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A New Pentecost

When the Brotherhood issued its "Special Report" on the religious life in the Episcopal Church, it was with a certain amount of trepidation. While hoping for the best, we did not truly know what sort of response would come about. We can now report that the response is better than we could possibly have hoped: in fact, we think we can say that a turning point has been reached, and that from now on the religious life in the Episcopal Church is going to be on a much firmer foundation than in the past.

The change was clearly evident at the General Convention in Anaheim. The support and encouragement which Brs. Richard Thomas Biernacki and Tobias Stanislas Haller received from many members of Religious Orders was the best affirmation which could have been hoped for. And a statement issued by the Conference on the Religious Life, and its conciliatory attitude, mark a beginning of a new era of cooperation and mutual understanding.

The Conference's statement, presented by its President, Fr. Andrew Rank, SSP, at a meeting of the House of Bishops Committee on Religious Communities, demonstrates the Conference's willingness to cooperate, while focusing more closely on the efforts of the Conference to direct its attention specifically to religious communities devoted to communal living. We feel that this refinement in the definition of the Conference's goals and aims is a most positive development, and applaud the Christ-centered language and intent of the statement. We whose communities are not devoted to communal living situations will continue to offer support and encouragement to the Conference in the realization of its goals, as friends called to a different mode of the religious life: standing side by side, facing Christ together.

The most exciting part of the Convention for many of the religious was a meeting of members of nearly all the Religious Orders and Christian Communities of the Episcopal Church. For the first time in nearly ten years, members of the various communities sat and talked as equals, as brothers and sisters. Though there are still a few sore spots, it is clear that a new era of listening and sharing has begun. When at the end of a round-robin session of sharing in the work of each of the communities present, Mother Suzanne Elizabeth, CSJB, asked that all stand and join hands in prayer, the presence of Christ and of the Holy Spirit was manifest. We rejoice and give thanks that our Special Report may have had some small part in bringing about this reconciliation, and pray that the future may bring a greater depth of love and sharing among those called to the vowed life.

Comments on the Special Report

From bishops:

A profound document!

It's a good first step. I hope it serves to get everyone together.

Quite a historic piece -- a lot of research went into it. Quite good!

I read your report. I think it's the best thing of its kind I've seen in years. If I can do anything to help you with your goals, let me know.

From clergy:

You're going to have a lot of people angry, but you and the Brotherhood are up to it. Keep up the fight.

A fine piece of work. Long overdue.

I am grateful for this. It is about time something like this appeared in public. There has been too much going on in ignorance. This is a great service to the church.

I am so glad you did this. I pray that reconciliation will come out of it.

Not just a report -- a worthy dissertation! I know it may upset some people, but there is a real need for this.

From laity:

My thanks; please send me ten copies. One of the reasons for the poor growth of our communities is that they seem to be above criticism. The report was like a wholesome breath of fresh air.

I must compliment you on the excellent report on religious life. It is the most thorough treatment of the subject I have ever seen. The article really deserves wider circulation, and I wish more people could read it.

You have covered many points of vital interest to the "religious life" both of those in community and those who are not called to such. I commend you for your very thorough research and complete report on yours and other religious organizations who seek to be servants of the servants of God. My heart tells me that you have prayed a great deal about this matter, and that you are approaching it with love and forgiveness. Thank you for your excellent definition of chastity (which I feel is Christ's definition), poverty (also his) and obedience (his too).

I would like to express my appreciation and admiration for your especially informative Special Report. It exceeded all desires and expectations. I would like to compliment those responsible for their meticulous attention to detail, excellent scholarship, and visible efforts to provide a balanced understanding of the issues involved.

From religious:

I have had a lot of the same concerns for years. Your report brought them out so discussion can begin.

You said things that many of us have thought but were afraid to say, and even things we were afraid to think! Thank you!

I read the report **several** times. I liked it all, but you raised some very legitimate concerns in the last part. The religious life is in trouble and I hope it is addressed before it is too late. You have done the church a service.

The questions the Special Report raises about celibacy and corporate poverty are not irrelevant, and religious can profit by the constructive criticism of those who observe their life and work. It is not easy to discern how monastic life should be lived in the contemporary world and I welcome challenges to our traditional interpretation.

When I first read it, I was a little taken aback and thought, "Why are they saying this in public." Then I realized that perhaps the time had come for that.

I thank you for opening the lines of dialogue so we can talk about these unspoken concerns. You raised them up, now we need to address them.

We look forward to being part of honest, open communication with all those interested in searching for a transcendent solution. We know you are one of those. Thank you for your Special Report.

