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The Servant



*The westward
windows of
Saint Paul's
Chapel,
South Salem,
New York*

#167
Epiphany 1998

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All checks must be drawn on a US bank in US dollars payable to:

The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory—Publications

Mail all payments to: *The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory*
Saint Augustine's House
2462 Webb Avenue
Bronx NY 10468-4802 USA

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Published quarterly. Address all inquiries concerning this publication to the Editor.

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Inquiries may be sent to Saint Augustine's House, 2462 Webb Avenue, Bronx NY 10468-4802 USA

Founder's Forum Self-Love

"I love myself a great deal."

If we were to hear someone say this out loud, most of us would be shocked. The phrase sounds narcissistic, almost perverted, and certainly unchristian. We have been warned so often in sermons and, as children, by our elders, about the sin of pride, and we have been admonished so many times to choose God and our neighbor rather than ourselves, that we tend to think pride is the cause of all our troubles.

For most of us, the problem is not that we love ourselves too much. Rather it is that we feel ourselves so unlovable that we are convinced no one else can possibly love us. If no one loves us, it follows that no one will care what happens to us.

For Christians, the problem may be further compounded by the mistaken notion that God wants us to stop loving ourselves. Many of us feel so guilt-ridden that we see self-hatred as being the only way of dealing with our sins, the only way of life which will be pleasing to God.

"I love myself" can always be said by those who know that they are loved by God. God's love for us is neither partial nor tentative. It is not dependent on our good behavior, nor even on our faith. God loves us, and each of us is of almost infinite worth in the eyes of God.

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This is why God sent his Son into the world, to die for us and to rise for us. We are given the Holy Spirit, and we are fed with Christ's Body and Blood. Those who know this are called to celebrate God's love, and one way of celebrating is to love what God loves—ourselves as God's children.

This kind of self-love does not result in self-satisfaction or in pride. It leads, rather, to a deeper gratitude to God, a more widespread concern for all who share God's love, a freedom from self-doubt and self-hatred.

This kind of self-love, the best kind of self-love, is nothing less than a gift from God.

RTB

For the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul Conversation on Conversion

Today, the church celebrates the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul: a man who has received a lot of bad press then and even now. How do *you* feel about celebrating Paul's conversion? As Episcopalians we don't talk much about "conversion," though perhaps we should. We could use some conversion in the church—in the House of Bishops, in this community and in the world. Wouldn't it be great if suddenly the church could be delivered from all blindness and hardness of heart, as Paul was when Ananias laid hands on him and immediately it seemed that scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight— whoa, that's powerful! What a conversion experience that must have been!

Conversion comes in many different ways. It can be a conversion of heart, a conversion of life, or a conversion of religion—moving from one faith community to another; it can be an emotional experience or a quiet one. Often these days we hear that attendance is down; no new members are coming into the church. Naturally; for why would anyone want to join a church that seems to be persecuting itself, to be in a state of chaos? People are leaving and going to fundamentalist churches, because they are being nurtured in their conversion. We Episcopalians are called to nurture new members, to feed them the good news of the Gospel and the sacraments, and to be an example for their spiritual growth. In our own community we need conversion of heart, we need to take our young brothers and sisters and nurture them with love in the newfound conversion of vocation, and to nurture our older brothers and sisters as well.

Do you want "all to come to know the truth"? Are you willing to work in this community and your parishes to become "the slave of all so as to win over as many as possible"? Will you make yourself "all things to all people in order to save at least some of them"? A heavy responsibility, isn't it?

As we near the end of the Decade of Evangelism, I sense the church got something backwards. Instead of calling for a decade of evangelism it should have called for a decade of prayer for conversion of heart, *then* a decade of evangelism. I would like to challenge us all to a decade of conversion of heart, mind, and spirit. As Chesterton wrote, it is not that Christianity has been tried and failed but that we have failed to try it. Paul's conversion, or anyone's, is so important that we should rejoice in it forever.

Brothers, sisters, bishops, priests and deacons—we need to stop persecuting the church and each other. We need to pray for conversion, from persecutor to evangelist. The church has what it takes to give us life to the full and to restore life, victory, peace, and power to those whose lives have fallen apart. The church still holds the keys of the kingdom. The Gospel is and always will be true, the sacraments are powerful, life-changing and world changing.

Let us pray then that the Father will convert us, to convert many others; so we can come before the Lord every day of every season, to "do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God."

Thomas Joseph Ross is provincial, Province V.

Kerygma Korner

In the accompanying sermon, Thomas Joseph notes the growth of fundamentalist denominations. However, liberal denominations (New Age and others) are growing as well as fundamentalist groups. Both gain in part from those who leave the Episcopal Church. Why should this be?

