



"To gather priests to Christ and to one another to proclaim..."

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

September 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 1 Joseph Brankatelli <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 2 James Mazanec <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 3 Robert Franco <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rt. Rev. Dr. 4 Bryan Eyman <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 5 Tom Dunphy <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Rev. 6 Homer Blubaugh <i>Columbus, OH</i>	7 Pope Francis
Rev. 8 Joseph Losh <i>Columbus, OH</i>	Msgr. 9 James Nugent <i>Columbus, OH</i>	Rev. 10 Justin Reis <i>Columbus, OH</i>	Rev. 11 Richard Engle <i>Columbus, OH</i>	Rev. 12 Peter Gregor <i>Comayagua</i>	Rev. 13 Dennis Skonseng <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Most Rev. 14 Sam Jacobs Episcopal Adv.
Rev. Msgr. 15 Robert Laliberte <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. 16 Duaine Cote <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Very Rev. 17 Dale Kinzler <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. 18 Donald Leiphon <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. 19 Michael Shea <i>Grand Rapids</i>	Rev. 20 Mark Mitchell <i>Grand Rapids</i>	Rev. 21 Ayub Nasar <i>Grand Rapids</i>
Rev. 22 Donald Lomasiewicz <i>Grand Rapids</i>	Rev. 23 James Bozung <i>Grand Rapids</i>	Rev. 24 Charles Antekeier <i>Grand Rapids</i>	Rev. 25 George Fekete <i>Grand Rapids</i>	Msgr. 26 Cyril Lamontagne <i>Grenada</i>	Rev. 27 Brian Jefferies <i>Hartford, CT</i>	Rev. 28 Robert Rousseau <i>Hartford, CT</i>
Rev. 29 Francis Karvelis <i>Hartford, CT</i>	Rev. 30 Paul Halovatch <i>Hartford, CT</i>					

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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The Fine Line Between Presumption and Despair: HOPE!

By Father Ben Hasse

While I was studying for the priesthood at Mundelein Seminary, a new professor arrived to take the Paluch Chair of Theology, Fr. Joseph Henchey, C.S.S. He had spent years teaching in Rome, and at several other seminaries in the U.S. I was immediately drawn to his unique combination intense spiritual insights with corny humor that often involved baseball players who had died before my parents were born. There were MANY quotable quotes, and the famous story about the Gloucester fisherman, but the one I want to explore has echoed in my mind and heart ever since I first heard it spoken—I wish you could hear it delivered in Fr. Henchey’s Boston accent—, “Gentleman, there’s a fine line between presumption and despair... it’s called hope!”

In the conversations at our chapter meetings, we often have occasion to discuss shared areas of struggle, as well as opportunities and successes. I’ve noticed in recent months that not infrequently the conversations can move in one of two directions. There are many signs of renewal and growth in the Church, both worldwide and in the U.S. We can point to seminaries that are fuller than they have been in recent decades, to new and renewed religious orders that are beginning to welcome new vocations, or to the many vibrant parish programs teaching the faith with vigor and joy.

On the other hand, the headlines are full of news items that cast long shadows on our ability to operate Catholic hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and universities in a way that is consistent with our faith and

conscience. Sometimes these Catholic institutions seem to be throwing off the faith and ignoring our most sacred beliefs, and at other times they seem to be under severe attack by the government or other organizations. When we look out into the pews on Sunday, it’s not hard to notice who isn’t there. When we are planning and carrying out faith formation programs, or adult education, or planning funerals or weddings, it often seems that most of our parishioners have put the Faith far down their list of priorities.

It is far too easy to settle on one pole or the other: to glowingly describe and notice and call attention to the good work the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst, or to identify the very steep and severe challenges we face. These two poles or perspectives can easily involve emotional extremes or polemical attacks: one can verge into triumphalism, crowing at the even more rapid dissolution of mainline Protestant denominations, or pointing to the steady increase of Catholics worldwide as proof that we are “winning”. One can assume that we will simply go forward in the way we have been, and that our institutions will weather the storms, somehow. On the other hand, a daily glance through the headlines can also lead us into discouragement, despair, and cynicism. The demographics in our parishes are pretty brutal, even in places where the signs of renewal are evident. The way that people so often resist or ignore our heartfelt attempts to invite and encourage and motivate them can make it hard to keep going.

What has caught my attention is how

often I find myself in relatively quick succession taking first one and then the other approach. I like to talk and discuss, and I’ve caught myself vehemently identifying severe challenges in the life of the Church one afternoon, and later in the evening enthusiastically extolling the many signs of renewal. At times I’ve even felt a little bit like someone with a split personality!

The challenge of bridging this gap arises because both “poles” are grounded in reality. At this moment in the long history of the Church, there are very visible signs of the Church as we know it falling apart, at least in the West. At the same time, there are abundant signs of the Holy Spirit bringing life and growth to renewal and conversion. No one willing to honestly examine the data can deny both realities in the life of the Church. Many of us can probably point to both realities in our own parishes, or our own dioceses.

If embracing only the dire news would lead us to despair, while a narrow focus on the signs of growth might lead to presumption, **where does hope lead us? How does hope equip us to deal with and acknowledge both decay and renewal, both rejection and openness?**

Perhaps it is important first to distinguish between hope and optimism. Optimism can refer to various things... perhaps a sunny disposition that looks on the brighter side, or perhaps an analysis of the facts that points towards one’s desired outcome. In either case, what can be missing is an openness to God in all of His mystery. Hope, on the other hand, is all about God!

...continued on page 3

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Editor's Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org

Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted. Any submissions will help make each issue better!

