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# The Servant

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Jul/Aug '89

#127

*Founder's Forum*

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## Reflections on Psalm 100

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This psalm calls for all people to praise the Lord God. The image is of people coming to God's house for worship.

*Serve the Lord with gladness.* All people are called to worship the Lord, emphasizing joy in doing so.

Unfortunately, for many Christians this service becomes servitude, often dull and unhappy. We should want to praise the Lord with hearts full of gladness!

*We are God's people.* Worship involves our recognizing God as the

giver and sustainer of all life. We need to remember that we are God's and not our own. We are, in fact, sheep in a pasture whose owner is the Lord God: we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

*Give thanks to him, bless his Name.* We possess so much that it is often difficult to remember to give thanks. When we come into God's presence, we should do so with truly thankful hearts. It is important that our worship offered in a spirit of thanksgiving.

*His steadfast love endures for ever.* God is good, with a goodness that is eternal and unchanging. Just to think of that greatness should overwhelm us. No matter what we do, we encounter that "steadfast love"—that unchanging and unceasing concern and care for us as children of God. Though our faithfulness may falter, it can be restored when we receive the grace to say, "God is with us."

Psalm 100 has relevance for all times—not just the times of external and liturgical worship, but in the inner and spiritual worship we carry on in our hearts.

—RTB

*For the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost*

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## The one thing needed

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*Martha, Martha, you are anxious about many things; but just one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it shall not be taken away from her.—Luke 10.41-42*

Jesus was being entertained by the sisters Mary and Martha. Mary was interested in what Jesus had to say and sat at his feet and gave her attention to him. Martha was preoccupied with the meal she was to serve. She protested that Mary was not helping to prepare the meal and asked Jesus to instruct Mary to help her. Jesus' reply was that a simple meal—one dish—was sufficient for hospitality. Jesus approved of Mary's simple preference for listening to his teachings as contrasted with Mary's complicated acts of hospitality.

There is a Mary and a Martha in all of us. On many occasions we are tempted to place our energies and our focus on things that are superfluous

to the "simple meal" that is called for. Our values suffer when we have as our goal the pursuit of the tangible

*A simple meal  
—one dish—  
was sufficient for  
hospitality.*

as opposed to the intangible. When we have the opportunity to be with our families, for example, and instead use the time in ways other than for the expression of love and concern,

we have behaved as Martha. When we come together as a community and use the time in ways other than for community and brotherhood, we have behaved as Martha. When we do anything that detracts from the true essence of who we are and what we are about, we are behaving as Martha.

Our society places a great deal of pressure on us to conform to the complicated "meal" of the world. We fret and we worry. We plan and we devise. We control and we manipulate. We place our faith in our own view of how we and others should be. We orchestrate a nine-course banquet when a wholesome simple meal is all that is needed. We behave, many times, as Martha.

Perhaps we should learn to place our faith in the true values of the "simple meal" and turn away from the instinct of superfluous living

and realize that the simplicity of Christian faith does not need enhancement. *Haute cuisine* can be tasty, but who can deny the appeal of Mom's roast beef and gravy on a Sunday afternoon? Designer clothes can be attractive, but who can deny the comfort of an old pair of jeans and a cotton sweatshirt? Rolex watches are beautiful, but what can be more reliable than a Timex? Mary knew what was important when Jesus came to visit. Martha was interested in the extraneous. Mary was interested in the simple meal of Jesus' teaching.

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*Mary knew what  
was important  
when Jesus came  
to visit.*

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Perhaps we should consider more often our approach to the faith. Perhaps we should question whether or not we are adding a superfluous

*For the 14th Sunday after Pentecost*

## Heart of darkness

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*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...—Col 3.15*

Last December, several days before Christmas, a terrible tragedy occurred in the sky over Scotland. A Pan American jet, loaded with people returning to the United States to spend the holidays with their families, exploded in midair and rained down fire and debris on a small village below. All the passengers on the plane and many people on the ground perished—close to three hundred people.

Initially a terrorist group from

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*'Nuke them...  
bomb them... kill  
them... destroy  
them... make them  
pay!'*

the Middle East claimed credit for this disaster. They called the press and said the plane was destroyed in retaliation for the shooting down of an Iranian airliner by a U.S. Navy anti-aircraft missile earlier in the year. That incident caused the death of over 200 people.