I believe one weakness in the fabric of the Episcopal Church lies in its effort to hold opposites together in appearance only; to mistake division for diversity in a spirit of denial instead of truth; to cultivate cordial civility and the pretension of unity when there is deep and unrepentant division underneath. It is like trying to repair a massive crack in the wall with wallpaper and paste: from the surface the wall seems to be sound, but underneath the damage continues unamended.

We all know what happens to houses divided against themselves. Division stems in part from hardness of heart—the refusal to allow oneself to be converted; to be so sure of one’s own point of view (usually because it carries the weight of “tradition”) that one need not be converted to the new possibilities being offered. It was precisely the “traditionalists” of their day that Jesus (facing purity laws and the Sabbath) and Paul (opposing mandatory circumcision) were so keen to lead to conversion; sinners simply needed to repent, those who thought themselves righteous had to be converted as well. I write as one so converted — one who once opposed the ordination of women.

Disagreement is inescapable, but fundamental division over such matters as who is ordained or not only leads to chaos. It is not that ordination is the most important thing we could be debating—that is, in part, a tragic aspect of the current situation. As in the past, from Galatians on, the hot-button issues of one age will appear ludicrous in a few generations. However, ordination is important *enough*, as it is constitutive of the church as an institution. If the recognition of ministers and ministries is how we determine if we are “in communion” with another church or denomination—how can we endure such lack of recognition within our own body and still be one church?

Recently *The Living Church’s* editor sneered at a diocese for not allowing a separatist group to have a display at its diocesan convention—a group that counsels parishes to seek “alternative episcopal oversight” when they disagree with their bishop. Quite apart from the fact that such “alternative oversight” is a violation of the church’s law (and its tradition!), what kind of unity would such a contredanse of flying bishops provide? And what does the vow of obedience mean if every decision of the church is subject to official abrogation on the basis of personal conscience?

Over the last few decades the scandal of fundamental ecclesiastical division tarted up as unity has fueled the flight of many to conservative *and liberal* denominations that don’t worship the idol called Diversity. People have grown tired of the arguments and want to get on with the Gospel as they understand it. People are starving and want to be fed. They have left the Episcopal Church because in their new homes they found something to eat, while Episcopalians were arguing about how to set the table, and who can set it.

With the decision to mandate the deployment of ordained women in every diocese, a corner has been turned, no less than it was turned when Gentiles were first admitted to the church without circumcision; let us hope that the church will now be able to return to its primary work once again: to feed those hungry in body and spirit.

TSH



Here and there with the Gregorians Community Notes

Cornish NH

Helen Bernice reports that she is now officially Commander of the Cobra Cadet Squadron of the New Hampshire Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. Sincerest congratulations, Sister Lieutenant Colonel Helen Bernice, you make us all proud!

Cambridge MA

James began his traditional fall travels with his attendance at the annual meeting of the Seminary Consultation on Mission (SCOM)—a committee of the Council of Deans of the eleven seminaries of the Episcopal Church, to which each seminary sends a representative, together with overseas theological schools and the Episcopal Church Center in New York, and at which the focus of discussion is the world mission of the church and various means through which missiology can be taught, improved and expanded. James' presence is on behalf of the Overseas Leadership Training Program, a scholarship program of the Episcopal Church which he administers. Each year SCOM meets at a different seminary and this year's took place at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. Being in the midst of so many members of the order in Province I was reason enough for him to arrange to meet Donovan Aidan, Robert Michael, Gabriel Liam and Thomas for Sunday brunch and relaxed conversation. It was a warm, sunny autumn afternoon and the brothers strolled through Cambridge, stopping in to briefly visit the Rev Titus Presler, Rector of Saint Peter's Church and a colleague of James in world mission circles.

New Haven CT

Susanna Bede made a guest appearance back in her old stomping grounds of New Haven, Connecticut, as preacher at a special Evensong honoring church musicians at Christ Church on Sunday evening, November 16. This is no accident, as our sister is quite an accomplished musician in her own right. As she commented in preparing the sermon, "The readings are impossible!!! The only thing I can get out of the appointed scripture is that church musicians should not be too demanding in their salary requirements—and that's certainly not a message *we* would wish to give, would we, especially with the local chapter of the AGO present!"

Associate John-Albert Moseley has had an interesting year. He has graduated from Southern Connecticut State University with a BA in history and music after what he calls "a long haul" of ten years. He has been accepted to NYU for graduate study in voice, but has deferred starting for a year in light of the financial burden. He is now working for the Yale AIDS Program, working on grants and the needle exchange program. On the weekends he is music director for a local Roman Catholic congregation. In his home parish, Christ Church, he served on the search committee for a new rector.

