



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

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Sober or Intoxicated in Ars

by Father Michael Roy

It all depended on which bus you were taking! What do I mean by that? Well, this past October at the International Priests' Retreat held in Ars, France it was necessary for most of the priests to take buses each morning and evening to the variety of hotels in the surrounding villages where the majority of us were staying. Since the hotel for the English speaking retreatants was very close to the one where the African priests were staying you could get on either bus in the evening to make your return. Depending on which bus you were on made a considerable difference in appreciating the impact that the conferences and various activities were having on the participants.

As this retreat, which had been organized by the Congregation for the Clergy for this Year for Priests, unfolded it started taking on very definite characteristics of the Charismatic Renewal. Testimonies were given by Bishop Joseph Grech of Sandhurst, Australia and Archbishop Alberto Taveira Correa of Palmas, Brazil as well as the two women who made presentations, Emir Nogueira of the Shalom Community in Brazil and Patti Mansfield. Patti Gallagher Mansfield was one of the original college students at the retreat at Duquesne University when the Charismatic Renewal was first

manifested in the Catholic Church. These initial talks about the renewal and the charisms of the Holy Spirit were given on Wednesday afternoon and by Friday evening, the last full day of the retreat, there was a dynamic prayer meeting going on with all 1500 of us praying with and for each other, laying hands on one another and praying for a fuller release of the power of the Holy Spirit to aid us in our mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

Bishop Grech who gladly gave testimony to his own Baptism in the Holy Spirit was unhesitant in telling all the assembled that we had been called for something powerful that would make us witnesses of the resurrection in our time. God was visiting His people at this moment in history like He had in the earliest of days of the Church, and so much of this is based on a personal, deeply felt, relationship with our God who is not ashamed to tell us how very much He loves us. He told us of a sustained enthusiasm he has for the ministry in the face of great challenges.

You could not help but be excited by the depth of commitment and love for the ministry that flowed so naturally from this modern day bishop beset by the challenges of our hostile culture. Where does all this come from? Both Bishops were eloquent and enthusiastic in sharing

with us the significant changes that have taken place in their lives after the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and their willingness to give God permission to guide and direct their ministry. At the same time they warned us that our God is a God of surprises!

After these presentations and the Spirit-led prayer meetings that followed the significant difference in the receptivity of the priest – retreatants was very noticeable. On the English speaking bus there was a tendency to distant themselves from the whole experience. I heard people say – "That's okay for them if that is their style of prayer." Or "I didn't know that we were going get hijacked into that charismatic stuff." They were analytical, distancing themselves from the experience, trying to remain in control and sober. While on the African bus there was not so much conversation as there was singing and even some dancing in the very limited aisle space. Someone who was unaware of what had earlier taken place could easily be led to believe he was in a bus full of highly intoxicated men!

The experience of these bus rides made me want to read again the opening chapters of Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa's book "Sober Intoxication of the Spirit." Permit me to share with you a few paragraphs

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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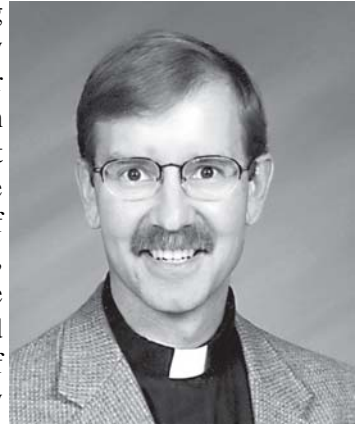
Priests need priests. To be effective ministers, priests need to receive as well as give. The Fraternity of Priests exists to “gather priests to Christ and to one another.” By our common prayer and courageous openness to one another, we are strengthened in our priesthood.

