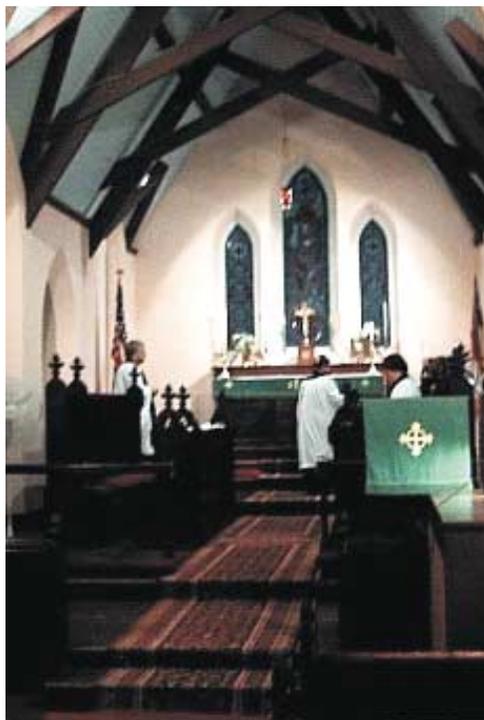


THE SERVANT



**LET MY
PRAYER BE
SET FORTH IN
YOUR SIGHT AS
INCENSE...**

*Summer Evensong at
Holy Trinity,
Highland Falls NY*

179
Epiphany 2001

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The Servant

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There is so much in the church news these days of parishes and persons leaving the Episcopal Church; it does seem like an exodus, does it not? The emphasis should be squarely placed on the word *not*! Allow me:

In one of my capacities on the Staff of the Presiding Bishop, as Deputy Registrar for the Ordination and Consecration of Bishops, I travel around the church quite a bit. During the month of October I was in Lexington, Kentucky; Hartford, Connecticut; and Spokane, Washington: three dioceses that are as culturally diverse as they are geographically different. I am here to tell you that in these three very different dioceses I saw and experienced a church that is alive and thriving; a church challenged and motivated to spread the gospel; a church far from dead, dying, or even sick!

As in all news stories, we are asked to believe those who are unchallenged where they live, move and have their being. We are asked to believe that the church is going to split and that we are losing numbers daily. We are perhaps losing some; but we have always lost some: those who are just not happy and who remain unchallenged and uninspired in their places of worship. Jesus *never* asked us to be successful—he did ask us to be faithful. And if those who are unhappy with the church cannot remain faithful, they should not stay one minute more than their conscience will allow.

If one is unhappy, one cannot serve God. If one is unhappy, one cannot proclaim a Gospel that resounds with joy and which is to be proclaimed with honesty and integrity! In the dioceses I mentioned above I saw challenge; willingness to look in new directions and a true desire to spread the Word. I heard Bishop Steven Charleston preach the Gospel! Unafraid and willing to tell the truth! High, Low, Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant—God does not care!

Jesus *never* asked us to be successful...

What's the point here? It is that we are members of one of the most diverse churches in the world. We are in a church that truly reflects the makeup of the communities in which it lives, a living church! We need to focus on all that we are; not merely on what the troubled members think we should be. Look at what we are. Cherish what it means to be truly Anglican and truly catholic.

It is the Episcopal Church, with all its glory and pageantry; its grand ceremonial liturgies and music; its great cathedrals and simple parish churches. It's the Episcopal Church. If you love it, stay and make it greater and more faithful. If you are unhappy, go where you will be challenged and can grow spiritually—if that's *really* what you want. But for the love of God and the church, let the rest of us minister and grow and be faithful.

RTB

New Hampshire

Charles Edward is settling in to CPE in a 650-resident retirement community with five other CPE interns. The facility's auditorium was filled to capacity for their commissioning, and about 300 attended the reception following the service.

