

HE SERVANT



AND I, WHEN I
AM LIFTED UP,
WILL DRAW THE
WORLD UNTO
MYSELF.

#148

Epiphany/Lent 1993

The Servant

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Founders' Forum

THE SHARED MEAL

The eucharist was, for a time, used little in the church outside of Rome and the East. In some churches once a month and in many others several times a year or even once a year was the norm! Thanks be to God that has changed and most mainline churches are observing the Lord's Supper more often.

The shared meal is referred to in three ways in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, and each has a special significance.

The term *eucharist* is not used in much of protestantism, though it is present in the New Testament in giving thanks for the bread (11.24). The shared meal is a thanksgiving to God for the Bread from heaven, even as at ordinary meals we thank God for ordinary bread.

+ Many churches use the designation *Lord's Supper* for the meal, but it is only called that in 11.20, and this is to contrast with the rowdy Corinthian gatherings.

+ The third name is *communion*—the unity of fellowship and coming to-

gether of brothers and sisters. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" (10.16) The word communion is *koinonia* or fellowship. Paul uses it in contrast to the "party spirit" and division (heresy and schism, in the Greek) that typifies the feasts in Corinth.

This is the shared meal: thanksgiving at the Lord's Supper with the living symbols of unity, cup and loaf. There are no two ingredients in history which have more nourished us than bread and wine. In bringing these two elements together we celebrate eucharist, the Lord's Supper, communion and shared meal. When we have this shared meal, when we take these elements into our bodies, they are changed into our body and blood. These two elements taken in communion make us who are many one in Christ.

Richard Thomas

Focus on ministry **IN THE FACE OF AIDS**

I am very happy to be with you this morning, on this last Sunday of October, the month set aside for AIDS awareness. My name is Rick Lorino and I am a brother in a religious community of the Episcopal Church known as the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory. My parish is on the other side of the county, where I assist as a lay reader, chalice bearer, liturgist, and serve on the vestry.

All the members of my community work in secular or church related jobs and financially support the church and the order. If I should look familiar to you, it's because I work here in town a few days a week at the jewelry store owned by my parents. You'll remember the gospel story about Jesus going to Nazareth to teach in the synagogue and the people whispering, "Isn't that the carpenter's son?" Well, just a few minutes ago I heard someone ask during the procession, "Isn't that the jeweler's son?" Yes, I am. But I'm not here to drum up business for the store. I'm here in a very different capacity, because when I'm not at the store, I'm at the county medical center where I work as a chaplain in the AIDS management program. That's what I'd like to talk to you about this morning.

In today's lesson from Jeremiah (14.1–10, 19–22), Judah mourns and laments over a drought. It doesn't look like there's any relief in sight. Judah is convinced that all of this is happening because of her sins, and she cries out in desperation to God for help, but her pleas are unanswered. She is sure that God has deserted her. The reading ends with Judah acknowledging that God is in control and she is powerless. In Paul's Second Letter to Timothy (4.6–8, 16–18), the answer to Judah's lack of hope is given to us in Jesus

Christ, who "will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom." Finally, the gospel (Luke 18.9–14) tells us that the humble, the downtrodden and those who suffer will be exalted by God; and the righteous, those who judge others, will be laid low. These three readings sum up a basic principle for us as Christians: where there is despair, we are to bring hope. There is no room for holier-than-thou attitudes. The gospel tells us where that leads. We are called to be beacons of light and hope.

Despair is what I deal with every day in AIDS ministry. Because of the devastating nature of this disease, most people with AIDS live in despair. There's nothing hopeful about the diagnosis. As you may or *may* not know, there's no cure, and no one has recovered. There's often tremendous guilt involved, because much HIV infection is a result of something society has deemed morally wrong, whether it's drug abuse or sexual promiscuity. Needless to say, guilt and despair play one against the other, and the result is a worn-down, frightened, isolated individual looking at four or five years left to live. That's the average right now from the time of diagnosis, although some have been known to live as long as ten years, but they are the exception. Most of my ministering to people with AIDS, or PWAs as they're called, is spent just being there for them, being a friend who won't desert them, someone they know they can trust and open up to without fear of being judged. A lot of time is spent talking about what they're going through, what they're feeling, and I spend a good deal of time helping them understand that they are not being punished for something they've done, and that in

God's eyes they are worthy of God's love, and the love of others. For a lot of them, that's difficult to believe, no matter what risk group *they* are in. I try to meet each patient where he or she is and help them along in the journey that will eventually end in an untimely and often torturous death. Many times, issues of spirituality surface; sometimes they don't. My work, as I see it, is simply to be there for them. Interestingly enough, the ministering is mutual. In helping to prepare them for death, I have been taught more about life and love than I ever imagined possible.

Before I go on, I'd like to introduce you to a few of the people I've become friends with in this ministry.

Louie is 44 years old. Diagnosed in 1987, he was an IV drug user. He is separated from his wife and his ten-year-old son. Before his diagnosis, he had a lucrative landscaping business. He has TB and can no longer work. His business went bankrupt just after his hospitalization.

