

Cum Petro



The Newsletter for

THE CONFRATERNITY OF ST. PETER

Christmas - January 2025

From the Chaplain

by Fr. James Fryar, FSSP

As the season of Christmas unfolds our first focus is on Our Lady and St. Joseph seeking room in Bethlehem. Next our focus turns to the Divine Child, born, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The angels come into focus singing Gloria, then the shepherds. So many things to ponder, as Our Blessed Mother pondered in Her heart—so many lessons to learn.

Also, in the latter part of the Christmas season our attention is directed to the Three Wise Men coming from the East. They bring gifts of gold to their King, frankincense to their God and myrrh to their Savior. They come from afar. They seek a King who is born. They follow a star. Of the millions of people alive at the time, who saw the star, who awaited the messiah, there were only three of them. We call them wise - indeed: wise is an understatement.

If we were to place ourselves in the east around that time, if we were to examine our conscience, would we have been among them? Or, rather, would we have stayed home like everyone else?

If we saw that star in the sky, would we have cared? Or would we have expressed passing interest in the bright sphere and gone back to whatever we were doing before the distraction?

If we saw the star, would we understand that it was guiding us to a child who is born? If we were wise enough to figure that out, would we have cared? Sure, someone extremely famous was just born on the other side of the world; but would we want to walk over there? Or is whatever I am doing more important for me right now?

Then there is the other leap of revelation that even the apostles struggled with while at the Master's side: that Child is your God and your Redeemer. Would we have comprehended that? And finally for the hardest question: If we knew that this star would lead us to our God, would we have left what we were doing and walk across the world to kneel before Him?

These three Kings were truly wise.

There's another aspect of their story. It's one thing to see a star. To know it's Christ, to leave everything to go worship Him. But then there's that little thing called perseverance, perseverance to travel across the world every step of the way—day after day.

Perseverance is like the clean house, it's a burden to keep going and apparently very little reward. Nobody thinks how hard perseverance is. It is one of the hardest things to do. The key to true perseverance is to renew our first intention every step of the way. We keep going because we know why we are doing this. If we lose interest in the goal the tediousness of the journey clouds our joy, monotony overwhelms our hope, we begin to wonder why we are even doing this and ultimately we give up.

There is also a level of perseverance required for the Confraternity member. You began your commitment with great zeal and desire to help the Fraternity with your prayers. The prayers seem so simple, even negligible, that we wonder why greater commitments are not asked. The first weeks pass, the first years, and then that little thing called perseverance comes into play. What begins as a few simple prayers becomes a challenge to remember; a challenge to continue. If we do not keep our first intention to pray for the Fraternity alive in our hearts it is so easy to forget the decade of the Rosary or the Confraternity Prayer a day or two, or for a while.

There are many lessons the Magi can teach us. As Confraternity members let us strive to imitate their perseverance, to stay faithful to the simple obligations of the Confraternity. The Fraternity needs your prayers. Please help us by praying for us! For my part, please be assured of my prayers for you and your families.

God bless you,



CUM PETRO

**The Newsletter of the
Confraternity of St. Peter
Christmas 2025**

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The Confraternity of St. Peter

Fr. James Fryar, FSSP · Chaplain

450 Venard Road,
South Abington, PA 18411
(570) 842-4000
(570) 319-9770 fax

Our Lady Queen of the Clergy

by Fr. Matthew Kane, FSSP

The Constitutions of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, after expressing that the members have a “special devotion to Jesus Christ, Sovereign Priest,” then stresses in the following paragraph that “The Fraternity is also under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Priest par excellence, and thus of each priest. She molds all priests in the image of her Son.” The FSSP has Mary Mother of the Priest as its chief patroness, because who better understands Our Lord, His mission, and ultimately His priesthood better than His mother? By drawing close to Mary, the priests of the FSSP are directed by the constitutions to find protection under Our Lady’s mantle, instruction from her in their vocation as priests, and ultimately to find in Mary the embrace of a loving mother. At the outset of this newsletter, there seems no better place to begin than by turning first to Our Lady.

