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CHRIST'S MIGHTY VICTORY Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave. Bearing the human likeness, revealed in human shape, he humbled himself, and in obedience accepted even death — death on a cross. Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow — in heaven, on earth, and in the depths — and every tongue confess "Jesus Christ is Lord," to the glory of God the Father. (*Phil. 2:5—11*)

Christ's great victory was the living of a life of obedience to God's will. Not yielding to the temptation to use the powers he knew were his, Christ lived a humble life dedicated to the praising of God, the proclamation of God's word, and the care for and healing of others. Rather than seeking to avoid the troubles which plague all mankind, Jesus embraced most of the experiences, and accepted all, even the final one, with grace: "If it is your will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." By this acceptance of humanity, Jesus became the exemplar for all who will believe his message: as he himself was, all are children of God and, living as he did, all may transcend and transform "mere humanity" and find closer union with God. Human limitations are transcended not by an escape into *higher* realms, but by immersion in the involved life shown us by Christ.

That way, as shown us by Paul in his Letter to the Philippians, includes the basic understanding of the traditional vows made by those following the religious life: poverty ("He made himself nothing, assuming the form of a

slave"); chastity ("You must look to each other's interest and not merely to your own"); and obedience (" . . . obedience unto death"). The substance of the vows is a set of guide posts, a collection of short notes that incorporates the Way of Christ, a backpack of essentials for the pilgrims' journey. They are positive guides to living a Godly life; they support and assist the baptismal renunciation of "the world, the flesh and the devil."

Paul has summed up all the other virtues — love, unity, humility, chastity — that he has so often praised, under one chief virtue: obedience to the will of God; through life and at its end, in the living of life, and the leaving of it.

Christ's mighty victory is victory over death. Isaiah's words are elaborated by Paul, in his Letter to the Colossians: "death is swallowed up in victory!" Because death can be so consumed, the Christian living today is living in part of eternity. There is no sudden starting of eternal life as a reward after death; we are now living a foretaste of the everlasting life of

the promise, and the life after death will be a continuation and transformation of what is being lived now. Death will not end our life with God, nor will it begin our life with him — it will merely mark a passage from one kind of existence to another. The pattern of life is set by the quality of living it. Those who live without God now will be without him eternally; those who walk with him now will walk with him forever.

Each of us daily finds himself or herself at the symbolic center of the cross, at the cross/road between earth and heaven, poised on the point of decisions which build our lives according to a pattern. We need to remember each day that Christ hung poised at the crossroad also, and in accepting obedience to God's will rather than his own desires, showed us the way to victory.

Paul's words were an inspiration to Caroline Maria Noel, the author of the familiar hymn that begins "At the name

of Jesus every knee shall bow"; the fourth stanza is:

In your hearts enthrone him:
There let him subdue All that
is not holy,
All that is not true:
Crown him as your Captain
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and power.

Our Captain has shown us the way : even through death in a life in conformity to God's will. It is the way of humble victory. Shall we follow?

Novice Brother Donovan Aldan Bowley is a member of the Church of the Advent, Boston, where he serves as an acolyte, chairman of the garden committee, and as a member of the "9:00 a.m. choir." He earned his doctorate in biology from Boston University, and works as a program manager of a Massachusetts program to clean up drinking water contaminated by organic chemicals.

Founder's Forum

God Himself Is With Us

Easter was early this year — the hymns have been sung and the trumpets have been forgotten until next year. The lilies are gone and all that remains is the remembrance of that sweet smell that says "Easter." Ascension Day is near and then Christ is gone from view.

Gone from view? Only for those whose faith is as shallow as their vision! We all know that the words "I am with you always, even to the end of the world" are not shallow. They are filled with power and promise. The disciples knew the loneliness of Jesus' absence. They knew him in the breaking of the bread and at the next moment he was gone. We too know these same moments: some call it "the dark night of the soul" and others "the desert." Some simply feel that these are dry periods, when God

seems all but gone both from our lives and thoughts. We sense an uneasiness similar to the child who has lost his or her mother in the supermarket.