I think it was a bit strong, but I do understand what you were trying to do.

We traditionalists need to be shaken up once in a while.

Great!! Your Special Report -- WOW! Excellent -- on target -- and I can say this since as monks we can be objective. I totally agree with your report. You know your stuff, and I want to affirm you, always teaching, healing, reconciling. God gave you the talent to speak --speak!



COMMUNITY NOTES

The "Founder's Forum" of Issue 77 of *The Servant* (August 1984) was reprinted in the Transfiguration issue of *The Anglican Digest*. Our thanks to *The Anglican Digest* for reprinting this short meditation.

BOSTON MA: The Brothers and Companions of Province I (New England) gathered at the seaside home of Gigi Green, a parishioner at the Church of the Advent, for a day of fellowship and relaxation. Thanks, Gigi. * *
* * Br. Roy Tobin preached on the future of the church and the responsibility of Christians, at St. Stephen's Church.

MADISON WI: Br. Bernard Francis LaReau has completed his two-year course at the Institute for Christian Studies in the Diocese of Milwaukee, with a B+ average. Congratulations, Bernard Francis!

MAPLE VALLEY WA: Br. William Bunting preached at St. George's Church, on the text, "Take Heart, It Is I." His sermon related the need for courage in facing the trials of the Christian life.

ANAHEIM CA: Br. Richard Thomas Biernacki, Superior General, and Br. Tobias Stanislas Haller attended the General Convention in their capacities as staff of the Episcopal Church Center. The work schedule kept them very busy, but they did have time to chat briefly with the Rev. Canon George Stacey, Companion/BSG, who is a deputy from the Diocese of Milwaukee. Br. Tobias Stanislas had the honor of officiating at Morning Prayer on the day of the selection of the Presiding Bishop-elect.

BRONX, NY: The annual assembly of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (Roman Catholic) was held at Fordham University and Br. Richard Thomas, who is an associate member, attended the opening day's events, with Brs. James Teets, William Francis Jones, Stephen Storen and Tobias Stanislas as his guests. The assembly was attended by 225 abbots, provincials and superiors general. The events began, following registration and dinner, with Evening Prayer (music from the Hymnal 1940 was a treat for us!) followed by the opening meeting. At this time Br. Peter Fitzpatrick, CFX, chairing the assembly, introduced several special guests, including the president of the Organization of Women Religious in the United States, and the Prefect of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, Cardinal Jean Jerome Hamer, OP. Then followed welcomes by Fr. Ronald Carignan, OMI, president, and Fr. Wilfrid Dewan, CSP, host for this assembly. The keynote address, entitled "Of Memory and Hope," was delivered by Fr. Roland Faley, TOR, executive director. The social time following afforded our brothers opportunity to meet and chat with old and new friends and to share with our Roman brothers the experiences common to all in the religious life. The occasion served to remind all present that we are united in our Baptism as Christians, and that Christ's call to unity will triumph over any amount of human separatism.

NOVEMBER INTERCESSIONS

Kalendar

1. The All Saints Sisters of the Poor
3. Grosvenor Calkins, Jr., Companion/BSG
11. St. Martin of Tours' Church, Omaha NE
12. Br. Bernard Fessenden, BSG
15. The Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr., Visitor
18. The Order of St. Helena
24. The Rev. Fr. Frank S. Walinski,SSC
The Servants of Christ the King
30. St. Andrew's Church, Bronx NY

For the ill:

Br. John Nidecker, BSG	Mildred Fessenden
Charles Fessenden	Milton Reed
Margaret Patricia Storen	Nancy Hansen
Sally Beauchamp	

For the departed:

Charlotte B. Morgan	Walter Hammond
Fleming	Joaquin Arrunategui
David Sheehan	Jim Templar
Lillian Kaplowitz	Carol Singleton
F. Bruce Gerhard, Sr.	

Special Intentions for:

The Rev. E. A. St. John	
The Visitation Nuns	The Sacramentine Nuns
Karl G. Sorg	Kenneth Allen Staples
George Keith	Randy Elliott
Br. Charles Mitzenius, OHR	
Fr. Ted Daniels and Holy Redeemer Chapel, Landover MD	
The victims of the Mexican earthquake	
For Justice in South Africa, and throughout the world	

Thanksgiving for:

The election of the Rt. Rev. Edmond Lee Browning as Presiding Bishop
The consecration of the Rt. Rev. David E. Johnson, Bishop Coadjutor of
Massachusetts
The birth of Nathaniel Jarrett
The installation of the Rev. Andrew Mead, Church of the Advent, Boston