As more and more reports and photos came to light both on TV and

in the newspapers, I began to hear the ugly comments of my fellow countrymen: "Nuke them... bomb them... kill them... destroy them... make them pay in blood and pain for what they did to our people!" I must admit that I was as angry as anyone else and I was caught up in this talk and these thoughts of revenge. I watched the grief-stricken families on TV, being informed of the tragedy as they arrived at the airport to pick their relatives up. The evening news took its viewers to Syracuse University and we saw the memorial service for the 38 students who died on the plane. I read in the local newspaper about the seven people from my area that perished over Scotland. Yes, I was angry, very angry. There was hatred in my heart and, if possible, I would have destroyed the people responsible and all those who tried to stand in my way.

Then in all my hatred I remembered what Saint Paul wrote to the Colossians: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds every-

side to our faith when we draw near to the Savior and make the path tortuous and complicated. Wouldn't we all be better off by following the words of Jesus when he said, "You are troubled and anxious about many things; but just one thing is needed."

*Br George Keith, who is in annual vows, is the office manager for the Church Hymnal Corporation, an affiliate of the Church Pension Fund. He is a member of Calvary Church, Manhattan, and is a student at the New York Theological Seminary, pursuing a master's degree in divinity.*

thing together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body." (3.13-15)

Paul was expressing the ethical demands of the Christian faith. We are told to love our

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*...forgiving each other;  
as the Lord has  
forgiven you... let the  
peace of Christ rule in  
your hearts...'*

enemies and to show them kindness and compassion. We are admonished to forgive their hatred and the injury they cause us, just as our Lord forgives us when we cause him pain and suffering. After reflecting on this, I was ashamed of myself and of my desire for revenge. The people who committed this crime are sinners; that is without doubt. They are also children of God and loved by God. I am confident that if they repented and sought God's forgiveness for their crime, it would be granted to them.

As someone whose goal is to be one of God's people and to live up to what that means as expressed by Saint Paul in his Letter to the Colossians, I had some soul-searching to do. It was incumbent upon me not to judge those I

felt this anger toward. That judgment is God's, not mine. If God could forgive those who planned and carried out the bombing of Pan Am Flight #103, how could I do otherwise?

I felt a need to pray. I prayed for those who died on the jet and those who died on the ground. I prayed for their families and loved ones. I

prayed for those who planned and carried out the bombing. It was my prayer that they see the error of their actions and seek God's forgiveness. But most of all I prayed for myself, asking God to forgive me my hatred and to be patient with me as I strive to live up to what is expected of me by our Lord.

*Br Edward Munro is a life professed member of the Brotherhood and is the community's director of postulants and novices as well as the provincial of Province III. He earns his living as a sergeant with the Fairfax County [Virginia] Fire and Rescue Department. He serves at Mount Calvary Episcopal Church, Baltimore, and is a postulant in the Deacon Training Program of the Diocese of Maryland.*

*Kerygma Korner*

## God first: A tithing catechism / Part 1

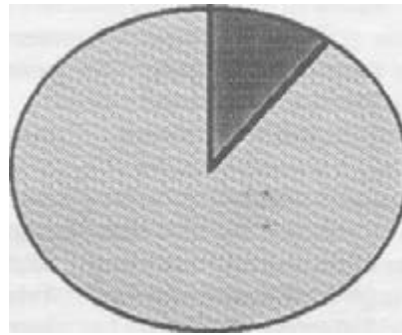
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*I've heard a lot about tithing and the tithe. Just what is a tithe?*

*Tithe* means "one tenth," just as *quarter* means "one fourth." To tithe means to give ten percent (one tenth) of your income in support of the church and God's work in the world. Sometimes people say *tithe* when they really mean *contribution*, or *donation*, or *offering*. Once in a while you'll even hear someone say, "The modern tithe is a tithe of five per-cent." But that's sort of like saying, "The modern quart is a pint"! The word *tithe* should be reserved for an offering that is one-tenth of a giver's income.

*Is the tithe a duty or a joyful response to God?*

It's both; duty and joy aren't mutually exclusive, you know. Think of tithing as you would about voting in a democracy. No one forces you to vote; but it is a responsibility, a duty. At the same time, most people feel good about having the right to vote. And they feel even better about actually exercising that right. There's a sense of participation in something greater than themselves: just by going into that booth, and throwing a few levers, they feel good—they are making a joyful response to living in a democracy. Tithing works the same way. By tithing you are participating in God's plan for the world, reaching out beyond yourself to something larger, in a very tangible way. Tithing, far from being a drain on your resources, is a gift which frees you to use your resources more generously. As it's often been said, tithing is a



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*The word tithe should be reserved for an offering that is one-tenth of a giver's income.*

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treatment for the spiritual disease of possessiveness.