Regarding Our Lady’s protection, we need look no further than the consecration of the FSSP to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on Feb. 11, 2022, and see that Mary has protected her children. Mary is always ready to defend her Children. One can think back to St. Dominic asking for a weapon against heresy. In return the saint was given the Rosary. But this defense offered by Our Lady is not limited simply to the clergy, it is offered to all of Mary’s children. If the clerical members of the FSSP are supposed to find protection under the mantle of Our Lady, should not those members of the Confraternity turn to her for protection as well? If both clerical and confraternity members are asked to pray a Rosary and a decade of the rosary (respectively) each day, will not Our Lady continue to defend them by this great weapon which she first handed to St. Dominic? Mary will protect her children, those who draw closer to her each day, defending their lives of prayer, virtue, and even their vocations.

Also, one sees that Our Lady instructs and molds the priest. While, the FSSP has two international seminaries, multiple priest formators and faculty, and an horarium of classes, the constitutions state clearly that the chief instructor of a priest, besides Christ, is Mary herself. Mary instructs not by a lesson plan or a lecture, but instead by living a life of virtue, simplicity, and humility that the priest (and all faithful Christians) should seek to emulate. One can learn at the feet of Mary by meditating on her life lived with Christ, by reading about it in Scripture, and most of all by turning to her for assistance. We can do all of these at once by turning

to Mary in the Rosary. “The Rosary is a book of the blind,” says Fulton Sheen “Where the souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men.” The Rosary, at its core teaches us about Mary, about Christ and the Mysteries of Our Faith.

The members of the FSSP are to find in Our Lady, the “Mother of the Priest par excellence.” A great summary of motherhood was once given by Venerable Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty:

“The most important person on Earth is a mother. She cannot claim the honor of having built Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not. She has built something more magnificent than any cathedral—a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby’s body . . . The Angels have not been blessed with such a grace. They cannot share in God’s Creative miracle to bring new saints to Heaven. Only a human mother can. Mothers are closer to God the Creator than any other creature; God joins forces with mothers in performing this act of creation . . . What on God’s good Earth is more glorious than this: to be a mother?”

Mary personifies the heights of this great gift of Motherhood. Not only is she herself a mother. Not only is she the mother of Christ. But, through His redemption, Mary takes on the role of the new Eve, and becomes “Mother of all the living.” “Woman behold your son . . . Behold your mother” (John 19:26-27).

This protection, formation, and motherhood of Our Lady is central to the identity of the members of both the Fraternity and Confraternity. That is why on the coat of arms, beneath Peter’s keys and three tear drops, rests a backdrop of the blue shield. The devotion to Our Lady Mother of the Clergy is represented by the blue shield and stands as a protection over each and every Fraternity member and Confraternity member as long as we only draw closer to her as our mother. Mary Mother of the Clergy. Pray for us. ✠



Fr. Matthew Kane, FSSP

Fr. Kane was ordained in 2024 and is currently stationed at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

O Magnum Mysterium

A Sermon given on Christmas

by Fr. Charles
Ohotnicky, FSSP

O Great Mystery, O Admirable Sacrament, that animals behold the Lord born, and lying in a manger.

A few years ago, as a seminarian, I was at the FSSP apostolate in Omaha for a Marian Procession and Mexican cookout. As I made a last minute dash to get a few more tacos before our departure, I came upon a very familiar sight. One of the girls of the parish, around 13, was walking around with a baby boy asleep in her arms. I was immediately reminded of the days when I would see my own sisters walking around during almost every parish potluck, holding someone's baby. What is it about babies, that makes all our young ladies practically fighting to get to hold them? And although the young men don't join in the fray, why is it that when a new father holds his newborn child for the first time, it changes his entire life? Why is holding a baby such a big deal?

Well, the answer seems to lie in the mystery which is the baby itself. The mystery of a little human person so very much alive, so full of potential, yet so small, so weak, so helpless. Nothing is so new as a baby; nothing is so in need of our care and protection. We are drawn to the mysterious, but we are also drawn to the weak. We are drawn to those in need of our love, and to love them by holding them. So we are drawn to hold babies because even though we can't wrap our minds around them, we can wrap them in our arms.

