

Fraternity of Fatherhood

A Spiritual Fraternity for All Men

Volume 2

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The Gift of the Fraternity of Fatherhood

The Editors



Dear Brothers:

It is not uncommon to hear from men how important the Fraternity of Fatherhood is in their life and their growth spiritually. This Fraternity of Fatherhood really is a gift to us. It is with gratitude during this Christmas season that men share why the gift of the Fraternity is important to them. Thanks to all the men who have shared their testimonies that follow

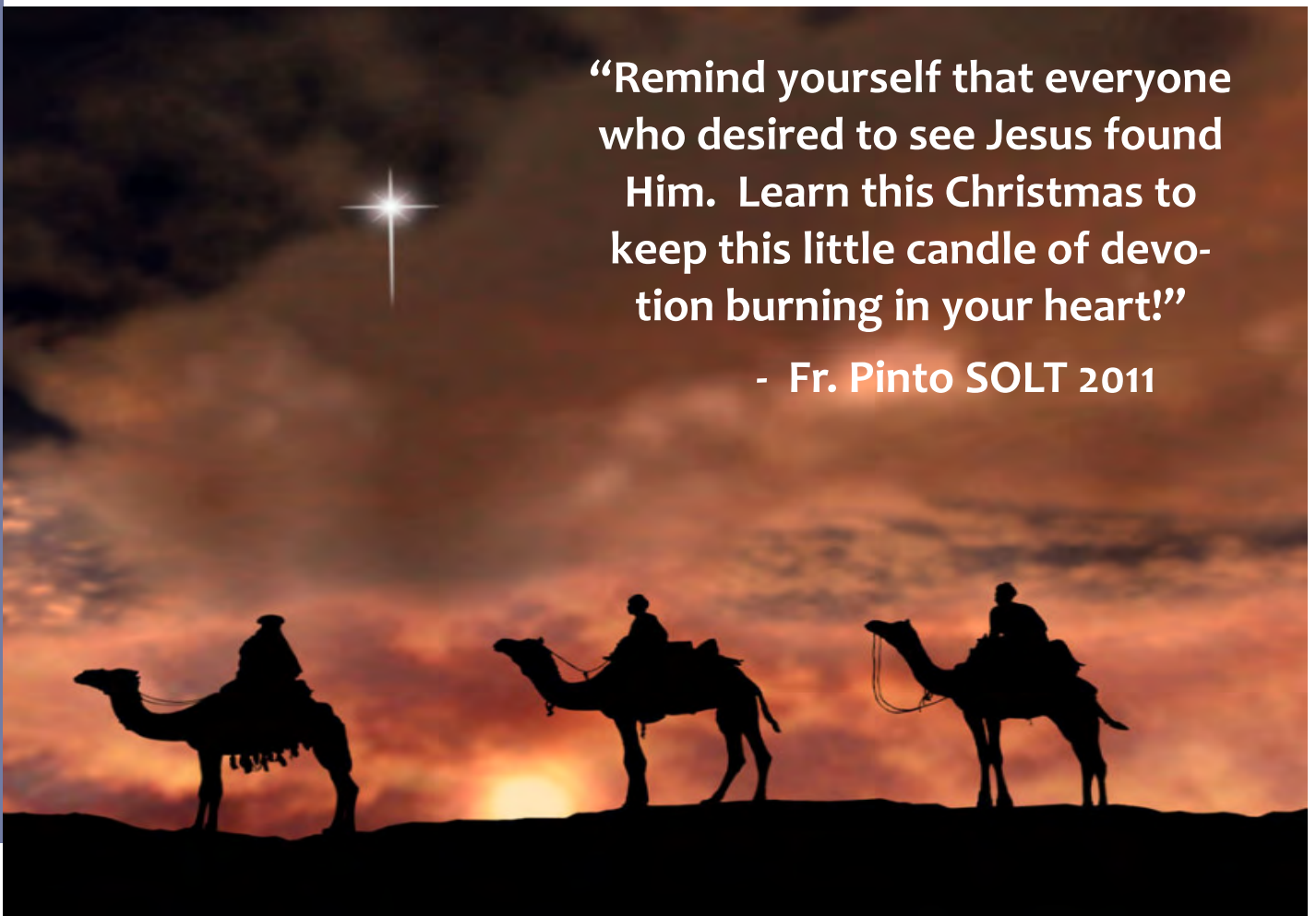
Merry Christmas!

