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May 1987

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#110

*For the Sixth Sunday of Easter -- Acts 17:22-31*

## To the Unknown God

*Men of Athens , I have seen for myself how extremely scrupulous you are in all religious matters , because I noticed , as I strolled around admiring your sacred monuments , that you had an altar inscribed*

So spoke Paul to the council of the Areopagus. He might just as well have used those words to us today . Because we are still scrupulous: attentive, conscientious, precise and exact. We spend so much time analyzing what we are doing, to make things work with precision and exactness, that we have lost sight of the basic characteristics of the teachings of Christ. The Church in its organization has become too involved in whatever it takes to make itself run. We have committee after committee , meeting after meeting. We quarrel among ourselves over petty little things to such an extent that we lose sight of what Jesus really taught while he walked this earth. That teaching was love for God and fellow human beings.

Meetings are good when and if they further that end. They are wrong and a waste of precious time if they are unable to spread the gospel of love. Meetings often bring more hatefulness into the world than peace. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who persecute you. " Yet we do just the opposite, and hate our enemies. We endlessly discuss the poor, the sick , the homeless, the aged -- and accomplish nothing. Why?

Paul might say to us today, "You have built lovely buildings and beautiful altars to an unknown god. " Since we fail so consistently to practice the love Christ taught , we might just as well be worshiping an unknown Jesus. We may be like the people of Malcolm Boyd's parable, in Half Laughing, Half Crying, who need a miracle to be reminded that they had apparently paid lip-service to Christianity without taking it very seriously

or even considering the possibility of actually preaching it . "

Jesus has taken to the streets. And people are looking for him there. They want to find the Jesus that heals the sick , offers hope to the poor, befriends the homeless, gives comfort to the bereaved. People no longer seem to find Jesus in the church, the box where God is supposed to dwell .

No, they are finding him in their daily lives, in the people they talk to. They see the face of Jesus in the next door neighbor . They find him in the ones who help the homeless. They find him in all walks of life. This is the Jesus they want to know and love . Not the one who hangs on the cross in stained glass windows -- but the risen Jesus who lives in people who share what they have with others, whether it be material things or the love that pours forth from their hearts. This is the same Jesus who walked the dusty streets of Capernaum and Galilee. This is the Jesus of faith, hope and love . This is the risen Christ .

If we let stones, wood and glass contain our God, he will remain unknown . Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit; let us go forth , to know Christ , and to make him known,

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*Br . William Bunting is Provincial of Province II. He has been a lay reader at St. Andrew's, Bronx NY for over 36 years . His secular work has kept him busy at Saks Fifth Avenue for 37 years.*

## Our task is unfinished

If the Church is to make any difference at all in a fallen world, if the Church is to be an effective witness to the love of God in Christ, then its members must reform: they must set aside the petty small-mindedness of traditions they have allowed to overlay the gospel.

We have for too long dissipated our real strength in squabbles over petty differences within. We neglect the great universal truths of the gospel. Those searching for the consolation of Christ should not be misled and repelled or rejected, whatever historical or cultural bases of our differences may be; they want, they thirst for, a spiritual faith that will redeem and unite, until the oneness we share in Christ puts on the flesh of visible unity.

It is encouraging to see an emphasis on unity, on gathering our mission imperatives under real scrutiny. The Church needs to reform itself from the discrimination it has been guilty of practicing. We have been quick to preach brotherhood and personhood but slow to practice it. There are many denominations which have made sweeping statements -- but the evils of discrimination remain. When the early Church was tempted to deny fellowship to other races and nations, Peter broke tradition by entering the home of

*Here and there with the Brotherhood.. .*

## COMMUNITY NOTES

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The annual Lesser Chapter of the Brotherhood was held from March 13 to 15 at the Incarnation Camp and Conference Center. And, while this retreat and convocation is optional for the brothers across the country, all but four members of the community were able to attend.

Saturday, March 14th, was dedicated to fellowship, personal interviews with Br. Richard Thomas Biernacki, Superior General, and the performance of the Rites of the Brotherhood. At Morning Prayer the Rev. Edward Ramón Riley (rector of All Saints,

a Gentile. (Acts 10:28) Paul said there could be no racial, cultural, or sexual discrimination among those who were one in Christ. (Gal. 3:28)