Jerry is 24 years old. He had a sexual relationship with an HIV+ woman during college. She has since died. The disease has ravaged his body, first taking his sight, then his hearing, now his liver. He has been in a semi-coma for over six weeks. He is fed through tubes. The only thing keeping him alive is his strong, young heart. His kidneys will probably fail next and that will bring death.

Laura is a 36-year old woman. Her brother and sister died earlier from AIDS. The three siblings shared IV needles.

Antonio is a 50-year-old artist. He is married and has two children. He contracted HIV during a blood transfusion in 1982, before blood was being screened. He is midway into the disease and episodes requiring hospitalization are becoming more and more frequent.

Margaret is 36, from an upper middle class family. Her first husband deserted her six years ago and was never heard from. She got news of his death from an

attorney, who also informed her of the cause: AIDS. She was tested and found to be positive. Her new husband has been devastated by this. He is working two jobs to *pay* medical bills. With professional help, he has managed to care for his wife at home, but her illness is progressing and she requires more and more medical attention. She now has PCP, a form of pneumonia that is one of the most dangerous AIDS-related infections.

Jim is a 52-year-old priest who engaged in unsafe, promiscuous homosexual sex. He was a distinguished professor at a university.

Matthew is 28, married and the father of two beautiful children. During his teenage years, he used intravenous drug and shared needles for a period of less than six months. His older brother found out and forced him into a rehab program. He has been clean since. He found out he was HIV+ when he tried to increase his life insurance after the birth of his second son.

Tom is 38, the father of three lovely and devoted daughters ages 18, 16, and 14. He contracted HIV through a casual extramarital affair that lasted six weeks. He has lost his home, his boat, and his business as a result of his illness. His wife and children have stayed with him through the entire ordeal.

Should I go on? The list is long; at the medical center there are 480 outpatients, 20 to 30 inpatients every *day* of the year, three to six dying *each* week.

Remember Judah who had no hope during the dry spell? Well, Judah had it good compared to these people. If Judah thought her God was a distant one, you can imagine what an AIDS patient feels! With almost any other disease, there's a ray of hope, even if it's dim. Cancer can be treated, with greater and greater success. We can transplant livers and kidneys; we do rooter procedures and bypasses for clogged arteries of heart pa-

tients. Almost every diagnosis has at least some promise. AIDS does not.

Now I'm not making light of the suffering any other people experience from other diseases; I know the devastation diseases cause to individuals and their families. But AIDS is different because of the way it first appeared in this country. It just so happens that in the United States, AIDS appeared first within the gay community, and later in the drug-using community. When it's spread was linked with these practices, it became an explosive is-sue, mostly because of the taboos society and the church have placed on them.

So, where are we concerning AIDS? How far have we come since it first made its ugly debut back at the turn of the decade? Not very far at all, I'm afraid. During this past month, PBS has aired several programs on the AIDS pandemic. One of these was a documentary made in 1986. As I watched it, I was amazed at the ignorance that ran rampant in our society during the early years of the disease. We burned down the house of a family whose hemophiliac children contracted the virus during transfusions; they were run out of town. We prohibited HIV+ children from attending school. We beat up gays, whether or not they had the disease, simply because they personified our fears. Hate and paranoia were uncontrolled, and in self-righteous ways we did some very ugly things. I couldn't believe this was only six years ago and I thanked God for the progress we had made in such a short time, and for the grace that made that healing possible.

But that was short-lived. Perhaps because I see AIDS face-to-face almost every day, I was living under the delusion that people had gotten a handle on their fears and were beginning to act intelligently and compassionately, but I was wrong. Within a week, I was brought back to reality: that AIDS and people with AIDS are still feared and hated.

**AN AIDS
PRAYER**

Dear God, We thank you for the sun and stars and all the things around us that make us happy. Thank you for all you have done for us and for sending Jesus.

We pray for those who are sick, especially those with hurting blood and death-giving diseases. Make medicine for them, give them nice doctors, and help them to pray in the sun and to live in victory.

We pray for friends in the hospital who are feeling bad. That hurts our feelings too. Make them better, Jesus... it is very important to us.

Get the unhappiness out of people and bless them with love. Shield us from the wrath of evil, turmoil and chaos, and abide us with joy.

Send your angels and the Holy Spirit and surround all sick people and us with your love.

Thank you, God. Amen.

This prayer was composed by the children of All Saints' Church School (Beverly Hills CA), and edited by Rector Carol Anderson for use at the "Stars With Hearts" AIDS benefit.

