

THE VISITATION

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Preparing for the Synod - By Fr. Robert J. Carr

As the newsletter goes to press, the synod is about to begin. Here in the United States, we are a lightning rod to the resistance to it. Many in our country including members of our leadership and those who have assumed leadership roles for themselves are fomenting dissention and hostility towards both the pope and the synod.

I received several comments from people concerned that the synod will change doctrine and even we will see priests celebrate same-sex weddings there. I have no idea where this detraction originates however there are many rumors spreading about it.

Coincidentally, here in the United States, October is the month people prepare for Hallowe'en. It is not a Catholic holiday and many in the world consider it demonic. It is however a day that can be a nightmare for some. If Hallowe'en leads some to think of evil, let us ask what is it that evil wants more than anything else? Separation from God and division of his people.

God wants unity above all. From the psalmist to St. Paul, we see over and over again the call to unity.

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say

and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV)

So, if we are divided, we are not doing God's work. Here in the United States we have some Catholics, priests and bishops who are standing up against the pope, the synod and even the Pope Paul VI Mass. It is tragic.

We members of the Fraternity of Priest have a duty to encourage unity in the parishes, dioceses and in the Church and that unity includes union with the bishop of Rome as well our own ordinary.

How can we do this?

First make sure we are well informed.

In both our fraternity and in my parish, I led a discussion of the working document for the synod.

If you read it, you will see the focus is encouraging all the baptized to have an active role and an active voice in the mission of the Church. I explained to my parishioners what this means is to bring an end to the concept of the priests, bishops and religious driving the bus to Heaven while the laity ride along. This is a common model for the Church and one that is both inaccurate and contrary to the voice of synod and the sacrament of Baptism.

The synod is calling for all to recognize their dignity as baptized Catholics and to act on it in a way that all can be saved. We all know that every baptism ends with a commissioning of the new Catholics who have the calling to hear the word of God and proclaim it. This obviously contradicts any model calling for people to sit on a bus on the way to Heaven.

The model of the faith in the synod seems to be close to the pope's own South American roots. Despite being a heavily Catholic continent, South America along with Central America and Mexico in North America have traditionally been the place of lay driven parishes. For many decades, the priest covered a number of worship sites that are all part of one parish. He cannot be actively involved in every parish and, therefore, the laity have strong leadership roles in every community in the parish.

The most prominent role is the head of religious education, usually a women who educates and leads the community in the absence of a priest until the day when he arrives to celebrate the sacraments.

When you see the synod call for all the baptized to recognize their role in the mission of the Church you can see how it has roots in South America. This despite it is also Church teaching
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Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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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:
\$2,948.00

Budget Deficit:
\$1,802.00

*Current as of
August 31, 2023.*

In 1975 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council and following a Synod on Evangelization Pope Paul VI issued a remarkable and still relevant document "On Evangelization in the Modern World". In paragraph 41 he states: "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." The Pope is emphasizing the absolute importance of witness of life in embracing the call to evangelize. For us who are members of the Fraternity of Priests it is essential that we give witness to the graces received.

As chairman of the Fraternity Board, I will be inviting several Fraternity brothers to share what the Fraternity means to them and to their ministry. One should never ask others to do something if you are not willing to do it also and so my brief witness.

Our Boston Fraternity was established in 1988. From the beginning a priest friend kept urging me to "come and see". My excuse was that I was too busy to attend a weekly gathering. However, I did become part of another priests' group that met monthly. At that time, I was a relatively young priest at age 47 and the members of this group was mostly retired priests. The topics of sharing and discussion were not my issues then. This led me to reconsider the Fraternity. I reasoned that if members of my parish could attend a weekly Bible study, if men were coming to a weekly men's group, what was keeping me from meeting weekly with a group of brother priests?

After attending the Priests' Conference at Franciscan University and during that week spending some time with my persistent friend, in June of 1991, I attended my first Fraternity meeting

and the rest is history. As the years went by, I participated in various summer Fraternity Conferences and was elected as a Board member. Presently I am serving for the second time as chairman.



What graces has the Lord granted me through the Fraternity? Without doubt my enthusiasm for friendship with Jesus and for priestly ministry has been sustained. Fidelity to prayer, especially the daily Holy Hour, has continued and gotten back on track when needed through the challenging of my brothers.

The Fraternity has helped me to grow in trusting that the Lord does speak to us individually and in our group. Discernment here is always necessary. I appreciate the prayer of praise and constant dependence on the Holy Spirit. When the need arises there is always a brother at hand to pray with, to speak with, and to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. With a degree of humility, I can state that when the sexual abuse crisis exploded in Boston in January of 2002, I weathered the storm better than some priests because I had my Fraternity group to share with and pray with each week. I continue to thank God for my priestly vocation and for the gift of the Fraternity.