In November Charles Edward hosted a Province I retreat day at his parish, Saint Jude's, Franklin. Retreatants discussed Luke's Gospel and the commentaries the brothers have been reading as part of the provincial reading program. The Rev Anthony Miller, interim at Saint Augustine & Saint Martin's, Boston, was celebrant for the Holy Eucharist at which Francis Andrew preached on Saint Martin and the proper for the day. Supper closed the day with Charles Edward and his partner, Scott, as hosts.

Boston

Francis Andrew has been traveling these last few months. First to Philadelphia to participate in a series of events for Episcopal Divinity School; while in the City of Brotherly Love, he served as guest deacon at Saint Mark's, and after the liturgy talked informally with people interested in religious life and/or theological education. In late October he traveled to Robert, Louisiana, to represent EDS at the Province IV Commission on Ministry Conference. Francis Andrew joined Bishop Steven Charleston, President and Dean of EDS, at the Convention of the Diocese of Oregon (where Francis Andrew is canonically resident). While in Oregon, he visited his former parish, Saints Peter and Paul, and spent time with postulant Scott Williamson. On the home front he was guest deacon at Saint Augustine & Saint Martin, a historic Boston parish, filled in for two Sundays following the departure of the organist/choirmaster at his parish, Saint John the Evangelist, Boston, and was guest preacher at Saint James', Somerville, at the annual celebration of Saint Francis and the blessing of the animals.

Ciarán Anthony was in Stuttgart, Germany from October 22 through 26 for the annual meeting of the IBM Academy of Technology, where he was inducted as a new member of the Academy.

Vails Gate NY

The fall meeting of the Brotherhood's Council took place in mid-October at the Convent of Saint Helena, the mother house of the order. It was nothing less than a glorious weekend to be in that rural setting amid the fall foliage in high color, and the Council's relatively brief agenda permitted the friars to enjoy the scenery and the mild temperature to the max! Tobias Stanislas was called upon to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and preach for the sisters, Gregorian friars and other visitors twice while the Council was in residence, and he was pleased to comply.

South Salem NY

Richard John hosted a gathering of Province II on Sunday afternoon, October 1, and while distance prevented some of the more far-flung friars from attending, those that could enjoyed a bright and sunny day together which focused on relaxed fellowship and hospitality.

Yonkers

For the fifth consecutive year, the friars at Brother Bernard Fessenden House held a eucharist, open house and party in celebration of Constance and her Companions, "The Martyrs of Memphis." The chapel at Fessenden House is dedicated to Constance and the other victims of the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1878 in Memphis, Tennessee. The centerpiece of this year's celebration was the dedication of the icon of the Martyrs of Memphis, which was written and presented to the house by Tobias Stanislas. The Rev Richard McKeon, Priest in Charge of Zion, Dobbs Ferry, was celebrant, stepping in for Bishop Catherine Roskam, Suffragan of New York, who was



(l to r) Deacon Claudia Wilson, the Rev Richard McKeon, Patrick Ignatius and Tobias Stanislas

called out of town at the last minute. Tobias Stanislas preached and Deacon Claudia Wilson and Patrick Ignatius assisted; Christopher Stephen served as cantor and traffic cop, while residents of Fessenden House assisted as thurifer, lector, oblation bearers and soloist. Atonement friars Tom Gumprecht and John Baptist Hildreth were on hand to represent the Society and the local Roman Catholic parish. Gregorian friars



The Martyrs of Memphis

James, Thomas Mark, James Dunstan and novice John Henry were also present along with about forty friends and supporters of Fessenden House. A wonderful meal, prepared by the residents of Fessenden House, completed the evening.

Brother Bernard Fessenden House provides supportive housing to nine men in recovery from severe drug and alcohol addiction. Residents are referred from in-patient and outpatient treatment programs located in the lower Hudson Valley, New York City, Long Island and northern New Jersey. Fessenden House has developed a reputation in the recovery community and among treatment professionals as being one of the most successful “sober houses” in the area. The house is filled to capacity and, at last count, there were thirty-three men on the waiting list. Christopher Stephen and Patrick Ignatius serve as full-time, live-in staff and also serve on the Board of Directors as President and Treasurer. Novice John Henry also serves on the Board and on the fund-raising and development committee.

