



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Humilitas

by Father Michael Roy

I can easily remember wondering if I would live long enough to see the beginning of a new millennium. It is hard to believe that we are already starting the second decade of that millennium. It becomes one of those sobering moments that cause us to be reflective and put before ourselves some challenging questions. How much progress have I made? What is truly enduring and what is passing away? What is God asking of me in the time that lies ahead? The answers to these questions can be surprising.

On a pilgrimage to the Holy Land a few years back, our guide told us that our itinerary had to be changed and that we now had something very rare – a few hours of unassigned time. Being familiar with this area he suggested that we visit the Herodian – the fortified palace that Herod had built after having leveled a hill top on the outskirts of Bethlehem. The once opulent fortification that boasted of a swimming pool (on the edge of the desert) so large it had an island in the middle, was now just a dusty and nearly forgotten jumble of ruins. The gate keeper, a friend of our guide, was happy to unlock the entrance way, delighted to see some visitors to the neglected and abandoned remnant of the past.

Within an hour after leaving the Herodian we were bending low to enter through the narrow door that leads into the Church of the Nativity. We descended the well worn stone stairs that bring you to the cave where the silver star marks the spot venerated as the place of our Savior's birth. There was a flood of people passing by; people from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, grateful for the few moments they had to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for all that God had done. Our visit to these two venues of antiquity was a moving experience of contrasts. The humble and once hidden cave where our great God and Savior appeared offering salvation to all, contrasted with the power, grandeur, opulence and pride that had once been the greatly admired way that things got done.

When we ask the questions about, "what is lasting and what passes away?" and "what is God's way of moving forward?", the answer seems so starkly simple. God's way is the way of humility. During this Year for Priests when you consider the witness of the Patron Saint of All Priests, John Mary Vianney, you see a simple life of humble service. As we struggle with the transition that our church is undergoing, could it be that the Lord is humbling us so that we can be good instruments in His hands ready to rebuild the Church He gave His life for? In the Fraternity,

living and praying and ministering in the unique and simple way we feel called to under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Charismatic Renewal, we know that we cannot do it on our own but must be more and more dependent on His power within us. Could the virtue we need to acquire in the New Year be humility? "for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

What follows in the next few paragraphs are some very insightful and inspiring reflections on this essential virtue of humility from Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa's book "Sober Intoxication of the Spirit." If we realize that the renewal of the Church which we desire so ardently depends on a new Pentecost, then in all humility we start by recognizing that there is absolutely nothing we can do - because only God makes a Pentecost! It is the Father who decides the manner and the time and the measure of the Spirit for everyone. We can only make ourselves empty to allow the Holy Spirit to come. This is how Mary prepared the apostles to receive the first Pentecost. She helped them to make themselves lowly, humble and docile as she was when she became the "handmaid of the Lord."

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Time is God's gift to us. Someone once said, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. That is why it is called *the present*." As I get older, I often ask myself, "How can I best use my time?"

The scriptures urge us:
Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

St. Peter puts it this way:
...live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God. Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness...(I Peter 4:2-3)

This January begins not only a new year, but a new decade. The first decade of the Third Millennium of Christ was marked by two significant events: the beginning of the 'war on terror' and the death of John Paul II. The first event has redirected the human and material resources of many nations. Much time and effort are now being channeled toward freeing the globe from terrorism.

The second event, the death of Pope John Paul II, ended a pontificate that both strengthened the Church and changed the landscape of the world. By his travels, labors and teachings Pope John Paul II left the world a legacy that still inspires and directs the Church.

What do the next ten years hold? Will there be a greater rebirth of Christian culture? Or will there be overt persecution of believers? Though I am not a prognosticator, I pray for the former and prepare for the latter. Someone once said, "We do not know what the future holds, but we do know Who holds the future."

And with confidence that the Lord holds the future, we press on. Our mandate has not changed. All the baptized are to live for Jesus Christ. The daily prayers, works, joys and sufferings for every Catholic Christian, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in union with

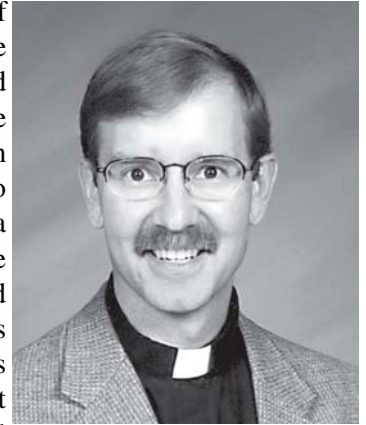
the sacrifice of the Mass, are to be offered to God. The whole human race is to become a living sacrifice offered to God through Jesus Christ. As priests, we not only model this way of life. We are to appeal to the conscience of each person, summoning them to also follow Jesus Christ.