SHE WAS AFRAID

SHE MIGHT

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A few days after that program, I received a call from a local clergyman asking if I would be available to attend a meeting with the mayor of this town concerning a sticker that was placed on parking meters and several shop windows, insinuating that the way to stop AIDS was to kill a homosexual. Actually, what disturbed me most about this was what it told me about where we still are, and how far we still have to go. First of all, the gay population is no longer the core, and hasn't been since gay-related transmissions started declining some years ago. You have to understand that since gays were hit first, they began taking precautions and educating themselves. And for ten years, while they were doing something positive to protect themselves, the other side laughed, made jokes, condemned, and judged. And during that time, the virus worked its way into almost every level of society, from drug addicts, to prostitutes, to middle class housewives, to high-powered businessmen, to famous athletes and movie stars. So, if the person responsible for those stickers had been informed, he would have found it difficult to single out any one carrying group. Statistically, only one out of every ten of our patients at the medical center is homosexual, the same proportion of gays in the total population.

Another incident that gave me a clear picture of where we still are happened just this week. I have been looking for someone to come in once every other week to help with some of my own housekeeping chores. A young woman came to the house, assessed what would have to be done on a regular basis, and we agreed on a price. She was to start the following week. Several days later, she called to tell me that she wouldn't be able to do it. I found out later, from a neighbor who knows her, that she read an article about my work with AIDS patients in a local newspaper and was afraid that she might contract the virus by working in my home. I really began to wonder if we have made any progress at all.

Do we have a responsibility as Christians to people with AIDS? And if so, what is it? Well, if you believe the gospel mandate, we definitely do, and it's no different from our responsibility to any person suffering from any disease. Jesus set the perfect model of compassion and compassionate healing when he was not afraid to be in the presence of lepers, the most shunned group in his times. Leprosy was thought to be a curse of God against a person, but Jesus dispels that myth and gives us the powerful image of the unclean coming before the church, the people of God, to be seen, to be made new, whole and clean. Take that model, emphasized again in this morning's readings, and you have the perfect outline for your ministry as a Christian: where there is disease and despair, bring Christ, the light and hope of all. Where there's Christ, there's healing. Jesus doesn't teach us to ignore or shun; instead, he gives us a model that calls for breaking traditional beliefs, that calls for compassion, and for love. AIDS is not the wrath of God on any singled out group, anymore than sickle-cell anemia is a sign that God is angry at blacks, or lung cancer is God's revenge on people who

smoke. Jesus tried to tell us that in his healing ministry. In John 9 Jesus clearly says that the blind man's blindness is not a result of sin; it was to let God's work show forth in him. God came into the world to love, and it is wrong to say that he would single out and destroy any of his creation. That is simply not Christian thinking. God is compassionate, loving and creating, and by his very nature is incapable of such destruction. As Christians, we are called to be mirrors of that love. Adding to the pain of any individual by perpetuating myths already proved false by Jesus himself, makes us responsible for working against God, and destroying the unity of the Body of Christ. And that is sin!

I know that we're not supposed to talk about sin or money in church. But I'm going to touch on both of those things today. What can this very parish do to be a Christian witness in the midst of AIDS? A good place to start is with what I like to call "the three-P plan": Prayer, Participation, Payment.

Pray first. Through prayer, God will let you know exactly what he wants you to do as his beacon of hope. *Pray* for a cure for AIDS. *Pray* for understanding and compassion. *Pray* for those who suffer from HIV and AIDS. *Pray, pray, pray.* Nothing can be done without prayer.

Then, *participate*. Get involved in something that will help alleviate someone else's suffering, maybe an educational program to help you understand AIDS, and in turn help others understand it. Or volunteer in a local AIDS program such as ARCS in Elmsford, or the Upper Room in Yonkers, where you might prepare or deliver a meal to an AIDS shut-in. Or help out at a hospital where you might be a cuddler, giving a baby born with AIDS the love and warmth he might otherwise never know. Or contact Volunteers of America to see what programs are available that you might be interested in.

Perhaps you don't feel that you can do hands-on work with AIDS patients. That's fine. Not everyone is called to that. But you can help with your financial support. That's where *payment* comes in. There are *many* programs in desperate need of money, and the opportunity is great.

AIDS is not going to go away anytime soon. Every day, hundreds of cases are diagnosed. Every day, hundreds more die throughout the world. By the end of this century, every one of you sitting here will know someone with AIDS. It cannot be ignored, and it must not be feared. We must begin by seeing it not as a divine retribution, but a divine opportunity for us to demonstrate God's love. We have to reach out with a healing touch, and transform suffering and despair into hope. That is what we are called to do as Christians, and our Christian response must be deeply rooted in love. Teresa of Avila once wrote "God is not so much concerned with the work we do, as with the love with which we do that work." Love should underlie everything we do, and it should keep us from being self-righteous and judgmental. "We must come to love even our own wounds." AIDS is our own wound, a wound on all of humanity. And if we can come to love that, we'll be able to work miracles of hope. And maybe, just maybe, someday soon we'll be able to look back to the 1986 documentary and say "I can't believe people actually did those things. Thank God it's different now." Only we can make that happen. Amen.

This sermon was delivered by Richard John last October. The names of the people with AIDS have been changed.