The friars at Fessenden House and the Society of the Atonement, who staff the local Roman Catholic parish, have recently started gathering once a week for Evening Prayer and fellowship. This weekly gathering gives the friars from both communities an opportunity to share their concerns and triumphs with other “religious professionals” who work in inner city ministry in the same neighborhood and deal with many of the same issues. This time of prayerful fellowship started as an expression of the prayer covenant between Saint Paul’s Friary of the Society of the Atonement and the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, and we are fortunate that friars from both communities are available to support each other in their ministries.

Patrick Ignatius also notes that any “spare time” he might have had is now more than fully occupied with his CPE course! He picked up the harness again last fall after a fairly relaxed and much-enjoyed summer.

New York City

“The Fate of Women and Children Globally” was the title of a benefit forum sponsored by the Anglican Observer’s Office at the United Nations and held at Saint Peter’s ELCA Church at Noon on September 14 (also the anniversary of the Founding of the Brotherhood). James was asked by Bishop Herbert A Donovan, jr, the Interim Anglican Observer, to provide hospitality ministry for this high-level event, which included the Archbishop of Canterbury and Ms Angela King, the Assistant Secretary General of the UN, as panelists, along with numerous Anglican and ecumenical guests. The reception following the event was a real “Who’s Who” of ecclesiastical and political personages!

James completed his regular fall series of traveling for the Office of Anglican and Global Relations at the Episcopal Church Center. His participation in the annual meeting of the Seminary Consultation on Mission was local for a change; this year that body met at the General Theological Seminary in New York City and James commuted from the Bronx! He represented the Presiding Bishop as Linkage to the Dioceses of Fond du Lac and Eau Claire, in Wisconsin, again this year, and he found the hospitality of novice Peter and his wife, Betty, most welcoming, and the atmosphere at their waterfront estate, Stillmarsh, just as much so! The Convention of the Diocese of Fond du Lac was hosted by the parish of Saint Thomas, Menasha, though James flew into Rhinelander and was the houseguest of the local rector and his wife, the Rev John and Mrs Marsha Biggs. Peter and Marsha were both lay delegates to the convention and John was a clergy delegate, of course, and James traveled with them across the broad Wisconsin landscape. He enjoyed renewing his friendship with Bishop Russell and Mrs Jerrie Jacobus, and chatting with many friends and acquaintances throughout the convention. James assisted as lector and chaliceist at the Holy Eucharist Sunday morning at the Biggs’ and the Buddes’ church, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Rhinelander, and was warmly welcomed by both the rector and the congregation.

Two short weeks later James was back in Wisconsin, this time attending the Convention of the Diocese of Eau Claire. This year the convention was hosted by Christ Church Cathedral and James was again the houseguest of the cathedral’s dean and his wife, the Very Rev Scott and Mrs Heather Kirby. This was the first opportunity James had to really get to know Bishop Keith and Mrs Suzanne Whitmore; he attended the

bishop's consecration in April of 1999 and chatted briefly with them at the Denver General Convention, but having the opportunity to share meals together brings people closer than most other occasions. He enjoyed time spent at the convention and was the guest preacher at the cathedral at both masses on the Sunday morning—also renewing friendships he has made in that diocese and cathedral over the past ten years of his annual visits.

William Francis is now at Church Publishing Inc, working on the *Episcopal Clerical Directory 2001*. He is also doing a project for Morehouse Publishing on the 2002 calendars.

