



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

# THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

August 2019						
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. Raymond Francis <i>Port of Spain</i>	Rev. Clifford Graham <i>Port of Spain</i>	Rev. Harold Imamshah <i>Port of Spain</i>	Rev. Dwight Merrick <i>Port of Spain</i>	Rev. Ian Taylor <i>Port of Spain</i>	Rev. John Theodore CSSP <i>Port of Spain</i>	Rev. John Dreher <i>Providence, RI</i>
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## Fraternity of Priests, Cure for the Lone Rangers

One of the great admonitions to the newly ordained is do not be 'lone rangers'. That is the hero priest who can do it all. Yet, like the fictional character that is the basis for the analogy, the archetype actually does not exist. No one is successful as a lone ranger unless he is a hero in a comic book.

This is what makes the Fraternity of Priests so important for its members. We are not lone rangers, and that understanding is the first step in being part of the fraternity. Second, we come together for prayer, worship, reflection and fraternity. This helps us to be better priests for many reasons.

The lone ranger works in his own world with his own perception of the problems, but the priest who rejects that archetype gets to see the world from a different perspective. The Fraternity helps us to see that different perspective not only of our own parishes, but of our own ministry that we would not see otherwise.

The lone ranger sees the solution coming from his own experience, and that solution may not be the best for all people. However, since he works alone, he can only draw upon his own experience and assumption that what worked in situation A will

work in situation B and that is rarely the case.

When we share our own experiences and challenges with others, then we can see why what worked in situation A will not work in situation B. For example, you can be in one parish that since the publication of the YouCat makes it an integral part of the catechetical program, then you can go to another parish and find out that the religious education team never heard of the YouCat. You have two different groups of people addressing the most effective way to catechize, but only one is aware of a powerful resource.

How you can assume that the solution for any situation that may arise one parish will automatically work in another? You cannot.

The lone ranger in you will become frustrated by the lack experience to draw upon. However, when you bring this to your fraternity, now you have an larger amount of years of experience on which to draw, this helps you address situation A and B.

This is an important resource for all of us.

Prayer is central, because when we gather for prayer, we recognize that we are doing the Lord's work, therefore, we follow the Lord's lead.

We begin by realizing that maybe we would have done things differently, but that is thinking outside of the Lord's lead. This is what St. Peter did when he was admonished by Jesus for encouraging Him not to suffer as He predicted. He was thinking the way he felt the mission of Christ should happen, not the way Christ Himself realized must happen.

If we could name a real lone ranger among the apostles, it would have been St. Peter. Again, we see his impression of the goal and of his own strength and of his own mission differs greatly from Jesus' vision of Peter's ability and of his mission and strength. He needed an admonition to save him from doing things his way, when the Lord needed Him to walk a path that Peter could not foresee.

Peter also ended up working with his brother apostles and also Jesus' mother and the other women, it was a team that hammered home that none of the Lord's work was fit for the one person and one vision.

If Peter were to go on his own, would he have been successful? Peter and Judas made their most famous errors at the same time, around the Last Supper. We can see that both were kind of lone rangers and only the one who repented of this spirit succeeded in Christ's mission.

...continued on page 3

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_ \$  \$10  \$25  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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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!

Even a cursory read of the gospels will give us a sense that they are historical but not chronological documents. In other words, the deeds and words of Jesus are true on every level. However, they are arranged differently in each gospel.

Jesus Christ faced rejection when he went to his hometown of Nazareth. This is recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. However, it is only in Mark's gospel that this event (Mark 6:1-6a) is followed by Jesus sending the Twelve out on mission (Mark 6:6b-13). This ordering of events in Mark's gospel lends credence to the political or sales slogan, "Fail local? Go national!" This thinking is counter-intuitive. Why would someone want to promote a message on a larger scale when it seemed to fail on a small scale?

The question is fair. However, if one is convinced that the message is vital and true, then it needs to be proclaimed "in season and out of season." So it is with the gospel.

During this season of purification of the Church, it seems a bit harder to proclaim the gospel. There are those in our congregations who "shut down" when they hear the good news of Jesus Christ proclaimed by a priest or deacon. The sins of our brothers have caused them to stumble.

