

THE SERVANT



**DROPS OF BLOOD,
THREE
FALL FROM THEE,
AS ONE WHO HAS
RISEN UPON THE
TREE
FOR US SO THAT
WE MAY HAVE
LIFE
ETERNAL AND
EACH DROP
REFLECTS
THY
CRUCIFIXION,
LORD.**

Claudia Michael

152

Epiphany / Lent 1994

THE UNRECOGNIZED CHRIST

John was dead. Herod had just be-headed him in the same scandalous fashion he did all things—and for the sake of his "honor"! The strong, clear voice of the prophet was now stilled. John's followers were devastated. Jesus' disciples had been out in the countryside on their wanderings by twos—listening, healing, teaching. Now, *they* and all the folk of the region were left insecure, disoriented, and distressed. There was every likelihood of a popular uprising. Certainly, this was Herod's expectation when he killed John. It must have been in the minds of those who were his guests that night, strengthening in their eyes that challenging gesture. He was willing to risk revolution for the sake of saving face! However, he also probably had patrols out that very night.

Jesus invited his disciples to retreat with him to a lonely place on the other side of the lake for a quiet retreat: perhaps to keep them from Herod's patrols; perhaps to consider their just-completed travels; perhaps to console them about John; certainly to pray quietly together. But the world would not let them go! Friends discovered where they were headed, and there was a throng in wait for them when they arrived at the now not-so-lonely place—at least five thou-sand! Surely, that was much of the district's populace. They were clearly expecting something to happen, expectations heightened by Herod's dispatching John. How did Jesus respond? "His heart went out to them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he did much to teach them." So much so that he taught all day. Suppertime

came, and with it the distribution of the five loaves and two fishes to this crowd—and the return of "twelve great baskets of leftovers"—one for each of the recently selected apostles.

After supper, he sent the apostles off by boat for Bethsaida, and sent the crowd home, and climbed the hill to pray. And then:

It grew late, and the boat was already well out on the water, while he was alone on the land. Somewhere between three and six in the morning, seeing them laboring at the oars against a head-wind, he came towards them, walking on the lake. He was going to pass them by but when *they* saw him walking on the lake, they thought it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw him and were terrified. But at once he spoke to them: "Take heart, for it is I; do not be afraid." Then he climbed into the boat beside them, and the wind dropped. At this they were dumfounded, for they had not understood the incident of the loaves; their minds were closed.

This is a curious passage! They saw Jesus on the lake, and thought at first that it was a ghost—they could believe that sooner than that it was a man. When *they* saw that it was their friend and teacher, that sense of the weird went out of it, but they were still confused. Perhaps they also relived that previous time when *they* were on the lake, and he stilled the storm; afterwards some of them had said, "Who is this!? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" Their familiar master and friend suddenly became "other"—and they were dumfounded. (Never mind that the whole

lot of them had just been out healing the sick, helping the blind to see, and raising the dead! They had not understood the incident of the loaves; their minds were closed.

THEY SAW JESUS ON THE LAKE, AND THOUGHT AT FIRST THAT IT WAS A GHOST—THEY COULD BELIEVE THAT SOONER THAN THAT IT WAS A MAN.

A mirade had passed unnoticed— even by those being taught to accomplish miracles. What is a miracle, *any- way*? In a miracle the ordinary is transformed; the familiar, changed. The base of reality shifts. Miracles are scary. They change the world and threaten our security.

How does one respond to such awe-filled incongruities? How do we react to a miracle? In many ways. We have ourselves experienced several of them:

- + **Non-perception** of the event—as in the incident of the loaves. Here, and elsewhere—even at Emmaus—Christ could pass unrecognized even by those who knew him—until their minds were opened. They didn't see divine intervention until their minds were opened.
- + **Displacement**—filling the mind with other activities; with busyness, to avoid confronting that perception.

- + **Disbelief**—I didn't see that! "It can't happen!" "It isn't happening!" "It didn't happen!"
- + **Rejection of the agent** of action (including one's own self): "Who, him? Why, I know him! He's from Nazareth!" Or: "I'm so sinful. Surely I can't do such a thing!"
- + **Reduction**—changing the unthinkable into the "merely" supernatural: "It's a ghost!"
- + **Ridicule**—dismissal of the marvel as absurd; the disbeliever's haven.
- + **Fear of ridicule**—the mirror of the former, is a most potent force in the suppression of joy, and in the dosing of minds. Carried to its extremes, it results in those who, like the Venerable Jorgi, in *Name of the Rose*, feel that "Laughter is a thing of the Devil!" The misguided attempt to forestall the ridicule and profanation of the Holy by unbelievers also prevents the Holy from being experienced in all its richness and wonder.