Last month I visited some of my brother priests and their Fraternities in the northeast United States. I spent some time with our former chairman, Fr. Bill Cosgrove from the Archdiocese of New York. It was edifying to see the good works of Fr. Bill’s parish. I was able to catch a presentation Fr. Bill had lined up regarding the defense of traditional marriage, given by a layman from the Archdiocese. I also visited their Fraternity on Thursday afternoon at Dunwoody Seminary and had dinner with Fr. Tom Devery, a Fraternity member and the personnel director for the Archdiocese. It was encouraging to be with a brother priest who maintains a joyful heart in the midst of a multitude of administrative burdens.

On Friday of that week I made the forty-five minute trek into the heart of Newark and met with the Fraternity of Priests of New Jersey. At least fifteen priests from Newark, Patterson and Trenton gather weekly for lively Holy Hour of prayer followed by a time of teaching. They were reading through George W. Rutler’s book The Cure D’Ars Today: St. John Vianney. The New Jersey Fraternity completed their meeting with an hour of small group sharing. They were even able to wedge a snack time between their prayer and teaching segments.

A week and a half later I made my retreat with the Providence Fraternity. We were joined by a couple of the brothers from the Archdiocese of Hartford. The retreat was held at St. Edmund’s Retreat Center, located on Ender’s Island, nestled next to Mystic, Connecticut. The retreat presenters were Fr. John Dreher, one of the founding members of the Fraternity of Priests and Fr. Tim O’Connor, a priest from Matamoros, Mexico and a member of the Servants of the Cross. Again, this was a very edifying time.

Besides being spiritually uplifted by our common prayer, retreat talks, and the celebration of the sacraments, I enjoyed the laughter and camaraderie of our nightly cribbage games.



Priests need priests. The Fraternity disciplines, as well as our common prayer and open sharing, empower us to proclaim the gospel in all its splendor. We desire to “serve the Lord with gladness.” (Psalm 100:2) **I want to thank all of you who have supported the Fraternity of Priests this year by your prayers, sacrifices and donations.** Your care, prayer and concern fuel this ministry and help us minister to each other.

I wish each of you a most Merry Christmas. May the love of Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, and the blessings of His Mother, be with you and your loved one’s this Christmas Season.

Fraternally,

Father 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: **\$2,197.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage): **\$(2,553.00)**

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Editor’s Box:

Please send articles, comments, and photos to the FOP Newsletter editor,

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

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of the tremendous insight that he gives us about the great gift of the charismatic renewal and how to continue to bring it into the mainstream of the church as it matures and grows.

He begins by quoting the revered Fathers of the Church – Cyril of Jerusalem (348) “They are not drunk in the way you might think ... but with the sober intoxication which kills sin and gives life to the heart. This kind of drunkenness brings understanding of things that were not formerly known.” This intoxication takes the soul beyond its poverty and powerlessness, into a state of grace where there is no room for doubts, regrets or self-absorption but only for joy and thanksgiving. St. Ambrose in Milan and St. Augustine in North Africa also spoke about becoming intoxicated with the Spirit. These pastors during what historians call the Golden Age of the Church, far from being afraid of this enthusiasm and trying to rein it in, nourished it and became its promoters and pastoral guides. “The confidence of the Church,” Fr. Cantalamessa writes “was not in the efficiency of its organization – in being a perfect society – but in the presence of the Holy Spirit in her midst. The Church was a spiritual society, a body animated by the Holy Spirit while visibly structured around the bishops.”

While the Fathers of the Church spoke about intoxication they did not elaborate much on what is meant by “sober”, but referred to its meaning in the Scriptures. For Paul sober is the equivalent of being humble, keeping a realistic sense of one’s limitations and not forgetting that

everything is a gift, “let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1Cor 1:31). Paul counsels that spiritual intoxication from God, through prayer, should be translated into active, charitable commitments to the brothers and sister, “If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love” (1Cor 13:1). Another aspect of sobriety can be found in the Pastoral Epistles and that is purity, a healthy emotional and sexual life. A chaste, transparent life, in accord with one’s state in life, which is a natural reflection of a life in the Spirit.

