



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

October 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	2 Prayer Requests Received	3 Pope Francis
Rev. 4 Robert DeGrandis, SJ Washington DC	Rev. 5 Giles Dimmock OP Washington DC	Rev. 6 Michael Nault Winnipeg	Rev. 7 Maurice Jeanneau Winnipeg	Rev. 8 Francois Paradis, OMI Winnipeg	Rev. Msgr. 9 Stan Jaworski Winnipeg	Rev. 10 Jean-Paul Gagnon Worcester, MA
Rev. 11 George Dunkley Worcester, MA	Rev. 12 Michael Roy Worcester, MA	Rev. 13 Ron Matthews Alexandria, LA	Dcn. 14 Norman Gremillion Alexandria, LA	Rev. 15 Harold Imamshah Alexandria, LA	Rev. 16 Thomas Paul Alexandria, LA	Rev. 17 John Pardue Alexandria, LA
Rev. 18 Larry Hess Allentown, PA	Rev. 19 John Brennan Boston, MA	Rev. 20 Jurgen Lias Boston, MA	Rev. 21 John Kiley Boston, MA	Rev. 22 Paul McManus Boston, MA	Rev. 23 Gerry Fraser Boston, MA	Rev. 24 Robert Carr Boston, MA
Rev. 25 Donald Clinton Boston, MA	Rev. 26 Patrick Gilbert Boston, MA	Rev. 27 Richard Kelley Boston, MA	Rev. 28 Volney DeRosia Boston, MA	Rev. 29 Maurice Larochele Boston, MA	Rev. 30 Paul Gilbert Boston, MA	Rev. 31 Gerard Leclerc Burlington, VT

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 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 care-fully and wisely, and not to ask for money that is not needed.

\$ _____ Other \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10

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

Dear Father Bob Franco,

Prison Chaplaincy

By Fr. Joel Almendras, Tucson Arizona Fraternity

Twenty years can be a long time to be a Catholic Chaplain in one of California's maximum security prisons. But I look back on those years with great gratitude on a ministry that is at once intriguing and fulfilling.

The late Bishop Thaddeus Shubsda of the Diocese of Monterey in California called me one day and asked me if I was interested in taking over the Catholic Chaplaincy of the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad which is located in our diocese. Although I had done volunteer work in a number of detention facilities and county jails, the thought of working full time in a maximum security state prison initially intimidated me. But Bishop Shubsda thought that I was the best priest to fill the position because of my previous prison volunteer experience and my background in educational counseling.

When I reported for work at the state prison, I realized that I would be part of a larger chaplaincy team. There was the Protestant Chaplain, the Jewish Chaplain, the Muslim Chaplain, and the Native American Chaplain. My camaraderie with them was instantaneous and was one of the more enjoyable aspects of my work. Sharing and coordinating our respective ministries was key since there was only one main chapel and time was limited. We had to work

within an eight-hour day and a five-days-a-week schedule. But there was a lot of give-and-take on the part of all five chaplains and we respected each other's faith traditions.

One area of prison ministry that we all shared in common was grief counseling. When an inmate received a death notice of a member of his family, and his own faith chaplain was not available, then one of the other chaplains had to step in. Grief, after all, is a universal experience regardless of one's religious background or even in the absence of a religious background. The chaplain offers a listening ear and gives the inmate the emotional support that he needs at that time.

My own duties as a Catholic priest consisted in celebrating three masses every Sunday, one in English, one in Spanish, and one bi-lingual mass. Occasionally, I would celebrate Mass in the Filipino language for inmates who were more comfortable in that language. I would also hear confessions in these three different languages. I also conducted a Catholic Bible Study once a week, with emphasis on the word "Catholic". The reason was because there were a number of bible classes conducted by volunteers from non-denominational fundamentalist Christian groups. Unfortunately, there was an anti-Catholic bias among some of

these groups. Assisted by my own Catholic volunteers, our bible classes had a totally Catholic perspective. Ironically, the more we taught Scripture from this perspective, the more I was enriched in my own Catholic tradition.

Well-trained volunteers are therefore necessary in prison ministry. I also emphasize "well-trained" since volunteers need to be very security conscious and must be above being manipulated by inmates once they are inside the prison walls. Volunteers can be a comforting presence to prisoninmates. Complicating our efforts was the fact that approximately 60 percent of the Catholic population were Spanish-speaking. Bi-lingual volunteers, therefore, were always needed. These volunteers made great sacrifices to go to the prison even on week-ends. That meant giving up quality time with their families in order that the Catholic inmates could continue to hear the Word of God preached to them and receive the Eucharist on a weekly basis.

I also found, at the Correctional Training Facility, a greatly supportive administration. They and other administration officials were quite supportive of the religious programs. I will be forever grateful for the cooperation and respect they extended to the Catholic program in particular. They made my work a whole lot

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Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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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!

As Yogi Berra, Hall of Fame catcher for the New York Yankees, once said, "It's *deju vu* all over again." During the 2015 Fraternity of Priests Annual Meeting the board of directors asked me to serve as chairman for the Fraternity of Priests this year. I have served the Fraternity in this capacity before. I ask your prayers that my service to the Fraternity of Priests will bear good fruit.

Early on in my priesthood I came to this conviction: priests need priests.

My first year as a priest was typical: busy (perhaps more dizzy), joyful and, at times, disappointing. I worked hard without much time off. By year's end I was somewhat bleary eyed and less idealistic.

That summer of 1983 I attended the Priests and Deacons Conference in Steubenville. There I witnessed hundreds of priests and deacons who were enthused about their ministry, meeting their challenges in the power of the Holy Spirit. Mission and hope radiated from their ordained ministry.

