



# THE VISITATION

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## The Sky Did Not Fall - By Fr. Robert J. Carr

The Synod is now over for this year. There will be a final session next year. As we look over reports of the synthesis document, we hear of some disappointment by groups who believed they would have a greater mention in the report. That is ironic.

Prior to the synod, many of the more traditional Catholics prepared for everything but the Four-Horsemen of the Apocalypse to come over the horizon. However, none of that happened. I predicted as much and, consistently, I tried to encourage people to wait it out and see what happens.

If we listen to the Holy Spirit then we have to do what the Holy Spirit says. If there is one thing we can imagine he will say to us it is to make sure your actions are based on true assumptions. Can I record a time in history he ever said that? Not exactly, but I can record in scripture that one must only act when he or she is assured of their motive.

We must never accuse someone of bad motives until we have reasonable evidence to prove this. We must never do anything that will lead us to bear false witness. One of the best ways to disobey this instruction is to act on assumptions that have yet to be proven true.

When did Jesus break the law?

I am sure you will tell me he is the word of God so he never broke the law. If you asked the pharisees the same question would they agree with you? Probably not because they acted on false assumptions.

The Holy Spirit tells us to only act upon what is true and nothing else. What happens if we do not do that? Well, maybe you can ask Scott Ridder.

If you do not remember the name, he was the voice in the wilderness warning that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Everyone else, even the then Secretary of State Colin Power, began a coalition to overthrow Saddam Hussein in a preemptive first strike to ensure Saddam Hussein never used his weapons of mass destruction. Ridder warned repeatedly that they did not exist. Leaders including in those media dismissed his words. Iraq was never the same.

Another man also warned not to go into Iraq, and many said to ignore him. That man? Pope John Paul II.

We must yield to the same warning. We must never act in a way based on assumption. We make a great mistake and this is what the Holy Spirit warns us through the commandments and laws of the Church and the Old Testament.

There is a great conundrum in the

Bible. I read about it once in a Catholic magazine, I believe it was America but to be honest I cannot find the reference. We have no idea whether Jonah was prophesying correctly. Remember, he warned that if Nineveh did not repent then God would destroy the city. Immediately, starting with the King, Nineveh repented so we never saw any indication that the warning was true. We never saw troops lined up on the border. We never saw a comet hurling to Earth only to be turned away at the last moment. We never saw anything like that. We saw people heed the warning and act upon it.

However, they acted on good authority, Jonah, that they were right to repent. Further, if the Ninevites were acting in an evil manner, they were fully aware of their actions. So clearly, there were signs that they should heed Jonah.

Others, in other times, refused to listen to the prophets and accused them of being false. The fact is that the signs were there that they were speaking the truth but the leaders remained deaf to the prophets lest they be convicted of their sins.

There is a powerful scene in Ezekiel (Chapter 8) in which the God shows the prophet that the priests are worshipping idols. It is a scene where God gives Ezekiel the power to see through the temple walls and

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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:  
**\$1,744.00**

Budget Deficit:  
**\$3,006.00**

*Current as of  
September 30, 2023.*

Several times as young seminarians we heard the phrase: "There is nothing deader than a dead priest". The speaker, one of the spiritual directors, was making the point that people often seem to neglect or forget to pray for the priests who have served in their parishes once the priest dies. Some assume that since this is a priest, he is already in heaven and doesn't need prayers or Masses. Some just forget. Recently a parish where I had served proved this statement wrong. I was invited to be the homilist at a Memorial Mass for a classmate and a priest who had served for twenty-one years in that particular parish. The Mass was to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his death. What a wonderful tradition to continue or begin in our parishes and communities!

We are now in the month of November which is a rather serious month. We began with the wonderful Feast of All Saints on November 1. We were challenged to live out "the universal call to holiness" and to keep focused on heaven as our ultimate goal. We then celebrated All Souls Day, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, on November 2. November is a month to focus on praying for and offering Mass for our departed loved ones and friends. This is increasingly neglected today in some areas of the Church. There are Catholics who no longer believe in purgatory, although it is one of the doctrines of our faith. Paragraph 1030 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, *but still imperfectly purified*, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve

the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven."

Let me encourage you, both our priests and lay supporters, to call to mind the deceased priests

who have served you and have been a blessing to you. Bring them into your daily prayer time. Remember them at Mass. I would encourage my brother priests and myself to look at the Ordo for our dioceses each day and pray for the priests listed. Let's not forget on the first Thursday of each month to pray for the deceased members of the Fraternity of Priests. This is listed in the monthly calendar of the Newsletter.

Let me end by repeating what I wrote last month. Even though it is early let's look forward to next year's summer conference. We have dates and a location for the Fraternity Conference 2024. **The Conference will be held from Sunday evening, August 4, to Friday morning, August 9 at Loyola Retreat House in Morristown, New Jersey.** It would be awesome if each active fraternity is represented by at least one priest, the leader or another. Also, if any former group discerns that they should begin to meet again or be formed anew, send a priest to the conference.

The Lord's blessings and peace,



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](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org). Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.