*Isn't the tithe just a legalism?*

It can become that, but it needn't. Like any structured or institutional form, it can be abused and corrupted. Like any standard, it can be misapplied. But *legalism* isn't the same thing as *law*. Legalism is what happens when law becomes an end in itself. If the tithe is thought of as a *means* to an end—the support of the church and God's work in the world—then it won't become an end in itself.

*How do I avoid that?*

Don't think of the tithe as a bill to be paid, but as a right to be exercised. Don't feel you've earned God's grace by tithing—on the contrary, it's God's grace that allows you to tithe! There are warning signs to keep in mind—warnings of when your attitude to the tithe is becoming legalistic. If you think you're doing God a favor by tithing, you've missed the point that God doesn't need favors. If you feel quite satisfied with yourself because you tithe, you've missed the point that the tithe is something God gives us, something made for us—just like the Sabbath. The Bible can help us out here: it shows examples of people using the tithe as it's meant to be used, and others misusing or misunderstanding it.

*What does the Old Testament say about the tithe?*

The two earliest references to tithing in the Bible are informal, almost incidental. In these cases the tithe is a free will offering, although linked to the concept of the *covenant*. But these references come before the giving of the Law as such, so they have a different quality. They are outbursts of gratitude, either directly to God, or to God's earthly representative.

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*Legalism isn't the same thing as law.*

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*What are they?*

The first is Abram's tithe of the spoils of battle, given to Melchizedek the King of Salem and priest of God Most High. (Genesis 14.18-20) It's hard to apply this isolated incident to our own contemporary experience; but note that Abram's action appears to be spontaneous

thanks, and thankfulness is one of the major motivations for tithing. Remember also that Abram has a special relationship—a covenant—with God, and his tithe of the spoils is a thankful response for God's blessing him.

*What is the other example of tithing before the Law?*

Later in Genesis (28.10-22) tithing appears again, though not, I'm afraid, tithing at its best. This is the story of Jacob's dream, and his promise to give God a tithe of all God gives him—if God protects him, feeds him, clothes him, and brings him safely home. This probably sounds familiar: there is nothing new about putting God last! But even so, you see that before the Law formally established the tithe, people were tithing for good or perhaps not so good motives. Abram and Jacob represent,

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*We tend to separate matter and spirit, institutions and sanctity...*

in a way, spontaneous, responsive joy on one hand and bargain-making *quid pro quo* on the other.

*What does the Law say about tithing?*

The Law talks about three different tithes.

*What are they?*

The first is the tithe of *holiness* which supported the Levites and priests. It is first mentioned in Leviticus 27.30-32. This tithe is a *holy* tithe—set apart for the Lord, and includes one tenth of all the produce "of the land, whether of the seed... or the fruit," and one tenth of all the herds and flocks. This tithe was used to support the Levites, who had no land. Note that the Levites had to

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*Tithing is a reminder to us that the church does not exist apart from the people who make it up.*

give "a tithe of this tithe" for the support of the priests. (Numbers 18.20-32) This tithe supports the institutional religious establishment — this is why it is a *holy* tithe. We tend to separate matter and spirit, institutions and sanctity; this tithe was a reminder to the people of Israel that it was through the covenant with real, live, individual people that God chose to work. God worked through that community of Israel, of which the Levites and priests were a particular part; the Levites and priests were supported by the tithe of holiness. Today, tithing is a reminder to us that the church does not exist apart from the people who make it up. All of us are members of it, and all are called to particular work in it, including the support of its institutional aspects.

The second tithe is the tithe of *community*, (Deut 14.22-26) expressed in a sort of liturgical feast, in which the people consumed their own offering at a great festival in Jerusalem. In effect, this tithe cost the giver nothing, since the giver ate the tithe of "his own food, wine and oil" together with the firstlings of his herd and flock. If the family lived too far from Jerusalem, they could convert the tithe into cash, travel to Jerusalem and buy whatever they wanted to eat at the festival. The purpose of this tithe seems to be God's reminder to the people of Israel that they are a community—a community of thankfulness—and that they enjoy abundant blessings in common.

