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The Visitation

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Let the Sacraments Do Their Work

By Fr. Robert J Carr, Editor

As we approach Pentecost Sunday and the return to ordinary time, it is a good time to help the laity understand the power of the Holy Spirit they received at Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination.

St. John Chrysostom explained that the same Holy Spirit that came upon the apostles, came upon all of us at our Baptism and Confirmation. Obviously, he came upon us at ordination as well.

Over the past several decades, many faithful looked upon the work of the Holy Spirit in ways found outside the Church. There were prayer meetings in homes, Charistmatic healing services in and out of a Church building and other celebration of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is easy to forget that the sacraments are powers within themselves.

When I began hospital ministry, the chaplain who mentored me brought forth that he had seen many heallings in his thirty years of ministry but explained that the healing power came through the sacrament of the sick. He taught me to let the sacrament do its work.

This is something I do today and recognize that we are agents of God˜s work, just bringing forth the sacraments for the Holy Spirit is working through them and through us.

One of the fascinating things I have come to experience is seeing someone's face change in the hospital because, we prayed, or a patient received the Eucharist and or the anointing of the sick. They tell me how much better they feel or how much they appreciate the visit, however, I feel nothing. I take this as God doing his work through me his priest and Ieave it at that.

However, that is a reminder that sacrament itself is powerful enough as it is.

Those who know me well know that I despise the work of celebrity exorcists. These are not those who do their work in dioceses usually without fanfare, it is those who you see on social media boasting of their exorcism work or teaching a concept of the devil that makes him almost more powerful than God.

The other day in the hospital, a man joked that his son with him needed an exorcism. The boy about ten did not react but think of how he may have heard this "joke", I immediately responded that confession is better than exorcism. Again, it is the power of the sacrament.

This is why we have the sacraments. Christ gives them to us through the Church so that his power may reach us, especially in our most personal and vulnerable moments. They are indeed powerful.

Cardinal O'Malley once preached at a Chrism Mass that we would meet people we did not expect to see in Heaven because of the Sacrament of the Sick. In fact, when I give the sacrament in a hospital room, often with the family standing around the patient in the last moments of life. I anoint the person which includes absolution a prayer of plenary indulgence and the anointing itself. I often remind the family that the person is going to the place they looked forward to all their lives. This is what we believe,

Indeed, the same priest mentor explained to me that if you pray someone to be healed and they die, in reality they received the greatest form of healing: to be united with Christ.

Many other forms of Christianity will focus on healings and even exorcisms, I call that the firework of Christianity but God often works without music.

Miracles can happen in our lives (truth be told they happen more often than we are aware) but there is no music playing in the background.

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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:
$2,316.00
Budget Deficit:
$2,434.00

Current as of March 31, 2026.

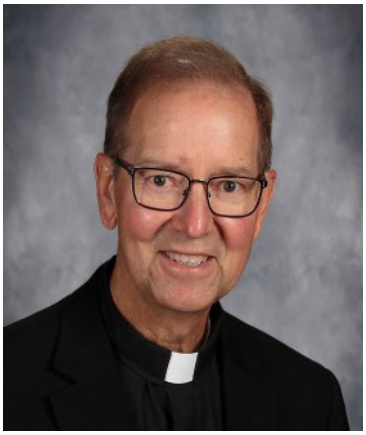
Priest members of the Fraternity commit themselves to ten disciplines that provide a framework for a flourishing priestly ministry. Some of these commitments are personal *(daily prayer hour, reading of Sacred Scripture, keeping a journal, weekly fasting and tithing)*, others are communal *(participating in Fraternity of Priests meetings, being fully open about one's life with at least one brother, accepting the teachings of the Fraternity)* and still others are pastoral *(living in the power of the Holy Spirit and bringing others into a deeper Life in the Holy Spirit)*.

Pentecost is a good time to examine our commitment to the Fraternity's pastoral commitments, "Am I intentionally living in the power of the Holy Spirit? Am I seeking to bring the people I serve into a more dynamic experience of the Holy Spirit?"

St. Elena Guerra (+1914) was an Italian nun who founded the Oblates of the Holy Spirit. In her ongoing correspondence with Pope Leo XIII, she urged him to summon the Church to pray for a fresh outpouring the Holy Spirit. In the mid 1890's Pope Leo XIII did this, asking that Church return to the Upper Room and pray a Novena for the coming of the Spirit nine days before Pentecost. Pope Leo XIII also asked the bishops of the world to pray the "Come Holy Spirit" prayer on January 1, 1901, the first day of the 20th Century.

We get a sense of St. Elena's perspective from her own words: *Pentecost is not over. In fact it is continually going on in every time and in every place, because the Holy Spirit desired to give himself to all men and all who want him can always receive him, so we do not have to envy the apostles and the first believers; we only have to dispose ourselves like them to receive him well, and He will come to us as he did to them.*

Pentecost is an ongoing reality. We need to "dispose ourselves… to receive him well." Certainly this means we need to pray with humility and faith. It also means being open. The Holy Spirit does not simply confirm our routines. He comes to equip us with wisdom, courage, charity and gifts that go beyond our natural capabilities. And this equipping is for a purpose. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses…" (Acts 1:8a) The Holy Spirit makes us credible witness to the Lord Jesus, risen and reigning.



We also need to find ways to equip the people we serve. Programs and organizations such as the ChristLife Series, Alpha and the Life in the Spirit seminar and Encounter Ministries are proven and effective instruments of the Holy Spirit that unlock His presence and gifts in the life of God's people.