Vails Gate NY

The Fall Council meeting took place at the Convent of Saint Helena, Vails Gate, on All Saints weekend. The foliage was at its peak of autumn splendor and the convent is situated to enjoy the seasonal colors at their finest. Peter Chambers Budde (Diocese of Milwaukee) was interviewed by Council and approved for admission to the postulancy

pending his attendance at Annual Convocation next summer. Council was informed that Alec McLure has withdrawn from the novitiate; our prayers remain with him as he discerns new pathways for his life in Christ. Council passed the 1998 budget and addressed other financial matters. The Brotherhood's Education Committee met during the weekend and made considerable strides toward completing the revised novitiate program. It was an additional blessing to receive the warm hospitality of the several sisters of the Order of Saint Helena who live at the convent and to share in the Daily Office and Holy Eucharist with them.

Yonkers NY

Tobias Stanislas has been called as Pastor of Saint Paul's Church in Yonkers. A deacon at the time of his call and appointment by Bishop Grein, his ordination to the priesthood is set for December 13; his formal installation as pastor will take place in the spring. He is pleased to be among the first clergy in the diocese to be using this title, and says, "'Pastor' reflects the spirituality and ministry to which I feel myself called, and it resonates with the ethos of Saint Gregory the Great, whose classic work *Pastoral Care* was once the handbook presented to all bishops at their consecration." Several members of the community have offered to help Tobias Stanislas through the beginnings of his work at Saint Paul's, and he hopes that this approach to building the parish in the spirit of the late nineteenth century religious communities will bear fruit. The pastorate is a part-time position at present, and Tobias Stanislas will continue to work part-time as assistant secretary of the convention of the Diocese of New York.

A highlight of the Council weekend in November was that most of the Council and Education Committee members were able to

visit Saint Paul's and to support Tobias Stanislas at his first service as pastor there. It was All Saints Sunday morning and he was warmly introduced to the parish by the senior warden and preached a lively sermon intended to perk up parishioners' spirits and get his pastorate off to an energetic start—and it worked! After coffee hour and an escorted tour of the wonderful church facilities (built in 1929, Saint Paul's is the last church designed by Ralph Adams Cram), the brothers departed to a local restaurant to relax and enjoy each other's company.

The Feast of Blessed Constance and her Companions (September 9) was observed at Brother Bernard Fessenden House with a Solemn Holy Eucharist and Ministration to the Sick. This is the patronal feast of the chapel at Fessenden House, dedicated to the Martyrs of Memphis. Bishop Catherine S Roskam, Suffragan of New York for Region Two, presided and preached, with Francis Andrew assisting as deacon, Richard John as thurifer/acolyte, Christopher Stephen as cantor and Associate Patricia Ahearn as lector. A full chapel consisting of several of the Gregorian friars and Associates of Province II and many friends of the Agapé Fund were present, and the buffet dinner which followed the service was a focus for fellowship and conversation among new and old friends. Bishop Roskam's sermon drew together the lives of Princess Diana of Wales, Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Sister Constance and her companions in terms of their personal devotion and response to the needs of the people around them, and of the AIDS ministry which takes place each day at Fessenden House. An exchange of gifts occurred during the service when Bishop Roskam presented Richard John with a chalice and paten for the Chapel of the Martyrs of Memphis and Francis Andrew returned the favor in the form of a new mitre for the

bishop. The chalice and paten were one of 68 pottery sets finished in a deep blue glaze which she had commissioned at the time of her consecration to be presented to each of the churches in Region Two as she visited them (she noted that she would now have to have one more set made!); the gold mitre was hand-made in India, and a gift to the house through the generosity of a good friend.

South Salem NY

Province II's celebration of the Brotherhood's 28th anniversary of foundation took place at Saint Paul's Chapel. The day took the form of a Quiet Day, featuring the Daily Office and meditations on the subject of "Listening to the Still, Small Voice" given by the Rev Lynn Harrington, Rector of Saint John's Church, South Salem, and Novice Carin Bridgit. Foundation Day itself was observed with a Holy Eucharist of the Feast of the Holy Cross celebrated by Harrington, with Tobias Stanislas preaching and Carin Bridgit assisting as deacon. About 20 Gregorian friars, sisters, Associates, parishioners and friends attended from New York and New Jersey, and Richard John, Provincial of Province II, hosted a dinner in the late afternoon at his nearby home. It was a warm, bright and sunny day—a lovely setting for giving thanks for the blessing of our order's foundation and for the individual vocation which gives each of our lives focus to do God's will in the world.