Stephen has been continuing his volunteer work doing English language conversation and writing partnerships with foreign students and immigrants at the International Center in New York City. He began this ministry upon his return from Asia, at the suggestion of a former Citibank colleague who is working on a Master of Arts in TOEFL—the Test of English as a Foreign Language—at Hunter College. He is also taking a course on Saint Paul at the Center for Religious Inquiry, taught by the Rev Anne Redding of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

James Dunstan and Thomas Mark attended and processed at the Festal Evensong at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine at which the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke. They were joined by Tobias Stanislas for the ordination to the priesthood of Ellen Francis Poisson, OSH, formerly a Gregorian novice. A number of friends from other religious communities attended, and our brothers had the opportunity to chat with David Bryan Hoopes, the new Superior of the Order of the Holy Cross.

White Plains

Richard Thomas has had a heavy travel schedule in recent months. In his role on the Presiding Bishop's staff as Deputy Registrar he was in Lexington, Kentucky for the ordination and consecration of Bishop Stacy Sauls. Shortly thereafter he traveled to Hartford, Connecticut for the ordination and consecration of two bishops suffragan, Wilfrido Ramos-Orench and James Curry. This occasion afforded the renewing of many associations and friendships with retired Bishop of Puerto Rico "Paco" Reus and the current Bishop David Alvarez. The Brotherhood's Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Rodney Michel, was also present. Richard Thomas was in Spokane, Washington for the ordination and consecration of Bishop James Waggoner. Again, many associations were renewed; many from this diocese are staffers in the General Convention Secretariats and Richard Thomas has worked with them over several Conventions. These events were particularly meaningful in that the bishops-elect were given consent at the General Convention and Richard Thomas was the liaison for the Committee on the Consecration of Bishops, preparing the data needed for the various hearings for consent.

Long Island

Novice John Henry attended the Convention of the Diocese of Long Island as a delegate from his parish (Saint John's, Park Slope, Brooklyn) and found a few moments to chat with Bishop Rodney Michel and with Clare, SSG. He reports that his rector, the Rev Clarence Powers, has asked him to teach an Advent class on the subject of the

religious life and the church. He also served as lector and chalcist during the recent parish visitation by Diocesan Bishop Orris Walker.

Highland NY

In mid-September Tobias Stanislas was officiant and preacher at the final Solemn Evensong of the year's teaching series entitled "Shall We Gather by the River," an annual event created by the Rev M Carl Lunden, a/BSG, Priest in Charge of Ascension & Holy Trinity. James and William Francis accompanied Tobias Stanislas and they all enjoyed the abundant fellowship and the warm late summer sunshine along the Hudson River.

Geneva NY

During last year's Fingerlakes Conference Alban Patrick visited Elizabeth Mary, SSG, Robin McKay, a/BSG and Jo Molinari, a parishioner from their parish in New Jersey, to celebrate their midweek break. They spent the afternoon catching up and enjoyed several hours with Julian, SSM, in conversation about her call to a vocation with the Sisters of Saint Margaret and some great craft tips that can be used in work with younger children. They gathered at Hobart College at day's end for the evening meal with the participants of the conference, and then joined in the evening eucharist.

Millbrook NY

Richard John was honored to preach at the Celebration of a New Ministry for the Rev Douglas Fisher, the new Rector of Grace Church. The sermon appears later in this issue.

Florida

There is cause for celebration in the Diocese of Southeast Florida with the institution of a new diocesan bishop, the Right Rev Leopold Frade, a/BSG. The ceremony at Trinity Cathedral, Miami, was beautiful, with diversity befitting south Florida. Parts of the service, including the Gospel, were in English, Spanish and French. Also featured was the English folk music of Garth Hewitt. With arms linked the congregation swayed in time and sang Hewitt's "Chain of Love." Richard Thomas and James were on hand for the event—Richard Thomas in his capacity as Deputy Registrar of Consecrations, and James was called upon by the team of Masters of Ceremony for advice—and they spent time with Bishop Leo and his wife, Diana (who is also an Associate of the Brotherhood). Also present were postulant Mark Jones and his wife, Diane, and this whirlwind visit by Richard Thomas and James provided opportunities to get to know them better, as well. Edward was in southern Florida with his wife, Barbara, attending the North American Maritime Ministry Conference in Fort Lauderdale at the same time. Though their schedule did not allow them to travel down to Miami for the institution, they arranged to meet Mark and Diane for dinner and social time later in the week.

