



THE SERVANT is published monthly by the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, a Religious Community of the Episcopal Church. Kindly address all inquiries to: The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, Saint Bartholomew's Church, 82 Prospect Street, White Plains, NY 10606.

Volume IX
Number 7
July 1985

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What Is the Church

We all have heard of the little boy whose father was being transferred from New York to Maine. On the last night in the old house, he ended his prayers with, "I guess this is good bye, God; we're moving to Maine tomorrow." Such words from a child of six are funny and cute; from an adult they reflect narrow parochialism: yet there are people old enough to know better who feel that "The Church" is their parish, or even the building in which their congregation holds its corporate worship. Members of parishes with old buildings often tend to feel that way. In fact there is some rightness in feeling that way -- up to a point. I have a great affection for my church building, and were it to be destroyed tomorrow with no hope of rebuilding, would grieve for it -- but it would by no means be the end of my life in the Church. My parish at one time operated nine chapels. One was sold and three were torn down. The congregations of the chapels affected grieved over their loss, but they found other church homes.

Most Episcopalians will agree that their own parish is not "The Church." They have a wider view. They will include the entire Episcopal Church. This is still a narrow, only slightly less than parochial, view. If the Church is not just my parish, not just the Episcopal Church, then what is it? We read the answer in Paul's Letter to the Romans (12:5) -- "So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Everybody who is baptized in Christ is "The Church." Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, the Eastern Orthodox, Protestant -- those now living here on earth and those who have departed this life -- all are "The Church" -- Militant, Expectant and Triumphant.

Though the Church is split into various denominations (which is to say, "calls itself by different names") and each emphasizes different aspects of the Faith, this does not destroy the reality of the Church's integrity any more than the Breaking of the Bread destroys the Body of Christ. In fact, in the Breaking Christ is known, and in the variety of Christian experience in the denominations, the reality of the richness of God can be known, if only differences are respected rather than being points for discord. As Paul says, "For in one body we have many members, and all members do not have the same function."

May we come to respect the different gifts bestowed by God the Holy Spirit upon the Church, relying only on Faith and (as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral puts it) "in all things of human ordering or human choice, relating to modes of worship and discipline, or to traditional customs" be "ready in the spirit of love and humility to forego all preferences" of our own.

Br. Charles Kramer, currently in his first year of annual vows, is on mission at St. Paul's Chapel of Trinity Parish, New York City. In addition to his duties as subdeacon and acolyte, he is a member of the liturgical committee of and is involved in parish visiting, the shelter for the homeless, and the stewardship program.

THE FOUNDER'S FORUM

Gathered 'round the Table of the Lord

Communion or sharing; religious fellowship between God and his children; between Christians; between a Christian and the Church, a body of the faithful having a common bond and discipline; the Eucharist or the act of celebrating or partaking of it.

Each time we think of this word -- Communion -- we think of the Lord's table and our gathering around that table. Jesus chose two everyday acts as the supreme expressions of faith - washing and eating. He chose eating, signifying his life and death with a bite of bread, because eating is so vital to life. Eating is a necessity repeated every day, and every time we share a meal we continue, in a very real way, the sacrament Our Lord gave us. Conversely, when we commune with Christ at the altar, we fulfill the purpose of our daily eating. "Whenever you do this . . .

What Jesus did at the Last Supper thrust the holiness into orbit, not by some technological power, but by a divine command. Right after that great commission "Do this in remembrance of me," the observance of that table began to encircle the globe, as the disciples first preached at Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria and Antioch; then in Galatia; then in Rome and beyond.

At this table darkness and hate are replaced by light, love and life. The future always looks thrilling from this table. The Eucharist is the sacrament of life. It is a sign of the Holy Community -- those gathered around the table of celebration. Christ is present in all humanity -- in loving redemption.

Communion, the word and deed come through in a simple story about a young, barely educated girl. She had decided to be received into the Church and be confirmed. One of her friends on hearing this, asked her why she had requested this and she replied that it was because she wanted to take Communion. When the friend asked her why she wanted this, she replied: "Because -- it was the last thing he asked of friends."

