



Jul/Aug
1990

Copyright © 1990 The Brotherhood of St Gregory, an Episcopal religious community. Published six times a year. Superior General, Br Richard Thomas Biemacki • Editor, Br Tobias Stanislas Haller • Unless otherwise noted, contents may be reprinted by anyone desiring to do so. Inquiries may be sent to The Brotherhood of St Gregory . Saint Augustine's House • 2462 Webb Avenue • Bronx NY 10468

#133

IN THIS ISSUE

Honduras journal	1
Growing pains	2
Knowing yourself	3
God first—Part 5	4
Community notes	

Founder's Forum

Honduras journal

In my capacity as deputy registrar of the General Convention, and in my work with Executive Council, I have traveled to distant places: Venezuela, Guatemala, Mexico, Ecuador, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico—places where the church is alive and flourishing, amid great struggles and political problems; amid poverty side by side with riches. Honduras was different; more intense. While I have experienced the church at work in all the other places, in San Pedro Sula I was adopted into a family. I became a part of the church and people of this great diocese as I was made an honorary canon of the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd (*El Buen Pastor*).

My visit began at the girls' orphanage, *Nuestras Pequeñas Rosas*. Little roses they were, and we were instantly taken by the smiles and joy in the faces of these children, as they gave us a tour of the house. The first full day was packed with visits and new experiences. Bishop Frade, my friend the Rev David Henritzky and I traveled to the North Coast, stopping along the way at several parishes and at St. John's School. We visited a workshop in which the boys learn woodworking and are sought after to manufacture mahogany doors and furniture. Boys who months before had nothing to hope for now have a trade which will enable them to earn a living.

We visited one of the clinics run by the diocese. These clinics are, in many areas, the only medical facility. The missionary/nurse takes care of all medical needs, including hygiene and medication.

Friday we traveled three hours to the Copan Ruins, one of the finest examples of Mayan Civilization. It was amazing to stand in that place and imagine what was once there, a civilization which discovered that the earth revolves around the sun—years before Copernicus!

Sunday morning came and the time for my induction was at hand. During the eucharist (celebrated in Spanish) I recited the Oath of Conformity and greeted the congregation, both in Spanish. The simplicity of the service and the music, and the beauty of the people served to cement what I felt intensely—a bonding with the church there.

Later that afternoon we accompanied the Bishop and his wife, Diana, for confirmations in a nearby parish. In a four-wheel drive van we rumbled along unpaved roads and were greeted outside a community building which had been converted into a church. We were presented with home-grown flowers by the children and began the service. Twenty-two children were confirmed and five adults received. All this new membership was the result of a

newly ordained deacon's work. What we could learn about evangelism! The service was followed by a reception in the same space used for the service—instant transformation in a matter of minutes. Wonderful food—cooked on open fires at the people's homes in town.

I have tried to keep this from resembling a travelogue. I've tried to give a real picture of the life of the church in Honduras. It is a Honduran church; a church with ethnic roots which are allowed to flourish and be preserved as a culture; a church which brings Christ to the people and also brings healing and education; a church that gives the people ways to earn a living and ensure a future. The work is not complete. The Diocese of Honduras needs our prayers and our support. If you would like to help, write me and I will suggest ways in which you or your parish can be involved. But most of all I would ask you to lift up in prayer the bishop, diocesan staff, teachers and nurses and all the people of Honduras. I became a part of the diocese in a special way; but in the end, we are all members of this family of God.

--RTB

Growing pains

Another parable he put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

—Matt 13.31-32

Have you ever sat on the beach and watched the waves come into shore? It is particularly interesting to watch them on a day when it is very windy, and, as surfers would say, "The surf's up!"

I have watched the waves on a day like that and have seen the whitecaps way out in the ocean. As the waves grow they become larger and larger and then burst upon the beach with a thundering roar. As the water flows back it leaves a sort of residue like soap suds on the beach. On a strong windy day this foam suddenly starts moving about on the shore as the wind pushes it. It picks up momentum and starts rolling along the beach. As it moves, it attracts and picks up more foam, and it develops into a larger and larger glob. My thoughts on seeing this was "the glob from the sea." It looks like a monster come up from the sea. I guess that is the science fiction fan in me.

