



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

2018 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh: August 5 - 10

By Monsignor Joseph Muldoon: Ottawa, Canada

Webster defines *Worship* as a spiritual discipline, 'to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission with God as a priority'. (cf Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language 1828 edition) The Fraternity of Priests gathered at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat House for the annual celebration of faith in the Lord and trusting in His goodness to us.

As we were approaching the Pittsburgh airport I began to hear the Lord speak so I started to write. But shortly after I took my pen the plane began to experience some turbulence. It was shaking all over and sitting at the back of the aircraft I seemed to feel every movement. With my shaking hand, I managed to record this prophetic word:

"Times of trial have afflicted my Church and now the darkness would appear to prevail, but My Son, the Redeemer of all the world has conquered every evil, even death itself. Now is the hour of great sorrow for all My little ones weep for Me. My Mercy is everlasting for all the ages and now I shall send you forth as My Watchmen to guard the city and hold all My little flock close to your heart. Nourish them with my truth and ever share it in love. Hold fast to Me in all that lies ahead, for I am with you to guard your going and coming, for I am with you always. Stand fast in Me,

for I protect you from every assault and from all harm."

This began our week as we focused on the theme: "Rooted in Christ, Torches of love."

Deacon James Keating guided our time together choosing to help us listen to the Lord through his meditation on the Gospel of St. John: 'Remain in Me'. He used the analogy of the spousal relationship of bridegroom and bride to describe our friendship with God.

He reminded us that staying in love with God is the work of the spiritual life. We can be easily drawn away from our 'First Love' in two ways: first, in responding to the spiritual needs of people and in managing the burden of our own constitution, wounds and neurosis. As the expression goes, we can become busy with the work of the Lord and forget about the Lord of the work. This leads to all kinds of difficulties and problems. We are called to receive deep love from God and to remain emotionally and spiritually available to the needs of people. God's love is communion; it is not a 'quick fix'. We are called to be in communion. It is expressed in the sacramental sign which we refer to as 'Holy Communion', a bond of friendship and love that continues to nourish our union with Him.

To suffer the love of God is, in fact, the condition of our fallen humanity.

We should desire to be loved by God but instead we hide from his love (Gen. 3:9).

Entering prayer has less to do with task completion and more to do with receiving gifts. At its core, the spiritual life is about 'receiving more' rather than 'doing more'. In reality, prayer is not my work—it is God's healing. Receptivity is at the core of prayer. St. Paul encourages us to pray always (1Thess. 5:17). To pray in this way is to be ready to receive Him...in every place and time. It requires a certain vulnerability to His presence and a willingness to remain in Him and on the journey of life. Our identity is not secured, discovered or guaranteed by accomplishment, but by making ourselves prayerfully available to divine life communicated sacramentally and personally. Noticing the affective movements of our heart in its thoughts, feelings and desires keeps us at the portal of good's arrival. He comes to give Himself within these interior movements; movements which carry Truth itself and us into Truth. To name our thoughts, feelings and desires before Him is to secure our lives in Truth.

The spiritual life is not an effort to attract love. We are already attractive to God. Even more mysteriously, like a physician to pain, Christ is attracted to our sin. One of our greatest temptations—to purify ourselves unto