Richard Thomas Biernacki, BSG
Superior General



COMMUNITY NOTES

EAST HADDAM CT: "Called to Serve" was the theme of a Quiet Day Jointly organized by the parish of St. Stephen's and the Brothers of Province I. Much of the 'leg work' was done by Novice Br. Joseph Thomas Irvin and his wife, Delphy. Brs. Luke Anthony Nowicki, Roy Tobin (Provincial), Bernard Fessenden and Postulant Donovan Aidan Bowley attended from Province I, and the Superior General, along with Brs. James Teets, Jason Jude Schellas, Tobias Stanislas Haller, William Bunting and Novice Br. Earl Christian, came up for the day from Province II. The silence of the retreat was punctuated by three meditations delivered over the course of the day by Br. Luke Anthony and Novice Br. Joseph Thomas, the Rev'd Richard L. Payne (Vicar of St. Stephen's), and the Rev'd John D. Swanson, OJN (Superior of the Order of Julian of Norwich). Breakfast and lunch were prepared for the retreatants by the ladies of the parish's ECW, and much thanks is due there for their help. And Fr. Payne made the day complete as he celebrated the Holy Eucharist for those present at noon. Most of the brothers had to leave following the day's activities, but Brs. James, Luke Anthony, Tobias Stanislas and Bernard were able to stay over and attend the Sunday morning Eucharist at St. Stephen's with Novice Br. Joseph Thomas and Delphy (they both serve that parish in a variety of ways). Then, following the service, Brs. James and Tobias Stanislas were pleased to again act as consultants for the renovation of the sanctuary in the parish church, at a meeting with the vicar and a member of the vestry, Mr. Dave Hass.

MANHATTAN NY: The Feast of St. Monnica (May 4th) was celebrated in a very special way at St. Andrew's, Harlem, this year: The rector, the Rev'd Herbert M. Groce, Jr., a long-time friend of the Brotherhood, hosted the parish's 'first annual' Acolyte Festival. The celebrant of the Solemn Pontifical Eucharist was the Rt. Rev'd Henry B. Hucclles III, Suffragan Bishop of Long Island, and the preacher was the Rev'd Canon Harold T. Lewis, staff officer for black ministries at the Episcopal Church Center, who brought home the need for the increase of black vocations to the priesthood. Our own Brs. James Teets, Jason Jude Schellas, William Bunting- and Novice Br. Earl Christian were invited to participate, and they enjoyed meeting many old and new friends among the acolytes and clergy, who came from as far away as Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington, D.C.

ALEXANDRIA VA: Br. Edward Munro was honored at Immanuel Church on the Hill in recognition of the completion of his fourth year of Education for Ministry.

TRENTON NJ: Brs. William Francis Jones and Stephen Storen represented the Brotherhood at the 200th Anniversary Celebration of the Diocese of New Jersey, at which the Most Rev. John Habgood, Archbishop of York, was preacher.

WORCESTER MA: Brs. Roy Tobin and Bernard Fessenden Joined Br. Michael Delmolino at the installation of the Rev. John R. Kilfoyle as rector of Br. Michael's parish, St. Mark's. They were Joined by representatives of the Society of St. Margaret and the Society of St. John the Evangelist. The celebrant was the Rt. Rev. Andrew Wissemann, Bishop of Western Massachusetts.

BRONX NY: Br. William was honored by his parish, St. Andrew's, in recognition of 25 years service as a Lay Reader for the parish.

Coming Soon

A special issue of *The Servant* will be devoted to aspects of the religious life as it exists in the Church, particularly in the Episcopal Church, in the light of recent reforms in both the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church. There is a great need for reconciliation and trust on the part of the religious, both traditional and contemporary, and a realization that together they might witness to the love of God in Christ.

Moving? Please let us know. You may have noticed that we have begun making use of the Postal Service's Address Correction Requested option. However, that costs us an extra forty cents when we have to track down an address gone astray. So please keep us informed of your moves! Many thanks.

