

The Servant

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#119

Founder's Forum

P.C.O.: the "Will of God" formula

These three letters, besides representing the three religious vows, are the keys to a formula for discovering the will of God for all of us.

P ... Pray. It doesn't matter much if you pray four offices each day or 35 or one. The important thing is that you do pray. The Brotherhood's *Rule* describes prayer as the life line of the community - the blood stream. The human body is dependent on a constant flow of blood to function well. We need the daily regimen of prayer to function and live as Christians. When someone says they are praying for you or that you will be in their prayers, don't underestimate the power of those words. God's power is infused in these words --prayer works! What would happen if all were faithful to their answer Yes to the question: "Will you be faithful in the breaking of the bread and the prayers"?

Faith is a gift and we must respond in conversation with God. This is also followed by our need to reform our thinking on approaching God. We can talk with God even when we have no needs or concerns. We need to set time aside to listen to God -- and not fill every moment of prayer with endless chatter. In a short article I wrote some years ago on silence, I said that silence is a ministry. There are times when a hand or a touch is far more important and prayerful than a lot of words.

C ... Constantly. Pray constantly. We are united with the faithful throughout the world as we pray. This constant prayer is a

chain with many links. We build many bridges in our several works and ministries, and the prayer we make strengthens those bridges -- keeps them strong - - so that those who cross them may do so in faith and trust. There is a lot of truth in the realization that all work and life and action is really prayer. To live the life God gives in faith is to pray constantly.

O ● ● Open. A hard word with which to deal. In this day and age with so much distrust around, it is very difficult to be open. Many people live in imaginary bubbles -- and religious aren't immune to the temptation. We need to remain open in many ways: by listening and praising; by keeping the door of our hearts open; by allowing our will to be replaced by God's. There are times it feels like we're being held in the palm of God's hand, and others when we feel that hand gently squeezing.

Since God is supreme, God's will must be supreme. There is nothing we can set up against that will. There is no situation into which God cannot enter with a healing answer.

Pray constantly with openness. Hard words. But God never promised the way would be easy. We are told to be constant in faith. Prayer gets us there --prayer keeps us there. Prayer is there. --RTB

The holiest week

We look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. -- Hebrews 12.2

Lent was a preparation for this week, the holiest week of the Christian calendar. A man by the name of Jesus Christ is proclaimed king and messiah by the people; yet he knew in his heart that these same people would soon shout to have him crucified.

Jesus was born of a human mother. He undertook the human frailties, the human joys: the sickness along with the health, the moments of despair as well as the moments of elation. He had compassion on the hurts and shared in the joys of other people. He was like each of us, but he was different. He was born of the flesh and yet he was begotten of God. This is the reason he was to come: to proclaim to the crowds that the kingdom of God is here and will be here for all eternity. For God so loved us that he willed to proceed through the days of that holy week, to be betrayed, to be arrested, to be crowned with thorns and spat upon, to carry the cross, and finally to be crucified and die.

Have we, as Christians, truly prepared ourselves through the disciplines of prayer, fasting, meditation, spiritual reading, and Scripture study for that union with Christ on Good Friday, and to celebrate with him the new life of the resurrection? Have we really begun to understand the true sufferings that our Lord went through? Have we actually admitted to ourselves that now is the time to change our lives, and to follow Christ completely?

All that Christ endured for us is not in vain if we accept who we are and live the life Christ wants us to live. Because we have been one with him in his death, so too we are one with him in his resurrection. In gratitude for that great gift, the gift of life everlasting, let our knees bend, our heads bow low, as with our tongues we confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord!

The journey with Christ to Calvary begins as each of us learns to be a

disciple. We do this by taking up our cross and following him. As Christ's disciples, we know that we are undergoing a baptism, drinking from a cup, bearing a cross as he did.

It is something to us who pass by. At the foot of the cross, stop; look; listen; then act.

Adam found the Tree of Life

For many years

I searched to find this place.

The way was watched by angels
armed with swords;
and yet in seeking it

I felt the Lord's
love guiding me.

With hope and fear, by grace I
made my way --

I'm sure it was God's will.

It was the Tree of *Knowledge*
God forbade.

Its bitter fruit

our innocence unmade;
had we kept faith
we'd been in Eden still.

But this, the Tree of *Life*,
was only lost
because we fell.

In Paradise once more,
I looked upon the Tree,
and what it bore.

The tree had brought forth fruit,
but at what cost!

I saw a wonder
hanging from that tree;
a man was nailed to it;
he looked like me.