It was a cold crisp afternoon, and I had been on the road since 9 am. The trek through central New York state was bleak, and snow had drifted heavily down from the gray sky more than once since I passed through Albany. I smile now as I remember that afternoon, a perfect New England day, peacefully snuggled under its *gray* blanket. As I crossed the boarder into Pennsylvania, the sun began to peak out from under the clouds near the horizon, painting the mountains gold in the waning gray daylight. The back of my mind was busy in anticipation of the coming events of this visit home. This wasn't going to be a typical Thanksgiving. My parents had just moved into their newly built home in the back woods of Pennsylvania, 30 minutes north of Scranton (the middle of no-where, by my reckoning), leaving behind my brother and the rest of my relatives back in New Jersey. On top of everything else, my aunt and cousin were visiting from Ireland (I haven't seen either in 15 years).

A note of concern, even a little *fear*, crossed my mind as I realized that it was getting dark. I had never been this way before, and the road was getting more difficult at every turn. I had just made the "second left at the third cow patty on your right" when I was really beginning to wonder if I would make it before dark, before I could no longer see the land-marks my father had dictated over the phone two nights ago.

I took a deep breath and slipped in-side myself. Down into that small, still spot where I know God. "Sigh," I said. "Hush," he said. "Thanks," I said, and re-turned to the narrow ribbon of road in front of me. Just about then I noticed the

lights of a car coming down the road behind me. I pulled over and motioned for the car to pull up along side me. The woman driving smiled at me and said, "Are you lost?"

"Maybe," I said, "Do you know where Fiddle Lake Road is?"

"Certainly!" she said, "It's *your* next left. I live just the other side of Fiddle Lake. Who are you looking for?"

"The DellaFera family," I said, "you probably don't know them, they just built a new house on Fiddle Lake Road."

"Can't say's I do," she said, "but you're almost there; just follow me. Have a nice Thanksgiving!"

"Thanks, and the same to you," I said, and drove off behind her with a smile. Just as I rounded the next bend I could see the golden light from the win- dows of my parents' new home at the top of the hill. "Thanks," I said. He just smiled. In retrospect, Thanksgiving Day was crazy and wonderful, joyful and a little sad. Things were definitely different this year. All the driving around the day before Thanksgiving to get to get my aunt and cousin back to the airport had us all a little crazy to begin with. My brother, now off and living on his own, only managed to stop in, just in time for Thanksgiving dinner. My cousin Jackie is pregnant and because of difficulties with the baby she and her husband couldn't be with us. My Aunt Millie, who used to live with my parents, has moved away so I won't get to see her this year until Christmas. Yet, lying on the love-seat in the family room back in Pennsylvania, with all of that behind me, something said "home." The view out the window is spectacular; my parents home is on the top of a large hill overlooking a beautiful

mountain valley. The smell of a crackling fireplace from somewhere down the valley mingled with the smell of roast chicken and stuffing drifting from the kitchen. My mother rattling pots and pans in the kitchen, and my father (with his glasses sliding down his nose) reading quietly across the room.

"JUST DRIVE," HE SAID.

I looked back out the window at the glory of God's handiwork. "Thanks," I said. I felt a warm home-scented draft caress my hair. A clear, authoritative voice spoke vibrantly of the Holy Spirit and St Luke's gospel, as the last cobwebs of a dream, now forgotten, began to dissipate. I opened one eye, rolled over and realized that the sound of Barbara Harris' voice from the radio probably indicated that I had managed to oversleep, again. Sigh! I rolled out of bed and briskly began my morning ritual, knowing that it would be a minor miracle if I made it to mass on time. In the shower I made a quick journey to that small, still place so familiar after all these years. The drive back to Massachusetts last night was long and tiring. The last words of Compline were barely drifting into the quiet of the night when I abandoned myself into God's hands and sleep, glorious sleep. Now in the rush of a Sunday morning, in fond anticipation of mass and fellowship, I needed to have a chat with a certain someone about the fact that I was not going to have time for Morning Prayer.

As I shot out into the Sunday morning traffic on the Mass Pike, I whispered few words of that all-too-oft-repeated prayer: "Oh Lord, bless and keep the State Police... far, far from me." A quiet "Ahem" echoed somewhere down in my

consciousness. "I know, I know," I said. "Just be careful!" he said. "Thanks," I said. "Oh, yes, one more thing," I said. "Eh?" I heard. "Urn ... maybe if I could just manage to arrive before the psalm?" "Just drive," he said.

As I opened the church door, the wonderful smell of incense brushed my nose, and the first notes of the psalm of the day greeted my ears. I smiled to myself and quickly slipped into a back pew.

The quiet of the church sank into me, in marked contrast to the craziness of the last two hours, calling to mind the peace-fulness of the week gone by. My mind wandered to thoughts of others, whose lives are craziness punctuated by rare, if any, moments of peace, instead of the other way around. Today, it turned out, would be a less than peaceful day for many of us at St John's. Peter's memorial service and the fire at Dorothy's house that morning would mean a "disturbed peace" for many people today. The sound of Jennifer's footsteps brought me back to the here and now, as she walked calmly to the pulpit. Her words, like brush strokes, painted a picture of peace; the warmth and purring of a cat; the sound of a radiator. Yet her words also painted a picture of reality, of a less-than-peaceful world, of the need for mutual support and sanctity, and of the need for love. I traveled inward and listened with my soul. "Be still, and know that I am God," I heard her say. I smiled to myself. "She understands," I said.

