



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

July 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Rev. Paul Duggan New Jersey	Rev. Lewis Papera New Jersey	Rev. John Primich New Jersey	For the souls of our deceased FOP members	For prayer requests received	For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. Stephen Toth New Jersey	Rev. William Cosgrove New York	Rev. Tom Devery New York	Rev. Christopher Gaffrey OFM New York	His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl Washington, DC	Rev. Alan Shnob Ogdensburg, NY	Rev. Joseph Muldoon Ottawa
Rev. Robert Boyle Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. John Brennan Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. Thomas Federline Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. Tony Gargotta Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. Stan Gregorek Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. James Holland Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. Thomas Kredel Pittsburgh, PA
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Rev. Paul Zywan. Pittsburgh, PA	Msgr. Cuthbert Alexander Port of Spain	Rev. Gerard Bernier Port of Spain	Rev. Riginald DeFour Port of Spain			

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.

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
PO Box 442
Steubenville, OH 43952-5442
Phone: (740) 283-4400

Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

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

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

Dear Father Bob Franco,

A Reflection on the Priesthood

By Fr. Bob Giardina - Providence, RI Fraternity

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." Jer.1:5 NABRE

It was 1961. I was in the seventh grade in Sr. Mary DeLellis' English class. When my name was called over the school's speaker system and I was told to report to the principal's office. That page usually meant only one thing, big trouble! Ten of my classmates, all boys, were made to stand outside the principal's office for what seemed like an eternity. It was actually about 2 hours. We were told several times by the principal, Sr. Mary Dominica, to be quiet and when she appeared absolute silence followed, if you knew what was good for you.

Finally, the school nurse office door opened and we were all asked to step in. We all stood around the desk, and there was Fr. Joe Hughes, the Diocesan Vocations Director, God rest his soul. I will never forget the moment. Fr. Joe was a chain smoker with his feet up on the desk. The window screen was standing in the corner and the window was open. It was a warm spring day and gentle breeze was drawing the smoke from his cigarettes out the open window.

My mind swirled with questions. Who was this guy? Did he know

this was a Catholic school? Did he know that if any of us was caught smoking we would have to stay after school and our parents would have to be notified? Yet, how was this guy dressed in black able to get away with this? We all stood there with our mouths open staring in disbelief. He then began to speak. He gave us a short talk about the priesthood and asked us if we would at least apply to the Seminary. There would be an entrance exam, if we passed it we would be accepted at Our Lady of Providence High Seminary for the ninth grade.

The talk lasted no more than ten minutes. I was relieved that we weren't going to be accused of unspeakable infraction of some obscure rule, like putting worms in the girl's hair during recess. As I recall they didn't see the humor in that sort of thing. So we went back to our home rooms and packed up our books.

In those days the church was always left open. The Holy Spirit led me to make a visit. My spirit was being stirred up and I wasn't sure what I should do. So, I knelt down in front of the image of Blessed Virgin Mary and just spoke to God. I recall saying, "Okay, God if this is what you want from me to be a priest then here is the deal you have to help me and I will do the best I can to serve you."

Then I went home to have supper. It was a Wednesday because we always had spaghetti on Wednesday night; we all ate our meals together and there was no TV. We actually had to talk to each other during the meal. That may sound strange to some people for we had an intact family. We began each meal saying grace and you ate everything on your plate. How I hated broccoli rabies. To this day I will not eat those terribly bitter pieces of grass.

It was then I decided to announce my desire to enter the seminary. My dad nearly choked on his pasta. But once he recovered from the shock, he was all for it and encouraged me to go for it. If that is what God wants of you!

At this point I must state for the record, I came from a very devout family who never missed Sunday Mass and my grandfather had been praying all his life that one of his grandchildren would receive the call to the Priesthood. They knew that education was the best way out of poverty and the dream was to go to college.

From St. Matthew's second grade all the way to four years at St. Meinrad School of Theology, I attended Catholic Schools. I am a "lifer" as they say. I believe it was all part of God's will that I be formed and equipped for ministry in this way. The men and women of my dad's generation believed the best way to form children in the

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!

There is a story about the devil putting his tools of temptation up for sale. The show room was quite a sight. *Pride*, with its deceptive and deadly ordinariness, was placed beside flaming and alluring *lust*. Steely cold *envy* stood next to strangely satisfying *malice*.

Off in the corner of the room was a harmless looking device in a relatively small glass case. The sign read "Not for Sale". Someone said to the devil, "What's that thing in the small glass case? Looks like the kind of thing you might want to get rid of." The devil replied, "Oh, that's *discouragement*. It is one of my favorite tools. Most of the time, it goes unrecognized. And when it does its job, I really do not need any of the other tools. Humans naturally fall into those other vices."

Discouragement is the often undetected milieu where doubt and spiritual apathy grow. When phrases like "Who cares?" and "What does it matter?" bubble up on our minds and hearts, then there is a good chance that discouragement has already been working on us.