The third tithe is the tithe of

*charity* (Deuteronomy 14.28-29; 26.12-15), which is an additional support for the Levites, and also for the sojourner, widows, and orphans. This tithe is given every three years; but it isn't clear whether it was the community tithe itself, or an additional tenth on top of that. In any case, it is an additional provision for the poor over and above the normal requirements of the Law. These requirements include the edges of the poor's fields, which are left uncleaned for the poor to gather the grain, and the open-handed loan — which is to be given without thought of ever getting it back (Deuteronomy 15.7-11).

*Did that mean, with all three tithes, that nearly 24 percent of your produce was out of your control?*

The later rabbis usually interpreted tithing in that way: an annual tithe went to the Levites; an annual tithe was used in the great feast; and every three years a special tithe was retained for relief of the poor. This understanding of the tithe is described in the opening of the Book of Tobit (1.6-8) in the Apocrypha. Note too that beyond the tithe, the edges of the field and the openhanded loan, there were many other offerings as well: the offering of first fruits and firstlings—including redemption of first-born Israelites with an animal substitute (Exodus 13.1-2, Deuteronomy 26.1-11), and the various sin offerings, thank offerings and free will offerings. All of these additional offerings were completely distinct from the tithe (see Leviticus 27.26).

In addition, during the time of the rebuilding of the Temple under Nehemiah (10.32-39) the people voluntarily placed themselves under an additional tax for support of the Temple. This Temple tax was in addition to the tithes, the offerings of first-born and first-fruits, and the sin and free will offerings. This is the way the offering was understood at the beginning of the New Testament period—far, far more than the simple 10 percent of one's annual income—probably closer to half!

*Does the Old Testament tell us anything else about the tithe?*

One of the last prophetic statements in the Old Testament is the demand for honesty and faithfulness in keeping the tithe. (Malachi 3.8-10)

— TSH

*Part Two will deal with the tithe in the New Testament.*

## Gregorian responsory



From time to time, space permitting, we like to publish comments from the readers of *The Servant*. Two articles brought in an unusual amount of mail: the Founder's Forum called "Generally conventional," and a Kerygma Korner entitled "Apostolic secession." We share with you some of the comments we received in response to these and other pieces.

I am earnestly praying for your community; grateful for your dedication... May God's richest blessings of peace, protection, and wisdom be with you.

**Ann Gilow**  
Green Bay WI

To: The Serpent  
Gentlemen:

It is always instructive to read your newsletter, not least for the way it provides documentation in contemporary church history. The recent article by [your editor] is particularly informative in this regard.

Keep up the good work for whatever it is that Anglicans are about. I have always believed that a make-believe church should have make-believe monks as well as make-believe bishops.

**The Rev Patrick H Reardon**  
Trinity Episcopal School  
for Ministry, Ambridge PA

I want to thank you ardently for your recent bulletins... They have been excellent, especially your gracious and convincing rebuttal of Bishop Wantland's approach, in the last issue... I regard the ECM Bishops' "statement" on the issue very distorted... [Women's ordination] seems to me grounded basically on the doctrine of Creation from a Christian perspective, as the best way to overcome the insistence on a male-dominated God and Church... Continuing blessings on your endeavors.

**The Rev Canon John R Ramsey**  
Marblehead MA

Bishop Herbert Donovan is coming to speak at St. Alban's... Your paper, "Apostolic secession," which appeared in *The Servant* is the most concise and exceedingly clear assessment of the proposed "synod." Want you to know that we are xeroxing your article for the people attending Bishop Donovan's talk here... Many thanks for your prayers, your scholarship, and your concern.

**Ann Tucker**  
Fort Worth TX

*Note: the article referred to in the previous three letters also appeared in its entirety in the May issue of The Herald, the newspaper of the Diocese of Eau Claire.*

I was going through some papers the other day and I came upon a copy of *The Servant*, and reread your article, "Generally conventional." When I had read it first last fall, I had felt it was true and very much to the point. But when I picked it up again, it was like I was reading it for the first time; most certainly I was reading it from a different perspective. Now I am involved in a not too happy situation over women's ordination. I have never liked the term *issue*, but I now see that it is alive and thriving, especially here on Long Island... I am seeking ordination. There are those who, to say the least,

are uncooperative if not negatively aggressive to this "new idea." I am told about the discipline and obedience one must give to the Church and in the same breath told of faithfulness to certain *traditions*, that the Church no longer upholds. It doesn't make a bit of sense to me, and it is so frustrating! My life is turned upside-down because of these "tender consciences." ...I know God loves me... values my existence, gives this person dignity, takes me seriously. Because of this, with his help, I can leap over walls!

