



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

# THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

September 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. Roger Geditz Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Randy Phillips Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Jerome Ranek Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. Peter Kirchner St. Cloud, MN	For the souls of our deceased FOP members	For prayer requests received	For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
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 PhD Saint Louis, MO	Rev. James Dyer Saint Louis, MO
Rev. Msgr. Edmund Griesedieck Saint Louis, MO	Rev. Martin Mannion Saint Louis, MO	Rev. Aaron Nord Saint Louis, MO	Rev. David Novak Saint Louis, MO	Rev. Charles Tichacek Saint Louis, MO	Rev. James Brown Toledo, OH	Rev. Norbert Howe Toledo, OH
Rev. Gerald Knueven Toledo, OH	Rev. Edward Littlmann Toledo, OH	Rev. Thomas Oedy Toledo, OH	Rev. Nicholas Weibl Toledo, OH	Rev. Dale Branson Tucson, AZ	Rev. Isaac Fynn Tucson, AZ	Rev. John Gonzales Tucson, AZ
Rev. James Hobert Tucson, AZ	Rev. Bill Kohler Tucson, AZ					

## 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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Dear Father Bob Franco,  
This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.  
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 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.

## Refugee Parishioners

By Fr. Dwight Merrick - Trinidad Fraternity

Events in Venezuela over 2018 have thrust upon the population of Trinidad and Tobago, challenges unknown to recent memory. While the early to mid-nineteen century did see the influx of many Venezuelans into the tiny island of Trinidad sitting just seven miles away, the numbers of them arriving daily are unprecedented. Estimates at present range from twenty to forty thousand and counting. Mostly young men and women with a few children arrive in little boats along the miles of unchecked coasts of western, eastern and southern Trinidad.

At present, there are six households with over forty persons spread across the villages, which I pastor. Of course, there are more we do not have any contact with at present. Jobs were the most imminent need followed by food and clothing. In quick time, our parish ministry to refugee seekers felt catapulted into action to provide just about everything for these families. Within weeks, we were supporting some with the payment of their rent. Financial assistance was never enough but most of all was the constant need for food. Then came the drive for mattresses as we realized that most of these persons were sleeping on the floors especially in Carapo. Then refrigerators, stoves, fans, chairs and just about everything you could think of were being sourced.

As Church, we started employing some of the young Venezuelan men who did not have jobs. Legal advice had to be sought; few were here with passports, some with ID cards only but most with no identification at all. The national sentiment was divided, but the Archbishop stood firm; we must help and not just patronize but provided genuine human support as far as possible. Then came a government intervention; they had to be registered or be deported. Some of the young men working in the parish skipped across to Tobago and got it done in a few hours. Two households however, with whom we were working closely, including two newborn babies and their parents were being left behind. At one point, there were just three more days to be registered and nothing was happening for them.

The lines in Port of Spain looked like 'Jouvert morning; the start of the days of Carnival. Down to San Fernando we went; two cars, six adults and these two baby boys. The women with babies stayed with my sister Marsha, close to the San Fernando registration centre. The men would stay on the streets all night hoping to be in line for the morning session of registration. It was a great plan except that all fifteen hundred numbers for the day were distributed overnight mysteriously, without any of us knowing anything about it. One long morning of crowds

but nothing achieved.

It was off to my mother's home then in San Fernando for the day. The only bright spot seemed to be my mom taking pictures with the people's babies and my siblings volunteering to adopt them. One more day of even more drama including, walking up Mucurapo road in hot sun with babies to taxi home to La Horquetta, traveling back down to San Fernando with the babies the next morning, proving meals, photocopies and Marsha driving us around, some very helpful officers and registration persons and eventually, all six adults were registered. This registration document thus entitles them to work in Trinidad and Tobago for six months with renewal if there were no infringement against the law within that time.

The last three months have been nonstop drama for parishioners and myself, from speaking my best Spanglish to learning about their culture. They do not like callallo, they do not really like chicken but prefer beef, don't like doubles but must have empanada and both male and female (at least in my area) clothing is best described as "if it eh tight it eh right". Imaging our surprise when all the "church clothes" we got them were flatly refused.

There was much about their culture we Trini's had to learn. Most significant was the attitude to relationships and marriage. Apparently, the majority of young Venezuelan Catholics no longer  
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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](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org)

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted. Any submissions will help make each issue better!

As the new Chairman of the Board of the Fraternity of Priests, I extend a special "Thank you!" to Fr. Bob Franco for his years of incredible service on the Board, and especially for his work as Chairman. I have big shoes to fill, but will try my best, with the help of God.

This summer marks a year since we experienced the reopening of the clergy abuse scandal. Just before I was ordained a deacon in 2002, we experienced a church-shaking event with the eruption of clergy sexual abuse and cover-up in Boston, and then throughout the world. This was difficult for me as a "baby-priest" in 2003 to figure out how to be a priest in a church culture so different from that in which I grew up.

Then last summer happened! A deacon friend of mine compared this to the tenth Station of the Cross, where Jesus is stripped of His garments. The flesh that had adhered to Jesus' clothes after the scourging, is now torn open, reopening the wounds all over Jesus' Body. And this is what seemed to have happened again last summer.

