



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

December 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 30 William McCarthy Sioux City, IA	Rev. 31 Edward Burian Sioux Falls, SD					1 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 2 Nicholas Mastrangelo Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 3 Kenneth Oldenski Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 4 Thomas Sparacino Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 5 John Sweeney Pittsburgh, PA	6 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	7 For prayer requests received	8 Rev. Paul Zywan Pittsburgh, PA
Msgr. 9 Cuthbert Alexander Port-of-Spain	Rev. 10 Gerard Bernier Port-of-Spain	Rev. 11 Riginald DeFour Port-of-Spain	Rev. 12 Raymond Francis Port-of-Spain	Rev. 13 Clifford Graham Port-of-Spain	Rev. 14 Harold Imammshah Port-of-Spain	Rev. 15 Dwight Merrick Port-of-Spain
Rev. 16 Ian Taylor Port-of-Spain	Rev. 17 John Theodore CSSP Port-of-Spain	Rev. 18 John Dreher Providence, RI	Rev. 19 Robert Giardina Providence, RI	Rev. 20 Wilfred Gregoire Providence, RI	Rev. 21 Michael Kelley Providence, RI	Rev. 22 Roland Lepire Providence, RI
Rev. 23 AB George Pearce Providence, RI	Rev. 24 Michael Roy Providence, RI	Rev. 25 Gerry Sabourin Providence, RI	Rev. 26 Terry Brenon San Angelo, TX	Rev. 27 Robert Bush San Angelo, TX	Rev. 28 Bernard Gully San Angelo, TX	Rev. 29 Santiago Udayar San Angelo, TX

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

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

Dear Father Bob Franco,

What is the Spirit Saying to the Church?

By Fr. John Kiley, Boston Fraternity

(This is a summary of a presentation Fr. John delivered in August 2018 at the Annual Fraternity Conference held in Pittsburgh. The full presentation is available at www.fraternityofpriests.org.)

The year 1983 was an important year for the International Fraternity of Priests. It was in that year that the Fraternity was established as a follow-up to the Summer Conferences for Priests held at Franciscan University of Steubenville. The hope and vision were that the work of God's grace experienced in the conferences could be kept alive by gathering priests together regularly (weekly) for prayer, teaching, fellowship, personal ministry, and support. As one committed fraternity brother puts it: at a conference it is "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit." Then we go back to our parish or place of ministry and it is "As It was in the Beginning, is Now, and Ever Shall Be". Fraternity was meant to change that and in many groups it continues to accomplish effectively its purpose.

Something else of major significance happened in 1983 that seemed to go unnoticed at the time, but eventually came to set

a direction for the whole Church. For the very first time Pope St. John Paul II used the phrase "New Evangelization". He employed that phase in an address to the bishops of Central and Latin America at a Bishops Conference in Haiti on March 9, 1983. If Fraternity had been founded several years later, I believe the concept of the New Evangelization would be more prominent in our vision and disciplines. Now is the time and perhaps long overdue to make note of this because of what the Spirit has been saying to the churches.

Every disciple or follower of Jesus Christ must be able to "read" and to "listen". I do not mean that Christians must be literate or possess excellent physical hearing. Rather, a Christian is called to "read" the "signs of the times" and to "listen" to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. One of the very evident "signs of the times" is the erosion or falling away from the faith especially in Western Europe and in the Americas. In the United States at present only about 25% of Catholic Christians participate in the Mass regularly. In New England it is about 17%. How will the Eucharist become the very "source" and "summit" of our faith, if most

Catholics never or hardly ever come to Mass? One answer is to learn how to "listen" and to respond to what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

What is the Spirit saying to the Church? Over the centuries of Christian history, the Spirit has been saying many things. However, in recent times, especially since the Second Vatican Council, one prominent word has been "evangelize". My own conviction is that had we responded to this word in the wake of the Council and cooperated with the Holy Spirit, we may have stemmed the tide of the great "falling away" that we experience today. The main question, of course, is are we ready to respond in the present moment?

Let's look at evangelization. To share the gospel message and to bring people to Jesus Christ goes back to the New Testament and apostolic times. Evangelization is nothing new; it is the primary reason that the Church exists. Many of our Catholic people continue to find this a difficult concept. However, since the Second Vatican Council evangelization has been placed on the front burner. When a parishioner tends to complain that this is something new, I love to mention St. Thomas Aquinas, a saint

Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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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!

Sometimes context makes all the difference.

Martin Rinkart (1586-1649) was an accomplished musician who spent most of his career as a musician and archdeacon (Lutheran) in the city of Ellenburg, Saxony (Germany) during the Thirty Years War. The war and plague took their toll on that city. It had been overrun by armies three times. As one of the last surviving ministers in the city, he spent most of his time performing funerals, sometimes up to 50 a day! During the year 1637 he performed more than 4000 funerals, including the funeral of his wife. Most of his resources were spent on refugees, making it hard to provide for his own family.

