

The Brotherhood of
Saint Gregory

The Servant

The Servant is **published** six times a year
by the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory,
a religious community of the Episcopal Church.
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(May/June 1988 #120)

Founder's Forum

Reflections on Lesser Chapter, 1988

*O God, you have prepared
for those who love you
such good things as
surpass our un-
derstanding: Pour into
our hearts such love
towards you, that we,
loving you in all things
and above all things, may
obtain your promises,
which exceed all we can
desire; through Jesus
Christ our Lord, who lives
and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever. Amen.*
— Collect for the Sixth
Sunday of Easter

Lesser Chapter is the mid-year meeting of the Brotherhood of St. Gregory. This year we returned to the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center in Ivoryton, Conn. It was, like all times the brothers get together, a welcome respite from the work in which we are all engaged most of the time. That doesn't mean it isn't work itself! A good many important and wonderful things happened this Lesser Chapter — it wasn't really "Lesser."

The Brotherhood has always supported change—we have always attempted to adhere to the decisions of the General Convention. At this Lesser Chapter we reinforced our words of many years and were privileged to have the Rev. Dr. Ellen M. Barrett as celebrant for the Chapter eucharist on the feast of St. Gregory. The deacon of the mass was the newly admitted postulant in the Companion Sisterhood of St. Gregory, Clare. This was the first time that a woman has celebrated for the assembled community; and behold, it was very good.

Sunday morning the community shared another first—the celebration of the eucharist by a professed brother of the community. Br. Edward Raman Riley made his first profession of annual vows at the eucharist on Saturday. He is our first professed presbyter-brother. It was a weekend of firsts, full of the Holy Spirit — it was Pentecost in Lent.

Pentecost is the reminder that the church has the power within itself to renew itself. Be-

cause of the Holy Spirit indwelling within it, the church can speak more loudly of the kingdom of God, serve more effectively, teach more compellingly and proclaim more boldly. A community with the Holy Spirit lives and changes with ease. It accepts — no — it *welcomes* the times and the situations of this age as the tracings of that Spirit who changes and molds and re-creates. The Holy Spirit is a fire which never goes out and I pray that the Brotherhood never loses the love of that fire of *change* and reform and new life which is the "religious life."

All the members of the church have an obligation. That is: to play their part in the building up of the kingdom of God. We are part of history. We are in God's church; we are of God's church. It is a great gift; it is a great responsibility.

—RTB

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For the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

I say to you, arise

But ignoring what they said Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

— Mark 5.36

Death is unavoidable. Each of us knows, though we try to avoid thinking about it, that a day will come that will be our last. In a hospital bed after a long illness, in the sudden explosive shock of an automobile accident, surrounded and supported by a loving family, or alone in a cold room—each of us will die one day. But before that day comes, each of us will very likely be touched by death in another way. Almost all of us will first know death in the loss of someone else. A loving grandmother, an aunt or uncle that perhaps you saw only a few times a year, your father or mother, a beloved friend, perhaps your husband or wife—most of us will be acquainted with death before we experience it ourselves.

Of all the losses the most keenly felt must be the loss of a child. In this we experience the death of the future, the death of hope, the passing of joy. And so it has always been. Even in the ancient world, when such deaths were far more common, they must have caused grief to the parents. The knowledge that pain is common or widespread doesn't make it any easier to bear; and though misery loves company, it is no less miserable. After all, death is the great, unavoidable blank wall that faces *all* of us — and that doesn't make it any easier to face.

So we can be sure that Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, was fearful for the life of his little daughter. Though he may have had half a dozen other children, that would not lessen the grief of this particular loss. For this was his little daughter—his only daughter, as Luke tells us (8.42) — twelve years old, and at the point of death.

When some folk came with the news, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" it was all very easy for them to take the "stiff upper lip" attitude. "He has other children, a good wife and many years ahead of him," they might have thought. "Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But this was his only little daughter. Would those sweet brown eyes never smile at him again, never twinkle with mischief, never glow with delight at the little gift of a beaded necklace from Sidon? "Why trouble the Teacher any

further?" Did Jairus shrug, nod, and turn away? Did he look at Jesus with hope, or with despair?

