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# The Servant

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#124

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## *Founder's Forum*

### *Parting words, welcoming words*

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For the founder of a community the first homily for a departed member is very difficult. We lost our first brother, Br John, in the summer, but I did not preach at the memorial eucharist. So this homily — my first for a departed brother — is especially hard for me.

On December 7, 1980 William wrote me a brief letter after being accepted by the Brotherhood. I would like to share some of it.

I want to first thank God and then you for accepting my application as a postulant in the Brotherhood of St Gregory. The news arrived Friday evening in a letter from Br James. I was delighted. I have been walking around sort of light-headed, happy and just feeling great. Nothing has ever affected me like this before.

Yesterday, at a seminar on spirituality sponsored by the Committee on Christian Education and Lay Ministry for the Bronx, I was moved by the passage from Scripture "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come."

I am most thankful to God and to you for accepting my application for admission. I hope, I pray, that I may live up to the expectations of the order, and hope that I may be able to contribute something of myself to the Brotherhood.

William more than fulfilled those words; he more than contributed of himself and his works and his intense love of the brothers, the Brotherhood and the church. In those contributions

was a man who adapted to change and new creations as if those words from Scripture were written just for him. William *lived* his faith everywhere he went. He was rightly proud of the community which was his religious family; which *is still* his religious family. He supported me in the things I tried to accomplish and he stood beside all of the brothers when in trouble, when they were celebrating and whenever they needed his care and love and support.

Just two days after his death, I was on Northwest Airlines flying to Detroit for the consecration of their new bishop coadjutor. Many of you know how much William loved to travel—one of his nicknames was "Brother Geographicus." How appropriate it was that I was praying for the repose of his soul during the Noon Office while flying through the sky. Later at my hotel saying Evening Prayer, I was struck by some of the verses of Psalm 73.

Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou dost hold my hand. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterward thou wilt receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

The other evening I had called Br Tobias to tell him that in the midst of all the planning and work for a fitting memorial, William's death had final-

ly hit me and I was feeling really sad. Toby made a statement that summed up my own sense of loss. He said: "That sweet smile..." That was it; that sweet smile.

William's smile summed up the joy which he felt in the Lord, in his church, and in the Brotherhood. Those who knew William knew that he has not been in the best of health for many years. Like anyone, occasionally he would admit to having an ache or a pain, but then he would always finish with something like, "But I'll be o.k." and then flash that smile. Our faith tells us that William now has reason to smile a bigger, broader, happier smile than any he managed here on earth.

Jesus told a parable about a stem master who delivered some money to three servants before leaving on a journey and how two of the three increased their master's property before he returned. William was one who constantly worked at increasing. And I cannot help but think—no, I cannot help but *know* that last week William heard the words of Jesus addressed to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your master."-RTB



*For the Third Sunday after the Epiphany*

## Members of one Body

*Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it. —1 Cor 12:27*

The Scripture this morning cries out to me, "We, all of us together, are the Body of Christ" Not just one person, but all of us together make up one body, the Body of Christ, which we call the church.

As I walk through the hallways of the church and parish hall on Sunday mornings I overhear little pieces of conversation—little tidbits of conversation called "back biting." It goes something like this: "Oh! that Mrs. What's-her-name, she said such-and-such and if she ever does that again I shall not serve on her committee or work in this parish group again!" And on it goes. This is back biting and it is not what we as Christians should be doing.

St Paul, this morning, gives an anatomy lesson. "The body does not consist of one member, but many." He goes on about how parts might complain, "If I am not a hand or foot I do not belong to the body." No, the hand, the foot, the eyes, nose, ears and so on make up the total body. And he reminds us that we, though different, together make up the Body of Christ, the church.

We, each of us, the choir, organist, vestry, wardens, acolytes, lectors, church school teachers, clergy and religious, children, adults, all of us in the congregation: we are the Body of Christ. But in the total picture of the whole church we are also *a part of*

the entire Body of Christ. It is, with our parish, that part of Christ's Body, that we should be concerned. We are without a rector at this time. Our body suffers. What are we to do about it?

In the Old Testament lesson this morning we learn of Ezra the priest, who brought the Law before the assembly so that all could hear what the Law was. We have church law, the canons: rules which govern the church. There are diocesan canons and national church canons. They tell us that in the absence of a rector the task of running a parish falls on the wardens and vestry, which you, as a congregation, have elected. Then, in the services of the church we have rubrics, the fine print in the Prayer Book which tells the participants what they may do and when to do it.

