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THE SERVANT



Icon at Trinity, Natchitoches LA, by Michael David

#153

Easter 1994

YOU ARE MY FRIENDS

You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends . . . —John 15:14-16

You all have seen the kind of signs they give you to hang on your door in hotels. On one side it says: "Please do not disturb." If you want to take a nap in the afternoon or sleep late in the morning, you simply hang this little sign on the outside of the door. Hotel employees who see this sign will realize that you do not want to be disturbed so *they* will not knock or come in.

The other side of these signs usually says something like "Maid service please." This means just the opposite. Instead of wanting to be left alone, you want the hotel employee to come in. Perhaps you have run out of soap or clean towels, perhaps you are going out for awhile and want the beds to be made up while you are gone. So by placing this sign on the doorknob you are asking the hotel to take care of whatever it is that you need.

Some people treat God the same way. Whenever there is something they know God would want them to do, like giving money to the church, or teaching a Sun-day school class, or helping out someone who is in need, they say to God, "Please do not disturb." But if they want some-thing from God, they very quickly say to God, "Service please."

Jesus taught us, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." In other words, our relationship with God is a two-way street. We often want things from God. And we find ourselves getting caught in the routine of saying to

God, "Give me, give me, give me." But we all too often forget that we must give something to God too.

What does God ask of us? You can think of examples of some of the important or obvious things. Jesus said that there is really only one commandment—that we love God with all our heart and all our mind and all our soul and all our strength. If we do this, then all the other things will fall into place. But is it really that easy?

Think about what it means to *love* for a minute. Think about the people whom you have loved during your lifetime; your spouse, your children, your parents, others. Was there more to that love than just what that person could give to you? Of course there was. In the case of your spouse, one or both of you probably goes out to work every day to provide the money to run the house. If you both are employed, you've got to divide up the responsibilities around the house so that things go along smoothly. One of you may cook while the other washes the dishes. Perhaps you'll divide up the other responsibilities—one will do the laundry while the other takes care of cleaning and dusting. Or you'll take turns on alternate weeks. The point is that a relationship involves give and take. There are responsibilities on both sides. If you were the kind of spouse who did not assume your share of the responsibility to make a relationship work,

how long do you suppose your marriage would last?

Jesus' point is the same. Our relationship with God has obligations on both sides. God does love us and does give us the things that we need most in life. But *only if* we hold up our end *of* the obligations. We must love God back—and that means that there are some things we must do to show that love.

God's called Moses to be the emancipator *of* the Hebrew slaves. You all know the broad outlines *of* the story *of* Moses. Born a Hebrew himself. Hidden in the bulrushes. Found and adopted by the daughter *of* Pharaoh. Raised as the grandson *of* Pharaoh. He killed one *of* Pharaoh's soldiers and was forced to flee for his life. Ended up in Midian, working as a shepherd for his father-in-law Jethro. One day as he was tending his sheep, God called him and asked him to return to Pharaoh and demand the re-lease *of* the Hebrews. Eventually and reluctantly he surrendered to God's commission and returned to Pharaoh to demand the release *of* his people.

**OUR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD HAS
TWO SIDES.**

Pharaoh initially refused and, with God supplying technical assistance, Moses called down the plagues on Egypt. Ultimately Pharaoh relented and Moses led the people to freedom, crossing the Red Sea and wandering through the wilderness for forty years before finally coming to the edge *of* the Promised Land.

There are a few things I would like you to notice about the initial stages *of* God's call to Moses, in the hope that we can learn something for our own lives. First, God frequently calls us—requests us to fulfill our side *of* the two-way street which characterizes our relationship with God—God frequently calls us when we least expect it. Moses was minding his own business, watching his sheep when he noticed a near-by bush on fire. Upon going to inspect, Moses met God. God can come to you, looking for your help in the same way. I don't mean in a burning bush. God has already used that one. I mean that God may come to you when you're thinking about—or would much rather be doing—something else. The call may come in the guise of a friend who is ill and who is in need of your caring. It may be that you are caught up in a catastrophic event, such as the earthquake in California just this Monday. And you're there on the scene and in a position to help someone. We need to adopt the attitude of being sensitive or even vulnerable to God's calling us at all times because we never know when it will happen.