Though we as believers acknowledge Christ as Lord and accept the concept of miraculous intervention and in fact pray for it, miracles, because they threaten our security, even our very identity, are often ignored, distanced, or rejected in one of these ways. Even very devout people do this from time to time. Despite our acknowledgment of the thinness of that curtain between heaven and earth, daily life conditions us to see a wall. Then, when we open that door hidden deep in our hearts where God stands and knocks, and the light of God's glory pours out into the dark of our own familiar sinful selves, we may even run, "fleeing down the nights and down the days, and down the years." Perhaps the awe of this miracle, of experiencing that God really is within, and that the world and time *don't limit* God's actions, is part of what that ancient writer felt when he

penned: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Actually experiencing—beyond inviting and acknowledging—the presence of God within and outside in the mundane events of our lives, is surely a miracle! One such direct experience opens the closed mind, and alerts it to constantly watch for the missed miracle; the hidden Christ. The religious life keeps the quest before us; the opened mind is a gift from God to the seeker; the opened mind, the pure heart, sees God.

"Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? I will, with God's help." Christ is in

the Father, and the Father in him, and they in us all. This miracle is the root of true Chastity.

Now, as the sun shines down at noon, your light, O Lord, burns in our hearts; assist us to endure that light, and through your judgment find your grace. Amen.

*Donovan Aidan is
Provincial of Province I,
and a life professed
member of the
community.*



Meeting the community

VETERAN SERVANT

Damian-Curtis

I am the oldest of five children, three brothers and a sister. Our parents

were loving, kind, and very good providers, albeit quite permissive. They were not "churched" but made sure that we children were. We were raised in the Southern Baptist tradition. My childhood was as most kids. I did all the dumb things that kids do and still survived. I dropped out of high school at age 15. A year later I enrolled in a two year course for Operating Room Technicians. I had found my niche. (I finally completed my GED when I was accepted by BSG.)

I was drafted into the US Army when I was nineteen years old and completed eight-and-a-half years' service. The first five years in the military were spent as a Surgical Tech. I was an instructor in a

medical training school in Munich, Germany. We had the distinction of completely rewriting the Standard Operating Procedure Manuals for the US Army Medical Services Corps. The last three and a-half years of military service were spent as a Public Information Specialist in German-American Affairs in Stuttgart. While there, I had the pleasure of assisting in organizing the German-American Soldiers Chorus of the Southern Area Command. I was also (at that time) president of the US Army Press Corps.

I am retired now on disability. I live for the most part in Arkansas. When time and strength allow, I am involved in volunteer work. I work with the Ozark Legal Services, Department of Human Services (Elder and Child Abuse, Family Violence). When in Chicago, I try to be involved in visitation to

persons with AIDS. When time and health permit, I will be spending some time with the brothers in Mexico NY, at Saint Gregory's Retreat Center, doing whatever they think might be helpful. I have taken an intensive course in hypno-

therapy and will complete a chaplaincy course offered by the Bishop Anderson Institute of the Diocese of Chicago. I feel that this education will assist me to help people in dealing with pain, stress, and grief.

Here and there with the brothers and sisters

COMMUNITY NOTES

Province I

Roy, Donovan Aidan, Ciaran Anthony, Charles Edward, Claudia Michael and Helen spent a day in fellowship and prayer at St. Aelred's Skete. The gathering reviewed the upcoming event schedule for the province.

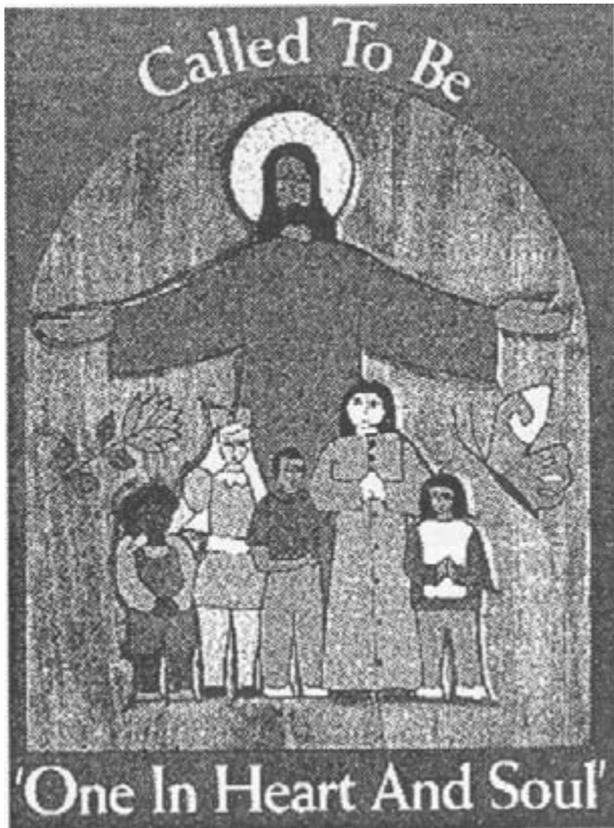
Later in the fall, province members visited Helen at her mountain-top home in Cornish NH. The Offices were said, food was partaken and good conversation followed. Helen gave them a treat with a tour of her tree farm and a brisk walk up the mountain.