To explain what the fatherhood group means to me, I must go back to a very low point in my life. I was newly divorced, unemployed and unable to see much of a future for myself. I was at a men's silent retreat, praying late at night in front of the Blessed Sacrament. I asked the Lord for a new start for my life. Something He and I could put together as a team. As I recall, I said something like, "I don't want a pat hand" or anything like that, but just a (continued on page 4)

“Will You Find Christ this Christmas?”

“Remind yourself that everyone who desired to see Jesus found Him. Learn this Christmas to keep this little candle of devotion burning in your heart!”

- Fr. Pinto SOLT 2011



Fraternity of Fatherhood

New Document by Pope Francis

Did You Know! Pope Francis issued a new document on November 27th. It is entitled "Evangelii Gaudium" which means "The Joy Of The Gospel" and it is about evangelization—sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

10 Reasons Every Catholic Should Read Pope Francis New Document

- 1. His language is simple and accessible**, which makes it easy for the average Catholic to read and understand. Does this sound too churchy?
"If we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?"
- 2. He cracks jokes!** Seriously - check this out.
"They (the laity) and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them!"
- 3. He remains full of hope** and challenges the Church to live and act out of hope:
"One of the more serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, "sourpusses". Nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents."
- 4. Francis doesn't want us to settle for being "ok"**, he wants what Jesus wants out of us - he wants us to be holy and missionary.
"We must recognize that if part of our baptized people lack a sense of belonging to the Church, this is also due to certain structures and the occasionally unwelcoming atmosphere of some of our parishes and communities, or to a bureaucratic way of dealing with problems, be they simple or complex, in the lives of our people. In many places an administrative approach prevails over a pastoral approach, as does a concentration on administering the sacraments apart from other forms of evangelization."
- 5. He wants to shake things up** and doesn't want us to do something merely because it has been done that way in the past:
"Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: "We have always done it this way". I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities."
- 6. He recognizes that some structures and practices of Catholic life aren't helping spread the Gospel.** So, serious reform of these things might be tough, but they are also necessary:
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New Document by Pope Francis continued.....

7. He knows how to get you pumped up for the work ahead!

"Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!"

8. He understands that the message needs to stick to the basics. The Gospel Jesus proclaimed is not complicated nor should the message the Church proclaim even forget the basics.

"On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: "Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.""

9. Reading it might do you some good! This is a very personal reflection on what is most important and Francis invites you to conversion!

"The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: "Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace". How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost!"

10. He is selling joy and who doesn't want that! The Gospel is supposed to be something that changes us and gives us joy, even when things are tough. This is a definitive sign that something has changed our lives!

"The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew."



The Gift of the Fraternity of Fatherhood (continued from page 1...)

a pair of dues would be fine. As an arrow straight to my heart came this reply.... "Jerry, I don't give anyone a 'Pat Hand'. What I do is surround you with people, who may or may not have one of the cards you seek. But more importantly, you may have one of the cards they need.....GO FISH!" That was not the reply I expected. I hadn't played that game since my kids were small, but from that day forward I have always paid attention to whomever God placed in my presence at any time of my day. The men in our Fatherhood Group are very close to my heart, and throughout all our meetings, many cards have been exchanged.

Jerry Gross

I am very thankful for the men's group in this region, although I live in Reno and we have not yet established a local men's group here, the Sacramento group has been a wonderful example. Their example is a great support and reminder that as a Catholic man I am called to live out my vocation in the church inspired by the Holy Spirit and in union with our Holy Father by following the teachings of the church in my life. As a father and husband it is often a challenge to live on the path that God has set in front of me in the way that I am called to. The example of other men living as fathers and husbands within the guidelines of the church and growing in holiness is truly an inspiration and a reminder to stay on the path that God has chosen for me. As we begin this Advent season the Holy Family is an example to bring into our hearts and our homes as we work to help our families grow in love of God. I am confident that the fellowship and example of the fatherhood group will be a great support in accomplishing this.

Peace,
Stacey

There are so many blessings in the Fraternity of Fatherhood that it is difficult to highlight only a few reasons it's so powerful in my life. We get so busy and so burdened with responsibility that sometimes committing to a night out can be hard. But every time I am together with the men I am so encouraged!

One of the best experiences for me is when we pray together. It always seems that there is something The Lord gives us to pray for together.

I greatly treasure this time with the men. We can have a great time together enjoying one another's company and seeking together. We are seeking to be the men God created us to be.

I am very grateful for the example and humility of my brothers.

Thank you men.

We truly are a band of brothers and it becomes tremendously clear that we are not alone.

Your brother in Christ,
Mike Allison, Sacramento

The Gift of the Fraternity of Fatherhood (continued from page 4...)