What does this imply about Christmas? What does it mean that 2000 years ago, God became a Baby?

In short, it means nothing less than that the Incarnation, that Christmas, that God coming as a Baby, is the foundational mystery of our Salvation.

In the most famous antiphon of Christmas Matins, which has inspired astounding music works, Holy Mother Church sings of this greatest of mysteries: O Magnum Mysterium, O Admirabile Sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum iacentem in praesepio. (O Great Mystery, O Admirable Sacrament, that animals behold the Lord born, and lying in a manger)

This is a great mystery! That God himself, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, would enter His Creation as the of the weakest of creatures. He didn't have to enter the world as a baby: he could have come shining with the glory of God, surrounded by an army of angels, but he didn't - he came as a baby, born of a poor woman of Nazareth in a dirty little stable in Bethlehem.

As Archbishop Fulton Sheen wrote:

"No worldly mind would ever have suspected that He Who clothed the fields with grass, would Himself be naked; that he, from Whose hands came planets and worlds, would one day have tiny arms that were not long enough to touch the cattle that the feet which trod the everlasting hills would one day be too weak to walk; that the Eternal Word would be dumb: that Omnipotence would be wrapped in swaddling clothes, that Salvation would lie in a manger - no one would ever have suspected that God coming to this earth would ever be so helpless"

Why did He become so helpless? Why did He who holds the world in His hands, want to be held in human arms? Our Lord became helpless, so that we would be drawn to help Him. He became unable to speak, so that we could speak to Him. He became defenseless, so that we could defend him. He became naked, so that we could clothe him. He became unable to walk, so that we could carry Him. He became lovable as a baby is lovable, so that we would love Him.

But you will say: Our Lord is no longer a baby, he grew up, died and rose again, and is now in Heaven.

Yes, but having paid an infinite price for his earthly thrones, the manger of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary - Our Lord could not leave forever the world where he had fought the great fight and won His victory of love. His meek and humble Heart prompted Him to stay. He has no need of anyone, since he is God, yet He seemed to need our company. "Having love His own who are in the world, He loved them to the end," unto that utmost limit which we call the Eucharist. The narrative of Our Lord's life does not close with His ascension, His nativity did not end in Bethlehem, for the story of His love is continued in the Tabernacle; Jesus, the same baby Jesus, is living today in the Eucharist.

The saints believed and understood this: take St. Anthony of Padua for example. One man, unconvinced by the St. Anthony's preaching told the Saint: "Even my horse could tell that the Eucharist isn't different from ordinary bread." St. Anthony, without hesitation, accepted the challenge. He told the man to not feed his horse for 3 days, then bring the horse with some hay and oats to the town square. St. Anthony brought the Blessed Sacrament. At the appointed time the man released the starving horse, which rushing forward, ignored the hay and oats, but with great effort, bent its front legs and

knelt before the monstrance. How did St. Anthony know this horse would recognize the Real Presence? Well, he believed the reality of Christ Child in the Eucharist. He believed the antiphon I spoke of earlier: O Great Mystery, O Admirable Sacrament, that animals behold the Lord born, and lying in a manger. St. Anthony believed that the Great Mystery of the Christ Child is present the Admirable Sacrament of the Eucharist. He knew from the words of Isaiah: “The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master’s crib” – that the ox and ass in that stable worshipped the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay in the manger. A manger is a feeding trough for animals, and surely Mary never would have laid the baby Jesus there if she was afraid of the animals eating out of it. They didn’t eat the hay, because they were in the presence of Our Lord, just as this horse, though starving, didn’t eat in the presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist. It is no coincidence that we always see St. Anthony depicted holding the Baby Jesus.

Even animals, who have no reason or faith recognize and behold the same Baby Jesus in the manger and in the Eucharist. Do we?