Do we see to the above picture of the sea a similarity in the mustard seed? Our Lord tells us that the mustard seed is the smallest of seeds, but when planted it grows into a large bush and becomes a tree.

In both stories there is a growth process. The whitecaps grow into waves. The foam on the beach gets larger and larger as the wind blows it along the shore. And the mustard seed becomes a large tree.

Each of these also attracts: the whitecaps grow into waves and attract more whitecaps. The waves leave a residue of foam on the beach, and as the wind blows the foam about it picks up more foam and becomes larger. The mustard seed grows into a bush, then a tree, and attracts the birds of the air.

We too grow and attract, we people of God. We are planted with a small seed inside of us. We are born with it. It is nurtured and

watered in many ways through our growth. Through our families, teachers, baptism, confirmation, church school, our understanding of the Scriptures: all of these help us to grow. And as we grow we attract others. We attract them through a common bond, through faith, through common concerns, through love.

The reason we attract is that we have something to share; and that sharing is Christ. But we must not put on airs or pretenses. We must be what we are, not what someone else thinks we should be. St Paul says, "I am what I am." (1 Cor 15.10)

'No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends...'

Many times parents will say, "I want my child to be a doctor... a lawyer..." and so on. But is that what the child wants? Parents also say, "I want my children to have what I didn't have." What do parents do? They work hard and give up a lot of their own pleasures only to find out that what they have done is not really for the best. It is not what the children really wanted.

Relationships too are like that. Two people are attracted to one another—enough so that if all goes well they will grow together. Eventually this may lead to marriage. There is attraction and growth. But there is still something lacking.

In a relationship where there is attraction and growth there must be something more, and that something more is friendship. This is

why some relationships, some marriages, fail: because friendship is lacking. Two people can live together in a marriage. They may think they have something real in the attraction itself. They can grow together in love and understanding, but if friendship is missing from the relationship, there will be problems.

You can count on a friend no matter what. A friend will see you through countless problems, whatever they may be. A friend will stick by you no matter what happens in your life. You know a friend's secrets, yearnings, problems. A friend will listen, will share your problems. A friend will be beside you through thick and thin, will cry with you when you feel like crying, will laugh when you laugh. A friend may take your advice, or may not; but no matter what happens, a friend is a person you can trust, to love, to share. Even though many miles away there is a mutual bond, an attraction, a growth in understanding in true friendship.

Friends know a friendship seed was planted in them, and they experience one of the greatest joys. One may experience this only once in a lifetime. I mean really *being* friends. We talk of *having* friends, but *being* a friend is different. Friendship has to be worked at. We may not always think our friend is right, but we share mutual respect, thoughts, concerns, and countless other things. This is true friendship.

I think that in the parable of the mustard seed our Lord is trying to make us aware of that. Friendship starts as a small seed. It develops into something more than just two people who enjoy each other's company. It grows in sharing, and the sharing is a cement that bonds the friendship. And when others see this they want to share in it or wish they too had such a relationship—the attraction begins.

This is what our Lord shares with us; not just by being the Son of God, but by being a friend. "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15.15) And *being* our friend, he did what a friend must do: "There is no greater love than this, that one lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15.13) This Jesus did. He gave up his life for us. This is a true friend; a friend indeed, "who at my need his life did spend." How many of us would do as much? Probably none. One or two might, but it is a rare thing. You might find it in the armed forces or in the movies, but few other places. To grow to

this kind of friendship is to suffer pain gladly for the friend; few endure such growing pains.

I think our Lord is telling us something else in the parable of the mustard seed: to be what we are. To be friends with ourselves first. If you are a friend to yourself then you can be freed to share what you have with others. If you value yourself, you know you have something to share. The friendship seed is planted in you. It can lie dormant for a long time. But when it does grow it becomes like the mustard tree, and attracts. It is the attraction of *being you* that others will want to share in. God created us all in a certain way. All of us have characteristics that make us who we are. Those gifts are different in each of

us. They make us individuals. We are what God created us to be, after the image of God. God, Paul, and we too, can say "I am what I am." We must nurture that seed of being that God has planted in us. Let us not go about trying to change what we are into what we were not meant to be. Be yourself. In being yourself you accomplish a monumental task. Grow as God intends, and share that growth with others. In that sharing, become a friend. In being a friend, be one with Christ.