Chicago

Ronald Augustine, who has volunteered at AIDS Care in Chicago for five years, was honored with the AIDS Care Director's Award. The certificate, signed by Founder

and President James Flosi and Director of Human Capital Jim Foster, reads, "To the individual who has moved AIDS CARE forward by addressing the changing needs of the agency and those we serve. By utilizing their time and talents, they have helped AIDS CARE succeed in accomplishing its mission. Through their drive and determination, they have prepared AIDS CARE for the future." AIDS Care is a residential living facility for those with AIDS, and shares space with the Convent of the Society of Helpers, a Roman Catholic religious order.

Damian-Curtis visited Chicago through Thanksgiving. He stayed with Edward Ramón and had an opportunity to worship both at his parish of the Atonement and at Saint Peter's.

Bloomington IL

Novice Aelred Bernard hosted a Province V gathering in September. He and his partner Jim Elledge, a/BSG, had a great cookout at their home on Friday night to kick off the weekend. On Saturday, following breakfast at Aelred Bernard's parish, Saint Matthew's, Bloomington, Tina Sipula led teachings on Lectio Divina. Those assembled said Noonday Prayer at the parish, followed by the Holy Eucharist. There was another afternoon session by Sipula, and the day ended with Evening Prayer and Benediction. All those who attended met for an excellent dinner at Sonoma Cachina in Bloomington. The group met for Morning Prayer and then attended eucharist at Saint Matthew's. Rector Howard Bowlin, a/BSG, celebrated and was assisted by our own Gordon John as deacon. Ronald Augustine, Gordon John, postulant Joe Gauss, and Mary Julian Croisant, n/SSG, drove down from Chicago. The constant BSG travelers, novice Peter and his wife Betty, joined in for the celebration on their way back to Wisconsin. Others who attended were Eleanor Lloyd, Gina Stickelmaier, a/BSG, Judy Thompson, and Brad Hicks, a/BSG.



(l to r) Joe Gauss, Betty Budde, Gordon John, Aelred Bernard, Peter, Jim Elledge, Ronald Augustine, Gina Stickelmaier, Eleanor Lloyd, and Howard Bowlin

San Francisco

Thomas flew up from Irvine, and postulant Scott Williamson flew down from Portland, meeting Karekin Madteos, novice Francis Sebastian and his partner, Mark Palcanis, a/BSG on their home turf. They had a wonderful weekend of fellowship and prayer, and festivities including a screening of *Auntie Mame!* The next day, all went to Saint John the Evangelist for worship, where Francis Sebastian served at the eucharist. After lunch the day drew to a close with a tour of Grace Cathedral.

Karekin Madteos and Francis Sebastian, along with Associate Mark were inducted into the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham, a devotional order in the Anglican Communion. The induction was done at a Solemn Holy Eucharist at the Church of the Advent of Christ the King, during a pilgrimage tour of the statue of Our Lady from the Shine at Walsingham, in Norfolk, England. The brothers were inducted by the Rev Martin Warner, one of the Guardians at the Walsingham Shrine.

Those attending Winter Convocation 2000 will remember the addition of a film and sound crew to the daily round of prayer and celebration—this crew was led by Sara Needham, a Masters student working on her dissertation in video arts, which was to take the form of a short film on the life of our own Karekin Madteos. Entitled *Changing Habits*, the film is now “in the can,” as they say in the biz, and is beginning to receive some fine reviews. It held its San Francisco premiere at the 16 Annual Film Arts Festival of Independent Cinema in early November (reviews not available by press time), which should begin its international tour of the art cinema circuit. We are all quite proud of Karekin Madteos; his life and religious calling will now be an inspiration to many more people than he could ever hope to meet. And by the way, Sara was awarded the Masters Degree with very high marks!

