A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

VOLUME XXXIV
ISSUE 8

JULY 2025

The Visitation

! "The Visitation" is now digital! Visit **fraternityofpriests.org** to sign up to receive this newsletter via email and to access our online donation form. This will help the Fraternity of Priests be more efficient and to simplify costs as we enter the new year.

The Element of Celibacy Rarely Mentioned - by Fr. Robert J Carr, Boston Fraternity

When someone thinks about priesthood, one thought may be the challenge of celibacy. I remember when I was in the seminary how many laity would say to me words to the effect of: "Do you know what you have to give up?" as if the night before we were ordained, they pulled us into a room and said: "Oh, there is one thing we did not tell you. . . "

Of course, we contemplated the vow of celibacy from the application process to ordination. However, there is one thing rarely do many mention and that is the other side of it. All of us priests deal with it, although few mention it in discussions about celibacy.

Celibacy is not a vow not to have sex. The actual vow to reserve sex for marriage is part of the baptismal promises, therefore, all Catholics commit to it. Celibacy is the promise not to get married. Since sex is reserved for marriage, most people believe that celibacy is a vow not to have sex, that actually is an effect of the vow but not the vow itself.

However, the long-term effect of not engaging in marriage is the impactful element. I am sure you heard the saying: "Behind every successful man is a woman." which means his wife. However, celibates do not have wives. This is where celibacy is most difficult—no wives, no family. Now, I know there are marriages that are difficult and others that are hard work. However, celibates have no marriage by default. There is no spouse to build him up. None to encourage him to see a doctor or to be there when he is discouraged. Further, he is not there to do the same for his wife.

This is the important distinction. Anyone who focuses on priests being celibate only in terms of sex miss the deeper realities of this life. In fact, I don't remember any other aspect but continence ever being brought up in the seminary or even during priest conferences. The celibate priest is there to be free to minister to his parishioners. Granted there may be other priests one can seek for support and some friends which in a perfect world this would be true. However, this is not a perfect world and many priests do not feel comfortable to ask for support from their brother priests. They may look at it as showing weakness.

A man cannot win a battle against a woman. So, it is extremely hard for a priest when there is a woman or women who demand change to his policies in the Church. The demanding person may have good reason, while the priest's reason for the policy may also be for a good reason. Some who demand change from the priest can be unrelenting. Not having the support of his wife, it can be virtually impossible for him to win the battle. We had a parishioner in one of my parishes who was quite hard to deal with, she could be perennially angry and even stood up at a parish meeting and told the Salvadorans in the community they were not welcome. Needless to say, as priest she could be difficult for me to address. She could make things rather irritating at times as well.

In another parish, a Catholic school teacher would scream at priests if she disagreed with their homilies, especially if she felt that he should not have preached on the subject with children present. Granted, it did not happen often, but it did happen.

There are some personality disorders that make life difficult for priests when they approach the pastor. One is Borderline Personality Disorder. Fortunately, there are now organizations that help borderlines and help others understand it. When I first was contacted in ministry by a borderline, I had no idea how to deal with this personality and I found no available resources in or out of the archdiocese to minister to her or

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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:
$ 805.00
Budget Deficit:
$3,945.00

Current as of May 31, 2025.

This is my last reflection for the Newsletter as Chairperson of the Fraternity Board. A priest may serve on the Board for a three year term and then, if nominated, for another three years. With this Newsletter, I complete six years as a Board Member and two years as Chairperson.

Although written in June, you are reading this Newsletter during the month of July. This means that during the Fraternity Conference held in conjunction with the Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians Conference at Steubenville, new board members have been elected along with a new chairperson. Details will be shared in the August Newsletter.

I am looking forward to the Steubenville Conference (June 23 – June 27). This is the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Priests Conferences that were initiated in June 1975 by the then new president of the "College" of Steubenville, Father Michael Scanlon T.O.R. I was blessed to have been present for that first conference and have attended many conferences throughout the past fifty years. Eventually this conference expanded into a Conference/Retreat for priests, deacons, and seminarians. Many lives have been renewed and enriched over these fifty years. There are also several other adult conferences during the summer as well as the many youth conferences held at Steubenville and in other parts of the USA and Nova Scotia. Our own Fraternity of Priests came to birth at Steubenville in 1983, as a way of continuing and living out daily the graces received at the conferences.

As the Fraternity of Priests moves into the future there are challenges that will have to be addressed:

a) In the United States we have little growth and aging members

b) How to be more proactive in welcoming and inviting into the Fraternity younger priests, especially the newly and recently ordained of our dioceses and religious communities

c) While holding up the weekly meetings as the ideal, how to make allowances for situations where this is nearly impossible for the brothers

d) How to be more united with our brothers in Africa where Fraternities seem to be growing

e) How to exercise leadership to ensure that fraternities are embracing the vision of the fraternity of priests and living out the ten disciplines, especially in the areas of Pastoral Care for one another and holding one another to accountability

f) Work at improving and bringing the website up to date.

g) Inviting several more bishops to become Episcopal Advisors

h) Deciding what are the non-negotiables, if a group is going to be part of the International Fraternity of Priests

I appeal to my fraternity brothers and to our wonderful and generous lay supports to pray each day for the Fraternity of Priests. In 2025 we have been in existence for forty-two years. Much has changed in the Church, in the priesthood and in the world since 1983. We need to pray and discern what the Spirit is now saying to the Fraternity and calling the Fraternity to be as we continue to strive for the renewal of the priesthood, the Church and our parish communities.

Father John

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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to assist me. Psychologists would essentially run if you mentioned the type of disorder you believed you encountered. Fortunately, I had one resource in a religious brother who wrote his doctoral dissertion on BPD.

If I was a married priest, my wife would assist me in ministering to this difficult person. The problem is borderlines are common personality types encountered in ministry, so much so, that I recommended that the seminary teach about them.

Borderlines tend to call a lot, will speak for long periods of time; if you end the call, they will call back right away or soon. They may even take notes of everything you say and if you contradict yourself, they will read your notes back to you. Again, without any support, they can be a real struggle.

The Leadership Journal, which was a monthly professional journal put out by Christianity Today for clergy of all Christian faiths, published an article about a church pastor badgered by a woman terribly. Finally, other woman gathered together and silenced this badgerer because they realized a man cannot win a battle against a woman, even if he is minister. This can be a difficult dynamic for celibate priests. Men and women allies are important to the priest and they can be of assistance to him who is quite vulnerable because he is not married. This vulnerability is not of sexual temptation but of standing up against a badgering parishioner—male or female.

The priest does not have a wife to be there when there is a challenge to his ministry. Further, when he gets transferred to another parish and goes through the transition period alone, he may not have anyone to go through it with him.

Anyone who looks at the vow to celibacy in terms of sexuality alone misses the whole struggle with it. In fact, any priest who breaks his vows of celibacy is just complicating his situation.

The Fraternity of Priests is there as a priest brotherhood. Among its resources is to discuss all types of difficult issues we deal address; many are unique to the priesthood. Sharing them is a resource many priests who do not have a fraternity do not have. The vow of celibacy is more deeply felt not in sexual abstention but in lack of the fruits of marriage which is an immediate family. The parish becomes your family but only for a time and then assignments change and the priest must move on and go through a transition period.

Keep this also in mind when throwing that word celibate around. When dealing with people who are not married or may not be able to be married in the Church, to tell them they must be celibate and dismiss them also dehumanizes their challenges. Just to pontificate that they must live a celibate life misunderstands their reality. This includes the single, divorced, widowed, the handicapped unable to perform the sexual function, the members of the homosexual communities, and even those caring for a sick parent. Celibate priests may understand this better than other Catholics and can draw upon their experience.

The prospect that one will not have a family is not a little challenge. The role of the celibate priest is necessary and any anthropologist will tell you that the celibate in a society are essential to a culture's survival even if they do not contribute to the gene pool. However, it is not a decision or even a requirement that should be taken lightly. Fortunately, priests have years to discern it. So they know they need to be careful when demanding it of others.

The Fraternity of Priests is there to help all of us strengthen our ministry. We have a forum and a community to bring challenges we experience to others. Our situation is most difficult when we do not acknowledge our challenges. When we can share our issues—minor or major—with others, this improves our ability to serve others and to be stronger in our approach to serve our parishioners in Christ.

The brother priest who goes it alone may be setting himself up for a major failure thinking he is more impermeable than he actually is. The Fraternity helps us to not succumb to that prideful way of thinking.

Remember, celibacy is choosing not to marry in service to the Lord, which is a good thing. However, that means no wife, no children, grandchildren or more. It means your family is your parish but that is not permanent. Those in the seminary may add this dimension to their discernment and priests may consider this important aspect of their life in their feelings during down times. The fraternity can help other priests to note this part of priestly life in any struggle they encounter.

Please send us your prayer intentions:_____

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THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

August 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Rev. John Theodore CSSP *Port-of-Spain*					1 **For prayer requests received**	2 **For our Holy Father, Pope Francis**
3 Rev. John Primich *New Jersey*	4 Rev. Ernest Rush *New Jersey*	5 Rev. John Wassell *New Jersey*	6 Rev. Ben Williams *New Jersey*	7 **For the souls of our deceased FOP members**	8 Rev. William Cosgrove *New York*	9 Rev. Tom Devery *New York*
10 Rev. Joseph Muldoon *Ottawa*	11 Rev. John Brennan *Pittsburgh*	12 Rev. Thomas Galvin *Pittsburgh*	13 Rev. Stan Gregorek *Pittsburgh*	14 Rev. Thomas Kredel *Pittsburgh*	15 Rev. Joseph Luisi *Pittsburgh*	16 Rev. John Lynam *Pittsburgh*
17 Rev. Daniel Mahoney *Pittsburgh*	18 Rev. Nicholas Mastrangelo *Pittsburgh*	19 Rev. Kenneth Oldenski *Pittsburgh*	20 Rev. Thomas Sparacino *Pittsburgh*	21 Rev. John Sweeney *Pittsburgh*	22 Rev. Paul Zywan *Pittsburgh*	23 Msgr. Cuthbert Alexander *Port-of-Spain*
24 Rev. Gerard Bernier *Port-of-Spain*	25 Rev. Riginald DeFour *Port-of-Spain*	26 Rev. Raymond Francis *Port-of-Spain*	27 Rev. Clifford Graham *Port-of-Spain*	28 Rev. Harold Imammshah *Port-of-Spain*	29 Rev. Dwight Merrick *Port-of-Spain*	30 Rev. Ian Taylor *Port-of-Spain*

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
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Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
http://www.fraternityofpriests.org

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.

Please cut and return this form with your donation.

Dear Fr. John Kiley,
This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

☐ $10 ☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $_____

The Fraternity of Priests pledge of financial accountability: We take very seriously the trust you put in us when you send a gift. We stand accountable before God and you to honor that trust. We pledge: To use your gift carefully and wisely, and not to ask for money that is not needed.

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(Please print legibly)

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