"Hmm ... " he said, nodding in agreement, "Hmm ... "

Ciarán Anthony's meditation originally appeared in the parish newsletter of St John the Evangelist, Boston.

Epiphany thoughts

A G I F T T O S H A R E

By now we've had a chance to sort through our Christmas gifts. Some of them weren't exactly what we had in mind, were they? They have been discreetly returned to the department store, or consigned to the attic or similar resting-place for other people's good intentions. Sometimes in storing one present we come upon a past year's rejected gift, and realize with a start that we need it after all—the curtains that seemed so dark last year are now just right to go with the new armchair.

On the other hand, there are gifts we know at once to be "just what we wanted." They are so personal, they so re-veal another's love and knowledge of us, that we keep them to ourselves. They are very simple and unassuming: a single flower, a five-and-dime ceramic frog, or a pink plastic flamingo—the language of love has a strange but eloquent vocabulary. We don't talk about these gifts to those outside our circle of intimacy; how could we explain? To bring these gifts to light would be as embarrassing as using our beloved's pet name in public.

Still other gifts are such that the joy in receiving them grows by spreading them around and sharing them with others. The first impulse on receiving the video cassette of our favorite film is to find someone to watch it with. It's as much fun to watch the film with another fan as with someone who's never seen it before.

What do these gifts have to do with us? The world has received the most wonderful gift in Christ Jesus. That's why we give gifts at Christmas, after all: to re-mind ourselves of the greatest gift.

We receive this great gift much as we do other gifts. Most of us can't accept, at least at first, all that Jesus asks of us when

he comes into our lives. We may nod politely and say, "How nice," but we're already thinking about how to fit this ungainly package into our spiritual attic. Then one day we come upon the Christmas Presence we've tried to forget, and realize that what is asked of us is what we want to do, and that we've been given the skill to do what Jesus asks. The stone that the builders reject is later found to fit exactly in the most crucial spot.

At other times, Jesus comes to us in such an intimate and personal *way* we may feel shy about sharing that relationship with others. But that is simply how Jesus is: he calls us each by name, treats us each as if we were the sole object of his love. We can relish and enjoy that relationship, but share it in the knowledge that Jesus shares himself with others too. His love is as generous, miraculous and abundant as the wine poured forth at Cana.

In sharing this great gift, we may be tempted to remain within the circle of those who already know Jesus: the church. We relish our common joy, talking to each other about our favorite parts of the story, rather than breaking new ground as evangelists, telling the story to those who have never heard it, bringing the gift of grace to those who don't *yet* know Jesus. But the Scripture that is fulfilled in our hearing, the Good News we hear today, is for all people, and we are the ministers of this message of salvation.

Evangelism is stewardship of the gospel: it is sharing the greatest gift.

*Tobias Stanislas is
editor of The Servant.*

Here and there with the Brothers and Sisters **COMMUNITY NOTES**



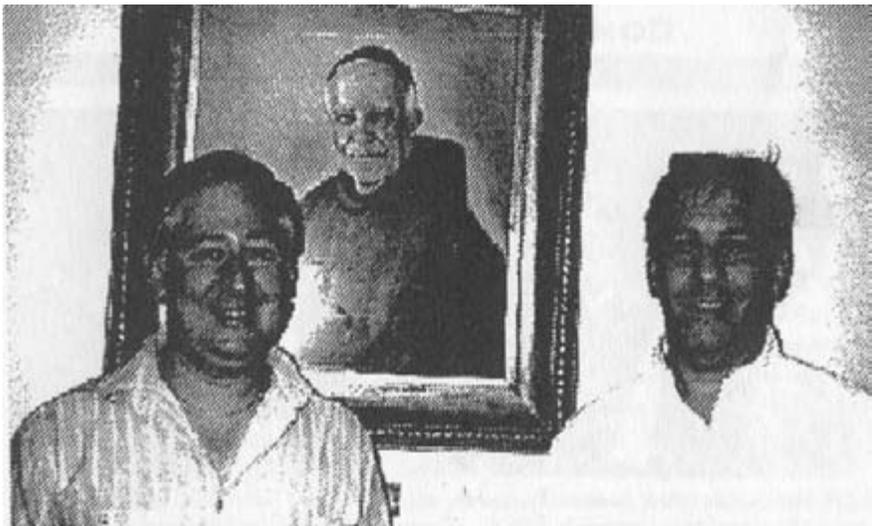
Brothers and one sister from Province I joined the rector of Trinity (Tilton NH) and Bishop Douglas Theuner of New Hampshire for a day of retreat and spiritual refreshment.