Mexico NY

As has become somewhat of a tradition (i.e., it's been done more than twice!), James and Tobias Stanislas visited Maurice John and Alban Patrick at Saint Gregory's Retreat Center and Farm for a week's vacation over the Labor Day holiday. The shift of pace from New



Alban Patrick, Tobias Stanislas, and Maurice John took a break from General Convention business to visit an appropriate bistro.

York City to rural farm country is both dramatic and restful, and the steady round of the Daily Office in the formal chapel setting is a welcome change from the routine. Life at Saint Gregory's continues apace, regardless of visitors, and Tobias Stanislas found himself at work on the production line in the factory and bottling plant there, assisting in fulfilling incoming orders for the numerous products and goodies created there; he also used his computer skills to help Maurice John in updating office procedures. James did not escape manual labor, either: He spent time painting several doors and, as usual, cutting grass. But this time his education increased—he graduated from the riding lawn mower to a full-sized tractor and spent parts of three days in mowing the orchard lanes, so necessary for the onset of the harvest season. Sunday found the four in Seneca Falls, New York, for mass at historic Trinity Church—historic because Trinity was the home parish of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Amelia Jenks Bloomer (see *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, July 20, and the latter is a likely relative of our own Christopher Stephen). The Rev Dr David R Ruppe, Trinity's

rector, and the congregation warmly received the four pilgrims and Tobias Stanislas was welcomed at the altar as deacon.

All those who have been to Saint Gregory's know that Maurice John and Alban Patrick are wonderful hosts, and time was found to rest, enjoy the country air, to witness a spectacular double-rainbow, and to feel the refreshing chill of the approaching change in the seasons as it occasionally cut through the late summer's heat.

The normally peaceful atmosphere was disrupted on October 9 as all heaven broke loose at Saint Gregory's Retreat Center and Farm, resulting from a large article in the *Post-Standard*, one of Syracuse's major newspapers. The article, featuring photos of Maurice John and Alban Patrick—in color on the front page of the Food Section—was a wonderful (and free!) endorsement of the products manufactured at Saint Gregory's and the response was immediate. Customers came in lines of cars, day and night, which caused quite a stir on the normally quiet road in rural upstate New York, and possibly Mexico's first traffic jam, while the phone rang continuously and the fax machine churned out orders! Extra staff had to be called in for this unexpected blessing, which literally continued for weeks afterward.

New York NY

Presiding Bishop-elect Frank T Griswold, III and Mrs Phoebe Griswold visited the Episcopal Church Center for a week of orientation and meetings with various senior staff in mid-September. As the Griswolds entered the building on arrival they came into the Chapel of Christ the Lord for Morning Prayer, and James, who was the officiant that morning, welcomed them to the Church Center. And later in their visit, as Bishop Griswold celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the staff for the first time, Francis Andrew

was Deacon of the Mass and Richard Thomas was the organist for the service. While Bishop Griswold has known a number of our friars for several years, both as Bishop of Chicago and dating back to his years as a member of the Standing Committee on Religious Communities of the House of Bishops, it was good to have this opportunity to begin yet another new relationship with him on this friendly note.

The extraordinary life and ministry of John Elbridge Hines, XXII Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, was celebrated with a memorial service at the Episcopal Church Center's chapel on November 14 (Bishop Hines died in July). Presiding Bishop Edmond L Browning was the celebrant and Bishop John S Spong of Newark preached a wonderful remembrance of a man who was his mentor and his close friend. When it came time for the administration of the elements, the Presiding Bishop asked Richard Thomas to assist with a chalice; this meant that there was no Communion Hymn, as Richard Thomas was also the organist for this service! Bishop Hines' children were all in attendance—his wife having predeceased him—and Bishop and Mrs Browning hosted a luncheon reception for the visitors and staff in their penthouse apartment atop the Church Center building.

James led a Workshop for Subdeacons at his parish, the Church of Saint Luke in the Fields, Manhattan. Saint Luke's is one of the most active liturgical parishes in the city, as witnessed by the fact that twelve subdeacons attended this workshop—including Postulant Donna Lise, who is also a Saint Luker—and not all of them could make it!

Tobias Stanislas exercised his administrative and crowd control skills in helping the Diocese of New York through the process of electing a coadjutor. As assistant secretary of the diocesan convention, he is charged



At Saint Matthew's, Woodhaven (l to r) Paul van Brunt, Bishop Michel, Fran Wings, Tracey Williams, Virginia Holloway, and Charles

with coordinating registrations and arrangements for the 700+ clergy and lay members of convention, guests, visitors, exhibitors, and staff. Everything came off with relative grace and dispatch, and the diocese now has a new bishop coadjutor-elect, Dean Mark Sisk of Seabury-Western. Tobias Stanislas is also charged with coordinating the consent process, which is now under way.