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November 2018						
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. Paul Cannariato New Jersey 4	Rev. John Gordon New Jersey 5	Rev. Timothy Graff New Jersey 6	Rev. William Halbing New Jersey 7	Rev. Paul Lehman New Jersey 8	Rev. Joseph Meagher New Jersey 9	Rev. Brendan Murray New Jersey 10
Rev. Paul O'Donnell Duggan New Jersey 11	Rev. Lewis Papera New Jersey 12	Rev. John Primich New Jersey 13	Rev. Stephen Toth New Jersey 14	Rev. William Cosgrove New York 15	Rev. Tom Devery New York 16	Rev. Christopher Gaffrey OFM New York 17
His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl Washington, DC 18	Rev. Alan Shnob Ogdensburg 19	Rev. Joseph Muldoon Ottawa 20	Rev. Robert Boyle Pittsburgh, PA 21	Rev. John Brennan Pittsburgh, PA 22	Rev. Thomas Federline Pittsburgh, PA 23	Rev. Tony Gargotta Pittsburgh, PA 24
Rev. Stan Gregorek Pittsburgh, PA 25	Rev. James Holland Pittsburgh, PA 26	Rev. Thomas Kredel Pittsburgh, PA 27	Rev. Joseph Luisi Pittsburgh, PA 28	Rev. John Lynam Pittsburgh, PA 29	Rev. Daniel Mahoney Pittsburgh, PA 30	

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!

God is unveiling the sins of the clergy. As disheartening as this is, our response needs to be that of humble reparation—the making of amends for the wrongs that have been done.

We may be tempted to say, “Thank God these are not my sins.” However, this sounds a little like the attitude of the self-righteous Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14. Our place is always with the tax collector: *Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.*

Anger may well up in us. The sins of priests and bishops have scandalized many people and diminished the credibility of the Church. Yet Sacred Scripture says again, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay.* (Romans 12:19) Jesus Christ is the judge of the living and the dead. Certainly we can and should advocate for change. However, heat without light, anger without reason and action, would be counter-productive.

Hopefully, we sympathize with the victims of abuse. They deserve our prayers and compassion. We need to beg their forgiveness. The abuse of power for personal gain is wicked. Jesus said, *...it would be better for him (the abuser) to have a great mill stone hung around his neck and be downed in the depths of the sea...* than to cause one of his little ones to sin. (see Matthew 18:6) Jesus hates this kind of sin and is certainly siding with the abused.

Which leads to the response with which I began this letter: we need to make acts of reparation for the sins of the clergy. Offering the unexpected trials of the day as well as by making intentional acts of penance for the sins of clergy we fill up is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church. (see Colossians 1:24)

Fr. Willie Doyle SJ, an Irish priest who died as a military chaplain in the WWI Battle Ypres in 1917, discerned a special calling to make reparation for the sins

of priests. He wrote: *“The great light of this retreat, clear and persistent has been that God has chosen me, in His great love and through compassion for my weakness and misery, to be a victim of reparation for the sins of priests especially; that hence my life must be different in the matter of penance, self-denial and prayer, from the lives of others not given this special grace.”*

His last diary entry was: *“I have again offered myself to Jesus...to do with me absolutely as He pleases. I will try to take all that happens, no matter from whom it comes, as sent to me by Jesus and will bear suffering, heat, cold, etc., with joy... in reparation for the sins of priests. From this day I shall try bravely to bear all “little pains” in this spirit. A strong urging to this.”*

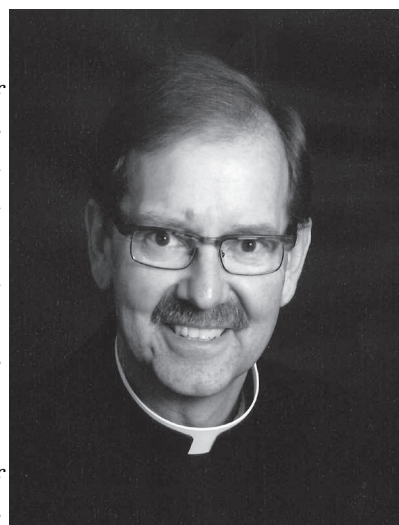
Let us imitate Fr. Willie Doyle. We can start by being the best priests and Catholic laity we can be. Then by our intentional and spontaneous acts of reparation we can bring God’s grace into the darkness of these sins.

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: \$ 1,833.10
Budget Deficit: \$ 2,916.90

Current as of August 31, 2018.