Province I

Ciarán Anthony is continuing his education in American Sign Language (ASL). In his second year of training, he hopes to become a licensed ASL interpreter/translator. + + + He also participated in the City Year annual Serv-a-thon. City Year is Boston's Urban Peace Corps. Corps members donate a year of service to City Year in exchange for a salary of \$100 a week. During their year of service corps members do community service work in the city of Boston. Activities include repairing homeless shelters, helping out at the National Braille Press, general maintenance and painting in housing projects for the differently abled, and so on. The Serv-a-thon allows non-corps member volunteers to experience City-Year-For-A-Day. Serv-a-thon volunteers are given pledge forms and solicit pledges of minimum wage or better for an eight-hour day of service. On the day of the Serv-a-thon the volunteers gather at 7 AM for some brief exercises and to receive their work assignments for the day. This year's Serv-A-thon drew 7,000 volunteers from all over New England.

Province II

The Presiding Bishop has re-instituted a linkage system within the Episcopal Church as a way to increase communication between the dioceses and the inter-national office in New York. Most staff officers at the Church Center have been assigned one or two dioceses with which they will be contact persons: Richard Thomas has been appointed to Western Louisiana (where Michael David lives, moves and has his being) and James to Eau Claire and Fond du Lac (both in Wisconsin). Last October James attended the Eau Claire diocesan convention, meeting many warm and committed Episcopalians, and he had the opportunity to talk with several people about the ethos of the apostolic religious life as the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood understand it. Bernard Francis drove up to the convention site, Eau Claire's Christ Church Cathedral, and he and James returned to his home in Madison. James' first trip to Wisconsin concluded with a visit to Bernard Francis' parish, St. Luke's.



When in Rome... Richard John (left) paid a call on Fr Jim Puglisi (and Fr Paul Wattson) at the Atonement Friars' Centro Pro Unione.

Richard John preached at the autumn AIDS Memorial Service at the Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla NY. These services are held at each change of season. He later joined several members and patients of the AIDS program in "The Festival of Saints in a Time of AIDS" at the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine.

On All Saints' Day, he joined Superior General Richard Thomas at the organ console at St Bartholomew's, White

Plains, in a performance of Fauré's *Requiem*.

PROVINCE III

Edward and Gustavo paid a visit to Associate Sr Helen Marie Joyce, VHM at Stella Maris, Towson MD. Helen Marie is one of the community's dearest friends, and was there at the very beginning.

At this writing, Thaddeus David is in critical condition in Temple University



(l to r) Thomas Joseph, Fr Cochrane, Associates Patrick and Elizabeth, and Ronald Augustine
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Novice Gordon John, course leader Guy Charleson, and Associate Brendan Nugent, at St Peter' Chicago.

Hospital (Philadelphia). He was attacked, severely beaten on the head, and robbed in a transit station on his way to evening choir practice. Pray for him.

Province V

Ronald Augustine and Gordon John joined Thomas Joseph for a Provincial retreat at Christ Church, Cincinnati, led by the Rev John Cochrane, rector of St Anne's. They were joined by Associates Patrick Schwing and Elizabeth Holton, both members of Christ Church. The retreatants also attended the Sunday service, at which Bishop Furman Stough was celebrant.

Michael David has been working on another fellowship at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs NY. During this time he completed stations of the cross and stoups for Trinity, Natchitoches LA. He is now working on a rood treatment. In a more secular arena, he produced the poster for the Zwolle Tamale Fiesta.

Gordon John and Associate Brendan Nugent are taking part in St Peter's (Chicago) Bible course on the historical Jesus, led by Guy Charleson.

The Vesting Drawer

This last quarter brought donations of used but still useful vestments and church furnishings from Jack Scheel (Shalimar FL), the Rev William J Haas

(Cleveland), the Rev W F Hendricks III (Binghamton NY), the Rev Robert Ward (Orange City FL), the Rev Patricia E Henking (Merrimack NH), the Rev Robert Grafe (Beaverton OR), Angela Kotenic (Bronx) and from St John's Church (Baltimore), Trinity (Tilton NH) and St Thomas (Pittstown NJ).

The Exchange was able to send replacement vestments to St Augustine's, Slade Green, Kent (England) recently. The church suffered damage from fire.

Donations are repaired and inventoried against requests from the field. The articles are then shipped to those needing them, the shipping cost being borne by the Brotherhood. Donations and requests may be sent to:

The Brotherhood Vestment Exchange
St Gregory's House
25 Allen Street
Manchester NH 03102-5112 USA



St Augustine's, Slade Green, Kent, undergoing restoration and repair following the fire.

Kerygma Korner

SCANDALOUS BEHAVIOR

We often forget how scandalous Christianity is. Jesus is the great *skandalon*, or stumbling-block, a stone that builders reject when they cannot fit him into their Capitols and Temples. (1 Cor 1.23) Those who try to turn Christianity into a moralistic system for the preservation of society overlook just how horrifying and threatening first-century society, religious and civic, found this strange new sect to be. The church is called to be against systems that limit the spiritual and human potential of each individual, the full and abundant life for which Christ died, crucified by the Moral Majority of his day.