Another thing you should notice is that God can be very persistent when there is something he wants us to do. Moses was at first very reluctant. He tried to get out of it. But God would not allow him to wiggle away. Just so with us. There may be things which we know God would have us do. But we post-poner, we delay, we find all sorts of other things to do to fill the time, hoping that God will tire and give up asking us to fulfill our obligation to the relationship. But if we have any sensitivity at all, if we have any sort of *genuine* relationship with God at all, we won't be able to es-cape his demands *of us*. That friend who needs our assistance will continue in

need. That social injustice which demands correction will continue to be there. Look at Jonah. You can't escape God's demands of you.

Third, you don't need any particular qualifications to be used by God. So often we think that we need to leave "God's work" to the clergy or to the professional church workers, because they are the ones who have the qualifications. Moses didn't feel qualified either. In fact that was one of his first negotiating points with God. He said to God: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" He tried to convince God that God should have chosen someone else, someone perhaps who was a distinguished diplomat. But God, in his greater wisdom, knew that Moses had exactly the qualifications God was looking for. When God calls us, he has a particular purpose in mind,

and he knows that we have the capability to be successful, whether we believe it or not. Whether you think so or not, *you do* have what it takes to respond to God's call. For as with Moses, God will give you the ability you need. Do not think that you are inadequate. God will make you adequate.

And finally, as Jesus told us, if we obey God's commands, then, and only then, we are allowed to ask God anything—"whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you."

So remember, if you want to be able to hang out your "Service please" sign for God, you must also remember, when God asks you for something, that you cannot flip it to "Do not disturb."

RTB

A Meditation for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

NOTHING WILL BE LOST

Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 148; Romans 8.18-23; John 1.1-5,9-14

Beloved sisters and brothers,
let me tell you a mystery.
Nothing will be lost. All will be restored. In
the economy of salvation,
nothing goes to waste.
Our God is not a God
of acceptable losses.
Nothing God has made
deserves God's hatred.
Everything that is
was created in love.
Each atom, every blade of grass, and
most of all each human soul, reposes
in the assurance of divine,
unalterable love.
Nothing will be lost.
All will be restored.

The whole creation groans,
subjected for a time
by the divine command
to wait on tiptoe and in expectation:
waiting for the children to grow up,
waiting for the children to inherit,
waiting for the glory to be revealed.

For glory came down from heaven,
and hid itself within a tiny child, a
child some tried to kill,
a child some tried to ignore,
a child that others worshiped,
a child destined
to be the rise and fall of many not
just in Israel
but throughout the world.



Peter Taran, SA, was co presider at the Unity Service.

The glory hid itself,
but could not hide itself for long. It
shone as light in darkness, and the
darkness could not hold it in.
The darkness tried to turn its back;
the naughty children hid their eyes
and said, "You can't see me,"
but the light was so relentless,
it was so strong
it shone right through the darkness. The
darkness never knew what hit it; for
when the light was come,
the darkness wasn't darkness any more.

Beloved, nothing will be lost.
All will be restored.

Creation groans, waiting for the promise,
waiting for the branch to bud and blossom
and bear,
waiting for the children to inherit,
waiting for the children
to stop their fighting,

waiting for the children
to open their eyes
to behold the glory
shining from each others faces.

Never again, God said, never again; I'll
never kill you all again.

Never again
will water wash a world away.
I promise you,
and set the contract in the clouds, the
covenant in the storm-cloud, my
Name in shining light.

I'll keep my word; my word is good. It
lasts for ever.

I will do more. I'll send the Word, I'll
send my Son to seal the contract with
his blood,
blood shared with you—your blood,
your human blood.
Nothing will be lost. All will be restored.

All? All? I ask. What, all?
Even those who turned their backs?
Even those who through free will
rejected you,
the Will that gave them freedom? Yes,
says the Lord, all will be restored.
Nothing will be lost.

How, Lord? I ask.
How will they be redeemed
who turn away?
How will their blind eyes see? How
will their hard hearts melt?

God answers patiently,
Love will turn them 'round. My
love turns stars, you know, it
turns the universe;
and though a human heart
is heavier in my eyes
than a thousand, thousand
white dwarf cores,
my love will turn it; wait and see!
All will be restored. Nothing will be lost.

