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## Our Future with Jesus

*And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. —John 14:3*

Imagine Jesus standing on Olivet's windy hilltop, as he begins to ascend upward into the cloud. You look on in disbelief and awe. Angelic voices tell you that he will come again, and you recall his own words of promise, "I will come again."

But when is that day of return? He also promised that he would be with us always, even to the close of the age. But where is he?

The text quoted above talks about two different events :

- something that will happen — "when I go to prepare... I will come again."
- something that is happening right then and there—"where I am, there you may be also."

This is a word of the future growing backwards into the present. It is key to answering the question, What is our future with Jesus?

Our future with Jesus began with our baptism and continued through our growth in the Church—we learn who Christ was and is right now. We were taught the tenets of our faith. We observed our parents and elders and were taught by them just how important Christ could be in each of our lives.

We were taught that Christ was present to us in the Holy Eucharist, in that

bread and wine. He is there *now*. He promised to be with us—and he is. We discover him there in the good times and the bad, amid pleasures and tribulations of daily living. He is the source of strength, courage and love. He encompasses our lives with his presence. It is true that faith shows us the way to realizing that presence—we need trust and faith to believe that he is with us—we need to love him, and to let him love us.

Our future with Jesus is a relationship built upon faith, trust and love. We do not have to await a second coming; we can enjoy the presence of our Lord right now, right this moment---for he is present now. He gives of himself freely for us and to us. How do we respond? How do we see him, touch him, know him in our life? Where is our future with Jesus?

Our future with Jesus is here, in the present, with him and in him in the mystery of faith.

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*Br. Luke Anthony Nowicki, a life professed member of the community, serves at Trinity Church, Stoughton MA. He is a licensed lay minister, 8th grade Sunday school teacher, and delegate to District 13. He is also Director of the Companions of the Brotherhood.*

# Founder's Forum

## Reading the Bible

### Some thoughts and suggestions

The Bible should be read in the spirit and practice of prayer, since these go hand in hand. The Scriptures help to shape our lives; they awaken our inner being to hear the whispers of the Spirit the same Spirit that aided in the preparation of these works in the first place. Here are a few concrete suggestions to help in getting more out of the Bible :

- The use of the lectionary is important. This listing of suggested readings helps us through the days, weeks and seasons of the church year. The lectionary aids in our getting to the most meaningful portions and moves us away from those parts that are not as relevant to our times. The most important reason for the use of the lectionary is to keep us on track—rather than using a "hit or miss" approach.
- Several translations should be used to give us different approaches and new insights.
- When possible, the Bible should be read aloud. Saying the Daily Offices is a good way to do this and I would encourage those who do not already say at least one Office each day to try setting up daily prayer and Bible reading with family or friends. We need to hear the words as well as see them. The moving poetry of the Psalms, the personal witness of Paul's letters to the churches, the dialogues with Jesus, even the judgment of the Law—all of these become more meaningful when we hear them.

- Use a commentary or study guide. The Bible is not its own interpreter, no matter what the literalist says. The work of scholars past and present often enables us to gain new insights into the Scriptures. Their work often helps us to find the Bible in tune with our particular situation or conflict.
- The reading of the Bible should be unhurried and deliberate. A time of quiet and stillness—perhaps the morning is best. A mood of relaxation and calm is needed. The Spirit moves where it wills and I don't believe there is any rush!
- The Bible should be read with pencil and paper ready—or at least nearby. Verses that stand out or have a special meaning for the moment often will form the heart of later meditations. In this way, we prepare our own "commentary."
- The Bible should be read with minds, lives and hearts open to the Spirit. We need to be vulnerable and free to let God move in and through us.

The Bible is a book for all seasons. It was written out of life itself and it fits any situation and time frame. In this respect, it is the most contemporary of books. Luther said that the Holy Spirit is the greatest teacher of the Holy Scriptures. I urge you to get to know the Bible better. It may be—come one of the best friends you have.

—RTB

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*Here and there with the Brotherhood ..*

## **COMMUNITY NOTES**

DUXBURY MA : Br's. Luke Anthony Nowicki, Roy Tobin and Laurence Andrew Keller attended a confirmation service at St. John the Evangelist parish. St. John's is to be Br. Roy's new mission, after his having served five years at St. Stephen's, Boston.

BALTIMORE MD : Br. Edward Munro attended the Maryland diocesan convention, where he manned a table in the exhibit area, describing the work of the Brotherhood.

ORKNEY SPRINGS VA: Br. Edward joined Br. Thomas Martin Little at the 1986 Clergy Conference of the Diocese of Virginia.

MANCHESTER NH : Br. Richard Thomas Biernacki acted as deputy registrar for the ordination of the Rt. Rev. Douglas E. Theuner as Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of New Hampshire. *Also* attending the service, which was held at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Cathedral, were Brs. Christian Williams, Roy, Laurence Andrew and novice Br. Donovan Aidan Bowley.