Sadly, instead of leading the offense, the church often colludes in repression and continued slavery to systems in the name of good order and respectability. It takes the path of Caiaphas, the expediency of sacrificing the rights of the few for the comfort of the many.

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey recently said that there were too many "one-issue" bishops occupying the church's time.

This, however, is the way the church has always worked. Jesus Christ was crucified largely because his views on the Sabbath and dietary laws did not meet with the approval of the authorities. Paul spent most of his career dealing with the single issue of circumcision and the place of gentiles in the church. The ecumenical councils were called, for the most part, to deal with single issues, whether about the Trinity, the dual nature, the translation of bishops, or the role of icons. This is not to say that other issues and concerns and

controversies did not occupy the leaders of the church; but it seems that there was always a key matter to be dealt with, at turning points in the church's pilgrimage.

So it is today. Like it or not, the issue with which the church must deal at pre-sent is sexuality. This is far more complex than some would have us believe. It is connected with concerns as near and far as the nature of the Incarnation; the ordination of women; the meaning of fidelity and chastity; the structures of authority, domination, and hierarchy, whether based on sex or race or class; the nature of the church in its local and ecumenical dimensions; and what it means to be a child of the Resurrection.

It is no good saying, "Let's get on with the real work of the church," because this is the real work given us now. We cannot be effective evangelists until we come to terms with the issues before us. What are we evangelists *to*? If we do not deal with the issues that concern the world, we will only be talking to ourselves, preaching to the choir. Nationalism, racism, and sex-ism (based both on sex and sexual orientation) are abroad in the world. Privilege wears the mask of bemused benevolence; hatred cloaks itself in righteous and religious zeal; and intolerance is instituted into law.

The world is stricken with a wound, and the church has the power to heal it, but only when it faces its own woundedness and heals itself first.

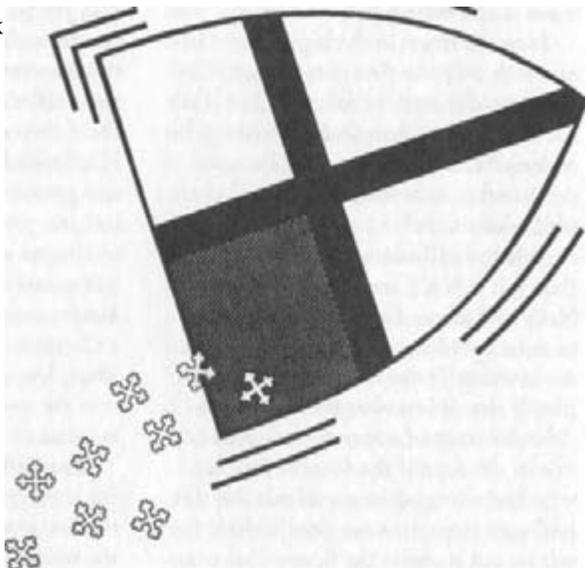
Tobias Stanislas

For 5 Epiphany
SALTY TALK

You are the salt of the earth.

—Matthew 5:13

Salt. The very mention of the word brings my college days back to me—memories of the dining hall in particular. The cuisine of the usual college dining hall would not set one's taste buds quivering with excitement. If anything, it would make them yawn with boredom. Dining hall food is dull—boring—blah! One day in my first week at college I re-marked to the student sitting next to me that the meatloaf tasted awful. He was a sophomore, so he knew the dining hall. He replied by giving me the two major rules of that or any other college dining hall:



- 1) Don't ask what's in the meatloaf, and
- 2) Pass the salt.

It's amazing what a little bit of salt will do for boring, ho-hum food. Unless the food is exceptionally vile, a little salt will make it taste good or at least not so bad. A lot of salt will mask all but the most pervasive flavors.

**SALT KEEPS THINGS
FROM GOING BAD.**

Our Lord's disciples—those of the twentieth century as well as those of the

first—are the salt of the earth. It is our job as disciples to add a little flavor to an otherwise dull, drab world. Can you imagine how dull the world would be without Christians and without Christianity? Christ makes the world exciting.

Salt does more than make food taste good. It preserves food, keeping putrefaction at bay. This is something our Lord was thinking of when he used that expression. Why is ham salty, and why did people start putting beef in brine? The answer to both questions is that they did not have refrigerators. They didn't even have iceboxes. The only way meat could be preserved was to put it in brine and let the salt water soak in. Even a cursory glance at a description of the time in which Christ lived will show that the world was on its way to Hell. The influ-

ence of those who have followed Christ since he walked the earth have put the brakes on this downward progress, slowing or stopping the rot. The names of people like Francis of Assisi, Florence Nightingale, and William Wilberforce come at once to mind, and influence like theirs is still working in the world.

Now we come to the big caveat. I began with only the first part of verse 13. The rest of it reads as follows: "But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for any-thing except to be thrown out and tram-pled under foot."