Do we enter the Church as we would enter the stable in Bethlehem? Do we attend Mass as we would attend the birth of Christ in Bethlehem? We Should. We should because that Magnum Mysterium, that Great Mystery, is not something that just happened 2000 years ago in a stable, no, it happens today, it will happen tomorrow, and every single day till the end of the world! Because it happens every Mass! It happens every time the priest, at the Consecration, pronounces the words “Hoc est enim Corpus Meum” At that moment the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity has come to us in Human Flesh once again. At that moment the priest holds the Infant Christ like a father holding his newborn Child for the first time. Thus, every Mass is like another Nativity, every Consecration like a new birth of Christ. Even that simple Low Mass on a weekday when only a few faithful attend, that Mass contains the Magnum Mysterium of Christmas.



We are no longer separated from the Infant Christ by thousands of years and thousands of miles. It is now possible to enter the Stable, to approach the manger, and even to hold the infant Christ. Approach the tabernacle as you would approach the manger. Pay attention to the Newborn Christ in the Eucharist, as you would pay attention to your own newborn child, for like an infant, in the Eucharist Our Lord cannot speak, He cannot move, He is entirely depended upon our care and protection. When the time comes to receive Holy Communion, prepare yourself as if to receive the Infant Jesus from the arms of Mary. A mother who is going to let you hold her child always gives you some instruction on

how to do it: “Watch his head, hold your arms like this, be really careful!”. So, heed the instructions of Holy Mother Church, dispose yourself well to receive the baby Jesus, prepare not your arms, but your heart. Infants know when you don’t know what you are doing, they get uncomfortable and start to cry. Assure the Baby Jesus of your love, your care, and your protection by the way you receive Him. If Our Blessed Mother handed you Baby Jesus to hold for a few minutes, you would be totally focused, and not forget that you were holding a baby, especially a baby who was God Himself. Really value the time after you receive the Christ Child in the Eucharist. He doesn’t ask for much, He simply wants to be held.

So when you hold the Christ Child in your heart after receiving Communion this Christmas, remember: Our Lord became a baby so that His Blessed Mother could hold him in her arms, He became the Host so that you could hold him in your heart. Finally, pray also for priests, who each and every day hold the Christ Child in their hands in the Eucharist. Ask Our Blessed Mother to teach them how to hold Him well. ✂



Fr. Charles Ohotnicky, FSSP

Fr. Ohotnicky was ordained in 2024 and is currently stationed at Mater Dei Parish in Irving, Texas.

Commentary on the Confraternity Prayer

Fr. William Rock, FSSP

Members of the Confraternity of St. Peter support the work of Fraternity of St. Peter in many ways, one of which is the daily praying of a decade of the Rosary with the Confraternity Prayer, which reads as follows:

V. Remember, O Lord, Thy congregation.

R. Which Thou hast possessed from the beginning.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus, born to give testimony to the Truth, Thou who lovest unto the end those whom Thou hast chosen, kindly hear our prayers for our pastors.

Thou who knowest all things, knowest that they love Thee and can do all things in Thee who strengthenest them.

Sanctify them in Truth. Pour into them, we beseech Thee, the Spirit whom Thou didst give to Thy apostles, who would make them, in all things, like unto Thee.

Receive the homage of love which they offer up to Thee, who hast graciously received the threefold confession of Peter.

And so that a pure oblation may everywhere be offered without ceasing unto the Most Holy Trinity, graciously enrich their number and keep them in Thy love, who art one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory and honour forever. Amen.

