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Thoughts of a Shepherd - A Pastor's Care

(On this, the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood, we would like to share some thoughts from our patron, St. Gregory the Great.)

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own (by which I mean, I love them) and my own know me." In plain words: those who love me are willing to follow me, for anyone who does not love the truth has not yet come to know it.

My dear brothers, you have heard the test we pastors have to undergo. Turn now to consider how these words of our Lord imply a test for yourselves also. Ask yourselves whether you belong to his flock, whether you know him, whether the light of his truth shines in your minds. I assure you that it is not by faith that you will come to know him, but by love; not by mere conviction, but by action. John the Evangelist is my authority for this statement. He tells us that "anyone who claims to know God without keeping his commandments is a liar."

Consequently, the Lord immediately adds: "As the Father knows me, I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep." Clearly he means that laying down his life for his sheep gives evidence of his knowledge of the Father and the Father's knowledge of him. In other words, by the love with which he dies for his sheep, he shows how greatly he loves his Father. Again he says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; they follow me, and I give them eternal life." Shortly before this he had declared: "If anyone enters the sheepfold through me he shall be saved; he shall go freely in and out and shall find good pasture." He will enter into a life of faith; from faith he will go out to vision, from belief to contemplation, and will graze in the good pastures of everlasting life.

So our Lord's sheep will finally reach their grazing ground where all who follow him in simplicity of heart will feed on the green pastures of eternity. There the elect look upon the face of God with unclouded vision and feast at the banquet of life for ever more.

Beloved brothers, let us set out for these pastures where we shall keep joyful festival with so many of our fellow citizens. May the thought of their happiness urge us on! Let us stir up our hearts, rekindle our faith, and long eagerly for what heaven has in store for us. To love thus is to be already on our way. No matter what obstacles we encounter, we must not allow them to turn us aside from the joy of that heavenly feast. Anyone who is determined to reach his destination is not deterred by the roughness of the road that leads to it. Nor must we allow the charm of success to seduce us, or we shall be like a foolish traveler, who is so distracted by the pleasant meadows through which he is passing, that he forgets where he is going.



LIVING SACRIFICES

In Romans 12:1-2, we hear of presenting our bodies -- living sacrifices to God; acceptable to him. He wants us so completely that we must be willing to sacrifice -- give without reservation, every aspect of our lives. This is the total body, a living sacrifice.

We read the word "holy." A holy body is one that is clean, without spot or blemish, not serving two masters, subservient to his will. The body, sin-marred and scarred, must be washed by the blood of Christ before it is presented.

Accepted: God can refuse a gift. He will not accept that which is hypocritical, halfhearted and in love with the world.

A reasonable service: The more correct rendition would be "spiritual service or an act of worship." Worship and liturgy and daily prayer (the Offices) are forms of service -- and service is a form of worship. Worship is reasonable in the street as well as in a church.

Not conformed to this world: The gifts we present to God should not be molded to conform to the world. They should be, through our desire for his will, fashioned by him to conform to his pattern. And this is done by the Holy Spirit renewing our mind. As we think, so we are. Our thoughts show on our faces. When we think on those things which are pure, lovely, just and honest, then the transformation occurs and we change into the transfigured life. His gift then is appropriate.

Richard Thomas, BSG
Superior General

C O M M U N I T Y N O T E S

PORTLAND OR: Br. Kevin James prepared and served lunch for the Metro-East Convocation Clergy Group (of which he is a member).

MADISON WI: Novice Br. Bernard Francis will be taking over youth group activities at his parish, working with the high school class and youth activities coordinator. His work with the Episcopal City Mission, Christian education and spiritual life committees continues, along with acolyte training for the parish. He is entering his last year of studies at the Institute for Christian Studies (Nashotah House).

ATLANTA GA: Br. Richard Thomas, Superior General, recently attended the meeting of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (RC), as representative of the Standing Committee of the House of Bishops for Religious Communities, and the General Convention Office.

BRONX NY: Rabbi Joshua Levy gave a seminar on "The Servant in the Old Testament" for a group of the brothers visiting Rofay Nursing Home, of which he is administrator.

SPRINGFIELD GARDENS NY: The Superior General officiated at the Burial Office for Louise Miller, Companion BSG, who died this month past.

Philip Deemer and Nathanael Sloan have withdrawn from the Novitiate of the Community.

SEPTEMBER INTERCESSIONS

FOR THE ILL

Ruth Leverich	Fr. Lee Young	Betty Jensen
Marion Pierce	Josephine Ciarvino	Br. Christian, BSG

FOR THE DECEASED

Harry Rodriguez	Vincent H. Gowen	Mills Rogers Omaly
Louise Miller	Mary Warner	Christopher Gardner
	Calvin Hampton	Harry Dietz

FOR THOSE WHO SERVE THE CHURCH, especially:

The Most Rev. Robert A. K. Runcie	The Most Rev. John M. Allin
The Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr.	The Rt. Rev. Horace W. B. Donegan
Episcopal Visitor	Visitor Emeritus
The Rev. Thomas F. Pike; Chaplain Emeritus	
The Rev. J. Norman Hall	The Rev. Errol A. Harvey
The Rev. Ledlie I. Laughlin, Jr.	The Rev. Richard L. May
The Rev. Robert R. Parks	The Rev. Ellen Shaver
The Rev. Bruce McK. Williams	

and for the brothers of Province II:

Richard Thomas, Leslie Victor, James, Jason Jude, Anthony Francis, John Peter, William Francis, Stephen, Tobias Stanislas, William, and Charles

FOR RELIGIOUS ORDERS AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES, especially:

The Visitation Nuns	The Sacramentine Nuns
The Order of the Holy Cross	The Order of the Holy Redeemer
The Community of Celebration	
The Community of Christian Family Ministry	

SPECIAL INTENTIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS:

The Rev. E. A. St. John	A job for Lee Michael
Brs. Charles and Laurence Andrew, making First Annual Vows	
Steve Zimmer, Earl Christian, and John Francis Jones, Postulants Prospective	
The Carmelite Sisters of the Aged and Infirm, at their General Chapter	
The 15th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Brotherhood of St. Gregory	
The Golden Jubilee of Br. Leo, SSF	A job for David
The ordination of Fr. Robert Morrison	
The election of Dom Godfrey Stokes as abbot of Nashdom	
The birthdays of Brs. Stephen (9/20) and Tobias Stanislas (9/30)	
Delores Rozycki	Richard and Bonnie Simpson
The swift recovery of Br. Christian after his surgery	