Br William Bunting died in 1988, in the seventh year of his profession.

A Reflection on Summer

Knowing yourself

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Summer is a time for growth, a time for renewal. It is time to reflect on the way life is going, in what direction our walk with God is taking us, in our jobs, our personal relationships. In religious life it is important to have some time to evaluate where we are; a time to look inward. This is a time to look to ourselves and ask ourselves hard questions: Are we truly living the life Christ wants us to live?

The AA prayer—a good prayer for everyone—falls into three parts. First, I must accept the reality of who I am, and that God loves me as I am. We fail and succeed in our own purposes, but for God's purpose, unknown to us, we must trust God for the power to succeed. Part of that trust lies in accepting that we are who we are.

Second, we need courage to change. After we have accepted who we are, we can look at how we are living our lives. Maybe there are areas that we need to look and say, "What would Jesus do in this case?" Or,

"What does Jesus expect of me today?"

There might be some real problems that cause us anguish and pain, or some aspects of our lives that drive us away from the Lord. We need to focus on Jesus' life in the Gospel, and compare our life—what we are doing—to his. That is where courage comes into play. We need to seek Christ; we need to seek his guidance and love, and then and only then can we begin to change.

Last, we need the wisdom to know the difference between accepting who we are, and changing what we can: and this only comes through prayer, study, and discipline.

Christians have accepted Christ at baptism, and many of us reinforced this at our confirmation. We gain further strength as we are nourished with the Body and Blood: strengthened and encouraged to live a life that is holy, to become a living sacrifice to the Lord. For religious, it is through the vows that we say to Jesus Christ, "I am yours, do with me as you will."

Are we now in the summer of life; time for growth in renewal, understanding and reflection? With God's continuing help, we are given serenity to accept ourselves, courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Following in Jesus' footsteps, taking up our cross up day by day: commitment is serious; it demands serenity, courage, and wisdom. Praise God for giving grace in abundance, in the summertime of life!

Br Luke Anthony Nowicki is in life vows in the Brotherhood. His home parish is Mt Calvary, Camp Hill. He is married, and works as a Medicare correspondent for Blue Shield.

God first—a tithing catechism: Part 5

■ Isn't tithing difficult?

For some it may be. But it seems that the people who worry most about tithing are those who don't yet tithe. Many people approach tithing the way St Augustine approached chastity, praying, as it were, "O God, help me to tithe; but not yet!" Once people begin to undertake the tithe as a discipline—and there's no use pretending it isn't a discipline¹—they usually find that it's not nearly as hard as they thought it would be. What's more, they usually begin to enjoy it!

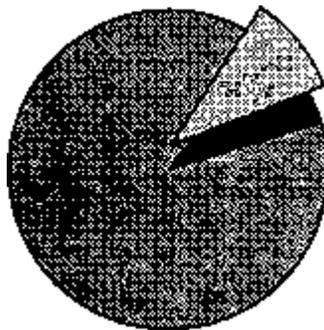
■ Should my tithe be on my total income or just on the after-tax income?

This is a frequent question. Often one hears explanations—or excuses—that present our modern world as vastly different from the ancient world as far as taxes go. A look at history shows us otherwise. There is nothing new about taxes. In ancient times as now, kings and governments have assessed levies, taxes, fees and fines. If someone wanted to wage a war, in 914 or 1914, taxes were a major way of raising the money. Taxes and tolls were also used for public works—roads, bridges and other municipal and civic structures—and programs like public education. So the idea that the tithe should now be figured on after-tax income, as opposed to gross income, has little historical justification. The tithe should be on your income—which is to say, your gross income—just as the tithe always was on "all the produce of your land, all that you get"—even though some of that produce was also taken by the landlord, or the baron, or the state. After all, as we saw earlier, Jews who tithed also paid a wide assortment of fees and taxes.