We do not know. Because whatever Jairus did, Jesus acted as well. "Ignoring what they said, Jesus said... 'Do not fear, only believe.' A moment before, the bottom had fallen out of Jairus' hopes. He had heard of the wonders performed by the Teacher from Nazareth, the healings he had performed in Capernaum. His hopes had been high as he fell at Jesus' feet, imploring his help, so that his little daughter might be made well, and live. Then the word had come, the word he had dreaded hearing all along. "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But into the midst of that empty, cold loss came a voice that said, "Do not fear, only believe."

When they came to the house, they saw the crowd weeping and wailing. These people were "doing the right thing." They were sympathetic neighbors, grieving in the ritual style that is as ageless as human civilization. Almost every culture has a form of ritual grieving, a way in which the community expresses the grief the victims themselves are too drained and exhausted to express. But it is rarely from the heart. And it can do little to fill the emptiness, the void left by inevitable loss. The formality of this mourning is revealed by the quickness of its turn to laughter. When Jesus gave the great good news that the little girl was not dead, but only sleeping, the crowd laughed in his face.

The knowledge that pain is common or widespread doesn't make it any easier to bear; and though misery loves company, it is no less miserable.

But the father and mother, standing by in the numb silence of grief—did they suddenly look up, look into the eyes of this man from Nazareth? Was not the silence of their grief broken by the sudden gasp of hope? "Not dead but sleeping."

So Jesus took this father and mother, and his disciples, into the house where the child lay. Imagine how quiet it was. The laughter has died down; though perhaps a few whispers pass through the crowd. The parents have their eyes fixed on Jesus; the disciples wonder what is going to happen next — they have seen so much these last few weeks.

Into that silence a voice speaks. It is a voice filled with power. It is the voice that called creation into being, the Word through whom all things were made. But here the voice speaks gently to a little girl. "'Talitha cumi... Little girl, I say to you arise.' And immediately the girl got up and walked... and he told them to give her something to eat."

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That voice still speaks to us. We have all fallen asleep in the death of sin, and that same voice calls to us to awaken, to rise up. "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." (Eph. 5:14) This is good news, the good news that stills the weeping and wailing of repentance. There are people whose lives have been ruined by guilt, and there are some who have turned that guilt into venom, suspicion and hatred.

For still others, the sense of sin produces that deep despair and depression that is like the loss of a child or a loved one. They are inconsolable, silent in a grief beyond words.

But Jesus brings good news. In response both to emotional grief and depths of dark depression, Jesus says, "You have sinned. Be healed, and sin no more." He accepts our repentance, and forgives us. Sin is not the end. Guilt is not the final word. We are not dead, but asleep. And by accepting the forgiveness freely offered us, we can awaken to the glorious light.

Just as he called that little girl from the sleep of death, he calls us from the death of sin. "Get up little girl; young man, arise; woman, I say to you rise up; come, Mother, take my hand; stand up, Grandfather." He silences the mourners. He touches us with forgiveness, and fills the depth of our empty grief out of the abundance of his love. He lifts us up from the sleep of death, stands us upon our feet that we may walk and follow him, and feeds us with the spiritual food of his own body and blood. Touched by this love, awakened by this voice, healed by this forgiveness, fed with this food, we can face anything— even bodily death—in the sure and certain knowledge that nothing in the universe can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—TSH

Here and there with the Brotherhood...
Community Notes

Massachusetts

Brs. Stephen Storen, Donovan Aidan Bowley, and novice Br. Ciaran Anthony Della Fera took part in a three-day retreat at the Society of St. John the Evangelist, entitled "Praxis and Personality." Both Donovan Aidan and Ciaran Anthony traveled to the west in work-related trips: Ciaran Anthony to Dallas to deliver a presentation on USENIX, and Donovan Aidan to Des Moines to present a paper at a conference on water pollution. Donovan Aidan has been assisting in teaching confirmation classes at St. John's, Charlestown.

New York

On the weekend after Lesser Chapter (see the following article) Donovan Aidan visited with Brs. James E. Teets and Tobias Stanislas Haller at St. Augustine's House in the Bronx. They journeyed through a surprising March bli77ard to join Br. Stephen and novice Br. Christopher Stephen Jenks at St. John's, Flushing, where they were welcomed by the rector, the Rev. Bruce F. Irwin, and the congregation. + + + Br. William Bunting joined James, Tobias Stanislas, and Christopher Stephen for the rededication service of St. Peter's Church, Chelsea, on its 150th

anniversary. Several former vicars were present, including Christopher Stephen's father, the Rev. Robert Jenks.