A reflection on violence **CAIN AND ABEL**

(Pantoum) 12/28/99

There beneath the autumn harvest, waiting,
Circe's solemn cry, her life-blood dwindling,
Whispers to the first-born, hesitating
To sacrifice the brother on the fires, kindling.

Abel, with his fatling, on the pyre burning
There beneath the autumn harvest, waiting,
Cain out in the fields, Circe in her yearning,
Whispers to the first-born, hesitating.

Yahweh stood some distance, watching, weeping
Abel, with his fatling, on the pyre burning
Hoping beyond hope to keep the fratricide from leaping
Cain out in the fields, Circe in her yearning.

While Cain undid his brother, to feed his anger
Yahweh stood some distance, watching, weeping
Watching Circe feed her ever-growing hunger,
Hoping beyond hope to keep the fratricide from leaping.

Circe crouches still, while her hunger, raving,
Whispers to the first-born, hesitating.
The blood of Abel cannot fully satisfy her craving
There beneath the autumn harvest, waiting.

Karekin Madteos

A reflection on the heart of the gospel

THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION

If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.—2 Corinthians 5:17-18

As a novice in the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, this passage from 2 Corinthians is one of my favorite readings for Noonday Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer. This passage sums up the ministry of God in Christ Jesus, and our ministry to each other. Yes, the summary and the entire plan of God is found in this passage, but what does that mean and how do we share in God's gift of reconciliation?

I wanted a greater understanding of the words *reconcile* and *reconciliation*, so I went to *Young's Concordance* and looked up the words in their original language. The Greek words for *reconcile* and *reconciliation* virtually mean the same, which is "to change thoroughly" or "a thorough change."

With this in mind I re-read the second part of this passage as, "All this [newness] is from God, who through Christ changed us thoroughly to himself and gave us the ministry of a thorough change." Finally I was beginning to see the connection between us as a new creation in Christ and the concept of "thorough change." Saint Paul writes, "Do you not know that all of us have been baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4, NRSV) We are made new through Christ and now we no longer walk as others walk, but we walk in the footsteps of newness of life, the footsteps of Christ. I can now see God's act of reconciliation as our walk and new life found in Christ.

But I wondered is there more to this reconciliation? Is it a component of our responsibility in the ministry of reconciliation? To get a greater understanding, I went to my dictionary to look up *reconcile*. The dictionary shed still more light, and I began to wrestle with this word on a personal level. I began to understand that I am *responsible* to be involved in reconciliation... not on my terms, but on God's terms.

The first thing I noticed is that *reconcile* is a *verb*, a word of action and of doing, suggesting that as a Christian I must be actively involved in the meaning and ministry

of “reconciliation.” Another insight came to me in the definition of *reconcile*: “to restore friendship or harmony.” Through Christ, our “friendship” with God is restored. Not that God never stopped loving us, but finally that the harmony that was broken by our sin is now restored in Christ.

These two concepts of reconciliation sum up the traditional understanding of the word, and many leave it at that and go on. However, when I look at this passage as a novice in a community, I have to ask myself, “How should I be participating in this ministry of reconciliation? Does it only mean being reconciled to God through the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ into glory; or does it mean more? Does it mean *me*?”

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus gives us an insight into what reconciliation is all about, and the spin he puts on it runs contrary to our way of thinking. Jesus says, “...if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matt 5:23b-24 NRSV) For years and years, I thought this passage read, “If you remember that *you have something* against your brother or sister, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and sister...” That is not a bad dictum to live by, but that is not what this passage is saying at all. After re-reading it, I still see the burden of reconciliation falling on us as Christians in taking the initiative in the ministry of reconciliation, not because we have something against our fellow Christians, but because our fellow Christians *have something against us*. The difference is very subtle and yet so powerful.