This, then, is the law for the parish until a rector is called. The wardens and vestry are in charge of running the parish. As far as the services go, the guest celebrant and the lay assistants are to follow the rubrics, the instructions in the Prayer Book as to the conduct of the services.

The parish has to be a team effort. Losing our rector brings this home for us. All of the parts of the body must work together to keep the church going week after week. We cannot be at one another's throats because we dislike someone, or some-

thing in the service. We are here because of one thing only and that is to make this the best parish in this part of God's kingdom—this part of the Body of Christ.

In the Gospel this morning our Lord went into the synagogue. He read to them from Isaiah. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he said to them, "Today the Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

If we cannot say with our Lord that today we receive the Spirit of the Lord; if we cannot mend our ways so that our eyes are open, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; then we are not ready to be true believers in Christ and to be a part of his Body.

We must stop our gossiping, our back biting, and join forces and become one close-knit fellowship in Christ's Body so that in the end, when we are all working together, we can say with St Paul: "Now we are the Body of Christ"—and individually members of it. Amen.

*This sermon was preached by Br William E. Bunting at St Andrew's Church, Bronx on January 26, 1986.*

*For the Last Sunday after the Epiphany*

## Listening to Jesus

*This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him.—Luke 9:35*

We are about to embark upon a new season of the church year—a season of penitence, extra services and devotions. This season of Lent is a time of re-examination of our lives and our preparation for the great festival of Easter, the Resurrection.

*Epiphany* means "showing forth." The season begins with the gifts of the Magi—the showing forth of the Christ Child to the non-Jewish world. Now on this last Sunday after the Epiphany we see the truly glorious shining forth of Christ on the mountain — transfigured between Moses

and Elijah. Moses the Lawgiver on one side, Elijah the Prophet on the other, and our Lord in the middle—all three together. Remember, Moses' face shone from talking with God; Elijah was taken up into heaven; and now see Christ himself, gloriously transfigured, be-

tween the two. A voice is heard from within the cloud: "This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him."

But how do we listen to Jesus, the Son of God? In this morning's Epistle, St Paul tries to help us out. To do so he uses a four-letter word. Yes, St Paul uses a four-letter word; believe it or not!—a word we hear in the streets, in our homes, and yes, even in church. It is a word that is very basic to our lives. We have heard this word from infancy and we will continue to hear it our entire lives. It is spelled L-O-V-E, *love*.

If we were asked why we are here this morning we would get a variety of reasons. Some would say, I come because of hymn singing at the service and because I like to sing. Another might say, I like the worship of the service. Some come because of the preaching; some because of the fellowship that is found here; some come because they like the priest.

But are these the reasons we come to church? As St Paul says, "I will tell you a better way." We have come here this morning out of love. We are not here this morning because we like to sing, or because we like the liturgy, or because we like the preaching. We have come because God loves us and we love God.

The church in the seventies was involved in a lot of controversy. It was not only the Episcopal Church, but the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and a host of others. There were many controversies: the ordination of women; changes in the liturgy; Prayer Book revision; revised confessions of faith; human sexuality; and others too numerous to mention. They are still not completely settled. The controversies still exist. We get so involved in these issues that we forget what basic Christianity is.

There have been controversies in the church before. In fact, for centuries church councils have met to decide on theological issues or controversies of faith. Church after church has argued about one point after another. Many times these arguments have resulted in splits or the breakup of the church into other denominations. In all of these controversies they come near to forgetting—and sometimes do forget—that the heart of Christianity is love, sacrificial love.

Remember our text for this morning: "This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him." How can we listen to him if we cannot obey his command: "A new commandment I give you—that you love one another—even as I

have loved you." And that love is sacrificial love; a love that lays down its life.

Lent begins in a few days. I want to make a suggestion as to what sacrifice we can make. It is going to take an awful lot to make it work. The sacrifice we all have to make is to bring the love of God back into the world, into our church and into our own lives. Each day as we pray—in our private devotions, in the saying of our prayers—let us sacrifice a few more minutes to meditate on the love of God—the love of Jesus. Whenever we attend services of Sunday or the extra services during the week throughout Lent, let us remember to pray for love. And in praying for love let us listen to the whisper of love that comes from God alone. "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46.11) Listen to him by loving him, by loving others and by loving ourselves.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, listen to him, the Chosen One. Pray for love. When you have that love in your hearts and minds, let it shine forth—let it manifest itself in others. When you have it, others will find it through you. Brothers and sisters in Christ, pray for love. Amen.