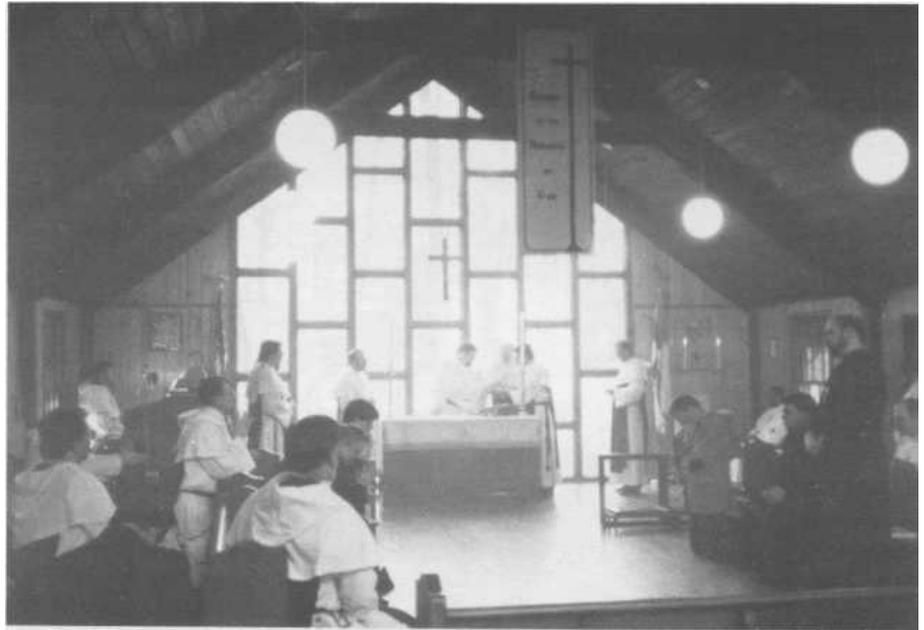
Few things result from lack of self-discipline other than indifference and complacency. Few things are more contrary to the will of God. It has been evident in the great historical reformations and revivals that the Church can overcome this lukewarm apathy, and continue the upward call in the kingdom of God.

If the words "like a mighty army moves the Church of God" is to become a reality, then reformation must continue until it rises above the apathy and complacency that threatens to paralyze it. The army of God is an army whose armor is Truth and whose weapon is Love. This weapon does not kill, but gives life -- everlasting life. Only to the extent that the plan for Christian action -- the gospel of Christ -- is put into practice, will the Church be able to reform itself and awaken from its apathy. With the gospel as a foundation, always refreshed by renewal and return to the roots of the faith, the Church can work for the building of the kingdom of God. Our work -- the work God has given us to do -- is far from completed. Our task is unfinished. o -- RTB

Chicago) was received into the novitiate of the community; Christopher Stephen Jenks (St. Ann and Holy Trinity, Brooklyn NY), Ciaran Anthony Della Fera (Church of the Advent, Boston), James Robert Davis (Christ Church, Luray VA) and William Edward Orce (Christ Church, Rockville MD) were admitted to the postulancy, and Br. Bernard Francis LaReau (St. Luke's, Madison WI) was commissioned as Director of Companions.

Several significant events took place at the Festival Eucharist that afternoon: Brs.

Thomas Joseph Ross (Christ Church , Cincinnati OH) and Tobias Stanislas Haller (St . James, Bronx NY) made their life profession of vows in the community; and Brs . Matthew Staples (Church of the Advent , Boston) and George Keith (Calvary/ St. George, New York City) made their first profession. For the first time in the Brotherhood's history, a priest of the community celebrated the liturgy with his brothers. Two vocationers and several friends of those making vows were able to stay for the reception which followed.



*The Festival Eucharist in St . John's Chapel .*



*The admission of four new postulants to the community*



*Brs. Richard Thomas , Matthew and George.*

On Sunday , March 15, the community gathered for a service of Morning Prayer and Holy Communion, at which Br. James E . Teets (St . Luke in the Fields, New York City) was officiant , Br . Edward Ramon was celebrant , and Br . Tobias Stanislas preached. After the service, the brothers assembled for a meeting of Chapter at which a decision to modify the

habit was made. It was with great joy that the Chapter received the report of the committee established to study the possibility of creating a Companion Sisterhood of St. Gregory, and proceeded to adopt it unanimously as a standing resolution . This legislation means that, effective immediately, the Brotherhood of St . Gregory will be



*Br. Thomas Joseph makes a point at the Chapter meeting*

accepting vocational inquiries from women who wish to explore the religious life as the Brotherhood lives it . For the present the Brotherhood will administer the life and growth of the Companion Sisterhood; it is understood from the outset that this program will last for a limited number of years, with the stated goal being that the sisters will eventually form their own autonomous community when its recognition by the House of Bishops

Standing Committee on Religious Communities is secured. Anyone interested in discovering more about this expression of the consecrated life is encouraged to write to:

Br. Stephen Storen, BSG  
 Director of Vocations  
 6 Aspen Lane  
 Howell NJ 07731

**ROCKVILLE MD**

Brothers of Province III gathered at Christ Church here for a day of quiet and meditation . Four scriptural passages assigned for study at last fall's Chapter meeting served as the core of presentations by Brs. John E. Nidecker ("You are a healer" -- Matt . 10:1, 8) , Thomas Martin Little ("You are a friend and bridge-builder" - - Matt. 10:40-42), Edward Munro ("You are a pro-claimer" — Matt . 10: 27), and Thaddeus David Williams ("You area harvester" -- Matt . 9:35-38).

**LURAY VA**

Br . Thomas Martin gave a talk at Christ Church as part of the parish' s Lenten

series. He enjoyed a lively question and answer session with the members of the parish, who have a new postulant among them, James Robert , p/BSG . o



*(l. to r . Brs Richard Thomas , Tobias Stanislas , Edward Ram6n , and Thomas Joseph .*