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Chairperson of the Board of the Fraternity of Priests. This past May 23rd, I celebrated my 43rd anniversary of ordination to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Boston. During this time, I served in eight parishes of the Archdiocese as parochial vicar, member of a team ministry, and pastor. For the past two years, I have been pastor of Holy Family Parish in Gloucester, MA. Holy Family is merger of four parishes in the Cape Ann area of Massachusetts. I have also participated in the Boston Fraternity of Priests Group since July of 1991. What a blessing and inspiration this group has been for me and for my ministry as priest!

God certainly has a sense of humor. In August 2009, the Boston fraternity hosted our International Fraternity Conference. At that time, there was one opening for a new member of the board. During the Conference, several priests asked me if I would be willing to be nominated. After my initial negative response, I did agree to think and to pray about it. In prayer, I had a sense from the Lord that I should offer my name. (I also prayed that I would not be elected.) When the time came for nominations, mine was the only name put forth. I am now beginning the second year of my second term on the Fraternity Board and it is a privilege to serve.

This past June, as many of you know, our International Conference took place during the annual Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians, Conference at Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH. The Fraternity began there 30 years ago and it was most appropriate that we return to our place of origin to celebrate this significant anniversary. The Conference was a magnificent experience of God's grace, the power of the Holy Spirit, and priestly fraternity.

I went to the Conference knowing that we would be electing a new Board member and that we would need a new chairperson. I was determined that the chairperson would not be me. (Again God's sense of humor!) Please know that I am honored and humbled to serve the Fraternity in this way. I thank Fr. Bill Cosgrove for his leadership during the past year as chairperson and Fr. Bob Franco for editing the newsletter. I am happy to welcome Fr. Joe Looney, from

Hartford, Connecticut as the new board member serving along with Fathers Francis Dabre, Vlado Bizjak, and Larry Van Damme. I am most grateful to Fr. Bob Carr from the Boston Fraternity for agreeing to be the new editor of our monthly newsletter. Please keep each of us in your prayers as we strive to serve our Fraternity brothers in the power of the Holy Spirit.



Fraternity Financial Report

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're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Monthly Donation Budget: **\$4,750.00**

Actual Donations: **\$ 5,300.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$ 550.00**

Current as of June 30, 2013.

...continued from page 1

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." (Heb 10:23) "The Holy Spirit . . . he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:6-7) *Catechism of the Catholic Church #1817*

Hope is a gift given, and an invitation to trust. "He who promised is faithful." This succinctly captures what a Christian means by hope: the conviction that God's promises are worthy of our trust because God is faithful! As we analyze the data, as we look for connections, as we identify trends, we must not forget the Lord! As we remember God's promises, His eternal and unfailing love, we must also not forget His mystery. God's providence is often not evident or understandable to us. Human freedom is very often abused and directed toward sin and away from God. Sometimes, in retrospect, we get glimpses of what God has been about in our own lives and around us, but even as that glimpse enlivens our hope, it doesn't remove the mystery.

One rich gift of the Fraternity of Priests to me has been the opportunity to draw upon the communal memory of our brothers. Gathered together we will often ask an older brother to describe a particular figure or situation from our history, or we will jointly reconstruct something that happened in the more recent past. Reading Church history is also a way of extending this glimpse far into the past. Recently I was able to finally read a book that had been on my list for several years, Saint Peter Canisius by James Brodrick, S.J. Fr. Brodrick wrote many wonderful

books about the early history of the Society of Jesus and its founders, and this one is particularly rich. St. Peter Canisius was one of the very first Jesuits from northern Europe, having been born in the Netherlands, and he is called the Second Apostle of Germany because he did so much to defend and re-establish the Catholic faith there. Reading of the abject state of the faith in so many place in central Europe, I was struck by how the Church has so often been in travail. In the midst of the Reformation, St. Peter often visited dioceses to find only one or two priests from the entire presbyterate still celebrating Mass and providing pastoral care. The intense problems he faced certainly place our own struggles in perspective! If God led the people of that time through such tribulations, we can and should trust that He will guide us!

A survey of the Church's past struggles, though, not only emboldens us, but it should also sober and focus our efforts. The life and work of St. Augustine is magnificent and has had an intense and lasting impact on the life of the Church, but where is the Church of North Africa now? For the most part, it no longer exists. A Christian territory that produced a long list of extraordinary saints during the first 500 years after Christ now contains only small pockets of Christians, and many of them are recent arrivals due to European colonialism. God's faithfulness and promises to His Church do not guarantee that our parishes and diocese will not collapse and disappear. He calls us to serve zealously, and to be His instruments.

So, what impact does Christian hope have on our daily duties and the way we encounter both joy and sorrow?

The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven;

it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1818

"Buoyed up by hope," what a beautiful image! The storm comes, the rain falls, the wind blows and the deepest desire for happiness in our hearts can be directed towards God's faithfulness and mercy, His promises to us. This doesn't mean we don't get wet or tossed by the storm... a buoy is often thrown precisely to the man who is drowning! But a buoy does keep us from sinking, or if we are doused by a wave, it brings us back up the surface. Trusting God we can have the courage to keep giving of ourselves even when the prospects seem grim. Trusting God, we can know that even the visible success of our efforts must be placed in His hands and attributed to His grace. Hoping, we do not forget the mystery of God's providence and care.

Let me close with a beautiful quote from St. Teresa of Avila with which the Catechism closes its section on hope:

Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one. Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1821, Exclamaciones del alma a Dios 15,3

We may be only Earthen vessels, but we strive daily to reflect the treasure we hold.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____