

# THE VISITATION

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## Advent to Easter: A Mystery to be Lived, Such is Life - By Fr. Sylvester Nanki, Ghana Fraternity

Events taking place in the world today possess a lot of challenges to faith of people including myself.

With all the wars — Ukraine, Russia and the general turmoil in the Middle East, as well as most parts of Africa — Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger etc. the political terrain is full of activities even challenging the existence of God and his creation.

And the recent, pandemonium in the church about synodality; and LGBTQ and women ordination in the church. These and many other events or activities put people at the cross roads. It was when I was planning to write this article I read a write up by an unknown author: who said "Life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived." There are many things in life and about life that may bring doubts into peoples minds about the meaning of life itself.

The fact that life is a mystery to be lived gives me light to focus; because mystery is defined as "Hidden or inexplicable matters, treated as a secret; obscurity: religious truths deviously revealed especially are beyond human reason.

Gods ways are not our ways, St. Theresa of Lisieux wondered she said, "I wondered for a long time

why God has preferences, why all souls don't receive an equal amount of grace. I was surprised when I saw Him, shower His extraordinary favours on saints who had offended Him, for instance, St. Paul and St. Augustine and whom He forced (so to speak) to accept His graces."

She continued to talk about her being surprised and puzzled when reading the lives of the saints. This is what she said: "I was puzzled at seeing how our Lord was pleased to caress certain ones from cradle to the grave allowing no obstacle in their way when coming to Him, helping them with such favours that they were unable to soil the immaculate beauty of their baptismal robe. I wondered why poor savages died in great numbers without even having heard the name of God pronounced." (the story of a soul, the autobiography of St. Theresa of Lisieux by John Clerke OLD) pag. 13-14)

Venerable Bishop Fulton Sheen in his reflection (375 days of inspiration: The wisdom of Fulton Sheen) likened this human expectation about life when he spoke about the birth place of Jesus Christ: "But when finally the scrolls of history are complete, down to the last word of time, the saddest line of all will be: there was no room

in the inn."

"The inn was the gathering place of public opinion, the focal point of world's moods, the rendezvous of the worldly, the rallying place of the popular and the successful. But there is no room in the place where the world gathers- the stable is a place for outcasts; the ignored and the forgotten."

The whole plan using Mother Mary, Joseph and other personalities began the mystery of the birth of Christ. Using fragile human beings for His important plan of salvation.

Jesus prayed thanking the Father for hiding these things from the learned and revealing them to mere children...He conclude by saying "this pleases you."

Mystery evokes curiosity and desire to search for the truth...The wise men from the East — as St. Theresa of Lisieux said God put His graces in these wise men to spark off — the way to conversion.

They stepped out into the unknown, into the dark night to search. The grace of God lifted up their search. Notwithstanding the dangerous encounter with Herod and doubts and confusion losing sight of the star, they finally reached their destination.

The mystery of life and our faith sometimes or often must go through: "the valley of darkness" as the  
*...continued on page 3*

# 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:  
**\$3,068.00**

Budget Deficit:  
**\$1,682.00**

*Current as of  
December 31, 2023.*

Let me remind you that our 2024 International Conference will take place at the Loyola Retreat Center in Morristown, New Jersey from August 4 – 9. I am asking that at least **one member from each Fraternity** be present. Please intercede that the Lord bless this event. This month Fr. Moe LaRoche will share with us.



Fr. John Kiley

## Fraternity Keeps Us Attached to the Vine

Fraternity of Priests lived out with my brothers reminds me that Jesus must be the Vine and Source from which we all draw the life that sustain us in Christ.

Fraternity of Priests provides a communion of mutual encouragement toward deeper holiness to guard us from a priesthood of "societal relevancy". Yes, the Lord God has yoked us with brothers! Without brothers we are in danger. Indeed, as priests, it is very easy to slip into lone-ranger-ism. For when there is no one to care for us, we may be lured into finding comfort in sinful activities. With no one to pray with, we are void of the power manifest when two or more gather in His name. With no one to encourage and affirm, we may find ourselves pandering to a priesthood of popularity over the priesthood rooted in the cross of Jesus Christ. With no one to whom we are accountable, our priesthood could easily dissipate into minimalism, moral and spiritual compromise, and perhaps scandal. Without this communion of brotherhood there is no one to remind the us that we ourselves

need the mercy of Jesus.

A clear image of the power and fruit of brotherhood is revealed in the contrast between St. Peter and Judas. After the

betrayal St. Peter went to his brothers, while Judas got on his lone-ranger ass and found a tree! And so, the Eleven, bound in brotherhood, encouraged, supported, and ministered to St. Peter in the Upper Room. They prepared him for his first papal pronouncement at Pentecost. "Then Peter stood up with the Eleven..." (Acts 2:14)

Fraternity brotherhood helps us constantly respond to the call of conversion toward deeper holiness. Therefore we strive for fidelity to our Fraternity meetings. Our time for small group ministry makes us "open book venerable" to each other. In small groups we do not simply share our complaints and woes. Rather, we care for and minister to each other in the power of the Holy Spirit for hope, healing, and strength.

I thank God for the Fraternity because it always takes me back to Jesus the Vine. For apart from Him we can do nothing. (John 15:5). But through Him, with Him and in Him, we trust His promise; "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and will do greater ones that these become I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)

Rev. Maurice R. Larochelle was ordained on June 6, 1987. He is the pastor of Ste. Marie Parish, Manchester, NH and is a charter member of the Boston Fraternity of Priests since 1988.