May the Lord bless and keep you.



Fr. John Kiley

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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for all Catholics to understand.

One of the difficulties we will experience regarding the synod will be a media coverage from both secular and Catholic outlets. The secular media will focus on whether or not woman will be ordained, same-sex couples will marry and LGBTQ Catholics will have a stronger voice. None of these issues are in the working document itself. The reason is obvious, the focus is on the role of all Catholics participating in the mission of the Church. This is something the secular media does not understand. From what I read and what I expect to read, their reports will be greatly inaccurate.

A recent article by the Associated Press focused, as can be expected, on women's ordination and the role of LGBTQ Catholics. The writer never quoted the working document nor gave any indication he even read it and that he understood this was not the focus on the synod. If anything, I explained to my parishioners, it was the opposite.

If the focus is widening the number of ordained in the Church, then all that will do is perpetuate the bus model. We will have more people to drive the bus while the laity sit there and ride along. This is not the point of the synod.

On the other side, we have members of the Catholic media looking to strengthen the understanding of the Church coming out of the Council of Trent. They are angry at the pope for limiting the Latin Mass and call him a heretic for their misunderstanding of the Amazon synod. However, what they do not understand as I

point out to my parishioners is that even though truth is unchanging, our understanding of it changes all the time.

If you read the documents from the Council of Trent, you will see the model of our solar system they use is the Ptolemaic which has the Sun and Moon revolving around the Earth. Of course, we know that the reality is the opposite. Our understanding of our solar system changed but the solar system never did.

So it is with our understanding of truth as we move deeper into the Twenty-First Century. In the Council of Trent women had a smaller role in society and less rights. The social issues of our time were different than they were then. The fall of the doctrine of the divine right of kings, which is not a Catholic understanding had yet to happen because the US Declaration of Independence triggered it. The Catholic Church itself did not embrace democracy as a governmental system until the Twentieth Century. So, to look at how we move into the Twenty-first Century as a united people of God is clearly a worthwhile mission today.

As for your Fraternities, may I encourage a good discussion of the working document of the synod, you can find them on the Vatican website. Consider doing them in your fraternity and your parishes.

Be ready to discuss what comes out of the synod being mindful of the source. The secular media will be most inaccurate and some Catholic media may be more slanted towards hostility towards the synod. Be ready to correct inaccuracies you will undoubtedly find because reporters

will be more interested in changing the practices and traditions of the Church than in reporting the actual truth coming out of the synod.

May be do regular updates with our parishioners to help them understand what is true. Correct the inaccuracies that may appear in such organizations as the Associated Press and other wire services. Use your bulletin column to address the truth and foster unity in the Church.

Do not dismiss some of the critics. Cardinal Burke, who raised his concerns about the synod, asked people to draw a line between what the pope says to the press on a plane and what he says in more official positions. Having appeared on CNN, MSNBC, NPR and other organs, I know he is right. Speaking in a live or live on tape venue has many distractions and is not the place where one can say things that must be perfectly precise. Just ask the bishop who was left with a "do you still beat your wife" type question when he appeared live on a major cable network news program speaking against abortion.

The call for each one of us is to foster unity. In the US, many promote an antagonism against the pope, even members of our ordained leadership including bishops. This must not be our role. The Lord seeks unity among his people. We must oblige.

Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®

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Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

November 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Rev. 1 Thomas Merkel <i>Marquette, MI</i>	2 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	3 For prayer requests received	4 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 5 Aaron Nowicki <i>Marquette, MI</i>	Rev. 6 Darryl Pepin <i>Marquette, MI</i>	Rev. 7 Benjamin Rivard <i>Marquette, MI</i>	Rev. 8 Michael Steber <i>Marquette, MI</i>	Rev. 9 Larry Van Damme <i>Marquette, MI</i>	Rev. 10 Michael Woempner <i>Marquette, MI</i>	Rev. 11 Anthony Bekpare <i>Ghana</i>
Rev. 12 Nicodemus Unezumeh <i>Ghana</i>	Rev. 13 Eugene Bettinger O.Carm. <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 14 Paul Cannariato <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 15 John Gordon <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 16 Joseph Meagher <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 17 Brendan Murray <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 18 Lewis Papera <i>New Jersey</i>
Rev. 19 John Primich <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 20 Ernest Rush <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 21 John Wassell <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 22 Ben Williams <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 23 William Cosgrove <i>New York</i>	Rev. 24 Tom Devery <i>New York</i>	Rev. 25 Alan Shnob <i>Ogdensburg</i>
Rev. 26 Joseph Muldoon <i>Ottawa</i>	Rev. 27 John Brennan <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 28 Thomas Galvin <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 29 Stan Gregorek <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 30 Thomas Kredel <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>		

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

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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 Fr. Von DeRosia,

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

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to receive our Newsletter?**
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