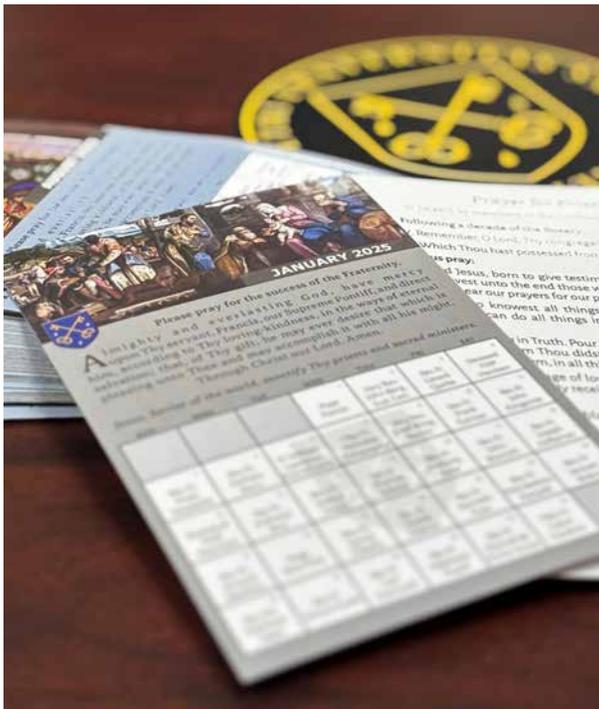
The initial versicle and response are taken from Psalm 73, verse 2, according to the Vulgate numbering. This Psalm is indicated as a “a prayer of the church under grievous persecutions,” for the Psalm details the profanation of the Jewish sanctuary by an enemy who seeks to “abolish the festival days of God” (verse 8). The enemy of God’s people seeks to prevent the worship of the One, True God and to destroy the place where this worship is carried out. In the midst of this persecution, God’s people implore Him to remember His covenant with them and to deliver them. When reciting this versicle and response, then, the members of the Confraternity should know that they are praying for

the Church which is threatened by both internal and external enemies, threatening to cut her off from her inheritance and traditions, to prevent her from keeping her perennial feasts, and to destroy and to profane her places of worship.

In his Commentary on the Psalms, St. Robert Bellarmine wrote the following regarding the verse from which the versicle and response are taken:

They now pray to God not “to cast them off,” [as stated in the preceding verse,] inasmuch as they are the people he formerly brought out of Egypt, formed them into a peculiar congregation, by giving them magistrates, laws, and rites, and, therefore, that it would seem incongruous that he who had so formed and established them should now desert them. “Remember thy congregation,” the people you congregated, “which thou hast possessed from the beginning;” who acknowledged no king or lord before you; you were the first to possess it as its Lord and Master. “The scepter of thy inheritance which thou hast redeemed, mount Sion, in which thou forever dwells” [as the verse continues]. Another argument to prove it was not right that God should cast them off; because he not only first called them as his congregation together, and possessed these; but he also raised them into a kingdom, turned the Canaanites out of the land of promise for them, and gave the land to them as being his people.

St. Robert Bellarmine is here dealing with the Psalm according to its historical context. The Hebrews, when found by God in Egypt, were not a people (see Deu 32:21), but God gathered them together, He congregated them, and made them a people, nay more, a kingdom, and gave them rulers and teachers and entrusted to them His divine teachings, His divine rites and ceremonies, and His divine disciplines. He was acknowledged by this people as Lord and Master and



“Remember, O Lord, Thy congregation, which Thou hast possessed from the beginning”

led them to possess the lands of the Canaanites. All of this, however, is now threatened, and so the people turn to God for help, reminding Him of all He has done for them in the past, and invoking this as a reason why He should come to their aid now.

Spiritually, however, the kingdom is God's Church. As with the ancient Hebrews, God formed the Church by establishing within her a divine hierarchy and by entrusting to her divine teachings, divine rites and ceremonies, and divine disciplines, which the Church has fostered and enriched throughout her long history. But the Church, like the ancient kingdom, has enemies which strive against her, and she likewise turns to God for her defense with a confidence founded on how God has dealt with her in the past.

In the context of the Confraternity Prayer, the "congregation" is the Fraternity of St. Peter, founded, congregated, from the very start, by God Himself. Indeed, the Founders credit the foundation of the FSSP to God rather than to their own efforts as it was something of a miracle that the Fraternity was founded given the state of affairs at the time. The Fraternity strives to maintain, express, and exercise the perennial teachings, rites, and disciplines of the Church, in union with the Church's hierarchy. The Fraternity, like the Church, has those who oppose this work, and like the Church, the Fraternity trusts in God to come to its defense, which is made much surer by the prayers of the members of the Confraternity.