Woodhaven NY

Charles served as crucifer at the eucharist on the patronal feast of Saint Matthew's Church, and later in the day as thurifer at Solemn Evensong, officiated by the Rev Tracey Williams, rector, and with a rousing sermon from Suffragan Bishop Rodney Michel.

Albany NY

Carin Bridgit's ministry as a deacon in the Diocese of Albany was recognized and celebrated—along with the rest of the cathedral staff and congregation—in a festive service on the same day, at which the Rev Daniel Herzog, bishop coadjutor-elect, was preacher.

Camp Hill PA

On October 12, the Sunday closest to the date of his life vows in 1985, Luke Anthony

celebrated the seventeenth anniversary of his profession in the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory. First professed in 1980, Luke Anthony is the third most senior friar of the order, and to celebrate this milestone, his ministry as catechist was honored at the service that day by his parish, Mount Calvary, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, and he and his wife, Carol, hosted a luncheon following the mass at their home. His Provincial, Edward, attended in support of Luke Anthony on this important occasion, as did Elizabeth Mary and Susanna Bede. It was truly a BSG/CSSG Fest at Mount Calvary that day, with Luke Anthony preaching at both services, Edward as deacon, Elizabeth Mary reading the Epistle and Susanna Bede leading the Prayers of the People. Luke Anthony and Edward assisted at the Communion, and each of the visiting religious had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the congregation. Congratulations, dear brother, and many more!

Oviedo FL

Lillian-Marie attended Cursillo 86 at Canterbury House in early October. She says that the experience was a "spiritual journey with other Christian women from across the Diocese of Central Florida." Bishop Hugo Piña closed the session, and reported on plans for the first Cursillo to be held in Cuba, with representatives from the Diocese of Honduras, with which several members of our community have a "canonical" connection—Richard Thomas and James are both honorary canons of the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, San Pedro Sula, and Bishop Frade and his wife Diana are Associates of the community. We wish this spiritual expedition to Cuba well.



Gordon John and Bishop Griswold at Saint Peter's, Chicago, for the bilingual confirmation service.

Eau Claire and Fond du Lac

Two weeks after his Cambridge visit James was in Wisconsin on behalf of the Linkage Program of the Episcopal Church Center (each staff officer is assigned as a communication link between the Presiding Bishop's staff and two dioceses). This year's Eau Claire convention was hosted by Christ Church, Chippewa Falls, and James addressed the assembly, bringing Presiding Bishop Browning's greeting and an update on his own activities over the past year. James was guest at the Deanery, home of the Dean H Scott and Mrs Heather Kirby, and he was invited to preach at both services at Christ Church Cathedral. This year Dean Kirby also asked him to attend the "Children's Mass" between services—an instructed Holy Eucharist for kids six years old and up—and, in place of a sermon, James was invited to tell the kids about the religious life—in less than five minutes!

The following weekend James was back in Wisconsin, in Manitowoc, a small town on the coast of Lake Michigan, for the Annual Council (convention) of the Diocese of Fond du Lac. As in Eau Claire, James addressed

the convention and visited with Bishop and Mrs Jacobus. He was guest preacher at both services at Saint James' Church, and he attended the "Rector's Forum" between services, participating in the animated and wide-ranging conversation. Brunch with the Rev Kenneth Okkerse, Priest-in-Charge and Diocesan Evangelism Officer, and Mr David Hornung, parish treasurer, then a drive to the airport, made more interesting by the heavy, though beautiful, snowfall.

Chicago II

Associate Stephen D Montgomery rode in the Twin Cities–Chicago AIDS Ride 2. The 494 mile bicycle ride from Minneapolis to Chicago raised more than five million dollars for 12 HIV/AIDS agencies in Chicago and Minneapolis. Stephen should be proud of the fact that he rode every mile and raised over \$7,000 in pledges. Stephen has been an Associate of the community since 1988, and is Chair of the AIDS Task Force of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, and also serves on the Bishop's Task Force on AIDS for the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago. Thanks for a job well done, Stephen!

Damian-Curtis and Ronald Augustine completed Communities of Care training with the AIDS Pastoral Care Network in Chicago. Communities of Care teams, groups of seven to ten individuals, come together as a small community for the purpose of nourishing their spirituality, building community, and ministering to a family in which at least one member is living with HIV/AIDS.

San Antonio TX

Postulant Steven Baker has just started a new job teaching health care skills at a local school and is enjoying it very much. Please keep Steve in your prayers, especially since he now has to find himself a new car to go with his new job!

San Francisco

Karekin Madteos has been finding his work to be very hectic and his ministry very fulfilling. The Diocesan Commission of Recovery Ministries has gotten off to a great start, coordinating a speakers' bureau as well as parish-wide retreats and seminars on alcoholism and chemical dependency. EFM has started and Karekin Madteos has been asked to sit on the adult education team at Saint John's Church. He joins in the laying on of

hands at the healing service on Sundays, and finds the ministry very rewarding.