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divine approval—is wasted energy. No physician demands we be healed before he attends to our wounds; so it is with Christ. Somehow He is attracted to a beauty in our wounds (Luke 10:34). This beauty is really love. Love involves both self-donation and reception of the other. The clearest example is the marital act which involves giving and receiving of one’s entire self in an act of love. William May, the moral theologian expressed it by saying, ‘a woman receives in a giving sort of way and a man gives in a receiving sort of way’.

In love, we give and we receive. One cannot give without receiving and one cannot receive without giving. Love is always reciprocity. Even within the Cross is the surprise that such self-depletion carries within it the resurrection from the Father as a response.

To allow oneself to be loved is to allow oneself to be ‘found’. Love is suffering because it draws out of us our present condition, a condition we have been hiding from others. The one who loves us is like a searching light in his or her fascination with us. The suffering that is love is the pain that is known when sinners attempt to reveal themselves after a lifetime of emotional reserve, independent living and self-concern. Love’s suffering is the pain of coming to life as a gift for another.

Contemplating the suffering Christ, over time and in the Spirit, heals our wounded reason (Catechism of Catholic Church 2037). Such contemplation allows the truth of the scriptural texts to enter the conscience ordering it toward communion with God. Such is the nature of true theological thinking; it is healed

thinking.

Healed thinking is born as a result of explicit and sustained contemplation of the mysteries of Christ in faith. This is the suffering we are called to assume: to open our minds to the living influence of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, sacramentally participate in this Mystery, and establish our comprehension upon Christ doing ‘His thinking within us’. Christ ‘thinking within us’ is not a mystical exceptionalism; it is born from intentionally relating our minds to God in prayer. In this, our minds are formed anew and revelation is understood in love, taking us beyond the minds we once had to a new way of conceiving reality in and through the mystery of Christ.

One can confidently say that prayer is the safest emotional place on earth. In prayer, when the image of God held in the heart is genuine, we can receive truths about ourselves while simultaneously welcoming Divine Love. Here is the integration that moves us to healing and spiritual maturation. This self-knowledge is only as real as one’s engagement with the Trinity in loving prayer.

Prayer involves enduring an almost unpredictable silence. This silence can appear to be ‘empty’ and without love, even as faith tells us such silence is ‘full’ and carries with it an irrevocable promise: God is with us: ‘in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit’.

Unfortunately, this experience of prayer as ‘empty’ is one of the common reasons leading clergy to stop praying. Staying in love with God is the work of the spiritual life, remaining steady and committed to prayer, even if such prayer is one long exercise in suffering the absence of consoling affective movements. Benedict XVI

spoke of prayer as a ‘struggle’...a long night of seeking God’s face’ so He will bless us. This blessing that we seek cannot be ‘grabbed’ or won by our own strength but must be received as gift. Prayer is God reaching us. ‘Prayer is pure receptivity’, according to Benedict XVI. God’s perennial stance towards us is self-giving love.

What makes prayer a chore is that we can ‘harden’ ourselves against His outpouring of love. Our call is to remain with Jesus, to remain available to Him, and to be open to his initiatives of love. This is a difficult invitation because our default position as humans is to hide from God (Gen. 3:9) and choose instead ‘our own place’ (Acts 1:25), eschewing the communion offered us by the Trinity.

Satan hates clerics who pray, because it is prayer that prevents clergy from believing that the routine of ministry is exhaustive of life’s meaning. Prayer keeps us keen to look within the ordinary rounds of ministry so that we do not focus on their predictability, but rather upon their configuration to the glory of the incarnation; the movement of God within common events. Prayer prevents us from the deadly tailspin of cynicism, despair, boredom and sloth. Prayer and spiritual direction are experiences of a sacred exchange. They are the Golden Threads of our lives. Both orient us toward the Divine Presence where we listen to God directly and follow his commands in our lives.

The deepest growth in our prayer life occurs when we notice and surrender to the smallest movements of love from God, allowing these movements to take us up into one of the many mansions of love God is preparing for us (Jn. 14:21).

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