New Document by Pope Francis continued.....

After participating and attending the Saturday Fatherhood Fraternity get-togethers, I realized that many of the secular friendships that I was maintaining were not especially healthy relationships. Listening to other men's experiences and challenges they have living their Catholic Faith and the opportunity for sharing my experiences gives me strength, joy, and comforting peace as I face daily trials working towards living my faith daily. At one of our meetings, I was personally told by one of the group, "I pray for you daily, Paul!!" It took my breath away and it is hard to describe the positive impact that statement has on me. I find myself often praying for him and the others in the Fraternity. I very much appreciate and look forward to our monthly get-together.

Prayers & Blessings,
Paul Godsil

The Fatherhood Fraternity gatherings have been a true blessing for me. As a Catholic man, the opportunities provided in our monthly meetings are a vehicle to share with other Catholic men, which is a rarity! This has been vital to my spiritual growth and frankly, to my sanity, at times. The themed topics can be very timely and rich in discussion. Oftentimes we find ourselves personally exploring a poignant aspect of our manhood, as well, and the guys who come are invariably inspired to speak about how this is played out in their individual lives, in their families, parishes, workplace and community. Networking has been such a blessing and our group has definitely served as a tool for discernment, as well. I very much appreciate the approachable nature of this material and the practical format that we enjoy when two or more of us gather for prayer, reflection and fellowship.

Thank you, Brendan and compadres for serving us!

Harley Talkington

I have never been to a meeting. I have only met Fr. Pinto a handful of times and listened to him speak about as many. I have pulled back from parish activities do to family obligations and work load. But I thought that since you asked I would share this.

Just knowing that such an organization exists inspires me. It is easy to feel outnumbered, like you are surrounded by the world which is trying to force sin upon you. Knowing that there is a group of men sincerely trying to be good husbands and fathers to the standard the Church has outlined is more than comforting. And then getting to know you Mike, as a representative of that group is as much humbling and inspiring as it is intimidating. Humbling and inspiring because of the obvious example you are to that effort. Intimidating because it challenges me to achieve it. So thank you to the group for forming and thank you to you for being that example for me.

May God continue to bless the Fatherhood Fraternity Men,

John

(continued on page 6)

Fraternity of Fatherhood

The Gift of the Fraternity of Fatherhood (continued from page 5...)

Our Fatherhood Fraternity is a spiritual fellowship unique to any other that I have encountered. Raising children in today's secular society presents many challenges. Within our group we have honest heartfelt discussions about moving our families forward in faith. Brendan and our other group members are inspirational and truly faith-building.

Chris Verbiest

The time that our Fraternity of Fatherhood group spends together is a time that I always look forward to. We attend Mass together and we have a breakfast meeting to discuss and pray on the topic of the day. I always come away from our sessions with strength and at least one point of focus that I can take forward to build on. I love our friendship and we genuinely care about each other. It is great to have a group of men in which we support each other in our faith and we strive to grow in our vocations as Catholic men, fathers, and husbands.

Brendan McVicker

A Fraternity for All Men

The Fraternity of Fatherhood is for men of all ages. Our desire is to serve the Lord in all areas of our lives and to especially model our gift and responsibilities as fathers after the example of God the Father and His goodness. We support men; meeting them where they are. We engage in one-on-one friendships and provide opportunities for group activity, support and formation.

We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage of Saint Joseph.

Our Mission

To serve as men dedicated to the Lord in all aspects of our lives. To encourage and support men / fathers throughout the world in their gift and responsibilities as fathers. To encourage and support fathers "to respond" to their vocation, to protect and remain strong carrying their families in their hearts. Our desire is to be united to The Lord and fulfill our holy mission as fathers.

What is it we hope to do?

Bring men / fathers, closer to God by inviting them to learn their faith, challenging them to live their faith and encouraging them to love and share their faith. In addition, we invite those not married as this is a time to discern their vocation and calling in the Church.

As Fraternity of Fatherhood members, we are committed to grow and be formed spirituality, to support each other, to be active and supportive in our parishes. We are committed to learn who we are as Catholic men, to be discovered through our life experiences, prayer, studying Scripture and the documents of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, obedience to the Holy Roman Pontiff, our Roman Catholic Bishops and our parish Pastors. The formation of "Fatherhood" takes place in our hearts. Being a father means understanding that it is a call. When Fatherhood is received as a gift, it is accepted in humility and gratitude. Humility comes from the fact that we are weak. The pressures of the world are strong and flesh seems to have its way. Gratitude comes from the fact that the Lord is our Shepherd and He is with us always. With Him all things are possible.

