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June 1986

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## Christ Will Come Again

*...there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamor of the ocean and its waves... for the powers of heaven will be shaken.... When these things begin to take place, stand erect and hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand. —Luke 21:25f*

The bewilderment mentioned in this passage takes place daily somewhere in the world. I have lain on the beach and listened to the thundering roar of the surf as it strikes the rocks on the shores of the Pacific. On a sunny afternoon, this can be quite peaceful. Yet a sudden storm can change that calm as the shore is battered by waves of immense height and force that wash away chunks of cliff and roadway.

I have been in an airplane flying over the midwest and have watched a lightning storm in the distance. While everyone else is watching the movie or catching forty winks, I am watching God's disco in the sky. We are flying at 37,000 feet. In the distance, probably more than a hundred miles away, a thunderstorm is taking place. Lightning streaking and zip-zapping across the sky, through the clouds and lighting up the clouds: a beautiful and most spectacular sight.

Not everyone can see and appreciate this. I have seen thunderstorms from the ground and the destruction they can bring. Is this part of St. Luke's message? Or is he talking about the destruction of Jerusalem alone?

"Stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand." Isn't this what we do in the eucharist, as we see the Bread of Heaven

lifted high for all of us to **see**, to take and eat? Don't we lift up our heads and say to ourselves, "My Lord and my God"? Do we not join in the affirmation of our faith, "Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again"?

Christ will come again. He comes to us in all sorts of ways. He often comes unexpected. He can come to us in the stillness, the silence of a moment. He can be felt in a sudden breeze on a hot summer day. He can be felt as we listen to the pounding surf on the shore, or in the roaring thunder and disco lightning of the sky. And especially, as he promised, he comes to us in the eucharist. With our hands stretched out we receive him, we feed on the heavenly food. He feeds us with his presence, coming into our lives as we receive that bread and wine, giving us strength and refreshment with his life-giving Body and Blood.

We are refreshed. We feel that we can go out and face the world, bearing Christ within us. Whenever I feel down and out, the reception of Christ in the eucharist helps me get through one more time. He is present, and I know it. He has told us, "For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him... whoever eats me will draw life from me..."

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever." (John 6:55f)

Christ's coming is always within. He comes from above, but he appears within. He enters us as we feed on him. He comes into our hearts, our minds, our bodies, our being. He dwells within us always. We must never lose sight of him. We must "hold our heads high, stand erect" and see him in the eucharist. As he is lifted up, he draws us all to him—daily, weekly. He is with us as we can exclaim, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!"

When those powerful words are spoken, can't you picture the passage in Luke:

"For the powers of heaven will be shaken and then they will see the Son of Man coming in power and great glory"? (21:26f) When the celebrant begins that acclamation, when you hear those words, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," then hold your head erect and look up, and see the coming of Christ. Let us keep the feast in power and great glory, *now—on earth—* and for ever. Alleluia!

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*Br. William Bunting is Provincial of Province II, and serves on mission at St. Andrew's, Bronx NY, where he has been a lay reader for 36 years. He has also worked for 36 years, in various departments, at Saks Fifth Avenue.*

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### *Founder's Forum*

## A DAY OF REST AND GLADNESS

People today don't take the word Sabbath seriously. There are, in fact, few, if any "holy days" for many Americans. Many churches have Saturday 5 p.m. masses so that members can have the Lord's Day free to sleep, play golf, watch the ball game or just hang out. The world has become more geared to enjoyment than to duty; to pleasure rather than privilege. It is a privilege to worship God as a part of a church family.

I think of my childhood, and how much importance was placed on Sunday. It was a day of rest and gladness. It was dinner at home as a family and if we were lucky, my father made ice cream sodas in the evening. It was a day of rest and gladness. Jesus refuted the legalistic reasons for observing the Sabbath, but Scripture tells us "as his custom was, on the Sabbath he went to the synagogue." Jesus faithfully followed the observances that turned the Sabbath into a blessing.

Scripture speaks of the Sabbath being delight, but when one reads the constraints of the old Jewish devotions it is hard to see what the delight was all about. Maybe they instilled a good attitude; at least they forced those who followed them to take the Sabbath seriously. Again, thinking back to my childhood, we took Sunday seriously. sometimes felt suppressed. It was a day to be holy; not merely human anymore, but somehow transfigured by the discipline. Attending church on Sundays helps us to focus on delighting in something other than shopping or commercialism or business — or ourselves. The Scriptures seem to tell us "blessed are those who look on these opportunities with delight."