Salt by itself can never lose its taste. Pure salt is NaCl and will always remain NaCl. What *can* happen is that salt can be mixed with other things, things that are inedible. It can be mixed in so completely that it is useless for food. Consider the story of a merchant in Asia Minor in the days of the Roman Empire who had a large quantity of salt. He did not want to pay the tax due. To hide the salt he put it under the floor of his country house. When he went to retrieve the salt, he discovered that the salt had mixed in completely with the earth under the floor of the house. The salt was useless for food.

People lose their saltiness by being mixed with, and diluted by, the passions and desires of the world. I must confess

that in my younger days—at the time in my life when I was loading my meatloaf with salt—some of my friends prevailed upon me to see what we would now call an X-rated movie. On various occasions I saw several. I learned something about that kind of movie: when you've seen one, you've seen them all. That led me to conclude that sin is dull, and I shared that conclusion with my friends. After some reflection, they agreed with me. From then on we went to see Alfred Hitchcock films, with a clear conscience and greater enjoyment! But suppose I had not prevailed upon my friends to seek other entertainment. Suppose we had gone to practice in real life what we had seen on the screen. My usefulness as a Christian disciple would have been finished. I would have been so fully mixed into the world that I would have lost my saltiness.

Evangelist Dwight Moody once gave a Bible to a young man, saying, "Either this book will keep you from the sins of the world, or the sins of the world will keep you from this book." He was sharing salty talk, the kind that keeps things from going bad.

Charles serves at St Paul's Chapel, Manhattan.

Meeting the community: Charles Edward A DEACON'S ROLE

"This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God."

As I reflect on the process by which I entered the religious life of the Brotherhood, I can only say that God writes with crooked lines.

Having been ordained a permanent deacon in the Roman Catholic Church in 1977, my journey of faith brought me to the Episcopal Church as a *lay* person in 1983. In 1988, my orders were re-

ceived by Bishop of Rhode Island George N Hunt.

In my *many* years of service to the church many issues were dealt with. As a young cleric it was important to do things, and be goal-oriented. That seemed to be the measure of success.

However, God had other plans. There was an emptiness in my life. The pressures of being goal-oriented were taking a toll on me. It was at that point that I realized my life was not reflecting what I was all about—I had fallen into the clerical trap. Religious life has restored some of the balance that was missing.

As the process of admission to the community went along, it was becoming clear that the gifts possessed by the Brotherhood were the very things lacking in my life. As I journeyed during my novitiate, I saw that God's plan for me is a process. Illness and relocation from Rhode Island to New Hampshire caused me to see that events at times foster

much growth.

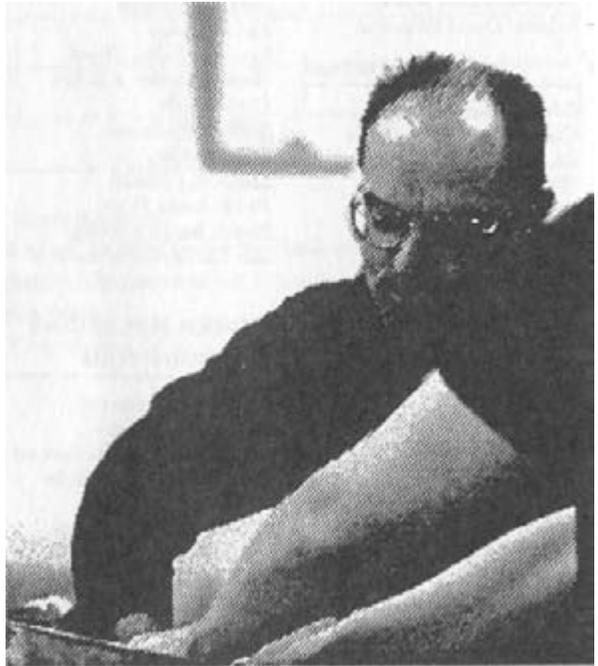
As I discern my diaconal ministry to meet the needs of the community in which I live, I see that as a brother I am called to be a bridge builder, friend, proclaimer, healer, and harvester.

What is striking to me is that the Brotherhood is *diaconal*: we are servants of the servants of God. All in community share the ministry of the diaconate to one another and to the church at large.

The void in my life as cleric has been filled, as I journey with my God and the community. The Brotherhood is an icon of Christ, who reached out to those on the fringe of society.

My working with persons in transition (street persons), individuals who live in dependency and those who work the streets, has taught me much. All are needy. Their physical needs may *vary* but all need affirmation to and be recognized for their uniqueness.

As a brother, I rejoice at the fact that I have been able to witness to God's love for me to them. Life in the Brotherhood is serious and dangerous business. One may be called where one does not want to go. The unknown is often risky. However, it also calls me to live in freedom and to be a good steward of God's gifts.



Editor's note

This Epiphany / Lent issue of *The Servant* inaugurates a new format and publication schedule. We hope that the new format will make it easier for parishes to duplicate pages for inclusion in their Sunday bulletins. We also hope that the new format will make it easier for people to

save their issues from year to year. We recently received a set of issues going back more than a decade from the family of our dear departed Associate Marion Pierce.

This comes with warm wishes for a spiritually rewarding Lenten season. God bless you all.

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