It was during this time that Martin Rinkart penned a hymn based on a passage from Sirach 50:22-24. You may want to look that passage up on your own. However, the hymn goes like this:

Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices, / Who wondrous things has done, in whom his world rejoices; / Who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way / With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

We are all familiar with this hymn. However, given the context in which Martin Rinkart wrote this hymn, it gives us a sense of his profound faith. He was somehow able to foster gratitude amid suffering. He sought to live the words of St. Paul, *In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.* (I Thessalonians 5:18) One must have a certainty that the promises of eternal life are worthy of guiding our daily lives.

As we draw near to Thanksgiving Day, let us take some time count our blessings. Are there troubles in the world? Of course. Are there scandals in the Church? Sad, but true. And does not each of us have our own set of difficulties and stresses, personally and in our families? Yes, we do. However, amid all these things, we

need to cultivate a grateful heart.

We can begin by thanking God for the air we breathe, the food we have been given and the place where we sleep. We can thank God for the people in our lives and the beauty of our world. We especially want to thank God for the faith we share, our baptism into Jesus Christ and the fact that He has made us His children. We can welcome Christ in the Eucharist and receive his mercy in a sure and true way through the sacrament of Penance. We live with the hope of eternal life. And we have the promise of Jesus Christ: *I am with you always, even to the end of the ages.* (Matthew 28:20) Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

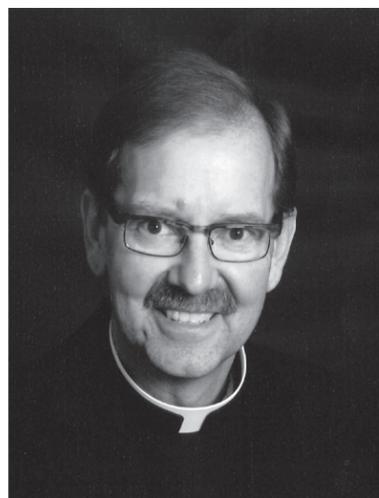
Let me take a moment to thank you for your prayers and financial support. Your support helps develop fraternal relationships among priests in the United States, Ghana, Slovenia, Trinidad and other places. Again, thank you and be assured of our prayers.

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: \$ 842.10
Budget Deficit: \$ 3,907.90

Current as of September 30, 2018.

...continued from page 1

of the 13th century: in #904 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church Thomas is quoted: "To teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of **each believer.**"

I love music and one of the great orchestral masterpieces, Bolero by Maurice Ravel, reminds me of how the Spirit has been speaking to the churches since Vatican Two. Bolero begins with a snare drum quietly beating out the rhythm. One by one the other instruments of the orchestra are gradually added until the piece ends with a thunderous crescendo. (I suggest you listen to this work.) I believe the Spirit has been speaking louder and louder and is perhaps now "screaming" to the Church "evangelize".

At long last it is begin recognized that one of the main themes of the Second Vatican Council was evangelization, although the word itself was not very prominent in the documents. The central purpose of Vatican II was to make the Church better equipped to proclaim the gospel to the world, in other words, to bring the world to Jesus Christ. The Council closed in 1965. On the tenth anniversary in 1975 Saint Pope Paul VI issued a document of major importance on December 8. Of all the themes he could have chosen, he chose *evangelization – Evangelii Nuntiandi/On Evangelization in the Modern World*. It is as if he were thinking, "They're not getting it. I have to bring the concept of evangelization front and center". The holy father reminded us that the Church exists to evangelize. In

paragraph #5 he states: "presenting the Gospel is not optional, it is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved – **it is a question of people's salvation.**"

Time marches on and in 1990, the 25th anniversary of the closing of the Council, St. Pope John Paul II, also realized that "they are not getting it" and he issued *Redemptoris Missio/ Mission of the Redeemer*. He is even stronger than Paul VI when in #3 he states: "the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes* – no believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples." What is the situation in your parish or community? Are you moving in the directions of devoting all your energies and resources to evangelization? In most places we still have a long way to go. John Paul also teaches us that the object of evangelization is Christian conversion and he gives a marvelous description worth meditating on in #46 – "the proclamation of the Word of God has Christian conversion as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel though faith.....Conversion means accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple."

As most of you know this call to evangelize was also taken up in many homilies and talks by Pope Benedict XVI and continues to unfold in the teaching and ministry of Pope Francis. One outstanding

quote from Pope Francis is found in *the Joy of the Gospel* #120 – "the new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus."

The Fraternity of Priests exists precisely to evangelize, form, and train priests to respond effectively to what God is doing today through His Holy Spirit. Discipline 10 challenges us to "Empower God's People in the Holy Spirit". Why does the Lord pour out His Holy Spirit? - certainly, for personal growth and sanctification - certainly to empower us with the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit to build up the Body of Christ. It is my conviction that the Spirit is poured out primarily to empower the Church for the evangelization of the world. When the Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost, the first thing that happened was the doors of the upper room were opened and the early Christian community began to preach the gospel and signs and wonder followed. To empower our people in the Holy Spirit is to prepare them for evangelization, to share their faith in Jesus with others both in deed and in word. May the Lord inspire us and assist us as we respond to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Better late than never!

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