A large provincial contingent attended the Sunday eucharist and marriage of Associate Mary Clement and aspirant John Haney at Epiphany Parish in Newport NH. The Rev Robert Friedrich conducted the service, and noted that this was the first time that he had ever performed a marriage between the Senior and Junior Wardens of a parish! Charles Edward read the gospel and Donovan Aidan and Claudia Michael read the lessons. The church was packed and the parish put together a feast to remember. The sun was shining and God was smiling on the events of the day.

Ciarán Anthony participated in building a new playground at the Learning Center for Deaf Children (TLC) in Framingham MA. He is being trained in American Sign Language (ASL) at TLC.

The playground was quite an undertaking; it involved about 50 people full time for most of the week. Because many of the volunteers were hearing impaired, the hired professionals needed ASL speakers to help interpret. He also visited St Andrew's Episcopal Church of the Deaf in Brookline MA to speak to them about religious life in the Episcopal Church. He's now in his fifth semester of ASL training and is starting to work it into his ministry. In his parish (St John the Evangelist, Bowdoin Street, Boston) he chaired the first meeting of the bisexual, lesbian and gay spirituality study group he started. The group will be exploring the relationships between sexual orientation and spirituality. + + + Stephen joined him for the 40 Days memorial service for Bernard, who died in August and was buried from the parish. The service concluded with the ancient Greek Orthodox tradition of the blessing and sharing of Koliva.

Charles Edward attended the North American Association for the Diaconate conference in Newport RI, as one of two deacons from the Diocese of New Hampshire. Aspirant John Haney and Associate Mary Clement also attended. Charles Edward also served as deacon for the eucharist at the New Hampshire Diocesan Convention.



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18–24) takes its theme this year from the Acts of the Apostles (4.23–37)

The province held a Vocations Day at Trinity Church, Tilton NH in late November. The assembly reflected on religious life in general, and on the community's Rule in particular, especially as the Rule is experienced in daily life.

Province II

Holy Cross Day, the 24th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood, was joyously celebrated at the Episcopal Church Center in New York. Associate Mark Harris preached and celebrated, James assisted, and Richard Thomas provided the organ accompaniment for

hymns and service music. Associate Richard Yarian also attended.

Local and regional newspapers (secular and church-related) covered the opening of Saint Gregory's Retreat Center and Farm in Mexico NY. Maurice John and Andrew have been kept busy with a steady stream of visitors and retreatants.

Stephen was a delegate to the NY Diocesan Convention representing Trinity Parish. Tobias Stanislas was busy behind the scenes, operating the computer balloting system the diocese uses for the election process. Remember those Number 2 pencils? Quite a change from the ballots of yesteryear.

After the convention, Stephen headed off for a visit to Edward

and his wife Barbara in Bowie MD, and took a tour of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center which Edward founded (see more on the center below!).

The members of Province II gathered at Richard John's home in South Salem NY to observe Foundation Day. This being the first visit to the provincial's new home, the day began with a house blessing with the Rev Michael Connolly, OFM. Cap and the Rev David Henritzky, OSL officiating. A festive meal followed, and a good time was had by all.

Also in South Salem, Bishop Walter Dennis, Visitor to the Brotherhood, vis-



Edward with volunteer Bob Donselar and Deacon Marshall Thompson, at the International Seafarers' Center. (Photo by Bob Stockfield)

ited St John's Parish for Confirmation and Reception. Since the brothers were gathered in nearby Garrison for a Council meeting, a group of them joined Richard John for the service at his parish. All were invited to the reception following, and had ample opportunity to spend time with Bishop Dennis at the home of parishioners Vincent and Judy Castelucci.

Visiting from New England, Roy and **Donovan Aidan** attended the 8th annual Feast of St Francis Liturgy at the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine, joining Stephen and William Francis. They report, "There was a 300-member choir singing the *Missa Gaia* and the cathedral was packed. Musicians played drums, horns, guitar, and bass, accompanying twenty liturgical dancers. And then there were the animals: elephant, snakes, llama, pony, hen, bees, camel, cats, dogs and much more. We've never seen an elephant process down the aisle of a church before!"

