

March 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Rev. 1 Roland Lepire Providence	Rev. 2 Francis Giudice Providence	3 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	4 Prayer Requests Received	5 Pope Francis
Rev. 6 Robert Giardina Providence	Rev. 7 John Dreher Providence	Rev. 8 Wilfred Gregoire Providence	Rev. 9 AB George Pearce Providence	Rev. 10 Robert Bush San Angelo	Rev. 11 Terry Brenon San Angelo	Rev. 12 Bernard Gully San Angelo
Rev. 13 Santiago Udayar San Angelo	Rev. 14 William McCarthy Sioux City	Rev. 15 Edward Burian Sioux Falls	Rev. 16 John Helmuller Sioux Falls	Rev. 17 Joseph Vogel Sioux Falls	Rev. 18 Joseph Short Sioux Falls	Rev. 19 Rodney Farke Sioux Falls
Rev. 20 John Rasmussen Sioux Falls	Rev. 21 Edward Pierce Sioux Falls	Rev. 22 Charles Duman Sioux Falls	Rev. 23 Richard Baumberger Sioux Falls	Rev. 24 Randy Phillips Sioux Falls	Rev. 25 Gregory Frankman Sioux Falls	Rev. 26 Jerome Ranek Sioux Falls
Rev. 27 Roger Geditz Sioux Falls	Rev. 28 Robert Hamel St Cloud	Rev. 29 Todd Schneider St Cloud	Rev. 30 Gerald Mishcke St Cloud	Rev. 31 Daniel Walz St Cloud		



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

# THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

## Planning As God's and Priest's Way to Act

By Fr. Vlado Bizjak, Slovenia Fraternity

In the last decades we speak a lot about planning, not only in secular world but also in the Church, especially after the Vatican II. Some Church people are super excited about it; others are quite suspicious. We will agree that there are many in both groups that do not have the right attitude towards it. Planning cannot solve all Church problems, especially if it is done solely by human thinking and not supported by prayer and openness to God's will. This is what makes some suspicious of what appears to be the Church's way of being and acting. It cannot be merely human logical or rational action. But we have to admit that in many cases, at least in the western world, we narrowed the life of our communities a lot to only the human or social level.

On the other hand, we don't have to be over suspicious as usually some ecclesiastics are, especially those inclined towards explaining the Church's life as prevalently the work of God's grace. They also minimize the meaning of the human dimension as opposed to the divine dimension. Many younger priests do this, but I think that is because many times passiveness and fear of conflict situations and relying to tradition, preferring what is expected and safe situations – every year same calendar, feasts, rituals, same people etc.

We won't fall into an endless arguing over which side is right. To catch the balanced use of planning in our personal and community life, we surely have to follow the example of Bible. Maybe we never meditated on this topic. How is God relating towards planning and what is his way of acting? Is he a super detailed planner or is he spontaneous, letting things go their own way? We could again find people explaining it one or other way. Some explain that God is present in every tiniest particle of universe and directing everything in very exactly planned way. Other would say that God created the world and then left it to go its own way, especially when we think about human freedom. Some see God active and others passive. I would explain God's way through the weather. The weather seems spontaneous and unpredictable, but at the same time everything about weather works according to strict natural laws. It seems unplanned, but, on the other hand, everything is faithful to the natural plan in the nature.

### The Plan of Creation

Let's shift to the Bible. I found 81 Bible quotes speaking about a "plan". First of all, we find God's planning in the beginning of the Bible in Genesis (first two chapters) as he created the universe. There are two different stories about how God pictured it.

The first story explains God's plan of creation in seven days. After the work God rests. Isn't this great!? He plans, he carries it out and he rests at the end. He isn't working something just according to his momentary feelings or without thinking. All creation is very thoroughly and meaningfully planned and carried out. Nothing is left to bare coincidence, even the rest is a part of the plan. We can even see gradualness, simple things first and complicated, with man as a crown of creation, at the end.

### Evil and Barely Human Plans

We can't analyze all 81 cases from the Bible. Some plans are human, very human, some really evil. You see, even the evil one and the evil people plan. The robbers or terrorists have to plan everything carefully and they are well occupied, even obsessed with it. We know that the evil one's plan is to destroy us all and to get us all to damnation and hell. About evil plans, the Bible constantly teaches that they aren't successful and God sooner or later takes care of them. So explains Psalm 21: "If they plan evil against you, if they devise mischief, they will not succeed. For you will put them to flight" (v.11).

The same destiny will strike everyone who plans only according to his own thinking. "I did it my way" does not work with God.

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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.

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.  
PO Box 442  
Steubenville, OH 43952-5442  
Phone: (740) 283-4400  
Fax: (740) 283-3622  
Email: [contact@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:contact@fraternityofpriests.org)  
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

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Dear Father 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 send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to [editor@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org)

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

**L**ent comes from an Old English word that means *lengthen*. Daylight lengthens. Soon the earth will begin to regenerate and new growth will spring forth.

It is an apt image of what is supposed to happen to us during the season of Lent. However, it is not as easy as simply exposing ourselves to the rays of the sun. Connecting with Jesus Christ our Light means patiently removing the clutter that obscures the light of His truth and love. Changes in how we think and what we do are necessary for the Christ's light to penetrate us in a deeper way.