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to view the blasphemy and idolatry the priests are doing. He then says to Ezekiel, They think I do not see this.

As in Nineveh, the people knew they were doing wrong but unlike that repentant city, they refused to change their ways. We know that Ezekiel was witness to the massive destruction by the Babylonians against the Jews. Why? They knew the truth and refused to heed it.

One of the issues the pope is speaking out is something many in this country reject—the development of doctrine. So many people believe he is bringing in this form of teaching which they reject. However, what does this development of doctrine mean? It actually means a deeper understanding of what is true.

If you asked St. Augustine about the solar system, he would explain that the sun was at the center and the Earth revolved around the sun. Later, in the eighteenth-century people began to understand what Copernicus discovered in the seventeenth that in fact, the Earth and the Moon revolve around the sun. So, they developed a new understanding of our solar system. Their science developed. However, the solar system never changed. It is the same it was in the time of Aristotle and Augustine but our understanding of it changed.

Those who say doctrine does not change would not be able to accept the Copernican revolution and in fact many did not. Societies took two-hundred years to fully embrace it. So yes, our doctrine has to be fully explored so that we can have a deeper understanding of it. This does not mean that truth changes but our understanding of it changes all the time.

One of the most important issues pre-synod was Cardinal Burke's raising of the need to understand canon law. He laments anyone who believes that the pastoral overrides the canonical. In fact, it does not but the two are equal pillars in the Church. The saints often talked about spreading the truth pastorally. Many of those who condemn the pastoral approach would have been similarly condemned by the saints who understood we need to ensure people understand the truth but we are not to bonk them over the head with it.

Pope Francis responded to Cardinal Burke's legitimate concerns by explaining that canon law does not address every situation and he is right.

I learned that one rumor spinning around by the anti-synod crowd was there would be same sex marriages performed during this session. Obviously, that never happened, nor would it. However, the nature of same sex relationships in our time are a great conundrum for some but in the past many would see them outside of sexuality as profound friendships. In fact, one such friendship that many of those who seek to be accepted by the church cite is David and Jonathan from the book of Samuel.

Was it a sexual relationship, I highly doubt it, but it was a profound friendship. Maybe what people do not understand is what people call "gay" today was called friendship in ancient times.

Others were concerned that the result of the Synod would be that women would be ordained. That did not happen, in fact one synod speaker who is a woman spoke about reasons women should not be ordained.

People may get concerned that dust gets kicked up where it should not. However, when dust is disturbed, it shows us that cleaning must be done. Immediately after the release of *Mulieribus Dignitatum*, where Pope John Paul II wrote that the question of the ordination of women was settled, a woman in a talk program on Vatican Radio stated that this question was not going to go away. So bringing it up for discussion is not only unsettling the dust but it is helping us understand where further discussion is needed. This is not to change doctrine but to deepen that which is already there.

The point of the synod is to look at the direction of the mission of the Church for the Twenty-First century. There have been a lot of truths in all disciplines that developed over the past hundreds years since Trent and even the past seventy since Vatican II.

The synod brings another look at these issues them and addresses them to understand that mission. Many of the great nightmares people warned about never happened. They could not happen because the Church is led by the Holy Spirit which is the only reason it has been around for as long as it has.

Here in Massachusetts, we have a state reservation of dinosaur footprints. Recently, there was a tremendous flood and I was concerned about how it would affect the footprints then I remembered they have been there for millions of years, I am sure they survived much, much more serious issues. I can same the same for the Church. Our teaching is intact because the Holy Spirit guides us in great power and strength.

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

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# THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

December 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 31 Santiago Udayar San Angelo, TX					1 For prayer requests received	2 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 3 Joseph Luisi Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 4 John Lynam Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 5 Daniel Mahoney Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 6 Nicholas Mastrangelo Pittsburgh, PA	7 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	Rev. 8 Kenneth Oldenski Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 9 Thomas Sparacino Pittsburgh, PA
Rev. 10 John Sweeney Pittsburgh, PA	Rev. 11 Paul Zywan Pittsburgh, PA	Msgr. 12 Cuthbert Alexander Port-of-Spain	Rev. 13 Gerard Bernier Port-of-Spain	Rev. 14 Riginald DeFour Port-of-Spain	Rev. 15 Raymond Francis Port-of-Spain	Rev. 16 Clifford Graham Port-of-Spain
Rev. 17 Harold Imammshah Port-of-Spain	Rev. 18 Dwight Merrick Port-of-Spain	Rev. 19 Ian Taylor Port-of-Spain	Rev. 20 John Theodore CSSP Port-of-Spain	Rev. 21 John Dreher Providence, RI	Rev. 22 Robert Giardina Providence, RI	Rev. 23 Wilfred Gregoire Providence, RI
Rev. 24 Michael Kelley Providence, RI	Rev. 25 Roland Lepire Providence, RI	Rev. 26 Michael Roy Providence, RI	Rev. 27 Gerry Sabourin Providence, RI	Rev. 28 Terry Brenon San Angelo, TX	Rev. 29 Robert Bush San Angelo, TX	Rev. 30 Bernard Gully San Angelo, TX

## 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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