



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

# THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

## Plan for the Battle Weary

by Father Michael Roy

**"... To gather priests to Christ and to one another in order to proclaim the Visitation Message."**

Could we have realized over twenty-five years ago when these words were used to express the vision of the Fraternity what a tremendous challenge lie ahead as we tried to put all of this into action? As you listen carefully to one of the earliest teachings given to the Fraternity there is no way that you could underestimate how difficult a struggle it would be, has been and continues to be.

The leadership then wrote: "We see our condition in the present age to be not wholly unlike the condition of God's people caught in the slavery of the Egyptian system of their age. Their slave drivers and task masters oppressed the Israelites with forced labor. Time and again Pope John Paul II has pointed to the great slave drivers and task masters of the present age, atheistic communism and secular humanism. Seeing the present day condition in terms of powers and principalities (Eph 6:10) the Pope has said that we are now standing in the face of the greatest confrontation in mankind's entire history between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan."

The founding leaders of the Fraternity went on to say: "Precisely at this time of massive confusion, darkness and evil threatening all of humanity, we believe that God is repeating His merciful Visitation of the Exodus 3:7-10, to put His people free of the oppression of the present age, which is largely under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness. We believe that what God is doing in the world today is visiting His people with a new and powerful outpouring of His Grace and Power in the Holy Spirit to put an end to this present age of darkness, to set His people free."

Well, now twenty-five years later we are beginning to see just how much effort is needed to confront the darkness of sin and chaos that continually assaults the Church, the mission of Christ and His priests. When this vision was first shared in 1986 the following were mentioned as the "task masters" that were enslaving God's people: "international tension, wars and threats of global extinction through nuclear proliferation, loss of dignity and respect, wholesale slaughter of infants, virtual destruction of family life and marriage, economic deterioration, global epidemic of disease." We read this today in 2010, with Iran developing nuclear weapons threatening to eliminate Israel, with

Catholic hospitals and medical personnel expected to provide abortions, with same sex marriage becoming common, with billions of dollars being expended to bail out our largest institutions and AIDS still ravishing entire continents. Besides this, our Church is experiencing a severe vocation crisis, the closing of hundreds of parishes across the nation and struggling to re-establish credibility after the clergy sex abuse scandal. It is clear that the empowerment of priests to accomplish the Visitation is as much needed now as at any time in history. Let's admit we can't do it on our own, only God can make a Pentecost.

Father John Randall of the Diocese of Providence, R.I. has recently written a book, "No Spirit, No Church\*", that is a personal and moving reflection of the way he has carried on his ministry of confronting the darkness and liberating God's people. He writes in the introduction "I realize that I have been privileged to experience first hand a marvelous explosion of Holy Spirit life during these past forty years. I have seen miracles: for example, two dying parishes coming to life again, all kinds of conversions, fantastic evangelism, healings, and deliverances. St. Paul writes in 2Cor 4:4 that 'the god of

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# Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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A Catholic layman was making a private retreat at Gethsemane Monastery at the beginning of Lent one year. He came to the chapel for the Ash Wednesday Mass eager to hear what the Abbot would say as they began this sacred time. After the gospel was read the Abbot delivered this message: *Pray and fast this Lent.* Then the Abbot sat down.

That was it! The long awaited Ash Wednesday homily consisted of five words. "Pray and fast this Lent." The message was at once: manageable, memorizable, practical, challenging, short, but not too sweet (as one might expect for Lent!)

In the gospel on Ash Wednesday, Jesus presumed that we would fast and pray, as well as give alms. He said, "When you give alms...pray...fast..." (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18) He instructed us to have the proper motive when we did these things. We must do them to please God - not merely to impress others. Jesus tells us that we should do these things in a hidden manner.

Perhaps we can take a twofold approach in weaving these practices into our lives. The first tact we can take is to make sure we are doing these things. In order to give alms we may need to say "no" to some of the extraneous things in our lives. We will need to say "yes" to the opportunities we have to assist the needy.

In order to pray, we need to make time for it. With all the distractions and busyness of our times, prayer may seem like a luxury. Jesus "told a parable about the necessity of praying always without becoming weary." (Luke 18:1) Prayer, a necessity? I believe this is what holds our world together in spite of our sinfulness.

In order to fast, we need to say "no" to ourselves. We need to be practical. Fasting from food is good. We can also fast from the TV for periods of time, from the sports pages, from window shopping, and the like. These kinds of fasts make us more sensitive to the things of God.

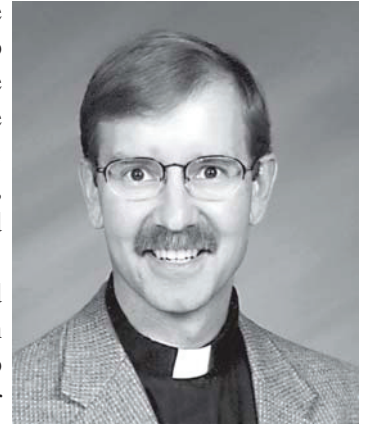
So the first tact is to make sure we do these things: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The second approach needs to focus on our motivation.

We need to ask for the grace to do these things to seek the Lord. St. John warns us about "sensual lust, enticement for the eyes and a pretentious life." (I John 2:16) It is this last one, a pretentious life or, as it has been more loosely translated "a life of empty show", that is the most slippery. We can do good things for the wrong reasons.

