



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

April 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 For prayer requests received	2 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 3 Bennette Tang Becheyie Wa, West Africa	Rev. 4 Stephen Dassah Wa, West Africa	Rev. 5 John Bosco Eledi Wa, West Africa	Rev. 6 Paul Gaa Wa, West Africa	7 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	Rev. 8 Victor Ganaa Wa, West Africa	Rev. 9 Stephen Kantubog Wa, West Africa
Rev. 10 Aloysius Kpiebaya Wa, West Africa	Rev. 11 Cletus Kulah Wa, West Africa	Rev. 12 Chrisantus Kulbile Wa, West Africa	Rev. 13 Vincent Kuubatge Wa, West Africa	Rev. 14 Godfrey Naagyie Wa, West Africa	Rev. 15 Sylvester Nankpi Wa, West Africa	Rev. 16 James Nasaalbeteryeb Wa, West Africa
Rev. 17 Nicodemus Nongnenuor Wa, West Africa	Rev. 18 Aloysius Nuolabong Wa, West Africa	Rev. 19 Aloysius Sunnoba Wa, West Africa	Rev. 20 Romanus Tampah Wa, West Africa	Rev. 21 Cyracus Tang Wa, West Africa	Rev. 22 Frederick Tantie Wa, West Africa	Rev. 23 Matthew Tuurosong Wa, West Africa
Rev. 24 Giles Dimock OP Washington, DC	Msgr. 25 Stan Jaworski Winnipeg	Rev. 26 Maurice Jeanneau Winnipeg	Rev. 27 Michael Nault Winnipeg	Rev. 28 Francois Paradis OMI Winnipeg	Rev. 29 George Dunkley Worcester	Rev. 30 Jean-Paul Gagnon Worcester

Second Chances, New Beginnings, and the Fidelity of God

By Fr. Joseph Briody - Professor of Sacred Scripture, St. John Seminary Boston, MA

(At the invitation of Fr. John Kiley, Boston Fraternity) All through salvation history—which is our history too—God’s goodness is rejected, people walk away, and it looks like the door of relationship with God is closed for ever. It should have ended with expulsion from Eden: “if you eat from the tree, you will surely die”—but it doesn’t end there. While the Lord expels them from Eden, he promises salvation. The Woman’s Seed would crush the serpent (Gen 3:15). It should have ended for the fratricidal Cain, but it doesn’t: Cain is cursed, but God heard his cry and puts a protective mark on him (Gen 4:11, 15). It was to end with the Flood, but destructive waters became purifying waters, and God began again with Noah: “I will make my covenant with you” (Gen 6:18). Only Noah and those with him were spared (Gen 7:23).

Toward the end of the primeval history (Gen 1-11), things rapidly unravel. It should all have ended with Babel. The inhabitants of the earth unite to reach the heavens by themselves and without God. There is no longer any communication between earth and heaven. Even God’s speech is a soliloquy. This really seemed like the end of the disastrous project called “creation.”

It should have ended here with humanity dispersed over the earth, alienated from each other and from the Lord. However, all along, the hand of God was quietly at work. Noah’s son Shem comes to the fore, from whom comes Terah, the father of Abram (Gen 11:26-32). The Lord had plans for the descendants of Shem—his semitic people. However, at the end of Genesis 11 there is only suspense and uncertainty: will the Lord continue with his people?

When all seems lost, the Lord begins again and does something new. Genesis 12:1 opens a new chapter in every sense. God called Abraham. The unassuming line can be easily missed: “Now the Lord said to Abram . . .” (Gen 12:1). While those at Babel sought to make their own name great without God, God calls Abraham and promises that *he* will make Abraham’s name great. All peoples will be blessed in him (Gen 12:2-3).

First Samuel 8 presents one of those milestones—the demand for a king—which was a rejection of the Lord. Once again, the door is slammed on relationship with God. They are warned that if they go ahead with this demand, then they will cry out to the Lord and he will *not* answer them. Still, they insist.

They wanted to be like everyone else, like the other nations. Like all sin, it’s a crazy decision. Kingship would be disastrous. Kings would be their downfall and destruction. Kings would conscript them, abuse them, burden them, pilfer from them, tyrannize over them, and ruin them. Samuel places all these consequences before them. In the end they say: we still want it; give us a king; we want to be just like everyone else, and we can take care of ourselves. They reject the fatherly love of God and set off on a path that leads to the loss of everything.

Saul is chosen as king. It is a disaster. He disobeyed the Lord and was rejected. The root of this plight: he never trusted in or had a personal relationship with the Lord. David and Samuel were different. They were always going back and forth with the Lord, speaking with him, listening to him, and acting on what they heard. Saul hardly ever speaks directly to the Lord except in public ceremony or pious cliché. In a nutshell, Saul’s lack of trust in the Lord renders him incapable of obedience, devotion, or leadership of God’s people. Saul is overwhelmed by fear and self-doubt. He madly seeks control, is jealous, envious, and murderous. He flails around in paranoia and rage. He obsesses over David’s

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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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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 Budget:

\$4,750.00

Actual Donations:

\$1,899.00

Budget Deficit:

\$2,851.00

Current as of
January 31, 2022.

Lent is here, again. My parish decided to encourage people in their growth in holiness by having challenges for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The idea was to create a community of support and accountability. Of these three disciplines, I struggle most with fasting... and it is one of the disciplines of our Fraternity!