Convent, Catonsville, conducted by the Rev. William Rich. + + + Br. Thaddeus David serves on the Diocesan AIDS Task Force/ Post-Hospital Care Committee; he and Br. Edward attended a diocesan luncheon and seminar at the Cathedral Church of the Incarnation, Baltimore. Thaddeus David also attends the special healing service held each month at Memorial Episcopal Church, Bolton Hill. + + + A family affair took place at Holy Trinity Church, Collington: at a special service Br. Edward and his wife Barbara renewed their wedding vows on their 25th anniversary. Also attending were Br. John and his wife Jeanne, Br. Thomas Martin and his wife Margaret, and novice Br. William Edward and his wife Jackie. A reception followed. Another happy note: Edward and Barbara are the proud grandparents of Erin Jane McDermott. + + + Br. Thaddeus David attended the service of institution for the new rector of Grace & St. Peter's, Baltimore, the Rev. Frederick S. Thomas. + + + Novice Br. William Edward is one of the teachers for the Genesis Bible Program at Christ Church, Rockville.

*The Rev. Henry Nobuyoshi Fukui, 1924-194
Chaplain of the Brotherhood 1980-1988*

Maryland

We note with sadness, yet rejoicing in the eternal hope promised us, the passing into larger life of the Rev. Henry N. Fukui, who for the last nine years had been working closely with Br. John E. Nidecker in various ministries in parishes and chaplaincies. Most of the Province III brothers were able to attend the requiem eucharist. Fr. Fukui's ashes were placed in the columbarium at St. Anne's, Damascus, where he and John had served jointly for over a year. On their last day of work together in the parish, Palm Sunday 1981, a statue of St. Francis in the garden by the columbarium was dedicated by the parish in honor of Fr. Fukui and Br. John, in thanksgiving for their work together there. May his soul, and the souls of all the departed, rest in eternal peace.

Fr. Fukui at the dedication of the St. Francis statue, St. Anne's, Damascus.



Brs. Thaddeus David Williams, Edward Munro, Thomas Martin Little, and novice Br. William Edward Orce attended a retreat at the All Saints

Illinois

A West Province gathering took place, with brothers heading in from the field. One gathering place was All Saint's Parish, Chicago, for a eucharist at which the celebrant was then-novice Br. Edward Ramón Riley; at far right in the photo are visiting Brs. Bernard Francis LaReau (Madison WI), Kevin James Jensen (Portland OR), and Provincial Thomas Joseph Ross (Cincinnati OH); also present was then-pos-



Br. Thomas Joseph Ross receives a blessing from the Rev. Patricia Sutton, following the celebration of her first eucharist.



tulant Linda Marie Peters of the Companion Sisterhood (Chicago). + + + Br. Thomas Joseph attended the first eucharist celebrated by the Rev. Patricia Sutton, at St. Luke's, Evanston.

Florida

Br. Michael David Elvestrøm gave a slide lecture on liturgical arts to the Tampa Deanery Clericus meeting in Plant City. He is also continuing his work with the campus ministry at the University of South Florida.

San Francisco

Br. William E. Bunting, on his recent vacation, visited Sacred Heart Roman Catholic parish and renewed his friendship with the pastor, Fr. Kenneth M. Westray. Fr. Westray, we are told, reads *The Servant* with interest, and posts it on the parish bulletin board.