In the future, the main prayer and its contents will be considered. ✂



Fr. William Rock, FSSP

Fr. Rock was ordained in 2019 and is currently stationed at St. Stanislaus Parish in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Blessing of Candles at Candlemas

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray. O Holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, who hast created all things out of nothing, and by Thy command hast caused this liquid to become perfect wax by the labor of bees: and who, on this day didst fulfill the petition of the righteous man Simeon: we humbly entreat Thee, that by the invocation of Thy most holy Name and through the intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin whose feast is today devoutly observed, and by the prayers of all Thy Saints, Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless + and sanctify + these candles for the service of men and for the health of their bodies and souls, whether on land or on sea: and that Thou wouldst hear from Thy holy heaven, and from the throne of Thy Majesty the voices of this Thy people, who desire to carry them in their hands with honor, and to praise Thee with hymns; and wouldst be propitious to all that call upon Thee, whom Thou hast redeemed with the precious Blood of Thy Son: Who liveth and reigneth with thee, world without end.

R. Amen.

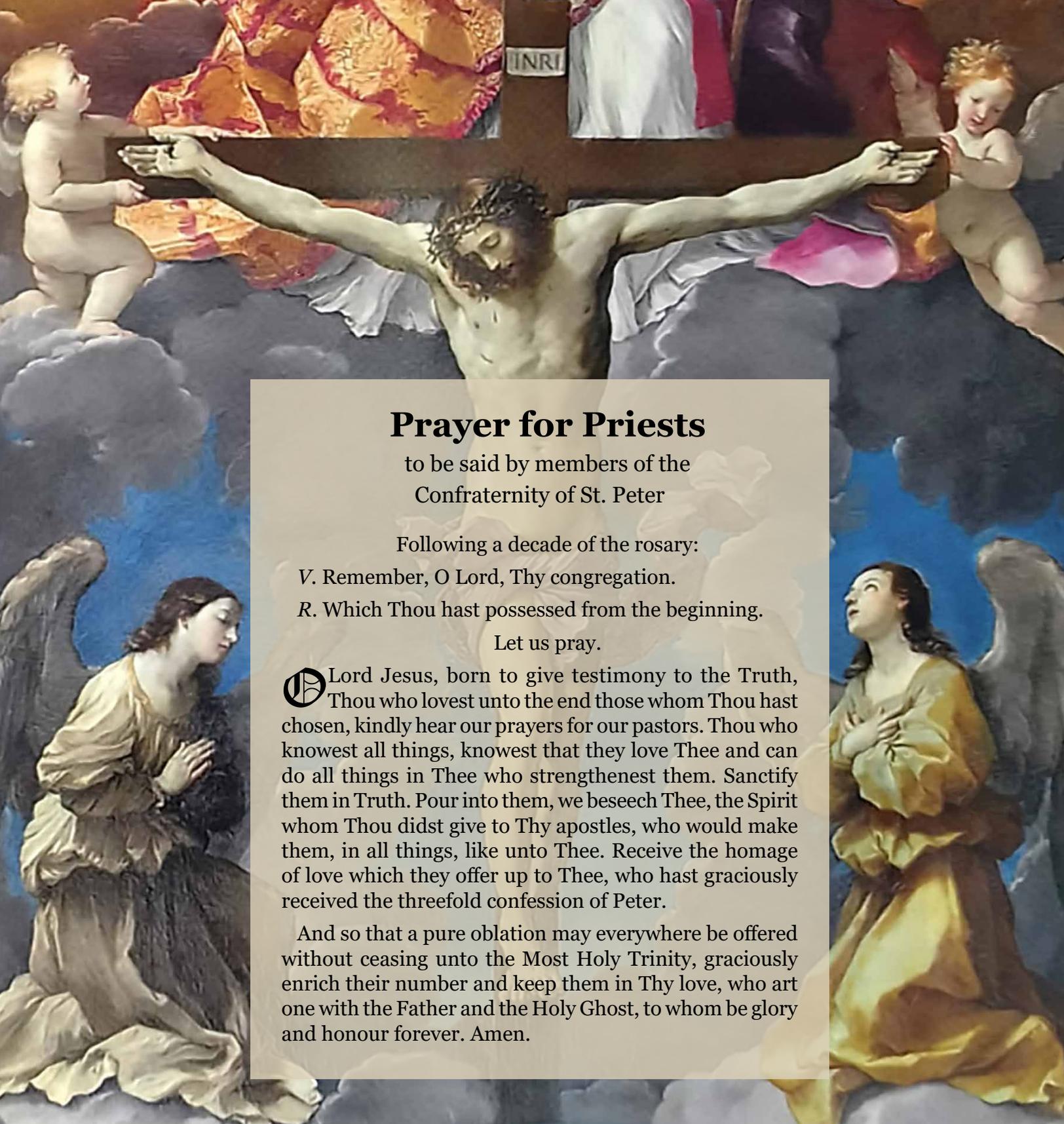
INTENTIONS FROM THE PRIEST PRAYER CARD



Fr. Joseph Duffy, FSSP was ordained in 2024 and is currently assigned at Corpus Christi Chapel in Naples, Florida. He is featured on our Priest Prayer card on February 28th. His special intentions are: the Duffy and Tarsa Family (living and deceased), Pope Francis, the FSSP, my siblings in a religious community and their confreres, Mrs. Sherry Ohotnicky (RIP), Dr. Brendan McGuire (RIP), Fr. Seamus O'Kielty (RIP), and Fr. John Donovan (RIP). Thank you for remembering these specific intentions and your continued prayers for all the priests and deacons listed in the coming months.

FEBRUARY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Pope Francis