Some people have developed bad habits over the years. Overeating, misuse of alcohol, viewing wrongful images on the internet: these habits are destructive and need to be dealt with. For priests in the Fraternity, other bad habits include neglecting prayer, reading and study or even Fraternity meetings. Besides firm resolve to overcome these obstacles one needs grace. And the means of grace includes the sacrament of Penance, Twelve Step groups and/or brothers in a local Fraternity.

Some people have developed good habits. However, these habits can become routine. One is faithful to the praying the Office. Yet his mind is preoccupied with parochial duties and not with the prayers he offers for the salvation of his people. Other people are faithful to rise early to praise the Lord only to find they doze off when they try to pray silently. (Remember: the battle is the morning is won in the evening. *Go to bed earlier!*)

Breaking bad habits and renewing good habits takes both resolve and grace. I also believe we need to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. Except for serious sin (to deal with this is always the will of God), I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to truly guide your Lenten penance. The Lord may have a different agenda for your growth than you do.

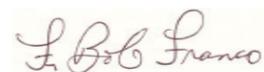
Fr. John Riccardo, a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit, recently said, "God could not live without you, so he died for you." Without delving into the question of God's eternal and complete perfect happiness, we do

know that God the Son became man. And out of love that stretches way beyond our comprehension, Jesus Christ died for us. This wild love led him to do the unimaginable to save our broken and self-centered humanity. We hear his prayer

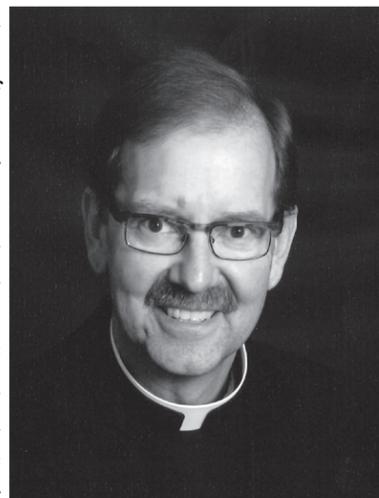
from the cross on Palm Sunday, "Father, forgive them they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) May the Light of Christ's love pierce our hearts this Lent.

As we press on through this transformative season, I thank all of you, priests and laypeople, for praying for priests. This is the spiritual fuel that powers our ministry. Perhaps part of heaven will be revealing the power our hidden prayers in personal and historical circumstances of our world. I am also grateful for your financial support. May the Lord abundantly bless you.

In Christ's Light



Fr. Bob



### 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: \$ **5,986.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): \$ **1,236.00**

Current as of December 31, 2015.

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Psalm 33 teaches us: "The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples." (v. 10) In this context we can understand political plans, based only on human calculations as problematic. Same is true also for Church or personal planning.

### Planning with God

Our mind is planning all the time, more or less consciously and rightly. But we are all called to plan under God's inspiration and his guidance, to commit our work to him: "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established" (Prov 16:3). This first step is to at least invite God in our plans, to take into consideration that he has something to do with it. Next step is to put him in the first place as a leader and to put ourselves into his plans, to submit to his will, because at the end his plans will succeed and last: "The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established" (Prov 19:21) and "the human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps" (Prov 16:9).

We can easily step into his plans and to submit to him if we believe that he is good and that he has good plans for us. We have to admit that we are not so sure about it in every moment because of many negative life experiences. So we have to refresh this awareness again and again: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jer 29,11). This is a promise to his people who had to wait many years in exile to finally await the salvation. There is hope, God is faithful, but it takes

time and patience for his promises to be fulfilled.

### God's Plan is a Plan of Salvation

There is a beautiful passage in the letter of St. Paul to Ephesians in which the apostle designs the global God's plan of creation and salvation, the whole story of existence which was revealed to us as very meaningful, "human friendly" and awesome plan: "With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:8b-12).

### Jesus about Planning

Jesus speaks directly about wise planning when he encourages his disciples to give up everything and follow him: "Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he

sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace" (Lk 14:28-33)

We won't find the exact word 'planning' in the Gospels. Even though it is obvious that Jesus himself had very clear life plan to seek and fulfill God's will. This is already clear at his age of 12 in the temple when he responds to his parents that he has to follow the plan of the Father. Later as he starts his public work at age of 30 he knows very clearly what he wants. He starts with the baptism and the Spirit leads him into desert. He gathers disciples, walks from town to town, preaches and heals. Very soon he expresses his plan to his disciples: "From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16:21). Jesus knew God's plan for him and he entered this plan with obedience to Holy Spirit. He pondered this plan in prayer and fulfilled it in his life: "It is finished" (Jn 19:30).

At the end we can conclude that planning as something very natural and we are doing it all the time. Small plans, big plans, evil plans, good plans, with God or without him. That's why a priest should not fall into the temptation to let his own personal and parish life to go its own way. Let's dive into God's plan for us and fulfill it.

Father Vlado Bizjak writes from Slovenia where he is a fraternity member. He is also on the Fraternity of Priests Board of Directors.

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