Associates

A warm welcome to several new Associates: Bishop of El Salvador Martín Barahona, the Rev M Carl Lunden (Holy Trinity and Ascension, West Park NY — and one of Tobias Stanislas' classmates at GTS), Patricia Ahearn (who serves on the staff at Fessenden House), the Rev David Alvarado (Diocese of El Salvador), Jay Frank Crosthwaite (San Francisco), and Paul E Van Brunt (Woodhaven NY).

A meditation on vocation **Are you listening?**

For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. — Matthew 10:20

Mother Alayne of the Community of Saint Mary the Virgin says, "The religious life is a search undertaken freely and willingly; it comes into being through God's initiative, is sustained by God's continuing presence, and is lived in faith. It is a continuous risking of oneself to an unknown future."

At baptism we are called to confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection and share in his eternal priesthood. Commitment to a life of faithfulness is lived out in different ways. The majority of Christians are called to a life of faithfulness in marriage or committed relationship, and some are called to religious life. Listening to the Spirit, some in this community are called to marriage, others to committed relationship, and *all* to religious life.

All are called to a vowed life, and we need to ask how we can make life-long promises or vows in a world such as ours, when so much is uncertain. We can make a vow only

because the call comes from God, who continues in faithfulness to us.

Many of us have known for a long time that religious life in the Episcopal Church is one of its best kept secrets. As vocations director for this community, I explain to people that a call to our community is a call which demands on our part a continual discernment of how our community remains faithful to God's call. It's a call that doesn't necessarily include ordination, which is part of the problem with vocations. Many clergy and lay people haven't the foggiest idea that religious communities such as ours exist.

Some of you were part of the community before we started using the Book of Common Prayer as an office book, and were part of the decision-making process to be faithful to the call to be a community in and of the Episcopal Church. The decision of our church to ordain women in all orders of ministry is another challenge accepted by

this community. Today, the jury is still out on the question of the appropriateness of the ordination of gays and the blessing of committed same-sex relationships. However, as one of our brochures reads, “Brothers are open to the Holy Spirit in their lives and works,” and “must remain true to the prophetic calling to be a voice of dangerous conscience.”

By and large, the Anglican Communion is not very aware of the religious life as an intrinsic part of the church’s life, and this very fact, while often frustrating and discouraging, can give to religious communities a freedom to cross boundaries unhindered — boundaries between the institutional church and society; between denominations, such as our covenant with the Society of the Atonement; between the variously labeled parties within our church — Anglo-Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, High, Broad, Low, Conservative, and Liberal. Being on the fringe of the ecclesiastical establishment brings its own benefits.

Religious communities are being called on more and more to cross these boundaries both by the church and by those who stand outside its orbit, thirsting yet doubtful of the establishment’s ability to slake that thirst. There are increasing demands made on us for teaching, preaching, retreat conducting, hospital calls, and parish work.

The Holy Spirit is powerfully at work, stirring people to life, both in religious communities and in the church. The Spirit is waiting to be released — to transform and surprise. This can be seen not only in the growing numbers of people seeking times of quiet and reflection in monasteries and convents around the country, but also in the dedicated commitment and desire of an ever-increasing number of men and women to test their vocation in apostolic communities such as ours, or as oblates or tertiaries,

seeking a place of belonging, a context for the deep yearning that is within, as they are called to the life of a religious. Even Saint Fabian, who we commemorate today, was a total stranger and not even a candidate for election when he was chosen Pope. The Spirit was certainly at work.

This leads me to the Collect: “Grant that those whom you call to any ministry in the church may be obedient to your call in all humility.” Humility is about speaking your mind, fighting for your ideas and opinions, creating through effort, sweat and debate. The humble person’s ego is based on reality — not fed on illusion. When wrong, he can admit it, and is open to the ideas of others.

What comes to your mind when talking about the vow of obedience? Many conversations among religious revolve around questions of what a superior may tell me to do, or about who failed to do what they were told by a superior or provincial. In the Roman Catholic Church, prior to Vatican II, the burden of discernment, decision-making, and responsibility in religious orders was placed squarely on the shoulders of superiors, with little input from the membership.

We should consider obedience in two basic ways. The first involves doing what the word obedience means—to listen; the second directs this ongoing listening specifically to our baptismal call. At baptism, each of us was consecrated to God. We in religious communities can ordinarily trace how our particular responses to our baptismal consecration have led us to religious life in a particular community.

