



# THE VISITATION

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## Celebrating the Faith - By Fr. Thomas Galvin, Pittsburgh Fraternity

I'm convinced that the month of May has earned the title of "Party Month of the Year" with so many numerous events scheduled to celebrate life achievements and recognitions.

So often when we think of May, immediate thoughts of Mother's Day flood the mind. But with May also come parties associated with weddings and graduations (from preschool to advanced degrees), with First Communion and Confirmations. And in some traditions, there are lavish displays associated with a May Crowning. Latino communities have special age-appropriate celebrations. And lest we forget -- Cinco de Mayo! Yup, May is a party month!

Think about it -- many of the above-mentioned events often require a new dress, suit, etc., -- except for priests who go in their standard black, worn most recently at the latest funeral. But aside from personal appearance, the participant is also expected to provide some sort of gift. In all, a day's wages may be spent to meet secular expectations associated with an above-mentioned party.

Now, before you suggest I'm wrong concerning the sacramental celebrations, most priests can easily highlight more than sufficient instances of religious practice absent from those in attendance -- whether it be a Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation or Marriage celebration.

Those in attendance are -- for the most part -- present (in church) with a sense of family responsibility, friendship or obligation, and are likely capable of speaking of the sacramental celebration of faith that is, has, or will be celebrated. This said, there are some cultures which do properly celebrate the faith.

Thankfully, these are not the only celebrations we are invited to join during May.

There are celebrations of faith which do not require gifts or special clothes and should be celebrated with abandon! Their focus is not a party which follows the ritual (in most instances). There are four major feasts of the Church following the Easter season. This year they fall in the month of May and the first day of June. So I ask...

...As a community of faith, how do we celebrate the **Feast (Solemnity) of the Ascension**, so important to our salvation? And when I say "celebrate" I am including our preparation of the hearts and minds of our people for what we profess as part of our Creed and make known through liturgical worship.

...How do we drive home the fact that when Jesus ascended into his glory, he took us with him so we can -- even now -- have a share in that glory?

...And what about the events, which I like to call "The Big Three", which follow the Ascension, namely the Solemnities of **Pentecost**, of the

**Most Holy Trinity**, and the **Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)**? Aren't these reasons for parties (celebrations) which make known our faith to people living in darkness? I believe that, overall, our efforts fail in comparison to the needs of people living in a non-Christian world.

Brothers and sisters, hopefully, plans have been made in our local Churches and Parishes for our celebrations of these great events which allow us, encourage us, demand us to pronounce in our homilies, songs, environments, and scripture studies what the Church teaches and should be living -- and what the world far too often stands against. These solemn remembrances developed in the Early Church because of ancient heresies and erroneous teachings. These same false teachings plague our society today, undermine our faith, and foster doubt in a world unaware of the truth found in the Gospel. These remembered events in the life of Jesus our Lord and of the Church are meant to be events we are to live in and share today.

At the Ascension the Lord took us with him to the Father. Have we and our people come to live that life of spiritual oneness with God? Have we as priests, deacons and catechists encouraged our people to look beyond our limited periphery to acknowledge that the Kingdom of God is with us even now? Or are our people living with a mentality of knowing nothing until death?

...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:  
**\$5,955.00**

Budget Surplus:  
**\$1,205.00**

*Current as of  
March 31, 2024.*

The month of May is an appropriate time to speak of Mary, the Mother of the Lord, and to consider the place of devotion to Mary in our lives as laity and priests. As a child and teen growing up in an Irish Catholic parish in Boston, devotion to Mary was both important and prominent in the life of the family and the parish. May was a time for parish and school May processions. Families decorated a shrine to Mary in their homes. Marian hymns were sung at church. The praying of the daily rosary was stressed especially in May and during October.

Following the Second Vatican Council there was a significant, but erroneous, falling away from devotion to Mary on the part of many Catholics. In a praiseworthy effort to make certain that Jesus Christ is always at the center of our faith, Mary was sometimes neglected or forgotten. Former popular devotions to the Mother of God ceased and even the powerful prayer of the Rosary was at times downplayed or neglected. This was certainly a misunderstanding of the Council and its teaching on Mary. This imbalance is being rectified to a certain extent in recent years.

Mary is the preeminent person of faith, especially as seen in Luke's account of the Annunciation and as she stands beneath the cross in John's gospel. Mary shows us that faith is not only for the joyful times in our lives, but especially in the moments of suffering. In all situations Mary completely surrenders herself to the will of God. She teaches us that faith is more than believing in the mind; faith is a trusting surrender of our whole life and future into the loving

hands of God.

Mary is a prophet. Prophets are those called by God to speak His word. Mary shares in Jesus' prophetic work. How often throughout



Christian history and especially in recent centuries Mary is sent by God to bring His word to the human race. She calls us to repentance, to prayer, to fasting, to deeds of love, to peace.

Even though we don't think of it often enough, Mary is a warrior. We see her portrayed in pictures and statues with her foot crushing the head of the serpent. In Revelation 12, we see a mysterious woman clothed with the sun and in conflict with the dragon. The scriptures and life itself clearly demonstrate that we are in a spiritual battle with eternal consequences. Just as the serpent deceived Eve in the garden of Eden and set humankind on a disastrous course, Mary as the New Eve will crush the head of the serpent. May we seek the intercession of Mary in times of temptation and when we struggle to be faithful to Jesus.

There are certainly many other aspects of Mary that are important and relevant, but during this Month of May be sure that Marian devotion is an important part of your spiritual life and remain faithful to the daily praying of the rosary.



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.

...continued from page 1

Just about every pontiff since St. Pope John XXIII has called for a "New Pentecost." Here we are 60 years later and far too many are looking for a new Pentecost instead of celebrating it. It's as if people are waiting for someone to announce "He's here!" but unaware of who they are looking for or what to expect. We are called to "live Pentecost" in our own time, remembering that there are many people standing outside the doors of the church building who need to hear the roar of an alive Spirit coming from a Church alive -- just as at that first Pentecost.

Years ago, I was serving a parish that was on fire with the Holy Spirit. You didn't need the Feast of Pentecost to tell you. Their life in the Spirit was only heightened at Pentecost. You could tell it was Pentecost before you entered the worship space as all were embraced with outside decorations speaking of something special. Inside, 3-D tongues for fire were suspended from the ceiling along with banners depicting the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thousands of carnations formed a white Holy Spirit in a red background on the steps of the altar. You knew it was Pentecost! The preaching had to match the intensity of the parish's preparations and anticipation. Had it not, the show would have ended before the "sending forth" had occurred at the end of Mass.

But these preparations were not just for one day for the people. They prepared ahead of time. Teachings concerning the gifts and fruits of the Spirit were done the previous Sundays. Handouts were provided. The Novena to the Holy Spirit was prayed at parish Masses and meetings, and in homes. It was Pentecost -- akin to when the Spirit rushed upon those in the Upper Room and caused those praying inside to "Go

forth and proclaim the Good News." These modern-day disciples then tied "The Big Three" together in the weeks to come.

The "Disciplines" adhered to by members of the International Fraternity of Priests include, ***"To empower God's people in the Holy Spirit, calling forth the many gifts of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and all people."*** Pentecost should be seen as "primetime" for us. The Early Church grew because its members prayed for the gift of the Holy Spirit to come upon all its members; were led by the Holy Spirit in what would seem uncertain ways; and trusted in the Holy Spirit in their decisions and movements.

I ask: Will we continue to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost Sunday, when our people need an awakening to the truth of our Triune God? Will we help dissolve the mystery of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit? It's really not difficult to do since our Lord provides the teaching concerning Father, Son and Spirit throughout the Gospel of St. John. Pray this Gospel and don't just read it. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us, to infuse our lives with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the God who is, not a god who was; God revealed, not hidden.

Since the beginning years of the Church, those early Christian communities were faced with one erroneous teaching after another concerning the Triune God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What we as members of the Church today face is no different. At the same time, some believers will say, "The Trinity is a mystery," and will not preach on it. Well, if God wanted to remain a mystery, first, Jesus Christ would not have preached and prayed for a unity between God and us. Secondly, he and the Father would have not sent

the Holy Spirit to awaken our thinking to the truth. The Father, who remains totally other, desires for us to share in his divine life and love. So, yes, we have reason for a party for "Trinity Sunday." It's a party of unity.

And how much more on the Feast of Christ's Body and Blood when we celebrate not just the Eucharist, the giving of Christ for our sake, but also as we accept the gifts of strength and courage from the Holy Spirit to share in Christ's life and giving? I sometimes feel we fall short of bringing our brothers and sisters to an intimacy with our Lord in the sacrament since we fail to acknowledge that we are being made into the very sacrament upon its reception (see Augustine). Our brothers and sisters need to see themselves as feeding people today with the very life they share in Jesus Christ. Prayer to the Holy Spirit is essential, as is our acknowledgement of the Gifts of Piety and Fear of the Lord (Holiness and Wonder and Awe),

I believe strongly that Catholic believers must party, that is, celebrate the fullness of its life of faith. I also believe that, in many ways, this does not happen and that stagnation has crept into the life of the Church, attempting to control the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, failing to believe in the unity with the fullness of God won for us by our Lord and Savior.

I believe that our joy needs to become that of God's joy for us, rather than how the world would want us to see it. I believe that all the fruits springing forth from our living of the gifts of the Holy Spirit can happen only when we celebrate our faith, make it our priority, and allow the world to again know that there is a God who provides beyond our wants, and calls us to more than we can ever imagine.

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

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# THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

June 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. Joseph Luisi <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i> 30						1 <b>For our Holy Father, Pope Francis</b>
Rev. Dustin Larson <i>Marquette, MI</i> 2	Rev. Thomas Merkel <i>Marquette, MI</i> 3	Rev. Brandon Oman <i>Marquette, MI</i> 4	Rev. Darryl Pepin <i>Marquette, MI</i> 5	6 <b>For the souls of our deceased FOP members</b>	7 <b>For prayer requests received</b>	Rev. Michael Steber <i>Marquette, MI</i> 8
Rev. Larry Van Damme <i>Marquette, MI</i> 9	Rev. Michael Woempner <i>Marquette, MI</i> 10	Rev. Anthony Bekpare <i>Nasaalbeteryeb</i> 11	Rev. Nicodemus Unezumeh <i>Nasaalbeteryeb</i> 12	Rev. Eugene Bettinger O.Carm. <i>New Jersey</i> 13	Rev. Paul Cannariato <i>New Jersey</i> 14	Rev. John Gordon <i>New Jersey</i> 15
Rev. Joseph Meagher <i>New Jersey</i> 16	Rev. Brendan Murray <i>New Jersey</i> 17	Rev. Lewis Papera <i>New Jersey</i> 18	Rev. John Primich <i>New Jersey</i> 19	Rev. Ernest Rush <i>New Jersey</i> 20	Rev. John Wassell <i>New Jersey</i> 21	Rev. Ben Williams <i>New Jersey</i> 22
Rev. William Cosgrove <i>New York</i> 23	Rev. Tom Devery <i>New York</i> 24	Rev. Joseph Muldoon <i>Ottawa</i> 25	Rev. John Brennan <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i> 26	Rev. Thomas Galvin <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i> 27	Rev. Stan Gregorek <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i> 28	Rev. Thomas Kredel <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i> 29

## A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

**Fraternity of Priests, Inc.**  
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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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