In the early days of the charismatic renewal I learned an old Pentecostal chorus: *I'm under the spout where the glory comes out where there's no grief or pain.*

And I'll always remain where there's plenty of rain, under the spout where the glory comes out.

I do not believe we can avoid all grief and pain this side of heaven. However, I also believe it is imperative that we do our best to remain "under the spout where the glory comes out." Come Holy Spirit.

In Christ,

Fr. Bob Franco

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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This not like in the movies where a miracle happens and you hear an angelic choir and a shot of the sky with rays of light burning through the clouds. Miracles just happen and we can glorify God while realizing that God's power does not need dramatic music in the background.

The sacraments are powerful in themselves and they too operate without dramatic music. You might be called to the hospital at 2:00 a.m. and if you are like I was when I worked in the parish, I would not be happy. Always, I would be love to give the sacrament but I would not have enjoyed getting out of bed at that time and driving through the streets of Allston and Cambridge, Massachusetts or Neponset in Boston, Chelsea-North of Boston or some of the other cities I served. However, once I arrived with the family seeking me to give that sacrament my demeanor always changed. This is them putting their hope in God for their son, daughter, father, mother, friend, whatever and it means a lot to them. Again, it is a dramatic moment but there is no dramatic music.

One of the great TV shows today is The Pitt, which shows the tremendous work of hospital emergency rooms where people deal with life and death everyday. Yes they are dramatic but in the midst of this, we bring in the spiritural reality that surrounds us and brings to light that in the times of life and death, there are realities that lead us to understand more than we can see and we work with those realities.

We bring that message of God's love and mercy even in that sometimes chaotic arena.

Recently, I was called to the ICU for what is a Code Blue. This is an all hands on deck call because someone has taken a severe turn for the worse. The doctors and nurses were working hard trying to revive the patient in a scene you watch on TV medical dramas all the time. However, they made room, without stopping their work for me to give the sacrament of the sick and as they tell you in this business, you anoint on whichever place you can on the body.

Immediately, I told his caretaker from the facility the patient actually lived to make sure they informed the family he received the last rites.

If we see the power of this sacrament then we can understand that same power is in them all. How many priests preach about not receiving the Eucharist while in a state of mortal sin without telling their parishioners about the what the Eucharist actually is.

So parishioners receive the Eucharist or do not based on whether they are in mortal sin but do not learn just how powerful this sacrament really is. They learn only the rules and not the reality.

All the sacraments are like this. How many teens have a true understanding of what it is they receive at Confirmation. Indeed, their parents may not understand as well. I remember growing up, parents from many Catholic families taught that a child had to attend religious education classes and Mass until they received the Sacrament of Confirmation which really makes no sense whatsoever.

The sacrament, we know is the fullness of Catholic initiation there for it ishould mark the beginning nof a powerful faithlife not the end. However, many parishioners do not understand the nature of the sacrament and the power withi it.

Many years ago, a woman came to be with her son. He was sick and they had tried to be cured going to a pagan spiritual healer. The boy did better for a while and then got worse and the mother was not doing well. I called the exorcists of the diocese but he was not in. So, as this was early in my priesthood, I did the only thing I knew what to do. I gave her the sacrament of the sick.

Later, the exorcist returned my call and told me that I did exactly the right thing.

This time is a great one, especially with both Pentecost and Corpus Christi coming up to teach that the Holy Spirit works through His Church in many ways and he reaches out to His people through the sacraments. It is a powerful teaching that we can bring forth at this time to help the faithful understand that these are not just elements of our faith we use to mark different periods in our faithlife. They are the power of God reaching out through the Church and her ministers to enter into the lives of the faithful.

Let us always remember the powerful work we do as priests and let the people know that even what we do may appear ordinary, it is far from that because the Lord is doing great work even though we may not see it.

Please send us your prayer intentions:_____

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THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

June 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Rev. Christopher Gaffrey OFM *Boston*	2 Rev. Patrick Gilbert *Boston*	3 Dcn. Chuck Hall *Boston*	4 **For the souls of our deceased FOP members**	5 **For prayer requests received**	6 **For our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV**
7 Rev. Elson Kattookkaran *Boston*	8 Rev. Richard Kelley *Boston*	9 Rev. John Kiley *Boston*	10 Rev. Maurice Larochelle *Boston*	11 Rev. Jurgen Liias *Boston*	12 Rev. Paul McManus *Boston*	13 Rev. Thomas Reilly *Boston*
14 Rev. Roarke Traynor *Boston*	15 Rev. Chris Wallace *Boston*	16 Rev. Daniel Zinger *Boston*	17 Rev. Donald Roy *Burlington*	18 Rev. Andy Bord *Cardiff*	19 Rev. Barry English *Cardiff*	20 Canon John Griffiths *Cardiff*
21 Rev. Matthew Jones *Cardiff*	22 Rev. David O'Donnell *Cardiff*	23 Rev. Barnabas Page *Cardiff*	24 Rev. Ryan Cubera *Cleveland*	25 Rev. Kevin Elbert *Cleveland*	26 Rev. Robert Franco *Cleveland*	27 Rev. James Mazanec *Cleveland*
28 Rev. Homer Blubaugh *Columbus*	29 Rev. Peter Gregor *Comayagua*	30 Rev. Robert Shaldone SOLT *Corpus Christi*				

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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.

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

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