**Patricia A Pierce**  
Bayside NY

One of our friends in the Sisterhood of St John the Divine here in Toronto... said that we might be interested in your article, "Generally Conventional." We were more than interested, we were delighted... Thank you so much for expressing those thoughts so clearly. The problem of conscience clauses exists in the Anglican Church of Canada as well. I think that ultimately the solution will come by example—people seeing ordained women and gay/lesbian people, both clerical and lay, who are competent human beings, good at what they do. The more these are seen, the more people in these situations will be seen as normal... Thank you again for your words. They have now gone to another 120 addresses all over North America, and some in Australia.

Chris Ambidge  
Integrity/Toronto

I ... pray God's blessings on you and your work in the future. May He ever guide you!

**The Rev Canon B McK Williams**  
St John's Cathedral  
Albuquerque NM

Three cheers and a hearty "well done" ... It is truly refreshing to find that there are others who believe in Canon Law and Order, the *via media* and equality of legs on Hooker's famous stool. Keep up the good work.

**The Rev Denny P Allman**  
Vicksburg MS

## Community notes

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### Province I

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Br Ciaran Anthony Della Fera continues his Tuesday night suppers at the Church of the Advent, Boston, and his hot line volunteer work with the Fenway Community Health Center. + + + Br Roy Tobin has completed his training as a buddy for persons living with AIDS. He continues his work with the East South Shore AIDS group. + + + Brs Donovan Aidan Bowley and Laurence Andrew Keller continue their involvement with the Iona Cornerstone Foundation. + + + Br Bernard Fessenden attended a lecture at the Paulist Center given by Walter Smith, SJ, who spoke about his experiences working with people with AIDS.



the Most Rev Olavo Ventura Luiz, Primate of the Episcopal Church of Brazil. The celebrant was Bishop Furman C Stough, senior executive for mission planning; the preacher was Archbishop Luiz; and the translator was Bishop of Easton Elliott L Sorge.

### A Farewell

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Our Visitor, Bishop Paul Moore, Jr., will be going on vacation prior to his retirement in October. We share with our readers his letter of resignation.

Dear Richard,

Just a note to officially submit my resignation as the Visitor of the Brotherhood of St Gregory. You all have come a long way since we began our relationship, and I am proud of your development, your constancy, and your discipleship.

God bless you all.

+Paul  
Bishop of New York

### Province II

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On Easter Friday afternoon the Rt Rev Charles L Burgreen celebrated his final Holy Eucharist at the Episcopal Church Center as Suffragan Bishop for the Armed Forces. Assisting at his pre-retirement service were Brs Richard Thomas Biernacki, James E Teets and Tobias Stanislas Haller. In addition to his keyboard skills, the Superior General contributed a special surprise: a half

hour before the service he called together an ad hoc choir (definitely *not* including Br James!) which delivered a touching performance of "Amazing Grace" that almost brought the bishop to tears. He has been a central figure in the ministries of every Episcopal chaplain around the world for many years and we wish Bishop and Mrs Burgreen God-speed as the Holy Spirit carries them forward in the years ahead.

Also at the Church Center, Br James participated as subdeacon in a special service honoring the visit of

*Life as a sister*

### At home

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As many of you know, the Brotherhood is in the process of forming a Companion Sisterhood, which will one day, God willing, become an independent community. Through this experience, the brothers are learning the experience of motherhood; as St Francis said in his *Rule for Hermitages*: "The brothers shall be mothers." Sr Clare Connell, n/CSSG

writes on the experience of being the sole current member of this community-in-formation:

"My own niche in the community fell into place at a worship service. I would like to say that this took during Morning Prayer when I made my promises, but it didn't (I was too *nervous* then). Things came together for me in the Compline ser-

vice at which I was appointed to be leader. As I was wondering if I could measure up to the scrutiny of the brothers, Br Michael David leaned over and whispered, 'Remember to whom you are speaking and don't worry about anyone else.' I knew in that moment that it didn't matter how well I read, but that *we* were worshipping God, together."