*This sermon was preached by Br William E. Bunting at St George's Church, Maple Valley WA and St Catherine's Church, Enumclaw WA on February 17, 1980.*

*Here and there with the Brotherhood and Companion Sisterhood...*

## Community Notes

### Brother William dies

Br William E. Bunting, BSG, died on Wednesday morning, October 12, in the Westchester Square Medical Center, Bronx. He was 57 years old and in his seventh year of profession.

William had been taken to the hospital on Sunday night, October 2, in a semi-conscious state and never regained consciousness for more than a few minutes at a time. He was suffering from a staphylococcal abscess under the sternum, infection throughout the major organs, and pneumonia brought on by spread of

the staph germs. Antibiotic therapy failed to improve his condition and he finally succumbed to coronary thrombosis. Fr Richard M. Rowland, a long-time friend from San Francisco, arrived at his bedside, as did the Superior General and a number of brothers of Province II, his family from upstate New York, and his col-leagues from Saks Fifth Avenue, where he had been employed for over 30 years.





*Brs Richard Thomas and William, after William's life profession of vows*

Pastoral visitation was provided by Fr Ross B. Hildebrand, rector of nearby St Peter's Church, who had known William for seventeen years. The Rt Rev Paul Moore, Jr, Bishop of New York and Episcopal Visitor to the Brotherhood, requested reports on his condition and joined his prayers with those of countless others.

The shock of William's sudden and fatal illness was also profoundly felt by the congregation of St Andrew's Church, Bronx, where he had served for 40 years. He had witnessed the building of a new church facility and the move into it, as well as the congregation's growth from diocesan mission to full parish status. He had been involved with all phases of the parish's life as a lay minister, church school teacher, and religious brother, he had held a Lay Reader's license for 37 years; and had been honored as a recipient of the St Andrew's Distinguished Citizen's Award a few years ago. He was well known to clergy and parishes throughout the Bronx from his years of service on the Christian Education and Lay Ministry Committee of the Bronx Council.

William's was a "late vocation." He entered the postulancy just two weeks before his 50th birthday. He was a patient, care-full man. He made his first profession in the



*Br John Peter chats with St Andrew's parishioners at the memorial eucharist*

Brotherhood in 1982 and his life vows in 1987. He served the community as provincial of Province H (1985-86), a member of Council, and as a member of the education committee. This last position gave him great personal pleasure, as he had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and was an avid reader of church history. He preached many sermons over the years, two of which are included in this issue. He also carried out an extensive pastoral correspondence.

His wish was that his body be cremated and the remains placed in the columbarium of the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine in New York City. The Holy Eucharist of the Resurrection was held at St Andrew's Church on Sunday afternoon, October 23, and brothers, family and friends from across the country filled the pews. Br Edward Ramón Riley arrived from Chicago to be the celebrant of the concelebrated mass, with Fr Hildebrand as deacon and Br Earl Christian as subdeacon. The Superior General preached and other parts of the service were shared by St Andrew's and the Brotherhood.

William loved God and he loved the religious life. In finding the Brotherhood of St Gregory he found the fulfillment of the many facets of his life drawn together in one place, one Rule. The joy of his life among us was reflected in his gentle,

mischievous eyes and in his sweet smile. William has been called home. We can draw strength and courage from his example of a life given fully to God, with the sure and certain knowledge that we will see that sweet smile again.

The strife is o'er, the battle done,  
The victory of life is won;  
The song of triumph has begun.  
Alleluia!

## Province I

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Visiting brothers were given a tour of Historic Beantown on a pre-Convocation spree. + + + After Convocation a provincial gathering took place at St Aelred's House in Wellesley. Fr Gustavo Mansilla and Terry Leverich were guests.

Br Christian Williams was organist for a baptism at Trinity, Meredith NH. + + + Br Ciarán Anthony Della Fera continues his Tuesday-night community supper involvement at the Church of the Advent, Boston. + + + Br Laurence Andrew Keller has retired as provincial, and serves at St Paul's Cathedral, Boston, as a lay reader, and with the diocesan altar guild.

