

September 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. Robert Hilz TOR Greensburg, PA						1 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. Robert Franco Cleveland, OH	2 Rev. James Mazanec Cleveland, OH	3 Rev. Homer Blubaugh Columbus, OH	4 Rev. Richard Engle Columbus, OH	5 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	6 For prayer requests received	7 Rev. Robert Shaldone Comayagua
Most Rev. Paul Bemile Episcopal Ad.	9 Most Rev. Sam Jacobs Episcopal Ad.	10 Very Rev. Franc Kromberger Episcopal Ad.	11 Most Rev. John Myers Episcopal Ad.	12 Rev. Duaine Cote Fargo, ND	13 Very Rev. Dale Kinzler Fargo, ND	14 Rev. Msgr. Robert Laliberte Fargo, ND
Rev. Donald Leiphon Fargo, ND	16 Rev. Claude Seeberger OSB Fargo, ND	17 Rev. Msgr. Dennis Skonseng Fargo, ND	18 Rev. Edmund Sylvia CSC South Bend, IN	19 Rev. Peter Donzing Ghana	20 Rev. Robert Sackey Ghana	21 Rev. Charles Antekeier Grand Rapids
Rev. James Bozung Grand Rapids	23 Rev. George Fekete Grand Rapids	24 Rev. Thomas Hack Grand Rapids	25 Rev. Donald Lomasiewicz Grand Rapids	26 Rev. Mark Mitchell Grand Rapids	27 Rev. Ayub Nasar Grand Rapids	28 Rev. Michael Shea CM Grand Rapids
						29 Rev. 29

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
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http://www.fraternityofpriests.org

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Do you know anyone who would like
(Please print legibly)

The Fraternity of Priests pledges 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 carefully and wisely, and not to ask for money that is not needed.

This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

Dear Father Bob Franco,

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



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

The Fraternity of Priests Makes Us Better Serve Our People

By Fr. Robert J. Carr, Boston Fraternity

I remember when I arrived at my current parish and had to explain to the pastor that I attend a weekly Fraternity of Priests meeting. I made sure he understood what the group is: a weekly gathering for prayer, study and community. I also explained what it is not: a session to complain about our pastors or the archdiocese.

Fortunately, our archbishop wants us to be in priest support groups, warning us to take measures against being one or both of common cultural parables: Lone Rangers or lost in Punch and Judy. The point of the Fraternity of Priests is so much more. Anyone of our members will explain, the Fraternity is to bring conversion of our parishioners and even a deeper conversion of ourselves. The mission is, of course, to deepen our relationship with Christ through our fraternity with each other.

We even, in most cases, live in our neighborhoods making us part of the pastoral scene. People know that the priest lives among them and he is more available than others.

There is an old joke about the dying man who wanted to see a priest right away.

"But Pat, you're not Catholic, why do you want to see a priest?"

"Because he is the only one who will come out on a night like this."

Emergency rooms do not think twice to call the priest on call at 2:00 A.M nor would we want them to do so. The call comes because the family wants a priest for their

loved one who just had a heart attack. We all even know the call in which we must run quickly to "read them their rites."

We know the rough looking man, who might give you a little anxiety by his tough demeanor, in tears that you made it to the bedside of his dying son and gave him the sacraments so that he will go to Heaven.

We have more demands on our lives at other times. When we received the sacrament of Holy Orders, we received it forever. This means that even when we are on our day off and in our civilian clothes, we are still priests.

I know of a priest who went on vacation in Mexico and there someone greeted him with "Hi Father." It was a former parishioner.

This kind of demand to live the Gospel cannot be done by one who is not grounded in the faith and living it with all the support he can receive.

We just cannot do this alone, we need fellowship with each other and with Christ. We cannot be the lone ranger who shows others how to be Catholic because being Catholic is always within a community in association with Christ. We are never alone in Christ, but nor can we do this alone without our brothers in Christ.

This is the gift of the Fraternity

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Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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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!

The title of Sherry Weddell's book *Forming Intentional Disciples* reminds us who we are: disciples of Jesus Christ. No matter what our vocation is, we are always students of Jesus Christ. He is always our gentle Teacher.

Right now the Lord has me enrolled in the school of "Managing Expectations". It is an art. I confess that sometimes I am a slow learner. Thank God, the Lord is a patient and persistent teacher.

Sometimes people have unrealistic expectations of me. I am learning to gently bring them back to earth. I am also learning that in spite of my best efforts I will not always succeed.

Other times, people have expectations of me that are completely justified. It is then that I need to do all in my power, with God's grace, to meet those expectations. Laying aside all lethargy, as a good shepherd, I seek to feed and tend the flock of the Lord.

Then there are those rare occurrences when people's expectations are too low, especially towards the Lord. Sometimes people do not really believe that God loves them. In their mind, "Why should God listen to my prayers?" Again, gently and consistently, I need to assure them that God is really for us, so "who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

Part of the Lord's class on "Managing Expectations" is learning to make my expectations clear, especially with those I work and live with. Partial messaging or presuming that people know or understand something often is the root of misunderstandings and problems. Cleaning up the mess that was made because expectations have not been clearly communicated is hard. Especially in the area of expectations it is true that an ounce of clarity beforehand is better than a pound of clarification afterward. (Usually three pounds of forgiveness is needed with the pound of clarification!)