All of this being said, how do we deal with this, as Catholics, trying to be faithful to the Church – the Body of Christ – while struggling with the pain that wounded members of the Church have caused to others? Two things stand out in my mind as an answer. The first are the words of St. Maximilian Kolbe, that everything comes to us through our Lady's hands. Even if it comes from the evil will of another, it comes to us through Mary's hands. This means that *she*, through the grace of her Spouse, the Holy Spirit, will make all things work for the glory of God. This gives me hope – Mary's got our back.

The second point has been said before and needs to be said again – the answer to this crisis today is that we need *saints*. It is always the saints who are the answer

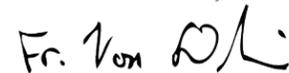
to a particular crisis, abuse or need for reformation in the Church and the world. Whether Francis and Dominic, Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, Vincent de Paul, or many others, it is the

saints who have been the instruments of God's healing and transforming grace in the world.

Here's the kicker – the saints are not "those people." They are *us*! By our baptism, God calls us – you and me – to be the saints of today. It is by our conforming our lives to Christ that Christ will heal this world, this Church. It is by denying even good things for the sake of Christ, that healing will come to the wounds of the indulged evil. It is by our active love of God that bring reparation to the Church, the world, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Let's keep "**our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith**" (Hebrews 12:2 NABRE), trusting that He can use *even you and me* to bring healing to the Church in our time. Let us ask Him to *make us* the saints that are needed for today.

Grace and Peace,



Fr. Von DeRosia

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: \$ 1,925.00

Budget Deficit: \$ 2,825.00

Current as of June 30, 2019.

...continued from page 1

attend Holy Mass or get married but are anxious to have the babies baptized. Our ministry team however, were not satisfied being pragmatic and providing things. Soon they were preparing to have a baby shower complete with gifts and a party with the moms the centre of attention.

Food boxes at all my churches meant that there was a constant supply of food supplied by parishioners and distributed to the 'Vene' households in the parish. Easter Sunday was special however as we carpooled them all to the Cumuto chapel for Mass complete with translation by Vernon Bereaux followed by brunch and a few hours of mingling with the parishioners there. Then back to the reality of stress but thankful for the little respite. The donations continue to flow; tonnes of baby stuff, toys for the toddlers and food, food, food.

Among the many challenges we are trying to help with, are the issues of rented apartments, furnishings, appliances and jobs. Transporting mattresses to their homes, delivering food hampers, helping with rent when they were short and facing eviction, as well as finding new apartments among parishioners and their friends, has now become standard daily work for several priests like myself I'm sure.

The faith journey has also been another interesting dimension to our interactions with the Venezuelans in our parish. From our earliest contact with them, 'Viejo' and a few others have regularly been at Mass at La Horquetta, even when they had moved much closer to the Santa Rosa church and were

receiving support from that parish. More recently, with the birth of the babies, there are more of them attending Mass at La Horquetta; a

requirement for the Baptism. Then there are the conversations about what God likes and does not like in terms of these shacking up living arrangements versus marriage. There have also been more than one conversation about the young men who have families back home in Venezuela procuring a new "chica" here in Trinidad. In addition, of course, my questions about if they pray regularly and how can the parish help them better, given the language challenge.

Several persons have been challenged to sit close to them to translate the homily at least during Mass. Marcia Reyes has been phenomenal in going back and forth to Mount Hope with the baby registration and health issues. Several persons have donated refrigerators, furniture and sourced new apartments. The WhatsApp chat group for our eleven persons formally in the Refugee ministry is alive and vibrant, complete with fights now and again. I have been accused of favouritism among other things in my roles and all the usual stuff that go into a vibrant group working hard; we have it all! The parish has welcomed the babies and the parents as our own grandchildren. One baby-father was telling me recently, that I have to be his baby's grandfather since the baby needs a grandfather. Then there was the conversation while driving with him one day, that he only had a stepfather (in Venezuela) who did not care for him very much, but he wants a father with whom he could spend time. (Here I wish I could place an emoji) Of course, the inner core of my leaders who know all that is happening are hysterical hearing of my stories. All in a day's work for the parish priest. Possibly our biggest impact in terms of faith has been our 'Spanish Alpha'. Recognizing

that our Vene population could use a spiritual renewal of their Catholic faith, our team headed by Marion in Carapo, procured the Spanish Alpha and have been running a separate Alpha in Spanish at Carapo over the last six weeks. Drawing to a close soon, we hope we could be innovative in creating ways of holding their interest in addition to plenty food.

Among the more difficult needs to meet for the Venezuelans is employment. After about two months of employing a couple of the young men, the parish has no more work needing to be done and, therefore, no more employment. One interesting project has been developing recently, which may have opportunities for more of them. 'Vene Delights' is soon to begin as a mobile small business selling empanadas initially but hopefully arepas and other Venezuelan foods enjoyed by Trinidadians.

As if the flooding late last year was a preparation for the refugee influx this year, the La Horquetta parish seemed to be prepared, willing and responsive to the Venezuelan challenge, which hit us a few months ago. "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers" never sounded as rich as when we found ourselves literally trying to provide just about everything to our new arrivals. At least the flood crisis abated after a few weeks but the refugee situation is with us for a while. Parishioners at Cumuto, Carapo and La Horquetta have been amazing generally, demonstrating what I think is our best characteristic as Trinis—generosity. And as if to reward them for all that they do, Vene Delight hits our parish churches this weekend (20/21st July 2019) with empanadas after Holy Mass at La Horquetta, Carapo and Cumuto; only \$10. *Hasta la Vista*

Please send us your prayer intentions: \_\_\_\_\_

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