Br Donovan Aidan Bowley was appointed provincial at Convocation. He visited Weston Priory, and was joined by Br Roy Tobin on a visit to St Joseph's Abbey, Spencer MA.

## Province II

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Companion the Rev. Frederick Duncanson, M.D., appeared on "Critical Condition: An AIDS Lifeline Special" on Channel 11 in New York City.

A late-Fall farewell to summer was an outing to the Bronx Zoo by the area brothers, Sr. Clare Connell, n/CSSG, and dependents. The zoo's residents survived the visit. + + + The province held a quiet day at St John's Church, Flushing NY. Br Donovan Aidan was a guest presenter of a talk on Ignatian spirituality, and Br Christopher Stephen Jenks led a discussion on centering prayer. The mid-day eucharist was celebrated by St John's rector, Fr Bruce F. Irwin.

At the special diocesan convention for the election of a coadjutor bishop for the Diocese of New York, Brs Richard Thomas Biernacki, William Francis Jones, Charles Kramer and Earl Christian joined members of the Order of the Holy Cross, the Society of Saint Francis, the Community of the Holy Spirit, the Order of Saint Helena, and the Order of the Incarnation in serving as tellers for the balloting—which was not over till long after midnight! + + + St Francis' Day was observed with a eucharist at the Church Center, and the religious who work there took part. Br Richard Thomas was organist; Br James Teets, lector; Br Tobias Stanislas Haller, litanist; and Br Justus Van Houten, SSF, preached.



*Br Thomas Martin receives a medal*

## Province III

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Brs Thomas Martin Little and Bernard Fessenden (visiting from Province I) attended the Washington DC display of the "Names Project," and took part in the candlelight march past the White House. + + + Br Thaddeus David Williams was at a healing service at Baltimore's Memorial Episcopal Church. Thomas Ahrens gave a moving homily on "Living with AIDS." Thaddeus David attended the institution mass for the Rev Jeremiah F. Kenney, rector of the Roman Catholic Basilica of the Assumption, Baltimore. + + + Br Edward Munro began his CPE training at Arundel Hospital. + + + Brs Thaddeus David, Edward, Thomas Martin and William Edward Orce attended

*Kerygma Komer*

the institution of the Rev. Gustavo Mansilla as missionary in the Hispanic Ministries of Northern Virginia. Edward and Thaddeus David presented the Prayer Book during the service.

Br Thomas Martin (also a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps) has received the Navy Achievement Medal, for "sustained superior performance, initiative, and total devotion to duty" in, among other things, maintaining computer-based models of the Enlisted Force Management System. + + + Lithographs by Br Michael David Elvestrøm were in a show at the Centre Gallery, University of South Florida, Tampa.

## Province West

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Br Kevin James Jensen officiated and delivered the sermon specially prepared by Bishop Robert L. Ladehoff, at St David's, Portland OR, during diocesan convention.

## One with the apostles... a dialogue

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JERRY and PERRY, both *Episcopalians, but members of different parishes, meet by the water cooler at the office.*

JERRY: Well, I see they've gone and done it.

PERRY: What's that?

JERRY: Elected a woman "bishop."

PERRY: Do I detect quotation marks around that last word?... No, that's o.k. ; I know how you feel about women in the priesthood, so I'm sure you feel even more strongly about women bishops.

JERRY: That's putting it mildly. I mean, after all, at least a woman priest doesn't taint the whole system.

PERRY: That's a pretty strong way to put it.

JERRY: Well, look: you get a woman bishop, right? What if I'm right? if women *can't be bishops*, as I believe? She goes through the actions of ordaining a man. Is he a priest? No. Are the eucharists he celebrates valid? No. If he's later elected bishop, is his consecration valid? Are the people he ordains ordained?

PERRY: I see what you mean. Well, it seems to me you've got a sort of individualistic view of ordained ministry

JERRY: What do you mean?

PERRY: You talk about the actions of the individual priest or bishop as if they were just acting on their own, not part of a whole church. What makes any ordination valid?

JERRY: Well, the validity of the person ordaining, for one thing.

PERRY: But that's only part of it. What about authority to exercise the ministry? Remember the ordinations of the "Philadelphia Eleven"?