■ But don't taxes now do what the tithe once did?

People have the impression that the tithe once supported the schools and hospitals and other social

services that the church was involved in. The church was involved in such charitable works—but the money came primarily from the alms and oblations of benefactors, or the work of religious orders (who had their own set of benefactors and sources of income)—but not primarily from the tithe. That some tithe money may at some past time have gone to support what we would now call social services is no reason not to tithe now.



Given the current cutbacks in Federal funding of many social services, it is apparent that the churches will have to start doing things that the government-levied taxes had been doing since the New Deal. If the home-less are to be housed, the hungry fed, and the naked clothed, as taxes come to be applied less and less to the works of mercy, the church *will* be called upon—in fact, is being called upon—to take up the task.

■ Should the tithe come "off the top"?

Writing a check for your parish first, as soon as you get your paycheck, makes a good deal of sense, for several reasons. One practical reason is a recognition of human weakness: you are less likely to be tempted to skimp on your offering if you put it out of reach first. Another practical reason is that it provides your parish with orderly cash flow.

But on the spiritual side, paying the tithe first reminds you to put God first. You will support the church, and God's work in the world, even if it might mean a little

scrimping on something else later in the week. Some people like to connect the idea of tithing off the top with the idea of the "first fruits." Paying your tithe first sanctifies all the rest of your income, in the same way that the first fruit offering sanctified the whole harvest.

■ What if my spouse or other family members aren't part of the Episcopal Church? If I'm the breadwinner, should I still tithe? Is it fair to them?

It isn't fair for your family to go short in order for you to satisfy your religious needs. But need they be the ones to suffer? If they aren't Episcopalians, perhaps your witness to your faith by tithing—and then being willing to cut back (if necessary) not on the money spent on them, but the money you would spend on yourself—maybe that devotion and example of self-sacrifice would bring a rich reward. Your commitment might inspire them to join you in the Episcopal Church. Tithing can be a very effective form of evangelism—not just for family members, either.

■ That makes sense. What about "talent and time"? I know some people don't tithe, but figure they make it up by singing in the choir or doing work around the church; is that so?

Let me turn the tables for a moment and ask you a question. What does the Catechism say is the duty of all Christians?

■ "The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God." (BCP, p. 856)

"Work, pray, and give": that sounds like three different things to me; one is not a substitute for the other. It appears there's no escaping the fact that we are called to do all three, to work, pray, and give.

■ How do I manage it all?

¹ After all, we're called to be disciples!

Let's look at the three duties—working, praying, and giving—in light of the three objects of stewardship: time, talent and treasure. Consider "giving" as referring to the treasure, the tithe; that's the obvious one. But think about "praying" as referring to time; and "working" as related to talent.

- I can see that the tithe gives me a clear guideline for stewardship of my treasure, but how do I figure the "prayer" and "work," as time and talent?

Consider prayer as the time you *spend* in God's presence, giving God your undivided attention in worship. As with the tithe, an objective figure of ten percent, there is a standard for time spent with God. The amount God specifically asks for is one *seventh*: the sabbath. That sabbath time is for rest and refreshment *in God's presence*. It is a time to be made holy through prayer.

- Aren't we called to "pray constantly"?

Of course; just as we know, deep down, that all that we have comes from God, and is owed to God—yet the tithe, one-tenth of our in-come, is the minimum standard, the guideline for stewardship of our goods, the part we offer to the church for God's work. So too with prayer. We *are* meant always to be aware of God's presence. But you know that that is easier said than done. The idea of the sabbath, time spent resting in God's presence, not doing work directed to any other end, is meant to focus us, to help us by setting aside and marking off as holy a minimum standard time with God. All time is holy, but in sabbath time we strive to make ourselves conscious of that holiness.

- But didn't Jesus criticize the observance of the sabbath?

No; he no more criticized the sabbath than he did the tithe. What he criticized was turning the sabbath into an end in itself, just as he criticized turning the tithe into a petty legalism rather than a way of focusing on

the gifts God has poured out so abundantly. The sabbath was made *for us* (Mark 2. 2), to give us time to pay attention to God. God doesn't need our attention or prayers; but we need to take the time to *pay* attention to God. When we don't take the time to focus on God, we be-come like people a n d I admit I've done this too — who turn on the TV while doing housework, as if it were a kind of background noise. Yes, it's on; yes, I can hear it; but am I really *listening* to it? It is the same with God—God is always there; but am I listening? The sabbath is a gift to me, to let me listen to God.

- Does that mean I need to observe a real sabbath day of rest?

Not necessarily.

That seventh of your time can be divided up over the course of the week, with daily prayer and devotion, quiet meditation, study of the Scripture, Sunday and weekday worship, Christian fellowship, and serious spiritual conversation or study with others. Time spent in such activities is time spent in God's presence. In this sabbath-time we *spend* time in *paying* attention to God. The strength gained in these times being *with* God ripples out into our working *for* God.

- Is that how talent comes in? I begin to see how work can be stewardship of talent. But what proportion do I offer?

I admit this is the hard part; there doesn't seem to be any way around it. God asks a tenth of your goods, a seventh of your time, but demands *all of you*. I think this is where "being in God's presence"—as we mentioned before—comes in.

- How is that?

Have you ever read Brother Lawrence's *Practice of the Presence of God*? He worked in the monastery kitchen, but always felt that he was in God's presence. Even washing the dishes—I should say *especially* washing the dishes— became "work for God" because he had learned to focus himself on simply letting God be there. Some

people only see God's work as doing things around the parish, or for charitable institutions. But if we can allow ourselves to be aware of God even at our desks, at the typewriter, at the sewing machine, at the kitchen sink—then we *are working* with God and for God.

Above all, we need to remember that we meet God in our brothers and sisters, especially in the poor and the outcast. Working in a volunteer program, visiting someone in the hospital, working to fight injustice in society—these are moments spent with God, doing God's work.

- That reminds me of a hymn:

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the
plane and the lathe,
be there at our labors,
and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord,
at the noon of the day.²

Exactly! And even more, if I can be allowed to match you hymn for hymn: there is a way in which observing these minimum guidelines can help to raise your life up to God.

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my heart, it is thine own,
it shall be thy royal throne. Take my voice,
and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my intellect, and use
every power thou shalt choose.
Take my will, and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.³

By giving of our goods, our time, and ourselves, we open ourselves to God's grace.

—TSH

1 Good stewardship of creation should rule this habit out! It wastes valuable energy. If you want background music, get a power-efficient transistor radio!

2 Jan Struther, Hymn 482

3 Frances R Havergal, Hymn 707

Community notes

Province I

Several of the community members attended the service of thanksgiving for the ministry of Mother Anne Marie, SSM, who has served for 12 years as Superior of the community, long known for its work in Haiti and the United States.

The Province held a vocations day at Parish of the Messiah, Auburndale MA. The day dawned clear and cold, but all were well warmed up when the events began with Br Bernard Fessenden leading Morning Prayer. Following this, Br Christopher Stephen Jenks, director of vocations, gave a talk which led into a discussion of vocation in general, and the Brotherhood in particular. At midday, Fr Bill Lowe, rector of Messiah, celebrated, assisted by Deacon Charles LeClerc, and Br Roy Tobin. A welcome hot soup and sandwich lunch followed (thanks to Br Ciarán Anthony Della Fera's culinary skills) and the Noonday office led by Br Christian Williams.

The afternoon session was an examination of the Rule and its importance in the life of the community. After this, Br Laurence Andrew Keller brought the day to a close with Evening Prayer. Music throughout the day was provided by Christian, and Companion Grove Calkins.

Br Roy has been reelected for another year as president of the South Shore AIDS Project. +++ Brs Donovan Aidan Bowley and Laurence Andrew continue to serve as advisors to the Iona Cornerstone Foundation, which operates Duncraig, an ecumenical retreat house on the Island of Iona +++ Brs Christian, Donovan Aidan, Laurence Andrew, Bernard, and Matthew Staples attended the funeral of former postulant John S Mazzuca, Jr.

Province II

At the National Cathedral, Br Richard Thomas Biernacki assisted as deputy registrar at the ordination and consecration of Suffragan Bishop for the Armed Forces Charles

Keyser. +++ He also assisted at the institution of the Rev Richard Burnett at St James', LI. Representing both the General Convention Office and the Brotherhood, he presented Burnett with a copy of the Constitution and Canons and a copy of the *Prayer Book Concordance*, in recognition of his friendship and concern for the Brotherhood of St. Gregory. This also gave Richard Thomas opportunity to chat with a good friend, Bishop Coadjutor Orris J. Walker of Long Island.

Br Tobias Stanislas Haller attended the Religious Communicators' Congress, in Nashville. The theme for this once-a-decade ecumenical event was "Communication Power," the ability of communicators to effect change. Speakers included Bill Moyers, Cardinal Jaime Sin, and Steve Allen. The week also included the annual meeting of the Episcopal Communicators.



The Province II vocations workshop was held at historic St Peter's Church, Chelsea (Manhattan). Br Christopher Stephen led the event.

While visiting in New York City, not far from the Cathedral of St John the Divine, Bishop Theuner of New Hampshire experienced the traditional native welcome: his car's front window was broken, and his overcoat and camera were stolen from within. His crozier was not taken. As the *New Hampshire Episcopal News* told it, "Reporting to a nearby police station, the Bishop was approached by an officer who had recognized the clerical collar. 'Anglican?' asked the policeman. 'And I

can tell you're a bishop, even without the red shirt.' Bishop Theuner discovered his police friend was Ron MacGregor," who is, of course, a novice in the Brotherhood!

Province III

Brs Edward Munro and Thaddeus David Williams spent some time with our "Mother Foundress" Helen Joyce in Baltimore. While there, they attended the wake for Sr Bertha Farver, VHM, who had died a few days before, in her early nineties.

Province West

Br Bernard Francis LaReau was catechist for a group of 15 seven- eight- and nine-year-olds. He made use of Gretchen Pritchard's *The Sunday Prayer's Communion Book for Children*. He has also given a talk on the Book of Common Prayer to the Journey in Faith group.

The Companions of Ohio and Kentucky held a gathering at the home of Companion Jerry Vogt. +++ The Companions at St Stephen's Parish, Covington KY, hosted the Coffee Hour in early Lent. Br Thomas Joseph Ross was reelected to the Vestry, and continues to serve as Senior Warden at St Stephen's. +++ Thomas Joseph attended the life profession of Sr Juliana, CT, at the Cincinnati mother house of the Transfiguration.

Br Michael David Elvestrøm has been busy this past spring. He designed costumes for a piece in the spring dance recital of the Northwestern State University and Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts, in Natchitoches; he also did scenic design for the Louisiana School production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and a dramatic "crown of thorns" display for the lenten array at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church, for whom he is also designing a frontal and baldacchino. +++ Michael David attended the ordination of Shirley Hall Wise Humphrey to the priesthood, at St James' Alexandria.

Transfiguration

"Some standing here shall not taste death until they see the Son of God in glory come."
So Jesus prophesied. He soon chose some of his disciples, climbed a lonely hill.
Did they suspect that that would be the day when glory would come down within a cloud, surround, embrace them all, and speak aloud, "This is my Son. Hear what he has to say."
They saw; they heard, but did not understand what goal the high Eternal Counsel planned.
Ahead lay cross and crown, the lifting up, the agony, the bloody, bitter cup.
But Peter did not comprehend these truths.
Instead, he said, "Lord, let us build three booths,"

—TSH

Prayers for the Decade of Evangelism

God the Sender,
send us;
God the Sent,
come with us;
God the
Strengtheners of
those who go,
empower us,
that we may go
with you
and find those who
will call you Father,
Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

—The
Church in Wales

Almighty God,
you have called us into your service in the church at a time of change and opportunity: Give us strength and grace to see what you are calling us to be and to do. May our thankfulness for your great mercies in the past provide us with even greater willingness in the days ahead. Guide us in the path of truth; lead us in our worship and preparation; draw us closer to you and to each other; help us to reach out in faith and confidence to all who seek your path; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—The
Church of Ireland