When, Lord? I ask.

When will the wound be healed?

Don't you know, my Child?

God answers.

The healing has begun.

It started with the coming of my Son.

This was the new beginning,
just as long before, when through him

all that is was made.

You should have seen it!

God laughs softly.

It only took the gentlest touch,
the merest breath of Love
to start the universe to being.

The quarks began to sing,
the particles to spin,

the forces to divide under the strong
even pressure of his compass.

The angels were impressed. The

Spirit hovered, kibitzing,
offering suggestions

for the value of Planck's Constant
and the speed of light,

and recommending that

space would be more pleasing
with a gentle curve.

It was a good week's work,

when the Word made the world.

And so it will again.

The healing has begun.

Nothing will be lost. All will be restored.

Is it really that simple? I ask.

Can the wound be healed

with a touch?

The healing will take a bit longer,

God answers,

then pauses.

O.K., I'll be honest,

it's you subcontractors,

the partners in redemption with my Son.

The specifications are clear,

"Love God and each other"

and the plan is concise:

"one house, many mansions."



Michael David's icon of St Francis

But you seem so intent
on constructing outhouses,
rock gardens and car parks!
Instead of a banquet hall you
construct fast-food stands!

There are times I regret I extended the
work force past Yahweh & Son.

But what's done is done.

The only thing in all my creation

I don't mind losing is time.

I'll have the job done right

if it takes forever,

and we'll keep at it together

until we get it right.

I am not a God of acceptable losses. I

won't cut corners;

cost overruns don't phase me.

Nothing will be lost. All will be restored.

And so, my beloved in Christ,

I give you this word:

now is the time

for the children to grow up,

now is the time for the heirs to inherit.

Nothing will be lost. All will be restored.

And now is the time. The whole world is waiting, the stars hold their breath, the wild beasts and cattle regard us with growing impatience, the birds hover over us, the fish all tread water, the trees shrug in wonder, or stand limbs akimbo, and deep in our hearts God's Spirit is groaning: be reborn, beloved,

become what you are
and the world will be free.
The Spirit is crying:
Look up to the light,
your hearts will be whole
and the wound will be healed.
The Spirit is singing:
my children, my children are home!

Tobias Stanislas

Meeting the community



SOMERSAULTS

Edward Ramón

There is a saying in Spanish which translates roughly to "Life gives

many somersaults" and my journey from where I began to where I am now has been no exception!

My family moved to the Chicago area from Kansas City where I was born. My early schooling was in the Chicago schools up through my undergraduate work at Northwestern University, where I studied speech education. I had been in show business from the age of six and thought that I would either continue in it in some way, or work in the mental health field (I had worked in that area all during college); but that was not to be.

Having been raised as an atheist, I was rather a pragmatist. But I came in contact with two Episcopal clergy whom I so respected personally, I decided that if they thought there was something to Christianity, I ought to give it some further thought.

Think I did; and somersault—I was ordained priest in 1965! After a year as a curate in suburban Chicago, I became part of an experimental Anglo-American team ministry on the island of Mallorca off the Spanish coast. It was there that I wrote, produced and "starred" in a radio show with retired film and TV actress, Faye Emerson. It later was broadcast on network radio and TV.

From Mallorca it was on to Munich, Germany for seven years in an American parish setting with mostly diplomatic personnel, followed by a year of independent study at Kings College, Cambridge. After having been out of the country a total of twelve years, I decided to come home to "touch base" before going back overseas. In another somersault, I became rector of an urban parish in Chicago and stayed 17 years!

During this period, I was given some information on the Brotherhood. I had always had a sort of yearning for the religious life or for some parts of it and

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT GREGORY

managed to avoid it. But somehow, I couldn't get it out of my mind, so I made a phone call to Stephen, then Director of Vocations. At my interview for postulancy, I was asked why I—already a priest—wanted to try my vocation in what was at that time an entirely lay community. Of course it was always envisioned that BSG would welcome all orders of the ministry but I happened to be the first priest to apply. At this point, even as I said the words, it came into focus: trained as a priest, I learned all the "nuts and bolts" of running a small business but somehow needed to *know God*. Being a brother is who I am—being a priest is part of what I am ordained to *do*. The rest is history. I was admitted, and enjoyed the somersaults of postulancy, novitiate and juniorate—and I'm still tumbling after making my life profession of vows last year.