**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.



...continued from page 1

psalmist will say. We will have to go through darkness and doubt in order to discover the true plan of God for our life as individuals and even as a church. Could it be that our world is going through the valley of darkness. And also the church of today with so many controversial issues: paedophilia, homosexuality, transgender (LGBTQ+) etc...when you see all these things happening know that the end is near, but not yet.

In every situation of search there is always an amount of doubt but such doubt is good doubt or bad doubt. Positive doubt peps you up to desire the real knowledge of the object of your search. Even the saint suffered it: for instance Mother Theresa of Calcutta. She had profound temptation in religious life: this is what she wrote to her spiritual director: "Do not think that my spiritual life is strewn with roses — that is the flower which I hardly ever find on my way. Quite the contrary; I have more often as my companion darkness". (Catholic Answers 11/28 2023 by Matt Nelson)

Blessed John Henry Newman talked about doubt in the following way: "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt. Difficulties and doubt are incommensurate here we refer to a wilful rejection of belief in contrast...here doubt is closer to what Newman meant by difficulty. Doubt presupposes belief on the authority of another and wherever belief is doubt tends to follow." Catholic answer 11/28/2023 (Matt Nelson)

Dear brother, life and faith are

mysteries to be lived not problems to be solved. This year let each of us step into the darkness of our lives and search for the light of God, through the sacraments. And through fervent prayer for ourselves, the church and the world. With the Hope that God will relent and grant us His mercies and His LIGHT OF GREATER FAITH.

These books though written long ago are still relevant today: their titles are captivating

- The Church in Crisis.
- Mission on Trial.

We need to pray for the church and its mission in the world. The desire to find God and His Christ will lead us through the darkness, danger, frustrations; but eventually we will reach the STABLE with the guidance of the grace of God.

This advent let us realize the mystery of God's mercy and with St. Theresa of the Little flower, "I am going to be doing only one thing: I shall begin to sing what I must sing eternally; the mercies of the Lord." (Pg. 240 The story of a soul.)

Advent is the great season and the great period of God's mercy for His creation. In Christ all things are restored (renewed). It is a time for us to turn around (repent). "Behold, I am making all things new" Rev. 21: 5.

It is time to heed the call of Ezekiel (14: 6) a called to change of mind and attitude. It is not just turning to God but also turning away from sin and sinful ways as we read in ICor. 6:9-10 "neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexual, nor thieves, nor greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. ICor. 6: 9-10.

The Eucharist each day should be a sure sign of God mysteriously leading us to Christ at Christmas and at the end of our life.

Have a great Advent season and elevating Christmas celebration.

### SOME QUOTES

When the hour of reckoning comes you will be sorry for not using this time in the service of God, why not arrange and use your time now as you would want to recall it when dying. *St. John of the Cross*

We have only short moments of this life to work for God's glory. The devil knows this and that is why he tries to make us waste time in useless things. O let us not waste our time, let us save souls. Souls are falling into hell innumerable as the flakes of snow on a winter day, Jesus weeps/instead of consoling Him we are brooding over our own sorrows. *St. Theresa of Lisieux*

We all have a vocation. We need to believe that God has placed us in this life to fill a special need that no one else can accomplish. *St. Francis de Sales*

Baptism is the ship in which we embark on our voyage to heaven; if we commit mortal sin we are like men who are shipwrecked. The only hope for them of being saved is laying hold of a plank, and clinging firmly to it; so, for the Christian, the only means of reaching the port of eternal salvation is through the sacrament of penance. *Rev. Francis Spiraga*

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

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# THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

March 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 31 Jurgen Lias Boston, MA					1 For prayer requests received	2 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 3 Aloysius Nuolabong Wa, West Africa	Rev. 4 Aloysius Sunnoba Wa, West Africa	Rev. 5 Romanus Tampah Wa, West Africa	Rev. 6 Cyracus Tang Wa, West Africa	7 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	Rev. 8 Frederick Tantie Wa, West Africa	Rev. 9 Matthew Tuurosong Wa, West Africa
Msgr. 10 Stan Jaworski Winnipeg	Rev. 11 Michael Nault Winnipeg	Rev. 12 Francois Paradis OMI Winnipeg	Rev. 13 George Dunkley Worcester	Rev. 14 Jean-Paul Gagnon Worcester	Msgr. 15 John Mraz Allentown, PA	Rev. 16 George Winne Allentown, PA
Rev. 17 John Brennan Boston, MA	Rev. 18 Robert Carr Boston, MA	Rev. 19 William Carroll Boston, MA	Rev. 20 Donald Clinton Boston, MA	Rev. 21 Volney DeRosia Boston, MA	Dcn. 22 Paul Dow Boston, MA	Rev. 23 Gerry Fraser Boston, MA
Rev. 24 Christopher Gaffrey OFM Boston, MA	Rev. 25 Patrick Gilbert Boston, MA	Dcn. 26 Chuck Hall Boston, MA	Rev. 27 Elson Kattookaran Boston, MA	Rev. 28 Richard Kelley Boston, MA	Rev. 29 John Kiley Boston, MA	Rev. 30 Maurice Larochelle Boston, MA

## 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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