CARRY YOUR FAMILY IN YOUR HEART - A CALL TO HOLINESS

A husband/father's guide to his vocation and spiritual direction. Each Newsletter focuses on one of the Guidelines or Areas of Growth from the "Carry Your Family In Your Heart" book. These guidelines to our Fatherhood Vocation & Spiritual Formation have been formatted based on the Fatherhood Retreat Guideline Teachings & under Spiritual Direction of Fr. Santan Pinto, S.O.L.T.

Guideline: STRONG

Fatherhood is your vocation, your calling by God. So many lay men think only the priesthood is a vocation. They thought they had a vocation at one time but then decided to get married. Then they are shocked when they find out marriage is not easy and the first time it gets tough they don't know what to do, they run, they want to leave their marriage. No! Marriage and Fatherhood is our vocation. It is not easy. It isn't supposed to be. If it was easy God would not have made it a sacrament. It is a sacrament because we cannot do it alone. We need God's help. God knows we cannot do it alone. We need God's sacramental grace for strength. We become strong through our vocation, through Fatherhood.

Our strength comes from being responsible. We have great responsibility for the gifts and talents we have been given as fathers. Show your strength to your children as a Father who helps clean, who helps with dinner and dishes. Show your strength in being a servant to your family. Jesus said the greatest is the one who serves. We are accountable for producing the fruit from the talents given us.

Our strength comes from always working. If our work is for the Lord, we will not get tired. We will be able to work past our own expectations. If our work is not for the Lord, we will tire easily.

Our strength is in being trustworthy. The Lord never gives us a cross that He has not already given us the strength and grace to handle. Our strength comes from trusting and learning to listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Listen and Learn! Trust in God's promise that He will not forsake you.

We must be strong against the abuse and inappropriate use of sex. Unfortunately, our world views sexual promiscuity as the mark of a real man. We need to set boundaries to protect ourselves against immoral relationships and pornography. We need to protect ourselves from situations where women are exploited; from the near occasions of sin. We need to be careful about the movies we choose, the magazines we look at, the TV shows we watch, the bars we attend.

Saint James tells us, "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15). Don't fall into the trap. Avoid the near occasion of sin by getting rid of any pornography you have. Just throw it away; the magazines, the cable channel, all of it. The real man is the one that has strength and seeks the strength in God to rule his passions.

Following these guidelines will make us strong and confident in God. Our strength must be "spent" on God's vocation for us. That way when we die, we enter into heaven as though we are truly coming home, head held high, confident. We can truly say we did our best.

Scripture Readings for Guideline: **STRONG**

Scripture Reading Ps 18:2-7

The Lord is our strength. He is a rock, a fortress of protection for us. We need to call upon God to protect us. He will protect us from evil if we ask Him. No matter how bad the situation, our cry reaches His ears.

Scripture Reading Ps 28:6-9

The Lord hears our pleading for help. We must trust in His help. We must trust that He is our strength and shield. We thank the Lord for His help. He saves us, blesses us, feeds us and carries us forever. The Lord is ready to help. We just need to accept His help.

Scripture Reading Luke 12:22-34

The Father knows you have needs. But He asks that we first seek His kingdom and then all the other things will be given besides. This requires trust and strength. Ask the Father for the strength. Do not be afraid! Get rid of the clutter that engulfs your heart. The world wants you to have all kinds of clutter and it clouds our view of the real treasure. Your real wealth is that which last forever in heaven. This is what you should seek. This is your treasure. This is where your heart needs to be.

Scripture Reading 2Cor 12:1-10

God's grace is sufficient for us, for power is made perfect in weakness. When we are weak, we surrender to God. His power then dwells in us. As Paul says, be content with your weakness, your insults, your hardships because it is through these that we are strong; with the strength and power of Christ.

Scripture Reading 2Tim 1:6-14

The spirit of God is one of power and love and self-control. Bear your hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. Do not be ashamed of the suffering's you endure because the strength of Christ is with you and will guard you. Guard this trust and ask the Holy Spirit to help you that dwells within you.

Scripture Reading Romans 12:1-2

Offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. Don't be conformed to the world but be transformed in Christ. Transformed in Christ that you may renew your mind, discern what is God's will for you.

Scripture Reading 1Thess 4:3-5

The will of God for you is that you refrain from immorality, that you acquire a wife in holiness and honor and not lustful passion.



POSTAGE

Fraternity of Fatherhood

**We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage
of St. Joseph.**



St. Joseph ...Pray For Us.



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To submit feedback and/or suggestions for future articles, please email the editors,

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