The parish in Chicago was reduced to a mission and I was beginning to see a

new focus, wanting very much to concentrate on counseling and/or teaching. It was time for another acrobatic exercise! After a year of teaching at St. Augustine College, a bilingual institution whose mission is to provide access to American higher education to those who would otherwise be unable to obtain it, I was named Chairman of the Department of Continuing Education and Occupational Programs. I also act as chaplain to the college. In addition, I have a practice in hypnotherapy and pastoral counseling as a certified hypnotherapist.

It's been quite a trip and I look forward with expectancy to all that remains. Certainly everything in my life up to entering BSG led me to that point and everything since has been enriched, informed and directed because I answered that gentle, divine nudge. Thank you, God, for all the somersaults.

Here and there with the brothers and sisters

COMMUNITY NOTES

Winter Convocation

The brothers and sisters gathered at Graymoor during one of the worst winter storms in recent memory, and in the wake of the California earthquake, to observe the annual Winter Convocation and welcome several new members to the family.

Graymoor honored the Gregorians by asking them to design the liturgy for the Wednesday evening observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is a major outgrowth of the Society of the Atonement's ecumenical work. **Richard Thomas** and Peter

Taran, SA, were the co-presiders, and **Tobias Stanislas** sang the meditation that appears on page five of this issue:

Members of the community took part in two workshops. **Donovan Aidan** led an open session on "Is There Life After Profession: Continuing Formation," and **Tobias Stanislas** gave a talk and led a lively discussion on "What is Anglicanism, Anyway?"

During the week, news of the heavy staff cutbacks at the national church headquarters came in, and those who are being "outplaced" were remembered in a moving Compline service and time of silent prayer.



It was a cold day in January when Robert Burnham, Richard Yarian, and John Hang were admitted to the postulancy. They are seen here at Graymoor with the Superior General and assorted ices.

Council met and noted the withdrawal of **Benet Hill** from the novitiate, and approved the appointment of **Richard John** for a second term as Provincial

II, and **Gordon John** as provisional Director of Associates. Council discussed the possible restructuring of the Winter Convocation, and heard reports on the

adjustments being made in the Formation Program. During the week, **Andrew** made his first profession of vows, **Helen Bernice** was re-

ceived as a novice, and **John Haney**, **Robert Burnham**, and **Richard Yarian** were admitted to the postulancy.

Among those attending the week were Associates **Karen Kleinmann**, the Rev **Gerry Beritela** and **Alec McClure**. The Rev **Glenworth Miles**, rector of Grace Church, Bronx—destroyed by fire late in 1993—visited to pick up some of the furnishings the Vestment Exchange has provided for the parish. He and his wife shared the eucharist with the community.



Claudia Michael, John Haney and Associate Mary Clement Haney, and Helen Bernice, at a New Hampshire social gathering on Helen's farm.



Helen Bernice and Richard Thomas

Province I

Charles Edward arranged and conducted a Province Day at Trinity, Tilton NH. **Donovan Aidan** gave a brief meditation on listening and community. Organist for the morning was **Jim Cyphers**, and for the afternoon, **Christian**.

Charles Edward led a discussion based on the vows, and he and **Ron Streeter** prepared a continental breakfast (waiting when all arrived!) and a lunch of home-made soup, vegetable lasagna, pasta and garden salad, and cheesecake. Present were **Charles Edward**, **Ciarán Anthony**, **Christian**, **Donovan Aidan**, **Claudia Michael**, and **Helen Bernice**, as well as **Robert Burnham**, **John Haney**, **Associate Mary Clement Haney**, and friends **Ron Streeter**, **Michael Bushnell**, **Jim Cyphers**, and **Roy Tobin**. Discussion continued well past the appointed mid-afternoon posted leaving time, and all went their separate ways after Evening Prayer.

Ciarán Anthony has been elected to the vestry of the Church of St John the Evangelist, Boston.

Helen Bernice is doing volunteer work at Cornish (NH) Elementary School, and was awarded another



Maurice John, Richard John, the newly professed Andrew, and Ronald Augustine chat after the profession eucharist.