Charles took part in the institution service for Bishop Herbert A Donovan, jr, as Vicar of Trinity Parish, New York City.

James traveled to the Dioceses of Eau Claire and Fond du Lac (for which he is the national church headquarters linkage person) for the long-range planning meetings there. Sherry Maule joined him as Executive Council representative. The visits were successful, and James had the opportunity to get to know several members of the diocesan leadership personally, which is part of the communication goal of the linkage system.

Tobias Stanislas' article from issue #150, "Toxic Nostalgia," was reprinted in the newsletter of the Council of the Laity, Diocese of Fort Worth. A reliable source informs us that it "hit the spot." He was recently approved by the New York Diocesan Commission on Ministry to continue the process leading toward ordination to the priesthood.



Thomas Joseph and Elizabeth ("Betty") Holton

George is missioning on the holy is-land of Iona. He reports, "One of the most interesting things to happen this month was the visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He flew in by helicopter to visit the abbey, and I was invited to lunch with him and his wife Eileen. I told him I'd waved to his helicopter when it banked over Duncraig. He said, 'I didn't see you, but please wave me off when we leave.' So when the pilot banked over the house again I waved him goodbye as he headed out to Glasgow and a very stormy horizon.

"This week the Bishop of Argyll and the Islands is coming to visit. The local priest has asked me to administer the re-served sacrament while he and his wife are on holiday. My bishop has given me a lay eucharistic minister's license, and I hope to apply that here. I'm trying to learn this work, this craft, of being a religious, and each cog of the wheel makes that a little richer and more useful to others."

Province III

Lillian-Marie is now a member of St Barnabas, Deland FL, where she has joined the altar guild, and takes part in the "Walk-In Ministry" that serves homeless, poor and needy people in the area. She's also helping out in the parish office, and serving as a chalice administrant.

The *Maryland Church News* featured Edward's ministry as Episcopal port chaplain in the Port of Baltimore. A while back he discovered that Baltimore, unlike every other major American sea-port, had no ecumenical ministry to merchant seafarers.

His efforts helped result in the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center, in the Dundalk Marine Terminal. As the *Church News* reports, "It gives seafarers from many nations the chance to call home, relax, mail letters, pick up books, magazines and clothing, and even toys for their children in far-away countries.

There is religious literature in many languages, but most of all there's that friendly ear." In November, Suffragan Bishop Charles Longest visited and blessed the facility, and accompanied Edward on a visit to the *M/V Anna* a ship in harbor destined to depart for Saudi Arabia.

The center is part of the North American Maritime Ministry Association, and works with the Center for Seafarers' Rights of the Seamen's Church Institute.

Province V

Ciarán Anthony visited Francis Andrew, and both paid a call on the Order of the Holy Cross in **Santa Barbara CA**. **Francis Andrew** visited the new Convent of the Sisters of St Mary in Highland Park CA. He attended the morning eucharist and stayed for breakfast. He served as delegate from All Saints', Beverly Hills, to the Los Angeles Diocesan Convention.

Farewells

At its quarterly meeting, Council released William Webber and Mary Francis Knipple from the novitiate, and Karen McConnell from the postulancy. Later in the fall, Council approved the release of Ronald MacGregor from an-

nual vows, and with assent of the Bishop Visitor approved release from life profession for Roy Tobin and Bernard LaReau. We wish them all the best in their continuing pilgrimage in Christ.

Associates

We are profoundly sad to report that **Elizabeth J Holton**, 79, an Associate of the Brotherhood, died suddenly in her apartment on Friday, August 27, 1993. Betty was an energetic and active Associate and a long-time member of the congregation of Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati, Ohio. Her loss is deeply felt by all of our friars, sisters and Associates, and especially those in Province V. The Burial Office and Requiem Eucharist were held at Christ Church Cathedral, celebrated by Canon J Mark Goodman, assisted by **Thomas Joseph**, Provincial. The opening collect was the Brotherhood's prayer of dedication.

We welcome new Associates **Karen R Kleinmann** (Schenectady NY), **Jeffrey L Benson** (Chicago), **M Eugene Ellis** (Pierrepont Manor NY), the Rev Mark Harris (Newark DE), the Rev Enrique Antonio Illane (Araranguá, Brazil), **Dennis W Pattey** (Chicago), **John A Bell** (Cincinnati), the Rev Gerard F Beritela (Syracuse), and **Perry L Conley** (Asheville NC).

AN INVITATION

The Brotherhood and Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory invite you to the Festival Eucharist to be celebrated at Graymoor, Garrison NY, on Saturday, January 22, at 3:00 PM. All are welcome!