--TSH

Br. Luke Anthony Nowicki is a life professed member of the community and serves at Mount Calvary Church, Camp Hill PA. He is a first year student at the Cathedral School (Diocese of Central Pennsylvania) and works for Pennsylvania Blue Shield.

Easter: the beginning of life

Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth, and the life: none come to the Father, but through me. -- John 14. 5-6

Br. George Keith, who is in annual profession, is Provincial of the community's Province II. He serves at the parish of Calvary/St. George, Manhattan, is currently in the Master of Divinity Program at the New York Theological Seminary, and is a supervisor for The Church Hymnal Corporation, publishers for the Episcopal Church.

For many, life is not worth living. The frustration, despair and misery of living in today's world sometimes seems too much to bear. We see the hopelessness of many around us every day. We see the homeless, the hungry, the broken. We see middle-class despair. We see upper-class despair. Broken lives know no barrier.

We can come to Easter looking for something which will give us new hope and a new lease on life. We go to church on Easter Day not merely to be seen, not merely to wear our Easter bonnets or our faddish new suit. We go because deep down we seek for renewed hope about life in the here-and-now and life eternal.

Certainly we feel that unless there is more to life than we sometimes suspect there is, then indeed it is not worth living. Unless the way to which Jesus pointed is true, there is little hope for any of us. Time and time again we come to an impasse which confronts us with the fact that we cannot carry on by our own strength. The strains of daily living, the misunderstandings, the

burdens, the temptations that befall us can weigh heavily and break us as human beings -- unless we can turn to the everlasting arms which can hold us up.

So, on Easter we remind ourselves that Jesus is the one who can take a person who doesn't want to live and make that person fall in love with life once again. He said, "Because I live, you shall live also." (John 14.19) There are many opinions about when life really begins. Scientists offer opinions. Theologians offer opinions. Psychologists offer opinions. I, too, offer an opinion. Life begins at Easter.

The same transformation awaits us all. Jesus can turn our sorrow into joy, our fear into courage. He can take a person without a purpose and give that person a reason for living, take someone without direction and give a cause worth dying for. He takes those of us who are lifeless and make us full of life again. Christ the Lord is risen today and we are raised up with him. Life does begin at Easter.+

Kerygma Korner

Tradition! Part 1: Faith of the Fathers?

Concerning ordination

- There may only be one bishop in any city. I Nicea 8
- Coadjutor bishops are expressly forbidden; only after a bishop's death shall a successor be elected. Antioch 23
- No bishop, presbyter, nor deacon may pass from one city to another; translation is forbidden. I Nicea 15; Antioch 21;
- A bishop shall not receive clergy from another diocese, unless they have been driven hence by civil strife. Chalcedon 20

It is said so often it hardly needs repeating: Anglican theology is founded on a triple basis of Scripture, tradition, and reason. We need to ask several questions: Is there really such a triple basis in Anglicanism? and are the three legs of the tripod equal? What is tradition? and what *isn't*?

It may come as a surprise, but when Hooker proposed the three criteria in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (V.8.2)* he did not suggest that they were equal: "What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by the force of reason; after these the voice of the church suc-

ceedeth." The church has the right to speak only on issues which *can not be addressed* through the reasonable examination of Scripture and human experience.

Tradition, then, must be very limited indeed. Moreover, Hooker's statement -- if he were referring to doctrine -- conflicts with the Anglican principle that Scripture "containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." But *was* Hooker referring to doctrine?

No presbyter nor deacon may desert his own church; if anyone attempt to ordain someone belonging to another bishop, his ordination is void. I Nicea 16

A man whose wife has committed adultery may not be ordained. Neocaesarea 8

No presbyter shall be ordained before the age of 30. Neocaesarea 11

No one shall be ordained but to a specific parish or cure. Chalcedon 6

Concerning clerical life-styles

Clergy are forbidden to lend money at interest.

I Nicea 7; Laodicea 4

If deacons are to marry, it must be before ordination. Ancyra 10

Clergy may not be vegetarians. Ancyra 14

A presbyter may not be a guest at the wedding of a person contracting a second marriage. Neocaesarea 7

No one in orders may enter a tavern. Laodicea 24

Mixed bathing is an abomination. Laodicea 30; Trullo 77

Bishops and clergy may not be employed in any secular business. Chalcedon 3

Clergy if they are to marry must do so before ordination. Trullo 6

No bishop may retain his wife; he must be celibate. Trullo 12

Concerning worship and ritual

Kneeling is forbidden on all Sundays and throughout Eastertide. I Nicea 20

No one may kneel from Vespers of Saturday until Sunday evening. Trullo 90

If anyone condemns the eating of meat, let him be cursed. Gangra 2

If anyone shall fast on a Sunday let him be anathema. Gangra 18; Trullo 55

No one below the order of a deacon may administer the chalice. Laodicea 25 (canons continued at left...)

