and too little on me," as Jesus told St. Faustina, but He continues, "let this not sadden you so much. You are dealing with the God of mercy" (Diary 1488). All that I struggled to do led to my falls because I relied on myself, not God. But God's other name is mercy! Which I desperately need!

May this holy season draw you to a deeper trust in God's infinite mercy, and a greater love of Him in all things! Happy Easter!

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