Finally, we have to learn to manage our own expectations. Sometimes we

can expect too much or too little from ourselves. A good friend, a spiritual director or a brother priest in the Fraternity can provide the objective feedback that we need. With regard to the Lord: sometimes we can expect too little (a lack of faith) or too much (presumption). With regard to the people, places and things in our lives: we need to learn to accept reality and not try to change it. Dr. Ray Guarendi of EWTN fame said that our level of frustration is directly proportional to the distance between our expectations and reality. In other words, if our high expectations are not founded in reality, we will be greatly frustrated. Dr. Ray also encourages people to conform their expectations to reality. Trying to "force fit" reality into our field of expectations doesn't really work.

Though all sorts of schools recommence in August and September, Jesus' school is always in session. He said, "...learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (Matthew 11:28b) Let's stay enrolled!

Finally, I am deeply grateful for your prayer-filled support. We pray for you.

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: \$ 7,475.20
Budget Surplus: \$ 2,725.20

Current as of June 30, 2018.

...continued from page 1

of Priests where we can share not only our difficult times but our successes and our inspiration. This also teaches us to continue this inspiration that we may serve others well.

The Church does not need the priest who follows his own teachings or one that just lives the role during office hours. She needs the prayerful full time priest who lives the Gospel, but does so because he knows what is at stake. It is the salvation of souls, all souls, even the most difficult in our parishes.

She needs the priest who can draw inspiration from others and be excited about hearing confession, for example.

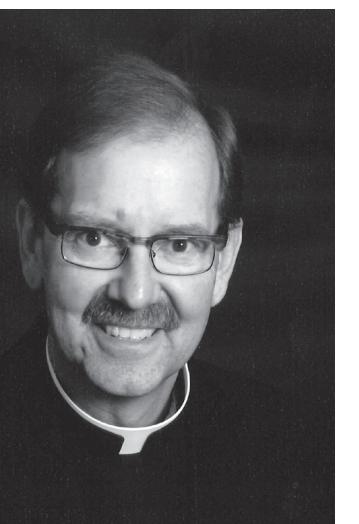
We must do this with assistance from others as we also come to worship Christ Himself who calls us to be His friends and His priests.

But we also are the face of the mercy of God in the confessional, in the hospital and even to the grieving family. There is some bad teaching out there and even people describing themselves as Catholics teach what the Church does not believe.

How do you explain to the family whose teenaged son just died of a drug overdose that the drug dealer who sold him the stuff and got him hooked is going to Heaven because there is no Hell? You don't. I often preach at some funerals, "don't tell me there is no Hell while some drug dealer puts profits over the life of the deceased."

Conversely, how about the man who feels that God could not possibly forgive him because he believes he cannot be forgiven by

Please send us your prayer intentions:



anyone? He needs to know that God will forgive all the sins of the repentant.

"If he will not forgive you, then how do I know he will forgive anyone? What you say is God has a limit on His forgiveness, that is not what we know to be true." I always explain.

How about the person who cannot forgive him or herself? We can speak of the mercy of God and explain that if God forgives the penitent, how can he or she not forgive him or herself?

This is who we are, the face of the just but merciful God. It is a role that we cannot do ourselves, we need the support of others. We need the place to speak with brother priests about what we deal with and ways to improve this unique work. Remember what we offer, the love and mercy of God. No other occupation does this. The doctor may be an agent of God's physical healing, but the doctor cannot forgive sins.

We are there when the mother is upset because her son died a tragic death and she was not sure if he was in a state of grace at his death. But unlike other voices on this subject, we have a duty to offer what the Church says and it is clear. We leave everything in the hands of the just but merciful God.

We also have the unique privilege of preaching on Purgatory. This wonderful teaching brings to our faithful what others do not. If you think of it, we believe that there are three places one may find himself after death. In Heaven, in Hell or in Purgatory. Most Christian religions

do not accept this teaching and so the result is a binary understanding of salvation. One goes to Heaven or one goes to Hell. I actually heard an evangelical preacher claim that there was a study out that indicated that most youth go to Hell. How does one make such a study without actually visiting Hell? But our teaching is clear, only those who are in obstinate mortal sin are lost. All others in various stages of grace are saved, but may need some further cleansing to encounter the fullness of God's presence.

This means that although we are not universalists, we also believe that God does all he can that one can get into Heaven. The rest is up to us in cooperating with God's grace and it is our role to teach this not only to the faithful but to bring them to live it alongside of us.

If we have such a unique role, know that there are forces that want us to be silent.

This is a unique role and we need the mutual support of others to live it. So let us live it with our fraternity brothers in prayer, study and community. Let us come together to praise Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and hear his words to us through the reflection of our brothers in prayer. Let us learn how others deal with the most difficult of trials as they discover Christ through them and help us to do the same.

This is the powerful meaning of the Fraternity of Priests. The movement is not just a support for each other alone, but is a way to help us represent the face of Christ for which we were called and ordained.