As part of a parish men's group, we're reading Dr. Brant Pitre's book *Introduction to the Spiritual Life: Walking the Path of Prayer with Jesus* (Image 2021). Chapter 11 is about fasting, and I found it helpful in my mentality. Dr. Pitre makes reference to how, in the Christian tradition, fasting was seen as a remedy for the lust of the flesh. At the end of chapter 11, he quotes St. Basil the Great:

"If fasting were to preside over our life... it would have taught all people not only to control themselves with regard to food, but also to completely avoid and be utterly estranged from avarice, greed, and every kind of vice." (Basil the Great, *Second Homily on Fasting*, 5)

Dr. Pitre goes on to suggest that just fasting from sins and bad habits isn't good enough. It sounds good in theory, but doesn't work as well in practice. "[I]f we can't control our tongue's craving for food and drink, what makes us think we will be able to control our cravings for gossip, obscenity, rudeness and insults? If, on the other hand, we are able to voluntarily give up good things like food, then we will more likely be able to voluntarily resist bad things, like sin. The ability to control the body and the soul go hand in hand. With that said, it is crucial to remember that when it comes to the practice of fasting, we need to ask God for the grace to grow in self-control" (*Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 76, Nook edition).

This was a good reminder to me about

the importance of fasting. By controlling one appetite, we're more able to control other appetites. By saying "no" to our tongue in one way, we're able to say "no" to our tongue in other ways.

Ultimately, the purpose is not self-control. Self-control is a means, but not the end. The purpose is always relationship with God. Until I'm able to say that pleasure – whether from food, or any other means – is not a god in my life, I won't be able to say that Jesus is truly Lord of my life. Until I can open my hands to let go of the sins I cling to in my life, I will not be able fully to embrace God's love.

At the end of the quote above, Dr. Pitre reminds us that it is *grace*. It starts with God's grace, it ends with God's grace, and grace upholds our choice all throughout. We need to remember to beg for God's help in all things, but especially in fasting.

As we move through Lent, I pray that this is an encouragement and reminder of the importance of fasting. As we're doing in the parish, community and accountability can help motivate us past the resistance we experience in fasting. Pray about how your brothers in your Fraternity can hold you accountable to fasting and help you along the way.

I invite you to join us for the Fraternity Conference in Tucson, Arizona. This year's conference will be held July 31-August 5, 2022. Mark your calendars.

Grace and Peace,

Fr. Tom DeRosia
Fr. Von DeRosia



Editor's Note: Please send articles, comments, and photos to the our editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org. Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.

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destruction. Instead of going after the Philistines—that was his task—he goes after David. In the end, the Lord pushes Saul aside and raises up David as king. The difference between Saul and David lies in the *heart*. David's line would open a way for God to enter the world. The Son of God comes as the Son of David. David is a sinner, but he shows sincere contrition and humility. His openness to the Lord is such that it inspires an idealization of a future Davidic figure. Messianic hopes are placed in a perfect Davidic king—the "Son of David"—in whom God himself would reign and justice and peace be established.

Out of the disaster that was kingship emerges the profound and glorious vision of what God would do. God would bring great blessing out of evil kingship. We hear these prophecies over Advent and Christmastide: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit" (Isa 11:1). "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light . . . To us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isa 9:2-7). God used their rejection of him as king to come among them anew as king, in a way that would be irresistible to the human heart, in a way that would draw us into the heart of God himself, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Happy fault indeed that won for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!

So often it should have ended. The prophets, however, had the insight that God would not give up on his people. He would open up new paths of grace. Why? Simply because *he*

is God, not man. Hosea (8th c. BC) explores this deeply. God's love goes unimaginably above and beyond. So often Israel broke her marriage covenant with the Lord. God should judge her and cast her off. However, it is precisely here that God shows himself to be God and not man. Through Hosea, the Lord cries out as if in the pain that comes from love: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim?! How can I hand you over, O Israel?! . . . My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger. I will not again destroy Ephraim; for *I am God and not man*, the Holy One in your midst" (Hos 11:8-9). God's passionate love is a pursuing and forgiving love. Benedict XVI summarizes this love "so great that it turns God against himself, his love against his justice. Here Christians can see a dim prefigurement of the mystery of the Cross: so great is God's love for man that by becoming man he follows him even into death, and so reconciles justice and love (*Deus caritas est*, 10). Here we glimpse the heart of God, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the wrestling in God between justice and compassion. (Within God, there is no contradiction of course). Hosea offers a moving glimpse into the heart of God and the passion of Christ.

Every morning we recall that dynamic of a new beginning in God with the Invitatory: "they shall *not* enter my rest," says the Lord: "it's over," "it's not me it's you." And yet his rest and new life are offered to us every morning we rise and say: "Lord open my lips." Scripture best expresses that

dynamic: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Most of all, we see the faithful God of Second Chances and New Beginnings in the Gospel parables—the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd. The Prodigal Son gives the lie to Satan's whisper that God cannot be trusted and is not always good. The emphasis is on the father, image of God the Father. We glimpse his strength, tender mercy, and faithful love. We learn how the Father looks on us, his prodigal children. That look is enough to inspire us to "get up" and return to the Father. The reality of the Father's mercy heals us at the very core of our being—even from our worst sins and deepest shame. His embrace restores us. He waits with arms outstretched—rather, he hastens towards us. Our security lies in knowing that the Father is coming. Indeed, he sends his own Son for us.

The Lord uses human lack of response to prepare for his own response, ultimately his response in the One who would respond perfectly, Jesus Christ. Bringing blessing and salvation from disaster is all in God's holy and good purpose for his people (Isa 14:26-27). Saint Basil the Great offers a striking reflection on this (Office of Readings, Ordinary Time Week 3, Tuesday): "Even the insult we offered to our Benefactor by despising his gifts did not destroy his love for us. On the contrary, although we were dead, our Lord Jesus Christ restored us to life again, and in a way even more amazing than the fact itself!"

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