NORWICH VT: Br. Laurence Andrew and novices Donovan Aidan and Matthew Staples attended the installation of the Rev. Michael J. Godderz as rector of St. Barnabas' Church.

SUFFERN NY : Br. William Bunting, Provincial of Province II, represented the Superior General at the introduction of Br. John Francis Jones and his family to the congregation of Christ Church of Ramapo. Br. John Francis and his wife, Maryellen (who is also a Companion of the Brotherhood), have begun a new ministry with young people of the parish. Br. John Francis will also be assisting the

rector, the Rev. John A. Andrews, in other areas, including visits to a nearby nursing home.

BRONX NY : Brs. James E. Teets, John Peter Clark, and Tobias Stanislas Haller attended the celebration of a new ministry for the Rev. Canon Edwin E. Smith as rector of St. Andrew's, Castle Hill. Senior Suffragan Bishop J. Stuart Wetmore celebrated, and Brs. William and Earl Christian, who both serve at the parish, were charged with the organization of the service, which came off splendidly. The Rev. Dr. Moran Weston preached, and several clergy of the diocese as well as friends from Canon Smith's former parish in Philadelphia took part in the celebration.

NEW YORK NY : Br. Stephen Storen has been promoted to branch office manager at Philips, Appel & Walden. +++ Br. William Francis Jones has received a new assignment in his job with Citibank—he is now responsible for a \$ 3 million communication budget. +++ Br. Anthony Francis Tornabene has been promoted to department head at the nursing home in which he works. He is director of the utilization review and the "RUG II" project- a \$28 million medicaid reimbursement program. +++ Br. Tobias Stanislas' sermon, "The Peace of the Lord," appears in this quarter's edition of *Selected Sermons*.

CINCINNATI OH : Br. Bernard Francis LaReau visited with Br. Thomas Joseph Ross over part of his summer vacation. He attended the Christian Education end-of-year party, visited Companion Kay Sturm, and received a warm welcome from the parish of St. Michael and All Angels.

# The Simplicity of the Church

When we reflect on the great people we have Known, the great places we have visited, the great happenings in our lives, one word seems to describe them all—simplicity. More often than not, that which is simple is beautiful. This holds true in the life of the Church, and in the religious life as a part of that Church. The heart of the faith is expressed in the Summary of the Law: Love God, love your neighbor.

The Church is not the building where services are held. The Church is the congregation-, the Body of Christ, involved in the life of the Church, from sexton to celebrant, from the most recently baptised infant to the most senior bishop.

The early Christians met in each other's homes there were no chapels or soaring cathedral buildings. As the early Church grew, the apostles spread the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ—and they preached simplicity. Part of the simplicity was to accept Christ as their Savior through baptism, to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit--whether wisdom, knowledge or healing to care for the poor and to participate in the great mystery of the Body, the eucharist.

The Brotherhood of St. Gregory, as a religious community in the Episcopal Church, has attempted to recapture some of this simplicity. There is no monastery, no building or real estate. Each

member of the community "carries a monastery on his back." The brothers gather at one another's parishes to share the eucharist. They strive to bring people into the Church through their own vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, by which they have dedicated themselves to the service of Christ. They use the gifts that God has given them, through the Holy Spirit, in their missionary and apostolic work. This work crosses all the strata of society. They can be found directing choirs, feeding the poor, in the military service, teaching in colleges and elementary schools, nursing the sick, or bringing the good news to Wall Street.

The Rule of the Brotherhood is simple, based on the Summary of the Law, the Great Commandment, and the life of our patron, St. Gregory the Great. Since there are brothers from one end of the country to the other, we are able to pray without ceasing through the day, in the Daily Office. In this way we join one another in a community of prayer more real than any real estate could make it. In simplicity, we seek to do the will of God, who has called us and given us the strength to do his will in the world.

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*Br. Anthony Francis Tornabene is a registered nurse, and holds a doctorate in psychology. His work in a nursing home keeps him very busy, and in addition he works as a private counselor.*

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Because I believe in the reality of the saints, I know that St. Gregory is with me as I continue to walk more closely with Christ. Because Gregory marked out a path, in his work and life, he made it easier for others to follow. Through his intercession, and through that guidance he left, our community has been formed, risen, grown and been blessed with many gifts. It seems fitting that there be such a patron and community in the Episcopal Church, as Gregory sent the faith to England. In our foundation through the vision of many—our founding brother, and his band of pioneers, together with the sisters of the Order of the Visitation—and in the daily work and life of the community, I have much to be thankful for. I will ever be indebted to these souls for their prayerful work, and to the living prayers of St. Gregory the Great. —Postulant Michael David Elvestrom