**The burden of reconciliation falls upon us
not because we have something against others,
but because they have something against us...**

Not only are we thoroughly changed in our relationship to God, but we have to be aware of what we say and what we do that can either build up the body of Christ, which is the church, or destroy the fellowship and harmony within the Christian community. If we know that what we are saying and doing disrupts that harmony, it is our responsibility to humble ourselves and go before those whom we offended, to ask for their forgiveness, and to be restored and reconciled to them once again. It’s not about them being reconciled to us, but us to them. Right there is the nugget of truth, the mind-set of Christ: to think of others before we think of ourselves; to serve and not to be served.

For me as a novice brother, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience can be summed up in that word, *reconcile*. According to our Rule, “A brother makes the vow of poverty by dedicating a major portion of the fruit of his labor to the church and to the brotherhood.” Poverty leads me to change my priorities thoroughly from self-service to the service of others.

Of chastity our Rule says, “A brother makes the vow of chastity as follows: chastity is the decision to live with all in love, with respect for each person’s integrity. It is not

a denial of one's sexuality and capacity for love, but a dedication of the whole self to God: free from indecency or offensiveness and restrained from all excess in order to be free to love others without trying to possess or control." The act of reconciliation and "the decision to live with all in love" is at the heart of the good news found in the Gospel. My willingness to live with all in love thoroughly changes me, not only how I see my neighbor, but how my neighbor sees me.

Finally, concerning the vow of obedience our Rule states, "A brother makes the vow of obedience to Jesus Christ as his only Lord and Savior, to the discipline of the Episcopal Church, the provisions of the Rule of the Brotherhood, and the Minister General and other pastoral officials as appropriate." As one brother told me at my initial interview with the Council of the Brotherhood, "The word obedience comes from the Latin word for *hearing*. The vow of obedience is the act of listening and hearing God's voice in others and responding appropriately." When we listen to God in seeing that a sister or brother has something against us, holy obedience to our Lord compels me to humble myself and go and be reconciled.

If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Aelred Bernard

An institution sermon

SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

I am extremely happy to be here this afternoon to celebrate with you as Fr Fisher is instituted as your new rector. In the way of a brief introduction, my name is Richard John; I am a member of a religious order of the Episcopal Church known as the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, and I am a full time staff chaplain and a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Supervisor at Westchester Medical Center. That's where I got to know Betsy, and Doug *and* Betsy have become very special friends of mine. I understand that Bishop Sisk has had a busy day with a confirmation earlier today at Saint Barnabas, Ardsley, which was once my parish, so I am both honored to have been asked to preach today, and happy to give Bishop Sisk a chance to take a rest. I just want to say that Doug, Betsy, Caragh, Jeffrey and Gracie are a loving, wonderful family. Gracie's the little one who thinks you named the church after her. And I know that they have been warmly welcomed by the people of this church and the people of Millbrook over the past couple of months. When Doug told me he had accepted the call to Millbrook, it was one of those happy/sad occasions, because while I knew this is where he and his family wanted to be, I also knew that it meant I would see a lot less of good friends. But I have found tremendous comfort in knowing how happy they are here and how quickly and thoroughly you have welcomed them into your midst; so I thank you for that.

There's a story about a new pastor who moved into a town a lot like Millbrook. He went out one Saturday to visit his parishioners. He went from house to house, visiting and getting to know his flock. Everything was going fine, until he came to one house

and rang the doorbell. It was pretty obvious that someone was home, but no one came to the door. He tried knocking, but still no one answered. Finally, the pastor took out his calling card, wrote on the back *Revelation 3:20*, stuck it in the door, and went on his way. When the owner of the house got the card, she went to her Bible, turned to Revelation and read, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to them and will dine with them, and they with me.”

The next day, as the pastor was counting the collection at church, he saw his card. Below his message was the notation *Genesis 3:10*. He went to his Bible, turned to Genesis and read, “I heard thy voice in the garden, but I was naked, so I ran and hid.” Just a reminder, Doug, to give your parishioners some warning *before* you make pastoral visits!