Fr. Cantalamessa, the renowned preacher to the Papal Household, answers the question “what exactly is this sober intoxication?” in these words: “It is a state in which a person feels possessed by and led by God, a state that, rather than driving us away from participation in the community, leads us precisely to commitment and often makes it easier and more joyful. It is an enthusiasm based on the cross. However, it is a kind of enthusiasm, which does not entail the reservations that the word raises among those who are zealous defenders of reason, efficiency and the middle of the road.”

It remains to be seen whether this movement, which is spreading among the people of God for a profound renewal, will end as a will-o’-the-wisp or will take root and renew Christians, as it did in the golden age of Cyril, Ambrose and Augustine. “There is no need to renounce our songs, the lifting of hands, speaking in tongues, our joy and enthusiasm. We merely need to avoid focusing all our attention on these things (nor be distracted when others focus all their attention on these manifestations). We must not

think of them as breezes that have come to caress us gently. Rather, they are sturdy winds that swell the sails so that the Church advances with strength and courage, pulling behind it a confused and hopeless world.”

The growth of the renewal means that alongside these festive manifestations of the Spirit there needs to be a firm commitment to building the kingdom of God within ourselves and in the Church. The first requirement is a life of personal holiness especially in the area of sex. We need to demonstrate that Jesus is Lord of our lives even in this intimate and generally hidden area.

The second requirement is humility. A humility that resists the temptation to take over God’s work, but that understands service to mean at the service of the community. Remembering that on the day of ordination I promised my bishop obedience and respect.

The third requirement of growing in a life of sober intoxication is of course, love. First of all, to love my confreres in the Fraternity; let it not be restricted to the brothers, but let it be a love that is evident to all everywhere. A love for those closest to the heart of Jesus, those for whom no one else cares for today, those oppressed by various kinds of slavery to sin, the outcasts, those suspended from ministry, those deprived of hope rather than of material goods.

If these general guidelines, as presented by Fr. Cantalamessa, can direct the full outpouring of the Spirit that was witnessed at the Ars retreat then perhaps those on the “sober” bus will ask those on the “intoxicated” bus, “how can I get more of what you have?”

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

December 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Rev. 1 Silverino Kwebuza AJ Alexandria, LA	Rev. 2 William Okot AJ Alexandria, LA	Rev. 3 Dwight De Jesus Alexandria, LA	Rev. 4 Harold Imamshah Alexandria, LA	5 Pope Benedict XVI
Rev. 6 Daniel Cook Alexandria, LA	Rev. 7 Ron Matthews Alexandria, LA	Rev. 8 Ferre D'cruz Alexandria, LA	Dcn. 9 Norman Gremillion Alexandria, LA	Rev. 10 Greg Downes Alexandria, LA	Rev. 11 John Pardue Alexandria, LA	Rev. 12 William Baker Allentown, PA
Rev. 13 John Mraz Allentown, PA	Rev. 14 George Winne Allentown, PA	Rev. 15 Larry Hess Allentown, PA	Rev. 16 David O'Donnell Cardiff, UK	Rev. 17 Barnabas Page Cardiff, UK	Rev. 18 Mark Rowles Cardiff, UK	Rev. 19 Michael Cronin Cardiff, UK
Rev. 20 Paul Millar Cardiff, UK	Rev. 21 David Myers IC Cardiff, UK	Rev. 22 Peter Reynolds IC Cardiff, UK	Rev. 23 Andy Bord Cardiff, UK	Rev. 24 James Kaniparam pil CMI Cardiff, UK	Cannon 25 John Griffiths Cardiff, UK	Rev. 26 Gregory Matus Cardiff, UK
Rev. 27 Matthew Jones Cardiff, UK	Rev. 28 John Fahy Cardiff, UK	Most Rev. 29 Peter Smith Cardiff, UK	Rev. 30 Donal Gillespie Cardiff, UK	Rev. 31 Barry English Cardiff, UK		

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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