As we progress through this *Year for Priests*, let us pray that this Lent will be a time of spiritual renewal for all priests. On behalf of all the members of the Fraternity, I thank each of you for your prayers for priests and your gifts to the Fraternity. May Jesus teach us to give alms, pray and fast this Lent.

Faternally,

Father Bob Franco



### Editor's Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor, Fr. Michael Roy via e-mail at [editor@fraternityofpriests.org](mailto:editor@fraternityofpriests.org) or fax to 508-943-2213.

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

## 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: **\$2,904.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$(1,846.00)**

*Current as of December 31, 2009.*

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this age has blinded people so that they may not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ!’ My desire in writing this book is to help remove the blinders and let the glory of God’s Holy Spirit shine everywhere. I want to share the hope of the victory that the Holy Spirit can bring about if we allow Him the central place in our lives.” In his book Fr. Jake Randall gives testimony that it is the power of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that can bring about a new Pentecost, a new springtime in the Church.

In the beginning of his chapter on the outpouring or the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa tells us that it is not an event, but the experience is rather the beginning of a journey whose aim is the profound renewal of life in the Church. Sometimes we just don’t realize how long and difficult that journey will be.

In the remainder of this article I’d like to summarize the way that Fr. Cantalamessa explains this spiritual reality that is the basis of the Renewal and powerhouse out of which we will find the strength to press on with the vision of the Visitation today. I hope this will move you to want to read the whole chapter, if not the whole book “Sober Intoxication of the Spirit.”

Putting the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in the context of scripture and its place within the Church of today, he quotes Ephesians 4:23-24 “Be renewed in the spirit of your minds and ...clothe yourselves with the new self.” The word spirit here indicates that part of ourselves (our hearts) that needs to be renewed. The renewal following Vatican II

focused too much on the antecedents of true renewal, i.e. liturgy and Canon Law. What matters to God is people, not structures. It is souls that make the Church beautiful.

The second biblical quote, Titus 3:5, tells us that God “saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” A renewal in which God, not man, is the principal author. It’s not about what we do, but about what God will do through us. “We need to give the power back to God” (Ps.68:35). For too long we have usurped God’s power as though it were ours, acting as though it were up to us to govern the power of God.

The outpouring of the Spirit is a response by God to the dysfunction in which Christian life now finds itself. We need to continue to be confident that God is going to use us to redeem His People from the chaos of this present age. If not us, then who?! The explanation for this power lies in God’s will: It has pleased Him to renew the Church of our day by this means, and that’s all there is to it!

Let us once again reflect on the essential, visible, community dimensions that accompany this outpouring of the Holy Spirit and ask ourselves if we are still deeply faithful to providing for them. They are familial or brotherly love, prayer and the laying on of hands. The One who is Love uses our love of one another to soften the ground to receive His manifestation of love. So much has already been said about the centrality of prayer. The

laying on of hands is a sure gesture of calling down, invoking the power of God. To actually do it gets us outside of ourselves, causes us to step out in faith and acknowledge that all depends on God. The simplicity of these three signs testifies also that what happens is not our doing and so is the opposite of how the world would do it.

Perhaps having grown weary in the battles and discouraged by the outcome, unaware of the compromises we have made along the way we may be looking for an honorable way to surrender. Now may be the time to hear this Scripture as being addressed to each of us: “I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline” (2Tim 1:6-7).

*\*To obtain a copy of “No Spirit - - No Church” by Fr. John Randall, write to: The Spirit and the Word, P. O. Box 114006, N. Providence, RI 02911.*

## Annual Conference Announcement

This is the first call for all Fraternity Brothers to gather from July 25<sup>th</sup> through July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. While our plans did not materialize for Uganda this year, we are deeply grateful that the Fraternity in Columbus, Ohio will host our annual conference. **Please mark your calendar now and plan to gather so as to build one another up in faith!**

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

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# THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

March 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Rev. 1 Albert Ajamie Indianapolis, IN	Rev. 2 Lucas Amandua Indianapolis, IN	Rev. 3 Harold Knueven Indianapolis, IN	Rev. 4 Paul Landwerlen Indianapolis, IN	Rev. 5 George Nangachveetill Indianapolis, IN	Rev. 6 <b>Pope Benedict XVI</b>
Rev. 7 Jude Berbach, OSB Kansas City, MO	Rev. 8 Thomas Cawley, CM Kansas City, MO	Rev. 9 Earl Dekat New Jersey	Rev. 10 Roderic Giller, OSB New Jersey	Rev. 11 Eugene Bettinger O. Carm. New Jersey	Rev. 12 Paul Cannariato New Jersey	Rev. Msgr. 13 John Demkovich New Jersey
Rev. 14 John Gordon New Jersey	Rev. 15 Timothy Graff New Jersey	Rev. 16 William Halbing New Jersey	Rev. 17 Jeff Kegley New Jersey	Rev. 18 Paul Lehman New Jersey	Rev. 19 Joseph Meagher New Jersey	Rev. 20 Brendan Murray New Jersey
Rev. 21 Paul O'Donnell Duggan New Jersey	Rev. 22 Lewis Papera New Jersey	Rev. 23 John Primich New Jersey	Rev. 24 Stephen Toth New Jersey	Rev. Msgr. 25 James Cassidy New York	Rev. 26 Richard Champigny, O.Carm New York	Rev. 27 William Cosgrove New York
Rev. 28 Tom Devery New York	Rev. 29 Joseph Fitzpatrick New York	Rev. Msgr 30 Leslie Ivers New York	Rev. 31 Francis Coryer Ogdensburg, NY			

## 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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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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_