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The Visitation

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Prayerfully Respond to Disputes, Stupid Ones and Others

By Fr. Robert J Carr, Editor

One of the most important lessons that we learned as sailors in the Navy was: "Don't win the battle and lose the war." Basically, what this means is not to focus on defeating someone in an argument only to discover that either you look foolish or the other person gives up on the faith. Of course, this is despite that you may have actually won the argument.

As I am writing this, two prominent Catholics are in a dispute on X. The lay journalist claims the prominent priest accused him falsely of supporting abortion and the priest claims the lay person is not strong enough against abortion because he supports the seamless garment. According to the journalist, the priest refuses to apologize for his words claiming that the journalist is soft on abortion. According to @grok, (X's AI account). The priest deleted the offending tweet.

Finally, the journalist decided to take the matter up with @Grok and eventually to let that device to make the final analysis of the dispute and leave it at that. As I look over this, I am thinking these two may have won their respective battles but may have lost their war. The loss would be the respect of their followers. They both have decent numbers of followers, unlike me. I disagree and agree at times with both of their various positions, but I generally don't express my thoughts about them on X. It is the lesson that is important.

Online media, especially X seems to becoming a battle of who is right in silly arguments all the time. This is especially in regard to doctrine. However, the real question is are these silly arguments actually worth fighting.

One of the Corporal Works of Mercy is to bear wrongs patiently. Something, I will admit I am not an expert at doing. However, it is an important lesson especially in the world of online media. A person may win his argument or he may lose but his greatest loss will be how others look towards him for the argument in the first place. This is why the online word is one filled with treachery. It is easy to win an online argument but it may cause more harm than good. It is literally in the virtual world version of the warning: it is better to be thought a fool than open your mouth (or type a few letters) and remove all doubt.

This is why it is dangerous to get into the wrong kind of argument with anyone online or in person. If we are always called to give a witness to our faith, how we argue with someone may be an important discussion.

This may seem to be a silly subject but is it not.

Currently, in one of our American states there is a real battle between paid political organizers and even volunteers and US Government Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers that led to the deaths of two civilians and the injury of officers and is making both groups look bad.

What is the core of the dispute? The enforcement of immigration law in the US. As a democratic republic, our country's leaders are elected and the main focus of the current ruling party during their campaign was to remove dangerous criminals who are here illegally. However, it appears that they are removing others who are not dangerous criminals. Others who may not have the proper documents and are labeled "illegals" (sorry, I prefer undocumented because Charles Manson and Jefferey Dalhmer two notorious criminals were both here legally) are living in terror. They are afraid to leave their home and they watch ICE outside on their streets.

This dispute led to serious even

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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:
$2,503.00
Budget Deficit:
$2,247.00

Current as of December 31, 2025.

In the gospel on Ash Wednesday, Jesus instructs us in the penitential practices of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. He has an expectation that these practices are going to be part of the life of a disciple. His teaching on each of these practices begins with the word **when**. Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are not optional. Disciples are expected to do these things.

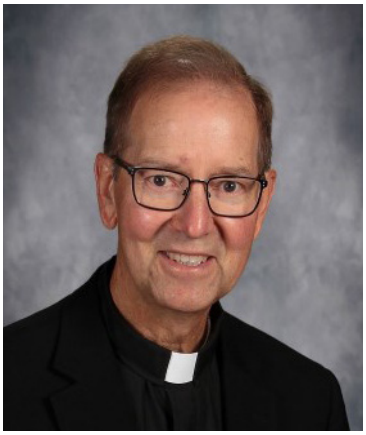
Jesus also highlighted **how** almsgiving, prayer and fasting were to be practiced. The person giving alms, praying or fasting does these things for God. They are to be practiced in a hidden manner. To do them to be noticed is counterproductive. God, who is hidden (certainly present everywhere, but invisible to our eyes), will reward disciples who give alms, pray and fast.

Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are three of the Kingdom disciplines that the priest members of Fraternity embrace on a personal level. Priests in the Fraternity are to practice almsgiving by tithing their income, giving at least ten percent of their income to the Fraternity, worthy causes and the needy. When done prayerfully, cheerfully and generously, most priests discover that we cannot outgive God. Jesus said: Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you. (Luke 6:38 NABRE)

He is alive to back up his promise.

Members in the Fraternity commit themselves to pray an hour a day without interruption. This special time, often before the Blessed Sacrament, nourishes our relationship with Jesus Christ, the hope of glory, our portion and cup and the destiny of our lives. With seemingly increasing demands on priests, it is even more imperative that we deepen our relationship with Christ.

Fasting from food heightens our spiritual sensitivity. This discipline needs to be embraced with humility.



Without humility, fasting can feed our pride. By our fasting, we join ourselves more completely to the cross of Jesus Christ. The living sacrifice of our lives (see Romans 12:1), through fasting, assists in making reparation for our sins and those of our people.

I pray that, no matter what our vocation, we may embrace the spiritual disciplines of almsgiving, prayer and fasting this Lent. With renewed commitment, let us have a fruitful and joy filled Lent!

Another topic: I invite the priest members of Fraternity of Priests to our annual meeting which will be held in conjunction with Franciscan University's Priests, Deacon and Seminarians Retreat, June 15-19, 2026 on their campus in Steubenville, Ohio. This event is a place where we priests can receive "that gracious word of his that can build [us] up and give [us] the inheritance among all who are consecrated." (Acts 20:32b) Besides edifying messages, inspiring liturgies and devout Holy Hours, we will enjoy each other's friendship and rekindle the Fraternity vision.