2 Rev. Fr. John Lyons	3 Rev. Fr. Aaron Liebert	4 Very Rev. John Berg, Sup. Gen.	5 Rev. Fr. Daniel Geddes	6 Fr. William Lawrence, Provincial Superior	7 Rev. Fr. Benoit Guichard	8 Deceased FSSP Members
9 Rev. Fr. Samuel Florance	10 Rev. Fr. John Killackey	11 Very Rev. Josef Bisig, Rector	12 Rev. Fr. Thomas Fritschen	13 Rev. Fr. Christopher Pelster	14 Rev. Fr. Anthony Uy	15 Rev. Fr. Rhone Lillard
16 Rev. Fr. Jeremy Chua	17 Rev. Fr. Massimo Botta	18 Rev. Fr. Christopher Mahowald	19 Rev. Fr. Karl Marsolle	20 Rev. Fr. Anthony Fill	21 Rev. Fr. Jacob Kasak	22 Rev. Fr. Matthew Goddard
23 Rev. Fr. Joseph Lee	24 Rev. Fr. Daniel Alloy	25 Rev. Fr. Dennis Gordon	26 Rev. Mr. Ronald McCann	27 Rev. Fr. John Shannon	28 Rev. Fr. Joseph Duffy	



Prayer for Priests

to be said by members of the
Confraternity of St. Peter

Following a decade of the rosary:

V. Remember, O Lord, Thy congregation.

R. Which Thou hast possessed from the beginning.

Let us pray.

P Lord Jesus, born to give testimony to the Truth, Thou who lovest unto the end those whom Thou hast chosen, kindly hear our prayers for our pastors. Thou who knowest all things, knowest that they love Thee and can do all things in Thee who strengthenest them. Sanctify them in Truth. Pour into them, we beseech Thee, the Spirit whom Thou didst give to Thy apostles, who would make them, in all things, like unto Thee. Receive the homage of love which they offer up to Thee, who hast graciously received the threefold confession of Peter.

And so that a pure oblation may everywhere be offered without ceasing unto the Most Holy Trinity, graciously enrich their number and keep them in Thy love, who art one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory and honour forever. Amen.

Obligations of the Members of the Confraternity

Members commit themselves to:

- daily* 1) pray one decade of the holy rosary for the sanctification of our priests and for our priestly vocations
- 2) recite the Prayer of the Confraternity
- yearly* 3) have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered once for these intentions.

To Enroll Now:

