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Founder's Forum

In communion

I am certain many of you assume that because I have been asked to preach I will talk about music. Not this time. I would like to spend a few minutes with you thinking about *communion*. What exactly do we mean when we do this together each Sunday and holy day?

Communion means sharing; fellowship between us and God; between Christians; between Christians and the church; the faithful having a common faith and discipline; and Webster's last word: "The eucharist or the act of celebrating or taking part in it."

Every time we think of the word *communion*, we should think of making eucharist. We should think of gathering at the Lord's table. Jesus took two everyday acts and made them supreme acts of faith: washing and eating—baptism and eucharist. Baptism makes us children of God and communion feeds us through the pilgrimage called life, leading to that eternal life with Christ—to which we should all be heading.

Jesus chose washing—baptism is the great washing. A few drops of water or a thorough dunking, baptism is symbolic of washing away the old life, and the new birth in Christ.

He chose eating—signifying his life and death with a bite of bread, because eating is so vital to life. So is this bread and

wine we eat every time we take part in the eucharist. Some bread sustains daily life—some bread sustains eternal life.

We talk about the saving death of Christ. We talk about being saved. As the fundamentalists would say: have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb?

In baptism we fulfill the cleansing ritual—in communion, we fulfill the eating ritual. But when we eat this bread and drink this wine, we pledge our lives anew to Christ and his church. We join in affirming a loyalty to the King of

kings and Lord of lords which makes us one—in *communion* above all differences. For all divisions caused by ignorance, injustice, fear, and hatred, for every barrier which would deny our humanity, there is a healing bridge of fellowship, says Paul, in Jesus Christ.

Eating is a necessity repeated every day, several times. And when we break bread at home with those we love, we continue to celebrate communion with God. Conversely, when we commune with Christ and our fellow Christians, we fulfill the purpose of our daily eating. *Every meal is holy*. Eating is a necessity both for the body *and* the soul.

When I was a child, attending parochial school, we often attended mass together, as a class. The nuns were always there, drumming doctrine into our tiny minds. But one thing sister said—it was Sr Joseph Magdalene—what she said was true and it has stuck in my mind even until today. Everywhere the eucharist is celebrated it's the same. Even with all the variations we still do the same things our fellow Christians do, every time we celebrate the eucharist. The shape of the eucharist is the same the world over. This table, though varying from place to place, circles the globe! This act of Jesus, gathered with his friends, thrusts an ordinary thing like a table into orbit—thrusts it not by energy from atomic sources or



rocket fuel, but by a simple command. " Do this in remembrance of me ... Go therefore, teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you." Do this ... !

The command was delivered—and it was a command. Jesus was not a wimp. He may have been the Good Shepherd and the one who possessed the lovely face we see portrayed in paintings—but he was not a weak person. Right after that command was given to his followers, the observance of the table began to encircle the globe. It circled the globe—beginning as the disciples first preached in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria and Antioch; and then in Galatia and in Rome.

After that, this observance we call the eucharist or communion began to extend to every part of the world. Today this table is set wherever God's people are ready to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This table encircles the globe!

Some very specific things happen when this table is set—when the people of God gather at their Father's table:

First, at this table of remembrance death is replaced by life. This happens every place where the gospel of Christ has been received. Our trumpeter, Peter Piacquadio, uses a phrase on his music students. He says, "If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong!" If hatred, criticism and dissension are not replaced by love, life and harmony we are doing it wrong. Another phrase comes to mind, one which I saw on a poster in recently: " If you have the joy of the Lord in your heart, kindly notify your face."

We cannot come to the table with criticism and resentment in our hearts. We cannot be attentive to receiving Christ into our hearts if there are walls in the way. The act of receiving the sacrament entails another dimension—that of becoming a new creation. It has to be if we are to be faithful to the gospel. The gospel is revolutionary and it mandates that we become new people. Every time a

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new person enters our midst, becomes part of this congregation, all the parameters change. Every new member changes the whole.

This parish is a new creation. And whether we like it or not, even if we are uncomfortable with change, God through the Holy Spirit causes that to happen. This place will never be the same again. The whole of the Episcopal Church will never be what it was 20 years ago. What has happened is full-circle cleansing.

The second thing that happens as we come to this table is that the future takes on a thrilling prospect. Without the communion promise "till he comes" tomorrow looks dark. At the table there is knowledge that God has loved us into redemption by paying the price on the cross. We then become part of his body.

As we gather at this table the desire to bring others into the family becomes stronger. Believe it or not, that is happening, right here, in this parish! As we gather at this table the message is expanded. It's our job to keep the message expanding.

Now—to what we see; what we eat at this table: bread and wine are the stuff of creation. The seed, the wheat field and the vine. In this everyday "stuff" is symbolized and actualized the work of human hands. The planting and the tending; the harvesting and the mill and the winepress. Finally the bread and wine are the very flesh and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the word made flesh.

The eucharist—communion—is a sacrament of life. For those gathered around the table, Christ is truly present.

Communion—the word and the deed—come to us in a simple story:

A young girl with little education who worked in a factory at a very early age. She attended church regularly. When a member of the congregation asked why she wanted to be confirmed, she said it was because she wanted to receive communion. The person asked why she wanted to do this. Her reply was very jarring to him: "Because," she said very slowly, "because at the Last Supper he shared with his friends he told them 'to do this in remembrance of me.' I want to be one of those who remember. I want to be one of those."

When we receive this sacrament, we can say to ourselves: "I am doing what Jesus did with his disciples in the upper room long ago." For the Christian, this contact with greatness is even more universal. We live in the world which is the work of God. The men and women among whom we live and move are the children of God. The world in which we live is the handiwork of God. After communion, everywhere we go we can say: " Here is God."

*This sermon was
preached by the
Superior General at
St Bartholomew's
Church, White
Plains, NY, October
20, 1991*



That is my name

Jesus had also been baptized, and was praying.—Luke 3:21

Suddenly, it got awfully quiet. Some minutes before there had been the splashes of water, the loud voice of the Baptizer calling out over the clamor of the crowd. People on shore were wondering how cold the water would be, and saying how the rocks hurt their feet. Then, after the baptisms, the crowd had settled on the banks, resting, thinking, praying. Some had been talking among themselves about what it was like when John held them firmly by the shoulder, and pushed them under the cold, clear water of the Jordan. As they went under, all normal sounds disappeared and a kind of humming, burbling sound—more pressure than sound—was all they could hear, as they held their breath and waited for John to let them back up. They could hardly make out his words through that humming: "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire; repent of your sins and be forgiven!" They came up sputtering, blinking, and feeling that something great had happened to them: a new life, a second chance, a clean slate. They had been cleansed; they felt like new people. "That's what it was like," they said to each other as they sat on the shore, drying in the warm sunlight, resting a little before the long walk back home, and the start of a new life.

Then something unexpected happened. A voice spoke, not very loudly, just loud enough that everyone could hear it, like distant thunder. "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Then, silence. Everyone looked around. Who said that? What was it? A little way down the stream a man was sitting by a rock, praying. What's that on his shoulder? A dove? Why is the Baptizer looking at him so intently; why have John's eyes suddenly taken on that wild look of excitement? In John's heart a question and a hope began to form: "Is this the one who is to come?"

Hundreds of years before a promise had been given to the people of Israel. A de-

liverer would come, one chosen by God. This chosen one, this *anointed* one, this *Christ* would not only deliver Israel, but establish justice on the earth. But who was it? Was it Israel the nation personified? Was it Cyrus the Persian? Time passed; other prophets spoke, other kings ruled; wars were fought and won and lost. And still, justice was not established on the earth, and Israel was not delivered.

But new hope had arisen in Israel as powerful personalities emerged in the days of Roman domination. Could it be John the Baptist? John answered the question directly: No, he was not the chosen one of God. He was a preacher of repentance to the people, a herald for the one who was coming. He, too, had been given a promise: "The one upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit." (John 1:33)

John understood the prophet's task. A prophet *points*. Prophets are filled with holy enthusiasm, a divine energy that cries out, "Look! Behold! Lo! *¡Mira! Voild!* There it is!" Prophets don't attract people to themselves, except incidentally; they point people to God.

Have you ever noticed what you do when you've just experienced something wonderful? You've just finished reading a book that you think is the best thing

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you've ever read; or you've just seen a movie that delighted and thrilled you; or been to that fascinating exhibit at the art museum. What do you do? You tell people about it, of course. And the way you tell them is filled with a special enthusiasm. You can't wait till they've seen it, or read it, or been there. And we all know that special extra delight, that added thrill of pleasure when we find someone else who has *already* read the book, or seen the movie or the exhibit. That's when the real fun starts. "What part did you like best? Wasn't that a great scene? I'm going back next week! Want to go together?"

That is what prophets are like. The difference, of course, is that prophets aren't talking about a book, or a movie, or a museum, but about God. The enthusiasm, the excitement, the desire to share the experience is the same. Prophets, and enthusiasts, point at something else, not at themselves. They don't say, "Follow me!" but "Come with me!" And if they can't go along, like John in prison, they say, "Go, follow *him*. I told you I wasn't the one; that I was only preparing the way . . . He must increase, but I must de-crease." The prophet has the joy of knowing that others are experiencing the fruit of their prophecy. It is enough, as John said, for "the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, to rejoice greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." (John 3:29)

God, in this as in all else, is different. God points things out, directs our attention, shows us the way. But God does it differently than John the Baptist or the other prophets. God says, "Follow me!" God is jealous. God wants it all; and quite rightly: no one else deserves it all, for God is Lord of all! When God points something out, whatever it is that is pointed to ultimately points back to God. Look at God's language, God's word, the Bible. How does God talk? God uses the first person an awful lot. Compare two examples of what you might call "point-

ing prophecy" from the readings appointed for this feast. Listen to John the Baptist's humility: "He who is mightier than I . . . I am not worthy to untie his sandal thong . . . He will baptize you with fire; I only use water." Then hear the emphasis in God's description of the coming chosen one: "Behold *my* servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom *my* soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him . . . *I am the Lord*, that is *my* name; my glory I give to no other." (Isaiah 42)

God's power and majesty are intimately linked with who and what God is: "I am the Lord, that is my name." Naming something is one of the ways to point something out, to define it. Prophets name things: John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God." (John 1: 29) And the voice that spoke at Christ's baptism, the voice of God, gave Jesus a name too, "My beloved Son."

Names serve two purposes: they identify the person, and the person's relationship to others. We have given names, and family names. One belongs to us, the other says we belong to something else: a family. In baptism, in addition to our "Christian name" we are given a name that is an owner's mark, an identity badge that doesn't say *who* we are but *whose* we are: "Christ's own." Look at the names given to Jesus in today's readings. *The Servant*—*whose* servant? God's. *The Chosen*—*chosen* by whom? By God. *The*

beloved Son—whose son? God's Son. At his baptism, Jesus is given a new name, but it is a name that describes a relationship to God: Jesus *belongs* to God.

The same is true for us. Before the liturgical revisions of recent years, the rite was seen largely as a family affair, a chief feature of which was the naming of the child. The same sort of thing was true of the rite of circumcision. What had begun as the rite of initiation into the people of Israel, and participation in the Covenant, had become a domestic matter over what to name the baby. The scene at John the Baptist's circumcision (Luke 1:59–80) was probably typical. The argument about what to name the child runs on, until Zachariah assents to the name, his tongue is loosed and he proclaims the great hymn of joy recalling the true significance of the day: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has visited and redeemed his people!"

So too, the act of naming the child has been played down in the new rites, and the emphasis is restored to the marking of ownership: "You are marked as Christ's own for ever." We belong no longer to ourselves alone, but to Christ. The Baptismal Covenant, the initiation into the Body of Christ, is now the heart of the service. It is not so much that we are named, but that we are baptized *in the Name* of God the Three-In-One.

The voice that came from heaven spoke to Jesus and told him who he was, and *whose* he was: God's beloved Son. God said, through Isaiah, "My glory *I* give to no other." But God does *share* that glory with one other, one who is also God and Lord of all. Jesus, the word made flesh, reveals that glory "as of the only begotten of the Father . . . And of that fullness we have received, grace upon grace" (John 1:14,16) Through Christ, God's glory is shared with us as well. As we come up from those cold Jordan waters, blinking and sputtering, perhaps gasping and crying, we are given a new name, and are marked with an owner's mark, in the shape of a cross. Baptized into Christ's death, we share in his resurrection, and in his glory.

And we have a job to do. It shouldn't be hard. Isn't life everlasting better than the best novel you ever read, the most exciting movie you ever saw? Leave each worship service fresh with a glow of enthusiasm; be filled with excitement! How can you help but tell all your friends about it? "I'm going back next week! Want to go together?"

Tobias Stanislas is a life professed member of the community, and editor of The Servant.

Meeting the community

Following the tune



Richard John Lorino

I was born on Sunday, January 3, 1954 in the Parkchester section of the Bronx. I spent the next several

months in San Antonio where my father was stationed at Fort Sam Houston. We returned to New York and soon after a new addition arrived, my baby brother, Tom. The family was complete.

I was educated in Catholic schools straight through college, attending

Blessed Sacrament grade school, Mount Saint Michael Academy, Manhattan College (undergraduate) and Fordham University (graduate). During that time, I also studied music privately at a local music academy, beginning piano at age 5 and organ at 12. I concentrated on organ study under the tutelage of a master Bulgarian organist until college, when I began working with the chapel organist, and was appointed assistant in my sophomore year.

Graduating from college in 1975 with a BA in modern foreign languages, I landed a teaching job in a local junior high school teaching Language Arts. After two years I decided to enter seminary, where I spent two years studying theology to be ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. I left after realizing that I was not called to ministry . . . at least not in that church. I returned to teaching and quite unexpectedly was offered a part-time position at St Barnabas Episcopal Church in Ardsley NY as organist and choirmaster. Feeling very corn-

fortable there, I found a faith community centered in Christ and was drawn closer to God than ever before. After five years, I was received into the Episcopal Church, feeling that God had finally got-ten me where he felt I should be.

In the not too distant future, another career change was looming. My parents' jewelry business in Hastings-on-Hudson had grown and needed more help. I left teaching and took over the office responsibilities and learned certain trade skills in the repair and design of jewelry. Since then, my brother and sister-in-law have joined us, so you can safely say that I work in a family business!

In 1988, I came across an issue of *The Servant* which reported the death of Br William Bunting. Until that time, I had never heard of the Brotherhood of St Gregory, but I was so impressed by what I read about William and the community,

that I made an inquiry. Once again, I found a wonderful mix of people dedicated to one goal: to serve and glorify Christ in everything. After much soul-searching, I applied to become a postulant. (I think Br William would have been very disappointed if I had not. I truly believe that he served as God's messenger in all this.) In August 1989 I became a postulant, began novitiate in March 1990, and made first profession of vows on January 26, 1991 (a very happy day in my life!).

Although I no longer hold a position as a church musician, I am frequently called to substitute at various churches, most often for the Superior General at St Bartholomew's, White Plains. It's always a delight to play a three-manual Skinner and work with a superb choir in a beautiful church! .

I presently live in South Salem and am a vestry member at my parish church, St John's, where I also serve as a lay reader and chalice bearer. I give time two days each week as a Pastoral Care Assistant in the AIDS Management Program at Westchester County Medical Center in Valhalla NY, a 600-bed facility that provides care for patients from Staten Island to Albany. The AMP program has an average of 26 in-patients and 250 out-patients per week.

I can honestly say that I have never been happier or felt more fulfilled and "on the right track" since I became a member of this religious community. I thank God every day for leading me here, and hope that I will always be open and attentive to his will, so that I might truly be a servant to his servants.

Here and there with the Brotherhood and Companion Sisterhood

Community notes

Bishop Horace W B Donegan

The Rt Rev Horace William Baden Donegan, the XII Bishop of New York, died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday night, November 10, 1991 at the age of 91. Bishop Donegan was suffragan from 1947-



49, and

New York from 1950 until his retirement in 1972. For the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory there was another facet to the bishop's life. In 1970 Bishop Donegan officially recognized our community under the canons of the Episcopal Church and he became our first Visitor. This expression of confidence in the vision of our founder and the other brothers of our early community, has, over the years borne much fruit in the lives of many men and women throughout the church. Sufficient thanks cannot be given

to the man who saw the hand of God and the potential in our *Rule*, and made it all happen.

The solemn burial rite was celebrated for Bishop Donegan by Bishop Richard F Grein on Saturday, November 16, at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine. **James, William Francis, Charles, Christopher Stephen and Richard John** attended representing the Brotherhood, together with many diocesan friends and a number of religious from other communities, with whom Bishop Donegan had a close and continuing relationship.

Companions

You will see **in the** Intercessions that the Companions have become *Associates*. There were a number of minor alterations in the *Associate's Rule*, which will be reported on more fully in the next issue of *The Servant*.

Province I

Postulant **Virgil** has joined novice **Charles Edward** at Emmaus I louse in Meredith NH. Both are now a part of the

Diocesan AIDS Task Force, and members of St Mark's, Ashland NH. + + + **Charles Edward** joined other clergy in the diocese for a week-long retreat with Bishop Theuner.

Donovan continues with his work for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He attended a conference in Maine related to mapping of environmental resources.

Novice **Benet** joined the intravenous therapy team at the Boston Visiting Nurse Association. **Benet** and **Roy** coordinated the Volunteer Training for the South Shore AIDS Project at Briarwood Conference Center in Falmouth MA. + + + **Benet** was profiled **in** the religion section of *The Patriot Ledger*, **in** an article which focused on the interrelationship between his work and the spiritual support of religious community.