I want to end this note with two requests. First, please forgive us at Fraternity of Priests for not getting our newsletter out in a timely manner. Your prayers and offerings are precious to us. We owe you a timely newsletter. And secondly, please do continue to pray for and support the Fraternity. Your prayers fuel our labors.

By God's grace, may we use our time wisely to further His reign.

Fraternally,

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 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: **\$1,500.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$(3,200.00)**

Current as of November 30, 2009.

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But how do we humble ourselves? Jesus says “Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 11:29). Which makes us realize that being humble does not mean having a low opinion of oneself or denying the gifts and talents and calling we have received. What Jesus did do was He abased Himself. “He came down.” Not in His thoughts and speech – no, in His actions! As the great hymn in the Philippians 2:6-8 says so eloquently; Finding Himself in the form of God in glory, He descended from that state in which nothing can be desired and nothing better can be had. He took the form of a slave and humbled Himself, being obedient unto death.

Seen in this light, humility does not seem to be a question of feelings - of feeling bad about ourselves – but rather a question of concrete action. It is not a matter of words but of actual deeds. Humility is the readiness to abase oneself and make oneself available. It is having a will to serve, but done out of love and not for any other motive. It is self-abasement without self-interest. When we look for applause and recognition, we lack humility because we cancel out the gratuitous aspect.

Humility, abasing ourselves to be available to the other, requires of us honesty and hostile confrontation with our pride. When it is we who descend, we lower ourselves from a false or pseudo-height, a height to which we were unlawfully elevated by pride, vanity or anger. In this way humility is always a “negative” virtue because it condemns the base instinct in us to elevate ourselves above our neighbor. In this sense it is correct to say that humility is truth.

If we are living in the truth then this essential virtue profoundly influences our attitude toward ourselves, toward others and toward God. True humility consists in being humble simultaneously before God and our neighbor. We cannot be humble before God in prayer if we are not humble before our brothers and sisters. It is admirable to be able to confess our faults at the feet of God in prayer and even to admit them with a certain amount of frankness to others. But what if someone begins to take our “confession” seriously and dares to agree with a small part of it? Does this cause us to bristle and react? If so, then it is not true humility. “The truly humble man”, Fr. Cantalamessa says, “is the one who evaluates himself in God’s light, discovering in Him who he really is and then transfers that truth into his relationships with others.”

“If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1Cor 3:18-20). The world around us instead of cultivating humility, exalts pride. From elementary school on what we instill in young people is the importance of having careers, of asserting themselves, even at the expense of others, of being first. Jesus’ way of thinking is 180 degrees different.

However, we must ask ourselves “does evangelical humility aim to create a community of passive, inactive people who lack initiative and not use their gifts?” Absolutely not! Evangelical humility means that we do not use our gifts for ourselves or to

dominate others. Instead we use our God-given gifts for the service of others. Remember the example of the Herodian palace and the Cave of the Nativity.

Let us not deny the gift we have received through the Charismatic Renewal, which has been correctly described as “giving power back to God.” Can we deny that the power of the Holy Spirit, like an electrical charge, is being transferred to the Church through our willing use of the gifts in the Renewal? Fr. Cantalamessa reminds us that “humility in the renewal is as important as insulation in electricity. The higher the level of current that flows through the wire, the thicker and more efficient the insulation needs to be; otherwise, there is a short circuit!” Insulation is made up of inert, worthless material, but it is as absolutely indispensable as the copper wire that carries the current.

The Renewal and the priesthood today need vocations to the hidden life. It should not be difficult for us to move out of the highest place; rather others should experience resistance in moving us out of the lowest place. As long as we know that it is the place where the Lord wants us to be, where we can do the most good in bringing Christ to the world and the world to Christ.

*Lord, my heart is not proud;
nor are my eyes haughty.
I do not busy myself with great matters,
with things too sublime for me.
Rather, I have stilled my soul,
hushed it like a weaned child.
Like a weaned child on its mother’s lap,
so is my soul within me.
- Psalm 131*

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

February 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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Rev. 7 Claude Seeberger OSB <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Very Rev. 8 Dale Kinzler <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. Msgr. 9 Robert Laliberte <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. 10 Donald Leiphon <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. 11 John Oderman OSB <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Rev. 12 Matthew Lanz <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Very Rev. 13 Duaine Cote <i>Fargo, ND</i>
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A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

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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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