Lesser Chapter

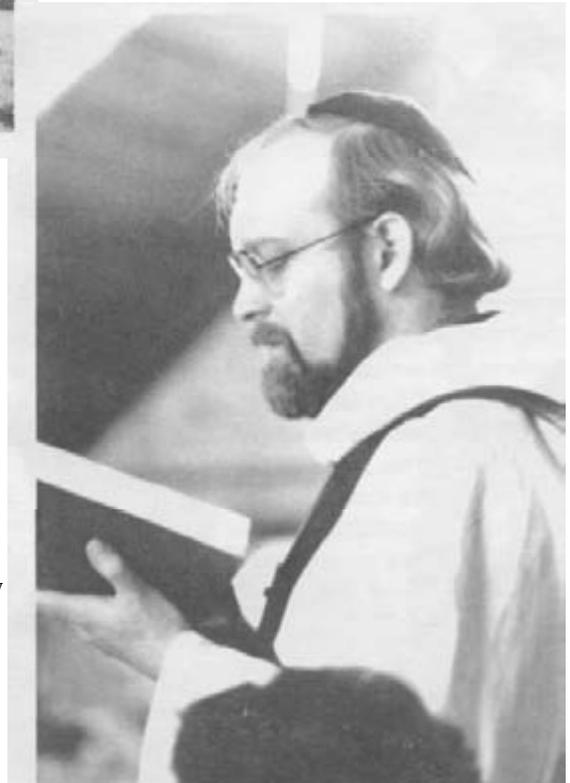
The gathering of the family



The Brotherhood of St. Gregory and the Companion Sisterhood of St. Gregory assembled for their Lesser Chapter retreat at the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center, Ivoryton CT, from March 10 to 13, 1988. Brothers and sisters gathered from eleven dioceses for this annual event. The focus for this yearly meeting is worship and fellowship, a time apart for prayer, and the celebration of the Rites of the communities.

Twice annually the Brotherhood and the Companion Sisterhood come together to admit new postulants and to support their members as they journey through their novitiate, first profession of vows, annual renewal, and life profession. At Evening Prayer on Friday, Alan Andrew Speer of the Diocese of Southern Ojio was admitted to the

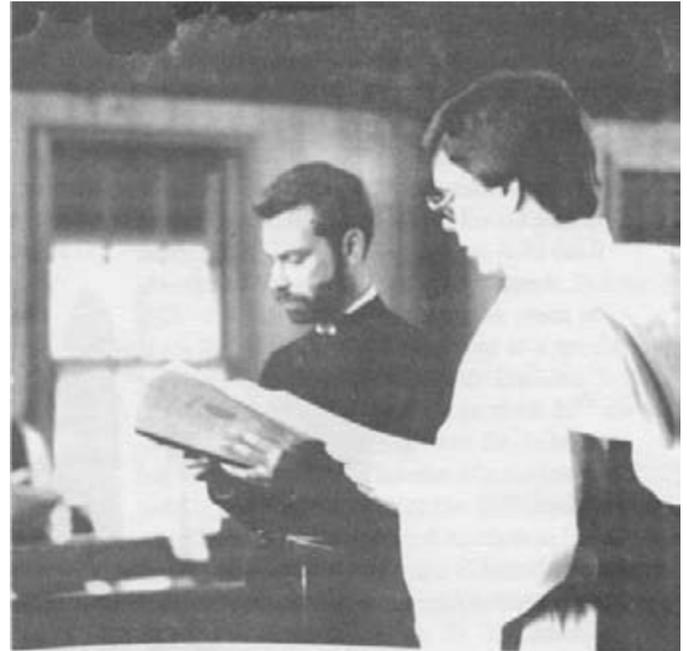
Brotherhood's postulancy. Alan Andrew is a registered nurse who works at the V.A. Hospital in Cincinnati; he attends Calvary Parish. At Morning Prayer on Saturday, Sr. Linda Marie Peters of the Diocese of Chicago entered the



Br. Thaddeus David Williams reads the lesson during one of the daily offices.



Above, Brs. Richard Thomas, Thaddeus David, Edward Ramón, with the Rev. Ellen M. Barrett.



made his life profession of vows at this service; and Br. Edward Ramón Riley, a priest of the Diocese of Chicago, made his first profession. The Rev. Dr. Ellen M. Barrett was the celebrant and Br. Richard Thomas Biernacki, Superior General of the communities, presided at the Rites and preached.

Right top, Alan Andrew is presented by Br. Stephen; middle, the Superior General with Sr. Linda Marie and Clare; bottom, the community heads for home. Below, Clare is admitted into the postulancy .

novitiate and the Rev. Susan G. Connell, a deacon of the Diocese of New Jersey (St. Raphael's, Bricktown), was admitted to the postulancy of the Companion

Sisterhood, receiving Clare as her name in religion. Six brothers renewed their annual vows: Br. Edward Munro (of the Diocese of Washington), Br. Bernard Fessenden (Massachusetts), Br. John Francis Jones (New York), Br. Earl Christian (New York), Br. Matthew Staples (Massachusetts), and Br. George Keith (New York). Two guests of the Brotherhood's vocational program, one from the Diocese of Arkansas and the other from the Diocese of Chicago, were present to share in part of this community time. The celebra-

tion of the Patronal Festival of St. Gregory the Great was of special significance to two members of the Brotherhood this year: Br. Thaddeus David Williams of the Diocese of Maryland