Sunday should be a day of restoration. The Hebrew word *shabbos* gets its meaning from a root word *which* means "stop what you are doing." What a useful phrase! How much we need that "quiet place of blest meditation." How much

we need to center down and rest in God.

wonder how many of us are aware that .dws governing church attendance were not intended to force people to be there on Sunday. They were in fact designed to prevent enslavement of people by cruel landlords and entrepreneurs.

The Sabbath should change our focus of attention. That is how rest works— as we release the tension, the mind and body relax. The Scriptures also speak of the Sabbath as a time of celebration. This joyous time manifests itself in many *ways*, the best of which is to break the negative cycle in our lives.

We look at time as a thing to be devoured, not savored as fine food or wine. We spend the week busily rushing around, not taking time to *be*; to cherish the wonderful things God has given us. Sunday should be a day of celebration of God's gifts in creation.

We were not made for the Sabbath, the Sabbath was made for us. So we appreciate that Sunday should be a time of delight, a time of rest, a time of celebration.

Your church is there—every Sunday and in everyone's life. Take delight in it. Find rest there and celebrate.

Br. Richard Thomas Biernacki  
*Superior Genera!*

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*Here and there with the Brotherhood...*

## COMMUNITY NOTES

NEW YORK NY : At a special service welcoming Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning to Province II and the City of New York, Br's. James Teets, John Peter Clark, Tobias Stanislas Haller, William Bunting, Charles Kramer, Joseph Thomas Irvin (visiting from Province 1), Earl Christian and Novice Br. George Keith joined the procession with members of other Christian Communities : the Order of the Holy Cross, the Society of St. Margaret, the Community of the Holy Spirit, and the Society of St. Francis. Mayor Koch, with his usual humility, welcomed Bishop Browning to the greatest city on earth. Bishops Moore and Robinson represented the diocese and the province.

BOWIE MD : Br. Edward Munro has begun a hospice care training course. After completion of the course he will be doing work in a local hospice.

MADISON WI : Br. Bernard Francis LaReau is taking part in the planning of a youth event for the Diocese of Milwaukee.

MARION IL : Postulant Michael David Elvestrom attended a diocesan music workshop directed by Ann Dunn and Kathleen Thomerson.

DOBBS FERRY NY : Br. Tobias Stanislas gave a brief talk on the history of the religious life and the Brotherhood, at a parish supper at Zion Episcopal Church.

Note : Next month is the hundredth issue of *The Servant*. We would like at this time to offer a special thanks to all who have contributed of their time, effort, prayers and good wishes to the Brotherhood over the years. We could not have maintained the operation of this publication without the help, hard work and prayers of many.

# Johannesburg

(after Blake's "Jerusalem," the Prelude to *Hilton*)

for Desmond H. Tutu, upon his election as Archbishop of Capetown

And do those feet in our own times  
walk on South Africa's bleak plains?  
And bleeds the Holy Lamb of God  
in Jo'burg's sidewalks' bloody stains?  
And is the countenance divine  
creased deep with sorrow's anguished lines?  
And can Jerusalem be found here, within  
these deep satanic mines?

Bring me my pick of rusting iron!  
Bring me the shovel of despair!  
Bring me some light! a burning fire  
to purify this poisoned air!  
I will not cease from sweat and toil in  
my long fight with unjust rule, 'til I  
have wrested from this soil  
a justice brighter than a jewel.

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Those pure of heart fail to appreciate sufficiently the function of the physical world, as a result of their spiritual ascent and the dissociation of their interest from the physical. This gives them in some respects a sense of spiritual exaltation, but for the world it results in decline, and this decline eventually penetrates from the world to these great people themselves.... this condition remains only as long as those holy people of the world have not risen to the higher divine heroism.... But when they will reach the nobler epoch... then they will no longer be afraid of the knowledge of the physical and all its functions, or of an encounter with impurity and all its filth. They will be confident that wherever they will look with the eyes of the holy heroism, the physical will ascend and be ennobled by the holy, and the filth of impurity will come to an end, all bowing before the light of the holy. Then will be magnified and hallowed the name of the Lord, the God of truth, and "the eyes of the blind shall see...." (Is. 29:18)

—Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), *Orot Hakodesh (The Lights of Holiness)*, tr. by Ben Zion Bokser. Published by Paulist Press. ©1978 by Ben Zion Bokser. Used by permission.

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