Discouragement can be combatted in many ways: good friendships, prayer, re-creative activities, faith-feeding reading and rest. However, there are times when circumstances seem so dark and hopeless that even these methods do not seem to wrest us free from the grasp of discouragement. So here is the heavy artillery. In a word: **Truth**.

The truth is that Jesus is Lord. No matter how dark and bleak circumstances in the church, the world or in our own personal lives, Jesus Christ is still Lord. Though this truth may seem to be obscured by discouraging circumstances, Jesus Christ is still the Lord. This is an unchanging reality in the invisible and visible worlds. We need to place ourselves before the Lord and His truth.

In discouraging moments and seasons, our response to the truth is very simple. Like discouragement, the virtue we need

to practice is not flamboyant. It seems very ordinary and unglamorous. However, it is the virtue we need to be saved.

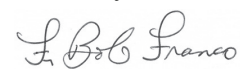
That virtue is perseverance. Jesus said, *But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.* (Mark 13:13b)

Let us persevere in prayer (Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2), serving the less fortunate (for this is how we will be judged, Matthew 25:31ff), proclaiming the gospel unashamedly (Romans 1:16) and living the Catholic faith to the full in spite of the failings of those in leadership. It may not seem flashy. However, it is effective. The pathway to heaven is paved with perseverance.

I hope to see many of my brother priests in Steubenville this summer at the Unbound Retreat. Until then:

"...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and **persevere** in running the race that lies before us, while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus the leader and perfecter of faith." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

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: \$ 2,890.10
Budget Deficit: \$ 1,859.90
Current as of April 30, 2019.

...continued from page 1

Catholic Faith was with a Catholic Education in a Catholic School taught by Religious Sisters, Priests and Committed Catholic Lay teachers. I received the best Catholic Education and formation in the Catholic Faith, and I am forever grateful for all the sacrifices made by countless Good and Faithful servants of God.

When we studied the sacraments beginning in grammar school and all the way through, the one thing that really stayed with me especially as I began to contemplate the call to the priesthood, was the Church's teaching on, "The Effects of the Sacrament of Holy Orders". As I grew my understanding of this teaching of the Church also grew. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 1581 to 1584, it states the profound truth I have come to love.

Holy Orders configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace that he may serve as Christ's instrument for his Church. I have witnessed this special grace in my life in situations where the Holy Spirit inspired me to approach a problem or an issue in the way that Jesus would do it and make a profound impact on the person who needed to hear God's Word or see God's love. God has always been true to the covenant we established the moment I knelt before Him in humble obedience.

From my earliest days in Catholic School, the thought I could never shake was "*indelible spiritual character*" that is conferred on the soul of the recipient that cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily. Just as in Baptism and Confirmation, once you receive this *indelible spiritual character* you belong to God as a Baptized and Confirmed Catholic

and it never goes away. Even if you fall away from the Roman Catholic Church, lose your faith and commit a mortal sin and die in the state of mortal sin, the *indelible spiritual character* remains. To me that meant once a priest always a priest.

What I found extremely profound was canons #1583 and 1584. "It is true that someone validly ordained can, for just reason, be discharged from the obligations and functions linked to ordination, or can be forbidden to exercise them; but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense, because the character imprinted by ordination is forever. The vocation and mission received on the day of his ordination marks him permanently."

Canon #1584 "Since it is ultimately Christ who acts and effects salvation through the ordained minister, the unworthiness of the later does not prevent Christ from acting. St. Augustine states this forcefully:

As for the proud minister; he is to be ranked with the devil. Christ's gift is not thereby profaned: what flows through him keeps its purity, and what passes through him remains clear and reaches the fertile earth... The spiritual power of the sacrament is indeed comparable to light: those to be enlightened beings, it is not itself divided."

When I was in Grammar School, there were four priests assigned to my parish; there were 1020 students in the Catholic School, there were 3 classrooms of each grade First through Eight and 60 students in the ninth grade. All but two classrooms had a Religious Sister of Mercy teaching the students. I admired the work that these holy men and religious women did. I still admire them. Today there is one parish priest, no religious sisters

and many Catholic schools are closed because there were too few students to attend them without paying a tuition that became too expensive for most families to afford.

My first shock came when I was in the ninth grade at the seminary, when my science teacher who was a priest with a PhD left the priesthood without any explanation. Since that time, I have counted over 90 priests from this diocese left the active ministry to marry a woman and about 15 were discharged from their obligations and functions. I have always felt sadness when a priest can no longer

function as priest. What happens to all the souls that could have been saved? Since God can't make a mistake did we make a mistake?

"Beloved, do not be surprised that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as if something strange were happening to you. But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly." (1 Peter 4:12 NABRE)

My grandfather prayed all his life that one of his grandson's would become a priest and God answered his prayer as he was present in his old age to sit in the first row of the church and watch my ordination to the priesthood. It is safe to say it was the happiest moment of his life because God answered his prayers, because he loved his faith and his Church.

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