Since we are consecrated to God at baptism, we are also consecrated to do God’s work and will. Clearly, the work of God is to be stewards of creation, not spectators. In today’s Gospel, we heard of being sent out like sheep among wolves. After all, as members of this community, that’s how we live

— out in the world among the wolves. We are all called to be stewards: of ourselves, our fellow human beings, and the earth.

Obedience, as a vow to God, is not a vow *to* a community but a vow *in* a community, since it is in a community that we have chosen to make our own personal obedient response to God.

Obedience means accepting God's gifts to me and accepting the responsibility to use these gifts in coordination with others in stewardship of creation. Obedience leads me to prayer where I grapple with and discern, as best I can, the will of God for my life. Obedience requires me to work to know myself, and what I have to contribute, and contributing as best I can. So I must develop my ability to listen to the realities of the world, to the members of my community, to the church, and to the Gospel.

While I'm listening, I'm also challenged every day to ready myself to respond and contribute to the world, to my community, and to the church. I should not be waiting for something to happen, or to be told what to do. Obedience directs me to make something happen. We would not revere the apostles if all they did was listen to Jesus. We revere them because they listened to Jesus' teachings, watched his ministry unfold, witnessed his death and resurrection, and eventually chose a course of action for themselves that responded to the world and to their consecration to God.

Like the apostles, we must take what we have seen and heard in the Gospel and do something with it in the present world, because truly obedient people are not submissive, they are powerful. A serious response to obedience leaves no room for me to say, "There is nothing I can do," or "I have nothing to say." What true obedience demands of every member of this community is active and positive participation in the life of this

community. This means that everyone must be involved in the community's prayer, faith-sharing, and dialogue. Apathy is *not* acceptable.

Make no mistake. I have no problem with following through on a decision made by the superior or my provincial. But at the same time, I cannot let my gift and my ability to think and contribute deteriorate through disuse. When I abdicate my responsibility to consider and reflect upon the will of God for me and my religious community, I let the gift of myself atrophy, and in turn I let my community atrophy. This, in my opinion, is the ultimate violation of the vow of obedience. Obedience must always be seen as a call for me to listen and respond with creativity and vitality to God's will in my life.

Obedience requires me to be responsible as a consecrated person to God and to those with whom I commit my life to God. Through your support of me and my support of you, we mutually strengthen our vow of obedience to God. Obedience is a constant search for God's will both in my life as an individual and in our lives together as a community.

No one can tell me God's will; I must experience it for myself. I am directed toward God's will through the mediation of others, just as I myself am a mediator of that same will to others. In the end, we must all strive to listen, not *to* each other, but to God *through* each other. In short, obedience has nothing to do with the selfishness and passivity of people who submit to everyone in order to avoid having to think or make decisions of their own. Obedience is the greatest free decision one makes for God.

*Ronald Augustine Fox
is director of
vocations.*

Intercessions

The Greorian Family

Episcopal Visitor Sun
Walter D Dennis

Episcopal Visitors Emeriti
Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91
Paul Moore, jr

Life and Annual Professed
Richard Thomas Biernacki
John Nidecker d 6.20.88
James Teets
Luke Anthony Nowicki

John Peter Clark d 2.25.94 Mon
William Francis Jones
Stephen Storen
Thomas Joseph Ross
Tobias Stanislas Haller
William Bunting d 10.12.88
Edward Munro

Charles Kramer Tue
Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93
Donovan Aidan Bowley
Michael David Elvestrøm
Edward Ramón Riley
Christopher Stephen Jenks
Ciarán Anthony DellaFera

William Edward Orce Wed
Clare Connell
Damian-Curtis Kellum
Richard John Lorino
Ronald Augustine Fox
Charles Edward LeClerc
Maurice John Grove

Francis Andrew Phillips Thu
Andrew Fortuna
Elizabeth Mary Burke
Gordon John Stanley
Lillian-Marie DiMicco
Helen Bernice Lovell
Karekin Madteos Yarian
Robert Michael Burnham
Alban Patrick Thompson

Novices Fri
Susanna Bede Caroselli
Stephen Julian Moss
Gabriel Liam Everett
Thomas Bushnell
Thomas Mark Liotta
James Dunstan Mahoney
Ellen Poisson
Carin Bridgit Kleinmann
Patrick Ignatius Dickson

Postulants Sat
Donna Lise Dambrot
Robert J McLaughlin
Douglas Cain

James E Cyphers
Stephen G Baker

Associates

Cecil Berges d 10.16.90 Sun
Marion Pierce d 12.26.91
Helen Marie Joyce, VHM
Grosvenor Calkins, jr

Jeff Emmett
Richard A Belanger d 11.21.94
Joseph di Mauro, SA
Catherine W Sturm
Mary Helen Clare
Maryann Wolff
Joseph F O'Day