We need to limit our definition of *tradition* to the Creeds themselves, which is precisely what the Lambeth Quadrilateral does. The articles of the creeds are derived *from* Scripture *through* reason. The Apostles' Creed contains nothing that isn't clearly scriptural. The Nicene Creed contains some abstract dogmatic statements, but even these derive from Scripture. The framers, the Fathers meeting at Nicea and Constantinople, didn't see themselves as making up new dogma, but as putting into precise terms something they had been teaching all along, something that they had received, that had been *handed down* to them. That is what *tradition* means.

If we include more than this under the heading of *tradition*, then we suggest that the early church didn't have the fullness of the faith! As Hermann Haring wrote, "How can one still meaningfully talk about a preservation of the true faith, when binding statements of the faith have only gradually crystallized or have been modified?" If it is important to salvation, it must be apparent to the reasonable mind in the Bible and the creeds. So Hooker was either wrong, or he wasn't talking about doctrine.

Most of those who speak of tradition *aren't* thinking of the creeds, nor really of doctrine. They are in fact referring to matters of church discipline to which they would like to give an added patina of authority. They appeal to an accumulated wisdom that not only guides but limits. But does such a body of "tradition" actually exist? Is there a monolithic, clear and distinct code, handed down uninterrupted and unchanged from the apostles? The answer is *No*. A casual examination of church history will show that most of what is called "tradition" is not handed down from "the Fathers" but developed as time went on. Not only are new "traditions" developed, but old ones pass away. The proper term for this body of accumulated discipline is *custom*.

Can "tradition" be normative or binding? Again, the answer is *No*. Those who attempt to enforce conformity to "tradition" are like people trying to measure with a shrinking yardstick.

Custom -- what they call "tradition" -- by its very nature changes. As examples, the accompanying side columns list decisions of the early church, made ' by ecumenical councils and synods, which are commonly disregarded by many who think of themselves as died-in-the-wool *traditionalists*.

So, the idea that "tradition," or *custom*, is unchanging is simply a myth. This is not to say that we don't need customs, or "traditions." But custom can't be set in stone, or treated as inviolable. Trying to keep custom unchanged is like burying the gold talent in the ground; customs are *supposed* to change, to meet the needs of a changing world. The faith -- the doctrine -- does not change; the discipline does. The great thing is to distinguish between doctrine and discipline, using the criteria of Scripture and reason, with a careful look at history. The church has the right to establish disciplines that are not contrary to Scripture and reason; it may not establish new doctrines: *this is* what Hooker was talking about, and this is what Anglicans have always said.

The church is built upon a rock, which is Christ. It is a rock that is solid, firm, sure, chosen and precious. But *it moves!* (1 Cor 10.4) And we had best move with it. Christ never promised that the church would never err, but that it would *prevail*. Falteringly, sometimes making terrible mistakes, sometimes having flashes of genius and insight, the church is a living thing that groans inwardly, with the Holy Spirit, and awaits its final consummation.

--TSH

more canons, continued from [right](#)

Christians must not rest on the Sabbath (Saturday) but only on Sunday. Laodicea 29

During Lent, the eucharist may only be celebrated on Saturday and Sunday. Laodicea 49; Trullo 52

The eucharist *may* not be celebrated in a private house. Laodicea 58

Laymen may not teach publicly. Trullo 64
The eating of blood is forbidden. Trullo 67

No layman may approach the altar or enter the sanctuary. Trullo 69

No representation of the saving cross shall be placed upon the pavement or floor. Trullo 73 It is forbidden to portray Christ by the image of a lamb. Trullo 82

Those who provide drugs for abortion are guilty of murder. Trullo 91

Community Notes

New York

Br. James E. Teets, Christian Williams, Stephen Storen, William Francis Jones, Tobias Stanislas Haller, Charles Kramer, Donovan Aidan Bowley, John Francis Jones, and novice Br. Christopher Stephen Jenks attended the 19th annual Trinity Institute. The theme of the conference was "Authority in Crisis?" and the keynote speaker was Archbishop of Canterbury Robert A. K. Runcie. Topics of workshops attended by the brothers included authority in relation to the Bible, feminism, personal morality, Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue, Afro-Anglicanism, and the church in Latin America.