Bernard attended the "Do Not Fear To Hope" Day of Reconciliation at the Society of the Atonement, Graymoor NY. He later enjoyed a trip to the San Xavier Mission in Tucson, Arizona and the Reservation of the Papagren Indians.

The brothers of Province One gathered at **Ciarán Anthony's** home in Hudson MA for a day of prayer, fun, and planning. They also met at St Aelred's Skete, Framingham, to plan the winter community events.

Province II

Maurice John, always the perfect host, was visited by **James** and **Tobias Stanislas** for a few days last autumn. While in the Lake Ontario area, they spent a day in Kingston, Ontario and visited St George's Cathedral (a splendid Wren-style building); paid a call on the sisters at St Margaret's House, outside Utica NY; attended the eucharist at St Paul's Cathedral, Syracuse; and met the office staff of the Diocese of Central New York. They joined in the Sunday service at **Maurice John's** parish, Grace, Mexico, and met many of the parishioners.

Richard John recently completed an intensive three day seminar at Westchester County Medical Center on Pastoral Care and the Heart Patient, a program designed for clergy and religious involved in pastoral care in health-related institutions. The purpose of the seminar is to make the care-giver sensitive to the physical and emotional trauma which a heart patient undergoes, in order to provide appropriate pastoral care. A similar program dealing with cancer patients is planned for the spring.

Ronald Augustine visited east just before Labor Day, and worshipped at **Richard Thomas'** parish. He also paid a visit to St Luke's in the Fields, Manhattan.

The Rev Christopher T Connell has withdrawn from the novitiate of the Brotherhood.

Province West

Michael David was awarded the contract to create the annual Christmas Festival poster, "*L'arbre magique*," for the City of Natchitoches LA. +++ He participated in an evensong service in honor of the Very Rev John A Simpson, Dean of the Canterbury Cathedral, at St Mark's Cathedral, Shreveport. +++ He has completed a triptych and a series of relief sculptures created for Trinity Church,

Natchitoches; he's also serving as chair of the parish every-member canvass.

The Province held its annual Thanksgiving gathering at All Saints, Chicago. A quiet day was held for the community and Companions, led by **Roger-Michael**.

Richard John visited the Chicago brothers in August, and was recruited as crucifer at Church of the Atonement. His visit was followed by one from **Maurice John** in September. +++ **Ronald Augustine** preached at Atonement last fall. +++ He was MC at the funeral for senior warden and Chicago police officer Roland Krause; Bishop Montgomery was celebrant. +++ **Ronald Augustine** went to the induction of a priest at St Edward the Martyr in Joliet, and participated in a mini-retreat at St Andrews, Chicago, as a member of the Bishop's Advisory Commission on Alcohol and Drugs.

Roger-Michael conducted a 4-day symposium at Oberlin College as part of the college's Human Sexuality Series. The symposium was entitled "Sexuality, Spirituality, and Social Justice," and included four presentations, one-on-one counseling with students, and informal discussions over dinners at various college dining halls. The symposium was sponsored by the Office of Chaplains, the Psychological Services Department, and the Alumni Office. +++ He also attended the Sunday eucharist at Christ Church, Oberlin, where he participated in the pre-eucharist catechumenate class. +++ In his musical activities, he was harpsichordist in a chamber recital at the *Alliance Franfaise*, Chicago. The program consisted of music from the court of Louis XV, and included a selection of solo literature for harpsichord. His article "When in Our Music ..." was printed in *Crossroads*, the quarterly publication of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. The article focused on his experience of eucharist and the gathering of community in his experience as a concert harpsichordist.

Roger-Michael has been licensed by Bishop Griswold as a lay preacher in the Diocese of Chicago, and has been invited to preach at various parishes in the Chicago area. +++ He was invited to pray the invocation for the television series, "HIV Update," produced by the Physi-

cians Association for AIDS Care. The series goes to all teaching hospitals in the United States, and is aired on local cable stations as well. +++ He appeared as guest speaker on the Chicago-based cable program, "Speaking of Religion," hosted by Dr Henry Allen, a former Orthodox priest. The program was a conversation between him and Dr Allen, focusing on the simultaneous grace and difficulty of ministering within the HIV/AIDS community. +++ He was invited to speak last Spring to students at the National College of Chiropractic Medicine in Lombard IL on recovery from childhood incest and the special problems involved for chiropractors who find themselves care-givers for adult incest survivors. He has been invited back to speak again in November.

Michael John Austin has withdrawn from the novitiate of the community.



Michael David and his terra cotta sculpture of St Michael, on the facade of Trinity Church.