Details for Fraternity members about our annual meeting at the Steubenville retreat will be on the Fraternity of Priests website. **Registration for the retreat will take place on the website of steubenvilleconferences.com.**

In Christ,

Fr. Bob Franco

Fr. Bob Franco

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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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fatal injuries on both sides. Who will win? Maybe the real question is who is losing? Another one is where is the Church?

ICE is enforcing the law and that cannot be argued. Several states including my own, have laws in place that prohibit local officials from co-operating with ICE, which by the way is legal. However, the real matter goes back to what law is ICE enforcing and who is responsible for that law? The answer? The deliberative body of the United States which we call congress. So why are people risking arrest or death by fighting with law enforcement officers? Why are they risking harming another human being in their battle? Simple, no one is teaching them they are fighting the wrong people. They need to address this with congress.

Now what does this all have to do with the argument on X? It is simple. If we focus on winning a stupid argument on X or we focus on attacking another person on X, we contribute to the problem in our country with people fighting battles that are the wrong ones or the ones that should not be fought. We open the door to people easily being manipulated to entering a fight where they do not belong. They can follow our example and get involved in their own disputes fighting battles that are not worth the effort. They will lead them to win the battle and lose the war.

This is why it is important for us as members or friends of the clergy to be careful of what battles, if any, we get involved in and what battles we encourage others to fight. We have the vocation to teach people to be prayerful and to reflect and think about what is the best response and how to do it. When we do that, then we help others to do the same. When we don't and contribute to the battles on a different level, we do no one any favors.

If someone asked me how to respond to the issue on ICE, I would respond for them to write to their representative and ask them why they did not change the law when the then president asked congress to change it in 2017-2019. Their failure to change the law is a direct cause of the current problems in the US now. As well as the failure to properly monitor the border from 2021-2025.

However, we live in an age when fighting battles is common and is the cool thing to do, even if it is irrational and even useless.

I have my arguments as well and as a minor player in the online content world, I do have my arguments but I try not to pick fights with individual persons online. I will, however, argue with ideas that I find are problematic. There is no ad hominem argument when fighting ideas.

We have a mission that goes beyond simply following rules. We, especially among the ordained, have an important role to call people to a different way of responding to daily battles. We want to create the best scenario for a win/win situation. That is not my idea, that is the idea of a community organizer named Walter Wink, who taught techniques based on the Sermon on the Mount and St. Paul's teaching of spiritual warfare. The world teaches we must battle others so that we get our world our way by any means necessary and the result is disastrous and at times fatal.

We have to handle disputes differently, prayerfully and rationally. How we do that may serve as an example to others as well that getting into a silly skirmish on X or Facebook is a lesson in winning a battle but losing the war. It is not worth the effort or the anxiety.

We want to do the same with other disputes we may have. That all begins with deciding whether a skirmish is worth fighting for in the first place, even if it as simple as arguing over the orans position with a liturgical literalist who demands the faithful refrain from using it (for the record, there is no law prohibiting the laity from using the orans position while praying the Our Father at Mass).

Our careful choice of how to respond to little things may help us to have a better voice on how teaching people when to respond to bigger things. As one priest told me quoting a wise old pastor—"Never get into a [urination] contest with a skunk." When we choose our battles wisely or better yet avoid them generally, we may be doing more than not getting into a virtual fight with someone on the other side of the world. We may actually be setting an example that we have no business fighting stupid battles or getting into a war with the wrong force.

Please send us your prayer intentions:_____

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THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

March 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 1 John Sweeney *Pittsburgh*	Rev. 2 Paul Zywan *Pittsburgh*	Msgr. 3 Cuthbert Alexander *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 4 Gerard Bernier *Port-of-Spain*	5 **For the souls of our deceased FOP members**	6 **For prayer requests received**	7 **For our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV**
Rev. 8 Riginald DeFour *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 9 Raymond Francis *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 10 Clifford Graham *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 11 Harold Imammshah *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 12 Dwight Merrick *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 13 Ian Taylor *Port-of-Spain*	Rev. 14 John Theodore *Port-of-Spain*
Rev. 15 John Dreher *Providence*	Rev. 16 Robert Giardina *Providence*	Rev. 17 Michael Kelley *Providence*	Rev. 18 Gerry Sabourin *Providence*	Rev. 19 Terry Brenon *San Angelo*	Rev. 20 Robert Bush *San Angelo*	Rev. 21 Bernard Gully *San Angelo*
Rev. 22 Santiago Udayar *San Angelo*	Rev. 23 William McCarthy *Sioux City*	Rev. 24 Rodney Farke *Sioux Falls*	Rev. 25 John Helmueller *Sioux Falls*	Most Rev. 26 Donald Kettler *Sioux Falls*	Rev. 27 Edward Pierce *Sioux Falls*	Rev. 28 John Rasmussen *Sioux Falls*
Rev. 29 Joseph Vogel *Sioux Falls*	Rev. 30 Mark Innocenti *St. Cloud*	Rev. 31 Peter Kirchner *St. Cloud*				

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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. Bob Franco,
This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

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

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(Please print legibly)

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