What we need to keep in mind is that God — Christ — the Holy Spirit — is never very far from us. Like our parents who are no longer near when we grow up and are on our own, and whose words and training still affect us, God's influence and teaching are always there. God is still in control. There are times when the absence of God in our lives seems unbearable and we are tempted to question his goodness and concern. It is at these moments that God surrounds us with his love which confirms within us a sense of basic security. He allows us to be on our own; to test our wings and gain

maturity. Just like a parent, God leaves us alone in order that we may develop and grow.

God has an uncanny way of bringing blessing to us in ways we may not expect or desire or consider possible.

In the faithful living of life in trust and obedience, his will is fulfilled in our lives.

Richard Thomas Biernacki
Superior General

Here and there with the Brotherhood...

COMMUNITY NOTES

BALTIMORE MD: Br. Edward Munro attended the investiture of the Rt. Rev. A. Theodore Eastman as Bishop of Maryland. The service took place in the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen (Roman Catholic). Also attending were sisters from the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, Catonsville, Maryland.

MILWAUKEE WI: Novice Br. Randal Anthony Elliott, who works as custodian at Central United Methodist Church, officiated

at the Imposition of ashes at their Holy Communion Service on Ash Wednesday. Onward Christian ecumenists!

NEW YORK NY : Speaking of ecumenism, the adult study group at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields has been focusing on this issue. Guest speakers have included the Rev. William A. Norgren, ecumenical officer at the Episcopal Church Center, and Br. William Martyn, S. A. We heartily recommend this sort of program.



Members of the Brotherhood with Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, after his installation as an honorary canon at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. (Left to right: George Keith, Tobias Stanislas Haller, John Peter Clark, Bishop Browning, Earl Christian, Richard Thomas Biernacki, William Bunting, James Teets. and Charles Kramer).

SALEM NH: Brs. Christian Williams, Roy Tobin, Laurence Andrew Keller, Bernard Fessenden and Novice Br. Donovan Aidan Bowley visited with parishioners of St. David's Church. During the eucharist the brothers gave a presentation on the Brotherhood as one of the many varieties of religious life available in the Episcopal Church. Several members of the parish were surprised not only of the existence of religious in the Episcopal Church, but also the number and variety of types of religious communities in existence. The rector, the Rev. Laurence Miller, received the brothers with a warm welcome. After the service, the brothers had time for fellowship with members of the congregation. They hope to visit other

parishes in the Province (I) over the next months.

BOSTON MA: Brs. Roy, Laurence Andrew and Novice Br. Donovan Aidan joined 130 people at Trinity Church, Copely Square, in the Annual Washington's Birthday Breakfast, a fund-raising event for District 18, of which Br. Roy is convenor. As a result of the event, hosted by the rector of Trinity Church, the Rev. Spencer Rice, over \$1000 was raised and donated to the AIDS Action Committee — Pastoral Concerns Subcommittee. The Rt. Rev. David Johnson, Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Massachusetts, was guest speaker.

Food for the Journey

" . . . and the people of Israel ate manna no of more, but ate of the fruit of the land Canaan that year." (*Joshua 5:12*)

The story of God providing manna for the children of Israel is an example of his love and care for his people. Wandering for many years in the desert, they were sustained by their trust in God's promise to lead them home, and by the food which their loving father provided for them in their journey. When they crossed the Jordan at Gilgal, entered the Holy Land and began to use the fruits of that soil, the manna stopped. Manna was food for their journey; when the journey ended, they no longer needed this food.

We are on a similar journey. We too are traveling through a wilderness. We too **are** being fed manna at frequent intervals by our loving Father. Unlike the ancient Israelites, our journey is a spiritual one. The wilderness through *which we* are traveling is a spiritual one. Our manna is also spiritual. It has the appearance of a small wafer of bread and a sip of wine

— in themselves not sufficient to sustain physical life — but is in its essence the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are sustained on our journey by the eucharist and by our trust in God's promise to lead us home. When our journey finally comes to an end, so will our need for the eucharist. We shall then be one with him, as he and the Father are one.

—Br. Charles Kramer

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