At a festive Epiphany eucharist celebrated by Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, Br. Richard Thomas Biernecki served as organist, Br. James as M.C., and Brotherhood Friend the Rev. David Henritz as epistoler. The service was a welcome home for the

Presiding Bishop, and a celebration of the ministries of the Church Center staff.

Baltimore

Br. Edward Munro spent a pleasant afternoon with Helen Joyce, our community's mentor, at Stella Maris, Towson.

Br. Edward was joined by Br. Thaddeus David Williams, as part of a group from Calvary Church attending a diocesan AIDS symposium.

Chicago

Brothers of the Western Province gathered in Chicago for a Thanksgiving celebration last fall, hosted by novice Br. Edward Ramon Riley, rector of All Saints. At the Thanksgiving Day eucharist three congregations gathered, and the Gospel was read in three languages for the Spanish, English and East Indian members of the congregations. On the follow-

ing day a meeting was held for those interested in finding out more about the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood. The weekend closed with a visit to St. Luke's Church and Seabury Theological Seminary, and the Latino Fiesta on Saturday evening. The next day, Advent I, started a new year with the brothers heading home, "Far apart in miles, but still a very close community in prayer, and in service to the church."

Br. Michael David Elvestrøm also had a chance to visit the windy city, and while there enjoyed dinner with novice Br. Edward Ramón and postulant Linda Marie Peters of the Companion Sisterhood.

Culpa nostra department: we inadvertently promoted the Rev. Robert J. Vanderau in the last issue; he is Canon Precentor, not Dean, at the Cathedral of St. Luke in Orlando.

Br. Michael David Elvestrom with the 4' x7' Christus Rex icon he presented to St. Paul's on the Plains, Lubbock TX.



Some thoughts on vocation

Time was when you heard a lot more about *vocation* than you do today. Nowadays the word is *ministry* and it comes in two packages: clerical and lay. I don't mean to suggest that these two words are mutually exclusive; in fact, ministry grows out of a sense of vocation. A while back, if someone in the Episcopal Church had a sense of vocation, *he* went off to seminary and became a priest or *she* joined her parish altar guild or any number of women's organizations. These were the only options commonly known.

In a small number of cases the word *vocation* contained another option: the religious life. In the Episcopal Church, this used to mean that a man or a woman could go away to one of the few monasteries in the countryside or in the inner city to pursue a life of contemplative prayer, devotion, and dedicated works such as teaching or nursing. *But* (and this is the problem) a person had to first *know* that such an option existed. This, together with the fact that the Episcopal Church does not share the reality of dwindling clerical numbers with some other churches, combined to perpetuate the general ignorance of the religious life which is still widespread. A recent statistical study by John H. Morgan reveals that of all bishops consecrated between 1960 and 1980 only four percent are visitors or associates of a religious community. Thirty-five percent are seminary trustees, which gives a clear indication of vocational inclination.

When a person has questions about vocation ("feeling the call," they used to say), he or she gets in touch with some-body in the know: the parish clergy. Maybe the Episcopal Church could take a lesson from the Roman Catholics in this respect. Their clergy take this

matter of vocation seriously; each parish priest is encouraged to actively pursue vocations of every kind. This is one of their everyday responsibilities. I suppose this means they realize that God's will is not limited; that the religious life is a valid option for many people. It would seem that our church believes the religious life is strictly a Roman Catholic phenomenon, that Episcopalians are simply not called to the religious vocation. I beg to differ, and I'm supported by a small but significant number of Anglican men and women who over the last 120 years have found that religious life *can* fulfill God's will in their lives.

So what can be done about this? If its true that we live in an era when information abounds, then the problem can't be insurmountable. What we need to do is to *care*. The national church needs to care, and to provide a coordinated program of information. The House of Bishops has long had a committee on religious communities; couldn't leadership begin there? Our church has accredited seminaries; isn't it logical to expect these institutions to inform their students that God might have plans for them that include ordination *and* religious life? And what about the diocesan offices? the chaplaincies on the campuses? the deaneries? the interparish councils? Are these each not places of pastoral guidance? But most important of all is the parish where matters of vocational discernment begin, with the parish clergy and vestry. Here the budding vocation first looks for help in discernment, and sometimes the wardens, the vestry or the rector have to be the aggressor in the matter. *Caring is part of discerning*. If people are self-aware enough to begin looking for a way to express what they feel to be a vocational call then shouldn't we care enough to make *all* the options avail-able?

Br. James E. Teets, of the Bronx NY, is a life professed member of the community and serves as coordinator of public relations. He serves at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, Manhattan, and is on the staff of the Presiding Bishop at the Episcopal Church Center, as administrative assistant to the executive for world mission.