Our response? With St. Paul, we must continue to proclaim that we are "not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16). With St. Peter, we believe and are convinced that Jesus has "the words of eternal life" and that He is "the Holy One of God." (John 6:69)

Last month members of the Fraternity participated in the Priests, Deacons and Seminarian conference at Franciscan University of Steubenville. One of the main presenters, Neal Lozano, shared an experience he had at the birth of his first grandson. As he held his grandson for the first time, he asked God to give him a message. Neal then saw in his mind's eye

an image of his grandson, now mature, standing in shallow water along a beach. What Neal noticed was that the tide was rising.

Neal Lozano sensed that during his grandson's lifetime the tide would shift. In our time, many people are being swept out to sea, drowning in secular values and godless thinking. Neal sensed that in his grandson's time the opposite would happen. People would be brought back to the truth of Jesus Christ and the Church. Until that time we must remain faithful to the Lord who has promised, "I will never leave you or abandon you." (Hebrews 13:5b)

This will be my last letter as Chairman of Fraternity of Priests. My time on the Board has ended. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served my brothers in this capacity. Next month's letter will be from Fr. Volney DeRosia from the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire. One last time I want to thank our donors and my brother priests. Let us continue to pray for each other.

Sincerely 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: \$ 2,002.00  
Budget Deficit: \$ 2,748.00

Current as of May 31, 2019.

...continued from page 1

When we come together, then we can recognize first that our ministry is done in union with Christ and others that we can better serve our parishioners practically and spiritually.

We also come together to share our experiences of priesthood and our histories in a way enhances our ability serve Christ. Each priest can share his experiences since ordination and in the seminary, but we also bring our pre-vocation histories with us. We can share not only what we learned from our saying "Yes" to the Lord, but also prior to that and even in our own lives prior to that time.

Our practical experiences prior to our ordination will help us with our practical issues in ministry. This does not matter if we entered the seminary out of high school or after a successful career as a CEO. Jesus drew upon the life experience of all his apostles and He draws on the life experience of all His priests. We can share this with others who may have not been aware of other solutions to an issue they are dealing with in a parish.

The young, inexperienced newly appointed pastor may see the only way to address an issue is with hard authority, whereas the old ex-CEO can explain soft authority. He can teach to correct an employee or parishioner in such a way that behavior changes without hard feelings.

The lector who never reads the passage ahead of time can be scolded for tripping over hard words, or

can be encouraged to improve his ministry to Christ by making sure he or she asks about the difficult words prior to Mass. One way is going to create hard feelings on the lector and the other is going to encourage better performance. The ex-CEO may recognize the difference whereas the young new pastor may not have even thought that was an option.

We can also share our experiences and solutions through our prayer experiences. Lone rangers are not known for being great prayers, why? They are self-reliant. Why would they pray if they feel they do not need any other resource but their skills. However, the Fraternity brings everything to prayer and in doing so, we see prayer as the central resource to all that we do. We are, after all, working for Christ. If we look at the Bible we can see how many times the Apostles prayed to the Holy Spirit as a group and we recognize how much we must do the same.

Finally, we can bring forth our own study as a group in order to enhance our own understanding of the faith to share with others. We can read everything from encyclicals to famous Catholic authors and more and share not only our own understand but the understanding of the other members. They, like us, draw upon their own experience in their sharing as we draw upon our own in our sharing and this brings forth a deeper understanding of the text.

The Venerable and soon to be Blessed Fulton Sheen always lamented that he could tell what year a priest was ordained by looking

at the copyright of the books in his library. The lament of course is that he did no further formation or study after ordination. This is the reverse of the central tenet of our groups as members of the Fraternity of Priests. We read and study texts and writers to ensure our ability to minister to others is improving and drawing upon more resources.

The Fraternity of Priests helps us to be better at our roles in the parishes through Christ centered prayer, sharing and fraternity that increases our the years of experience exponentially through the others in our group. It encourages us to keep current on and correct on Catholic teaching so that we may best serve our parishioners and each other.

The lone ranger never does well as a priest because his resources are limited, his abilities are limited and his problem solving skills are also limited. But the most limited aspect of his reality is that his understanding of his limitations is also limited. The Fraternity helps us to stretch our limitations and minimize them for not only effective ministry but also holy service in the priesthood. This is what our parishioners need more than anything, not just effective priests, but also holy priests. We need to be people who not only pursue holiness but call our parishioners to it. We cannot do any of this alone, but Christ called together twelve apostles and many more disciples just because He knew that no one could do it alone. Ironically, despite being fully human and fully divine, He too recognized that he was not a lone ranger either.

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

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