

November 1986

#104

General Chapter: Life Means Change

The Brotherhood's General Chapter was held in September at the College of Preachers on the grounds of the Washington Cathedral. This annual meeting is a vital aspect of the community's life: all brothers are mandated by the Rule to gather for this time of retreat, prayer and study, from which they can go out into the world empowered and strengthened for their ministry in Christ's name.

Chapter began with a retreat conducted by Sr. Clare Fitzgerald, SSND, former president of the Roman Catholic Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Sr. Clare reported on the new expressions of religious life emerging within the Roman Catholic Church, and the efforts towards reform and renewal that are continually developing. The day was an inspiring one for the brothers, and the exciting times in which we are now living -- times in which religious communities are once again acting as witnesses and prophets in the Church and the world -- are times for risking our lives in living the Gospel.

The most important aspect of renewal, after focusing on the Gospel, involves return to roots. Chapter gave the brothers time for doing this in a concrete way. The Brotherhood was founded in the Riverdale monastery of the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Visitation; while in Washington the brothers paid a call on the Georgetown Visitation monastery, and spent an afternoon sharing memories with the sisters.

The Chapter business meeting produced what may be one of the most exciting decisions in the Brotherhood's recent history: the beginning of a one-year period of study towards the development of a Companion Sisterhood of St. Gregory, which would be sponsored by the Brotherhood until such time as it has enough members to become an inde-

pendent community. A committee was appointed by the Superior General to begin this study for submission to Chapter next year.

The week was not without its sad moments, however. Br. John E. Nidecker, who has served so capably in many ways during his life in the community, has been in ill health for the last two years. In a valedictory homily, he wished the community continued growth, and constant fidelity to servanthood. Chapter voted a special commendation to him for his years of faithful service, as he

retired as provincial of Province III.

More painful was the announcement by the Superior General of the dismissal of Augustine James Baird by the Brotherhood's Council, and the request made by Br. Michael DelMolino for release from vows. Since Michael is in life vows, his request (which stems from his decision to leave the Episcopal Church) has been submitted to our Visitor, the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr., for his approval.

Chapter elected representatives to Council: Br. Thomas Joseph Ross was reelected for a second three-year term, and Br. Thomas Martin Little was elected to his first term.

A constitutional amendment specifying the tasks of the director of vocations, and the inclusion of this officer, and the director of postulants and novices, as Council members was passed. Br. Stephen Storen, who has been acting in the capacity of vocations director, will continue his excellent work in this demanding job. Brs. James E. Teets and Anthony Francis Tornabene were reappointed to terms on Council by the Superior General, who also named Br. Joseph Thomas Irvin as director of Companions, and Br. Edward Munro as provincial of Province III.

Saturday brought a number of changes to the community. the Rev. Glen Edward Riley,

rector of All Saints', Chicago, was admitted as postulant Edward Ramon; and Br . Michael David Elvestrom (St . Stephen's, Harrisburg IL) was clothed as a novice .

The Chapter Festival Eucharist took place in St . Mary's Chapel of the Washington Cathedral . The celebrant was the Rev . Richard E. Downing, rector of St . James', Capitol Hill . At this service four brothers from Province II made their life vows of profession: Anthony Francis Tornabene (St . Paul's , Yonkers NY); John Peter Clark (St . Augustine's, NY NY); and William Francis Jones and Stephen Storen (both of Trinity , NY NY). Br. Donovan Aidan Bowley (Advent ,

Boston MA) made his first vows of profession at the same service .

Among those attending the eucharist we would like especially to note our ecumenical guests, two Friars of the Atonement , and a member of the Little Sisters of Jesus. As Sr . Clare pointed out in her talk on the religious life, the ecumenical movement is strong among religious because they are the ones on the edge - - and the edges touch .

We ask for your prayers as the Brotherhood begins another year (our 18th) of reaching out , being dangerous, striving to listen, speaking boldly , and seeking always to be true to our Patron's motto: to be servants of the servants of God. □

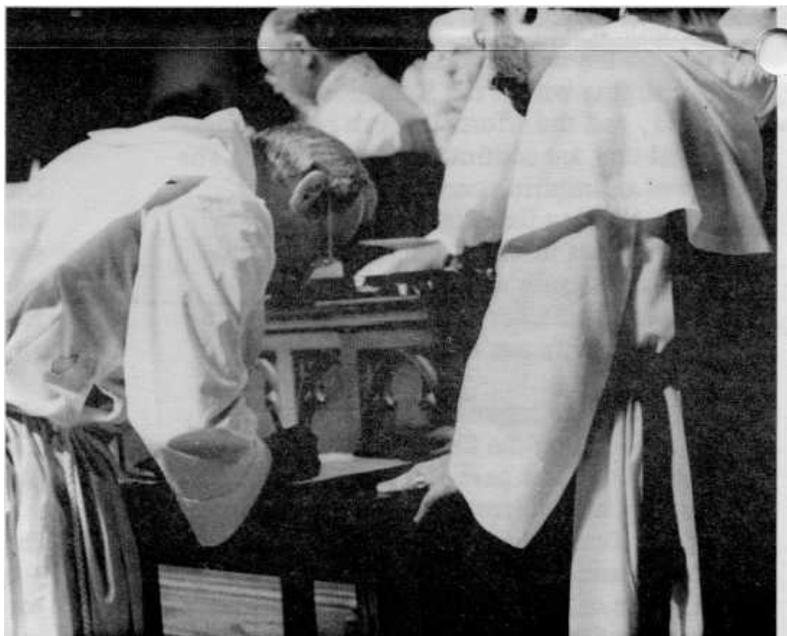
Founder's Forum

It has been suggested that for this month the Superior General's regular column should be renamed, The Founder's Mobile Home . Here's why, in the style of Community Notes:

BIRMINGHAM AL: Serving in his capacity as deputy registrar of the Episcopal Church's General Convention, Br . Richard Thomas Biernacki attended the ordination of the Rev . Robert Oran Miller as Suffragan Bishop of Alabama . In the photograph, Bishop Miller is seen signing the oath of conformity . (Photo by the Rev. Emmett Gribben .)