Besides listening to edifying talks, participating in wonderful times of prayer and celebrating the sacraments, the conference organizers had priests and deacons meet in small groups. In these small groups we really ministered to each other. Throughout the week our brotherly bonds grew more palpable. The conference fostered a common brotherhood among the priests that was refreshing. As the psalmist said, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity." (Psalm 133:1 Grail Psalter)

In the fall of that year, at our clergy convocation, one of the diocesan priests announced that a team of priests from Steubenville would be gathering our local priests together for a couple of Friday afternoons in November. This team sought to form local fraternal groups of priests. These local fraternities would meet on a regular basis for prayer, teaching and mutual encouragement.

When I heard about this, I knew I had to be there. Over time, Fraternity of Priests became the prescription to keep my vocation on track. The Fraternity did not make

me immune to weariness and disappointments. However, my regular contact with my brother in the Fraternity gave me the encouragement and guidance I needed.

I also came to see the value of ministering to my brother priests.

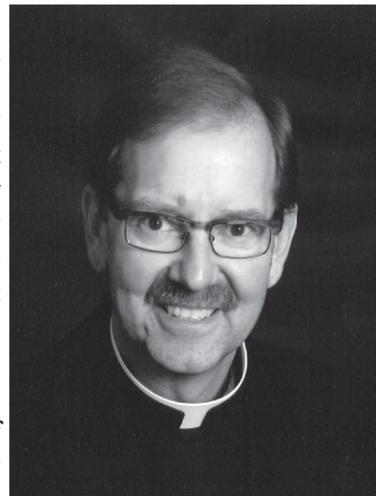
Besides simply being of service to my brothers, I know that my encouragement of them trickles down to the souls of the hundreds of people they minister to.

Much has changed since the inception of Fraternity of Priests in the fall of 1983. Our culture has become more radically secular. On the books, there are more Catholics than ever. Yet in the pews, there are less Catholics. The last three Popes have summoned us to a New Evangelization.

In the midst of these changes, one thing has not changed: *priests still need priests*. Fraternity of Priests greatly appreciates your prayers and support as we serve our brother priests. *God's blessings be yours!*



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: \$ **3,873.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): (\$ **877.00**)

Current as of July 31, 2015.

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easier.

On one occasion, a Correctional Officer told me about the futility of my job. He asked me "Chaplain, why do you have to celebrate Mass every Sunday for these criminals?"

I decided, then and there, to extend my ministry to him. I told him that it was not up to me to judge a soul but only God. My job was simply to facilitate communication between an inmate and God, to keep the channels of communication open. After all, we all have the same destiny. One day, we all have to meet our Maker. At the same time, I certainly did not expect miracles to happen to every inmate whom I encountered. But hopefully, through my homilies, counseling sessions, scripture studies, as well as the programs of the other chaplains, an inmate may be able to have a better perspective of where he is going in his life. He may likewise develop a better attitude and behavior which can be a means for a productive existence in the community where he will eventually be paroled. However, if an inmate was serving life without the possibility of parole, the religious programs can likewise be a means for getting along with other inmates, with other staff especially correctional officers, and to have a more peaceful existence behind prison walls.

One must keep in mind that prison inmates are people who have very deep emotional and psychological problems. They come from backgrounds consisting of poverty, domestic abuse, and drug and alcohol addictions. Many inmates have not even finished high school. Some of them were highly illiterate. They moved on with their lives with so many strikes already stacked against

them. They do not know what it is like to give-and-take. For many inmates, it is always take, take, and more take. This can be very stressful to staff personnel.

When I first started working as a Correctional Chaplain, one of my supervisors told me that a prison environment is a negative environment. It is up to chaplains, he said, to make it a positive one. That is why the term "Correctional Chaplain" is more politically correct than that of "Prison Chaplain". That is also the reason why the chaplaincy team works closely with psychologists, psychiatrists, and with the Education Department. We, therefore, apply a team approach, a holistic approach which can address an inmate's needs and concerns.

An inmate can bring a lot of baggage with him once he is incarcerated, baggage from his parents, his ex-wife, even from his own children. He can also bring with him baggage from street gangs that he used to be affiliated with. An inmate may therefore attend Sunday mass on a regular basis. But he can still be a ticking time bomb, ready to go off at any time. An inmate can seem to be the nicest person one can meet. But unless his emotional and psycho-sexual issues are addressed, he can still make the wrong choices. His behavior can still go awry. A holistic approach to ministry, in my opinion, is essential.

The staff with whom I worked with from both the Medical and Education Departments were very professional people to work with. My own background in education and counseling helped me to connect with them. In fact, they also made our work as chaplains a whole lot

easier. Inmates would come to the chapel for Sunday services less angry, less judgmental, and with a more positive attitude.

In spite of their past, change is still possible for an inmate. As one inmate once told me, somewhat facetiously, "When one is at the bottom of the barrel, there is no other way but up". Poverty, domestic abuse, drug addiction, a lack of education, are indeed paths to enslavement. But with a holistic approach to rehabilitation, a sound religious program, and the efforts of the outside community, it is still possible for an inmate to move on with his life and into a better future.

Correctional Chaplaincy, in the long run, is about healing. And healing is something that every mortal child of God needs in the course of one's life. But I have always believed that the best healers are those who have been wounded themselves. Wounded healers bring into their ministry a kind of compassion and a certain sensitivity that others may not have. Through a shared belief in what is right and what is wrong, instilling a moral compass on those who have been deeply wounded, Correctional Chaplaincy can be a very rewarding priestly ministry.

Thank you for your prayers during our Annual Gathering held in July.

Our updated list of Board Members appears in this issue (see page 2, opposite). Please pray for our brothers who are in leadership!

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