JERRY: How could I forget! They were declared irregular but valid.

PERRY: That's what a lot of people think, but that isn't what the House of Bishops said. In 1974 they decided that the conditions necessary for ordination were not present—that no ordinations took place! No one denies the ordaining bishops were bishops; but they didn't have authority to function. In other words, the House of Bishops agreed that you don't get power to ordain just by being ordained, but in addition by functioning within the body of the church. It's like in the eucharist: it isn't just the celebrant, but the whole church that makes it. If the consents come through and Barbara Harris is ordained, she will be a bishop because the church as a body—maybe not every member, but the electing diocese, and the other bishops and standing committees—has said she is.

JERRY: But how can the church go against Christ? I mean, he only appointed men as apostles. If he'd wanted women to be apostles he could have made one of them part of the Twelve. Why didn't he choose Mary or Martha?

PERRY: That bothered me for a while, too. Then I asked myself a couple of questions.

JERRY: Like what?

PERRY: Well, what *are* the Twelve, anyway? You know, by the time St Paul got rolling it seems as though all sorts of people besides the Twelve were being called "apostles"—including even one woman.

JERRY: Whoa—who's the woman apostle?

PERRY: Her name is Junia. Paul says she's "among the foremost of the apostles" in his Letter to the Romans. It's true that some later manuscripts have changed the name, but she was accepted as a woman apostle by Church Fathers like John Chrysostom. JERRY: I'll have to look that one up.

PERRY: Do! There are lots of references to women in Paul's letters. That was what first got me wondering, you know. If women were only doing altar guild work, why does Paul mention so many of them? It's hard to reconcile his saying "women shouldn't teach or hold authority" with the fact that he describes women teaching and prophesying, and calling at least one an apostle.

JERRY: All right; so it might be a little unfair to ignore all the greetings to women, but that doesn't answer my main question, What about Jesus and the Twelve? Certainly they were all men, right?

PERRY: No argument there. But what exactly *were* the Twelve, anyway? They were more than disciples—'cause there were plenty of those. No, there is something special about the Twelve, and it isn't just that they were with Jesus from the beginning—some of the women were, too.

What's so special about the Twelve?

JERRY: Well, I recall that Jesus says the Twelve will sit on thrones and judge the tribes of Israel. And that even ties in with the image in Revelation—not my favorite book, by the way—of the Twelve being the gates into the New Jerusalem, judging for admission as it were. Their names are on the foundations of the gateways.

PERRY: Exactly! The Twelve Apostles are the new patriarchs of the Twelve Tribes. And they are men because they are patriarchs, not because they are teachers or preachers or bishops! JERRY: But didn't they appoint the bishops?

PERRY: Well, it really isn't awfully clear, at least from the Bible. They appointed one member to their own company, to replace Judas—they had a clear idea that the number 12 was important. But they didn't act on Jesus' authority, but on scriptural authority, quoting the Psalms! So whatever else is clear, *Jesus* certainly didn't appoint the first bishops, or give authority to do so; in fact, he usually talks as if it's all going to be over within a generation! It's only later—after Pentecost—that the Twelve exercise other powers, and do things like appointing the first deacons. Jesus didn't start the church, the Holy Spirit did.

JERRY: But Jesus *did* appoint the Twelve—all men—and even if they were meant to be the judges of the Twelve Tribes they became something else: the guardians of the faith.

PERRY: Exactly; the apostles are the guardians of the faith. And as such they had authority to do things not specifically mentioned by Jesus. He gave them a sort of blank check—whatever two or three of you agree on will be done by the Father. So they did *new* things: like appointing deacons, and—it seems—bishops who continued as successors and held that same authority. Now, if bishops in that apostolic succession *don't* have the power to make new kinds of decisions—like ordaining women—then what kind of power do they have? Do they have any power at all? Are they only like the steward that buried the gold instead of doing something with it? Isn't part of apostolic power the ability to do new things, to develop the church and nurture its growth?

JERRY: Now, hold it. Do you really mean that *part* of the bishops in the apostolic succession could make such a decision? Shouldn't a decision that important only be made by an ecumenical council, or the Anglican Communion as a whole at least? I mean...

*At this moment, Ms. MARY KING, the office manager, approaches.*

MARY: Gentlemen, I believe that your break is over? Might you continue this conversation another time? There are a few things that need getting done today...