RENO NV: Br . Richard Thomas was then off to the Southwest , for the ordination of the Rev . Stewart Clark Zabriskie as Bishop of Nevada.

SAN ANTONIO TX: The Superior General then flew to Texas (after General Chapter in Washington DC) for the Interim Meeting of the House of Bishops. □



Here and there with the Brotherhood ...

COMMUNITY NOTES



Br. Tobias Stanislas (center) gives a presentation on the canonical standing of religious communities in the Episcopal Church.

DUXBURY MA: Superior General Br. Richard Thomas Biernacki and several of the brothers were able to attend a meeting of representatives from over a dozen Episcopal and (Canadian) Anglican religious communities. Many types of communities were represented, from small to large, monastic to apostolic -- a good example of the diversity of the religious life as it is now being lived in our church. The meeting was held here in early September, at the summer convent of the Sisters of St. Margaret. We are grateful to Mother Suzanne Elizabeth, CSJB, and Fr. Andrew Rank, SSP, respectively secretary and president of the Conference on the Religious Life, for providing a continuing forum for the discussions begun in Anaheim last fall.

The theme of the conference was "Life in Jesus: Ministry, Mission and Order," and the representatives from the religious orders and

communities had opportunity for dialogue among various viewpoints, and the time to express concerns and problems both shared and unique. It was a great mix, and the Rev. Richard Valantasis, the St. Margaret sisters' chaplain, did a fine job as facilitator and kept the brew cooking with pointed questions and observations.

Mother Anne Marie, SSM, gave the keynote address on the first evening which focused on the need for the centrality of the Gospel mandate to mission in all Christian life, but particularly for those called to the religious life.

The first session of the second day covered the remarkable increase in the number of communities which have arisen over the last few decades, and the new (or rediscovered) expressions of the religious life that are emerging. Another key question

dealt with the core or charism of a community, and how it is to be made incarnate in the structure of the community .

The afternoon session consisted of a presentation by Br . Tobias Stanislas Haller on the subject of canonical reform and/or revision , including the history up to the present time . This included observations on problems in the current canon (III.28) which apparently arise from previous errors of transcription .

Discussion of these points produced a clear consensus: for the present only corrections of previous errors should be made in the canon. There was discussion of the possibility of shortening the canon by combining the two sections, and a brief discussion about the vagueness of the term "Christian Community" and the communication problems this term presents.

Many other issues came up in the course of the following discussion:

There was strong support for the idea of a 'Superiors' Forum" sponsored by the House of Bishops. The possibility of a change in the structure of the Conference on the Religious Life was mentioned, but that is a matter that must be decided by its membership . It was felt by some that there is validity in the Conference's continued focus on communities that live under a rule of communal life . The possibility of the Conference changing its name in order more accurately to reflect this focus was also presented as an option.

Strong support greeted the request that there be a meeting with all bishops who serve as Visitors to communities. This has apparently never happened, and is felt to be overdue.

The question of solitary vows came up, and there seems to be a definite need for a consistent policy, a form of centralized registration and provision for ongoing pastoral oversight . The possibility of established communities offering pastoral guidance was suggested.

Accountability was another area of discussion. There is a desire to maintain a degree of autonomy while at the same time ensuring provision for oversight . The role of the Visitor is key in this regard, and at the meeting suggested above this balance might be explored.

The general impression was that this meeting was a great success, and that some very real progress is being made in shaping a distinctively Anglican way of looking at the religious life . We will keep you posted on further developments.



At Duxbury: (left to right) Br. Jonathan Maury, SSJE; Br. Stephen Paul, OI; Br. Richard Thomas; Fr. Arthur Willis, CSSS; Fr. Andrew Rank, SSP; Sr. Jean Campbell, OSH.

BOSTON Mk Br Tobias Stanislas attended the clothing of Br . John Paul Roberts, as a novice in the Society of St . John the Evangelist , at the Conventual Church of St . Mary in Cambridge . Br . John Paul is a former colleague from the Episcopal Church Center .

SIOUX FALLS SD: Br. Christian *Williams* attended the installation of the Very Rev . James R. Gundrum as dean of the cathedral . The Superior General was to have attended , but was stranded by a canceled flight .

MAPLE VALLEY WA: Br William Bunting was guest of the Rev. Edwin Hitchcock at St . George's, where, as has been a custom for some years now, Br. William delivered a homily at the Sunday eucharist .



Sister Clare Fitzgerald , SSND, addresses the brothers during the retreat . One key focus was the important concept Community locus .



The members of the community fill the small chapel at the College of Preachers .



The refectory, during the retreat .

General Chapter 1986

Br. John delivers a valedictory homily. To his left is the Rev . Henry N. Fukui , with whom Br . John has worked for many years.





The candidates for life profession are presented to the Superior General by their sponsors.

(left to right) Br. Tobias Stanislas , Br. Richard Thomas , the Rev . Richard E. Dawning , Br. James .



Br. Richard Thomas chats with Brs. Michael and James, SA, at the reception following the Festival Eucharist .



The community gathers on the steps of the College of Preachers.