A pair of Georges: Novice and Archbishop meet on Iona

"Commander's Commendation" for her Civil Air Patrol radio communications work.

Province II

Richard Thomas was joined by an old friend of the community, **Emmanuel**



George in a pensive pose on the holy island of Iona

Bologna, in a gala concert for organ and brass, at St Bartholomew's, White Plains. The concert included baroque and modern classics.

Elizabeth Mary and **Stephen** led meditations for an Advent day of recollection at St Mark's, Nepera Park, Yonkers. The Rev Canon **Anthony Bondi** celebrated the eucharist.

George has ended his tour of duty on Iona, and will be pursuing his domestic ministries after a brief hiatus to "de-Ionize" in the Arizona desert.

Province III

Thaddeus David, now almost completely recovered from the injuries that kept him out of circulation for over a year, took part in the National AIDS-Awareness Service at St Mark's, Philadelphia.

Province West

Deanery Three (Diocese of Los Angeles) has chosen **Francis Andrew** to be its pre-siding officer for a one-year term.

Michael David paid a visit to Chicago, in the course of shepherding six-



Gordon John was crucifer at a bilingual service at St Peter's / San Pedro, Chicago.

and church furnishings, and repairs and inventories them against requests from congregations in the US and around the world. The community supports the cost of repairing and shipping.

This has been a busy six months for the Exchange. We are happy to report that nine parishes and one bishop have received vestments or altar furnishings, and pleased to acknowledge the following donations: Trinity, Tilton NH (lectern and hangings); St. Jude's, Franklin NH (sanctuary lamp); NH Diocesan Altar Guild (vest-

teen students from the Louisiana arts school where he teaches. While in the Windy City he visited brothers at Atonement, and made a hospital call on **Roger**, recovering from a pulmonary infection. Acting as host rather than guest, he entertained **Richard Thomas**, **Elizabeth Mary**, and **Damian Curtis** when they visited the House of Our Lady of the Angels in Natchitoches.

Michael David played the harp in the Advent Lessons and Carols service at Trinity Church.

The Vesting Drawer

The Vestment Exchange receives donations of used but still useful vestments

ments and hangings); All Saints', Littleton NH (superfrontals); St. Thomas, Pittstown NJ (five-piece mass set); and the Diocese of New Hampshire (two mass sets.)

Donations and requests may be sent to

The Brotherhood Vestment Exchange
 Saint Gregory's House
 25 Allen Street
 Manchester NH 03102—5112 USA

Associates

In addition to welcoming the appointment of **Gordon John** as provisional Director of Associates, please welcome two new Associates: **Raymond E** and **Wilhelmina Barton**, of Mexico NY.

JUBILEE ALERT

This summer is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, and we hope to celebrate it in a big way. Further details will appear in the next issue, but in the meantime, plan on joining us at Graymoor on Saturday, July 30th!

**ROCK AND
WATER**

Your Rock-steadiness comforts my soul,
And fires it high with flame,
Clarifies it with Love's heat.

That the dross of life's bitterness and
disappointments
May be brought to ashes.

Ashes then swept away by the refreshing
stream

Of living Waters from your side,
Which beg to flow unimpeded
through the land of my heart.

Claudia-Michael

**PRAYER FOR
EASTERTIDE**

O God, send your blessing upon us in
this Decade of Evangelism. Prepare our
hearts so that we may be open to the
guidance and renewing influence of
your Holy Spirit. Revive and sanctify
your disciples here, and show us each
one what you would have us do. We
ask this in the Name of Jesus who is
the Way
the Truth
and the Life.

Amen.

The Church in Wales

**SHAKE
HANDS**

Come, my brother,
reach out your hand:
Shake hands with each other—
this is God's plan.

For many years now,
you've held this grudge;
In spite of timeless chances you still won't budge.

And what was this all about
—this thing over which you pout?
It's not all one-sided
there's his side too;
Now, come to the middle
the truth's overdue.
Did a few words
really harm you beyond repair?
Did a forgotten or broken promise cause you
to cease existing and living, and no longer be
there?

So look back now and see
it wasn't all that important!
And all this time your stubbornness
has kept you in this torment.
Give in
I know you want to;
Give in
it's what you should do.
Be friends again.
Shake hands.

Thaddeus David