The [Imaginary] Letter of Paul to the Church at Durham

GRACE AND PEACE from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have heard that some among you are denying that Christ rose bodily from the dead. But if Christ was not raised, then there is no resurrection, and Our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. Also, those who have fallen asleep have done so without hope, and are utterly lost. If Christ was not raised, our preaching and our gospel is in vain, and we are of all that dwell on earth the most to be pitied, and our hope is empty.

But Christ was raised from the dead, the first fruits of all the dead. For as a man brought death into the world through sin, so by becoming an offering for sin a man also brought about the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam we are all dead in our sins, so in Christ will we all rise to life everlasting.

Now, this spiritual body in which Christ was raised to life is the same physical body which suffered death on the tree, marvelously transfigured and glorified by the power of God. Cephas, who was a witness to his resurrection, has told us this, that the sure hope we have is through this resurrection. For the physical body of Christ sown in the earth was as much unlike the risen and glorified body as a grain of wheat is unlike the plant which springs from it.

There are some among you who claim that his rising was only in a spiritual sense. But again, if his body was not raised, then we are not raised. It was the hidden purpose of God that by the death of his Son at the hands of sinful men, he should open a way for us, through the raising of the body to follow where the Son has gone, exalted to the heavens, thus taking our humanity to himself.

Now, as you know, I was not granted the grace of beholding him in his risen flesh. But Cephas, Thomas, James and the other men of repute, and the women also who were the first to behold him, have told me how they spoke to him, ate with him, and touched him. I was not worthy of such a privilege, and to me, as in an untimely birth, he did appear in a spiritual way only. As I told you when I was with you, on my way to Damascus a great light shone from the sky, and I heard his voice accusing me.

Even so I now accuse you. You are persecuting the Body of Christ with these mistaken notions. For the rising of Christ from the dead is not a memory, or in a spiritual sense only, but real. It is not on tales artfully spun, or mythology, or the passing wisdom of this age that we rely, but upon the one fact that Christ rose from the dead.

And so, I beseech you to be true to the Gospel as you received it from me. Only have faith and remain firm in this knowledge, the knowledge of his resurrection. I hope to take this matter in hand when I come to see you. See to it that this letter is read in all your congregations. Greet one another in the peace of the risen Christ. Amen.

-- Tobias Stanislas Haller, BSG

JULY INTERCESSIONS

Kalendar

- 5. Br. Thomas Joseph Ross, BSG
- 7. Br. Luke Anthony Nowicki, BSG
- 9. The Rev. Jeremy W. Bond
Br. Christian Williams, BSG
- 11. The Order of St. Benedict
- 16. The Congregation of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
The Carmelite Sisters of the Aged and Infirm
The Sisters of Charity
- 20. The Society of St. Margaret
- 25. St. James' Church, Mt. Vernon VA
- 26. The Order of St. Anne
- 27. The Rt. Rev. John T. Walker

For the ill:

Br. John Nidecker, BSG	Gaetano Sanfilippo
Roman Biernacki	Leonore Jewell
Br. Christian Williams, BSG	Br. Orlando Flores, OHC
The Rev. Onell Soto	Christian W. Flohr III
Jim Templar	Stephen Darin
Clarissa Ray	Anna Ogelsby

For the departed:

Charlotte B. Morgan Stanley Nowicki	
The Rt. Rev. Robert B. Hall	Nellie Rivera
The Rev. George W. Parsons	Mildred Ross
Tryphenn Wetzell	Gail Klawitter

Special Intentions for:

The Rev. E. A. St. John	
The Visitation Nuns	The Sacramentine Nuns
Karl G. Sorg	Kenneth Allen Staples
Fr. Ted Daniels and Holy Redeemer Chapel, Landover MD	
Nicholas P. Albanese	
The Episcopal Alliance on the River	

Thanksgiving for:

David's new job
Confirmation of: Jodie Stroveaglia, de Zeumar Lee, Carol Goris
Reception of: Laurann Von Gonton, Linda Celli
Wedding of Lucia and Ron