Stephen D Montgomery Mon
Fidel Flores
Brendan W Nugent d 10.10.96

Sheila Gould
Earl Christian
Lawrence LeRoy David
Kenneth Staples d 10.6.92
David Smith
William R Munroe
Wendell Allen
Elizabeth J Holton d 8.27.93

Roland "Randy" RR Pryor Tue
Grant Walsh
Mary Virginia Clement Haney
Jeffery L Benson
M Eugene Ellis
Mark Harris
Enrique Antonio Illarze
Dennis W Pattey
John A Bell
Gerard F Beritela
Perry L Conley
Ethel B "Ettye" Hurley

Wilhelmina Barton Wed
Raymond E Barton
Gabriel McGovern
Amy M Barron
Leopold Frade
Diana D Frade
Robin Stephanie Steele
Ulric Van den Berghé
Carol Gwynn Hays
James David Walley
David Benzshawel

Robin R McKay Thu
Theresa Allan
Glenn R Charlton
Betsy Kardos
David Burton
Timothy Lundy
Wiley W "Jack" Merryman
David A Dean

Albert O Cantwell
Graham Thomas Prosser
Philip L Hewitt
Michael S Parenti

Mark L Raper Fri
Laurie A Wiegand
John-Albert Moseley
JoAnn Tomback
Carl Lindgren, OSN
R Tony Cable
Lynne J D McQuade
Ian William Louth
Zech Schariah
Lydia Karlo
Steven Bright-Jordan, OSJ
Ruth Richmond Laning

Denise A Tivedo Sat
Kathleen C Klee
Sarah G Wells
Patrick Bell Schwing
R William Franklin
Martin Barahona
M Carl Lunden
Patricia A Ahearn
David Alvarado
Jay Frank Crosthwaite
Paul E Van Brunt
& The Friends of the Brotherhood

Religious Communities
Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns
Society of the Atonement
Order of Agapé & Reconciliation
Camaldolese Benedictines
Society of Saint John the Evangelist
Community of the Paraclete
Congregation of the Anglican
Oblates of Saint Benedict

For healing
Damian-Curtis Kellum, BSG
William Edward Orce, BSG
Edward Ramón Riley, BSG
Clare Connell, CSSG
Luke Anthony Nowicki, BSG
Donna Lise Dambrot, p/CSSG
Lillian-Marie DiMicco, CSSG
Charles Edward LeClerc, BSG
For all who live with HIV/AIDS
Lisa Grossman
Beatrice
Jim Bushnell
Roy Dixon
Velma Yoder
Kathy Waldron
Steve Hayes
Laurence Keller
Ruth Garry
Cathy McAllister *more*

Intercessions, continued

Dannie Hilliard
Peter R Carey
Ken Newquist

Departed

Charlotte B Morgan
Arsene and Louise Lemarier
J Norman Hall
George T Koerner
Henry N Fukui
John Hines
Hilda Marie Elvestrøm
Frances Lowe
Elizabeth Lawfield
Daryl, Joseph and Mike
Joseph Egan, SA
William Wilson
Leah Tunkle
Wilfrid Braidi, OSB
Nancy Butler

Intentions

The Decade of Evangelism
Joseph Richey House
Saint Gregory's Retreat Center
Brother Bernard Fessenden House

Baltimore International

Seafarers' Center
Saint Paul's, Yonkers
Postulant Prospective Peter C Budde
Aspirants William Borgen, Lawrence
David, Glenn Charlton, John-Albert
Moseley, Douglas Christie, John
Calabrese, Scott Shenkman,
Timothy J Morris
Anne Bushnell
Nataush Dixon
Bishop Joe Doss and the Diocese of
New Jersey
Saint James, LaGrange Texas
Robert McLaughlin, p/BSG
Frank and Phoebe Griswold
Herbert Donovan
Jeff Avery
Alec D J McLure
Barbara B Dunne
For those who suffer in the wake of
disruptions caused by El Niño
The poor of Oaxaca and Guerrero,
Mexico
Sebastiano Teixeira, OASB

Thanksgiving

The appointment of Tobias Stanislas,
BSG, as Pastor of Saint Paul's,
Yonkers
The birth of Destiny Mary
The election and installation of
Mother Barbara Jean Packer as
Superior, CSJB, and for the ministry
of Suzanne Elizabeth as retiring
Superior

Where there's a will

You can assist and further the ministries of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory by remembering us in your will. If you choose to do so, the following form of wording is appropriate:

I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, Inc., a New York State not-for-profit corporation, with a present address of 82 Prospect Street, White Plains NY 10606-3499, and its successors for ever \$_____ and / or _____ percent of my estate to be used in such a manner as determined by its Directors.