████████████████████

**In many ways,
what is happening here today
is like a marriage.**

████████████████████

You know, when I received my invitation to today’s institution, I was struck at how similar all of this is to a wedding. Before all of what we’re here for today could happen, there was a period similar to a “courtship” when Doug and certain members of the parish family spent time getting to know one another. Once there was a mutual agreement, it was time to start introducing Doug to the some of the rest of the family, especially the elders, the vestry, to get their blessing. With all the preliminary details taken care of, date was set, and then all the planning started, and everyone started praying for good weather; the invitations went out announcing the church ceremony and a gala reception immediately following. Now I’m sure that this similarity is more by design than by accident, because if you look in your prayer book on page 423—not necessarily right now—but when you look in your prayer book you’ll see how similar the two services are. That’s because in many ways, what is happening here today *is* like a marriage. It is the joining together of a priest of the church and the people of the church, a serious commitment is being made between Doug and every member of this congregation. In a little while, your representatives will come forward and present Doug with gifts and symbols while at the same time telling him what you, as a faith community, expect from him. Simply put, you are asking your new rector to lead you and teach you and nourish you in word and sacrament. Today, Doug Fisher becomes the new shepherd of the people of Grace Church, Millbrook.

Now, I suppose one could infer from all of this that Doug is here to work for *you* and all you have to do as his flock is be around to be shepherded, be here for important events, pay your pledge, support him in his work—you’ll promise to do that in a in a little bit—and basically just get good at being his sheep. But I’m not sure that’s Doug’s idea; as a matter of fact, I know that’s not his idea, or mine either, for that matter, of priestly ministry. I’m sure that an arrangement like that wouldn’t work in a marriage, or any partnership. I mean, think about it, would it? Relationships fall apart when one party is incapable or unwilling to understand the other, or to bend a

little, or when they can't learn from and grow with one another. Well, it's the same for a faith community.

If you want to do something very interesting, go into Yahoo or Google, or one of the other Internet search engines and run a search for New Ministry. One thing you'll find is my opening joke, but you might be amazed to find, as I was, the numbers of parish profiles and ads for clergy all over the world. I was struck by the pages and pages of job descriptions and expectations of prospective pastors for every denomination, listings and listings of what people would want from their new pastor; who they want him or her to be and what they want him or her to do for them; but I couldn't find one place that said anything about what they hoped to become or what they hoped to do because of that person's leadership. Ministry is relational; everything that takes place here has a relational dynamic; and so, an attitude that is not mutually life-giving, or a self-centered posture that couldn't possibly work in any other relationship won't work here, either.

**Doug intends to continue the work of building
a Christ-centered—not a self-centered,
but a Christ-centered—community here.**

I have a pretty good idea of what Doug's vision for Grace Church, Millbrook is; and so must you, or you wouldn't have offered him the job. I know Doug Fisher well. I know that he is a man of integrity, so I know for sure that he didn't agree to be your priest just because Betsy liked the rectory! Doug intends to continue the work of building a Christ-centered—not a self-centered, but a Christ-centered—community here; he intends to raise up a people that will welcome all in the name of Jesus Christ. This will be a place of inclusiveness and there will be a spirit of community here like nowhere else, and when anyone talks about the people of Grace Church, Millbrook there will be no doubt that the work of God is being done here. As in today's Gospel, they'll say that the blind see, and the deaf hear, and the lame walk—maybe not literally, or maybe... I don't know *what* God has in store for this place—but certainly figuratively. Certainly, things will be different here; there's going to be change and maybe even transformation—those are frightening concepts for most of us; I know they are for me. But the truth is that we cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ and not expect growth and change, and we only fool ourselves if we think we can.

Please don't misunderstand me. I don't know very much about Grace Church. I don't know the work that you've done here. I have no idea where any of you are on your spiritual journey. I'm not saying that change is coming because you've been doing things the wrong way. What I'm saying is that change is going to be inevitable if you are going to take seriously the task you and Doug are agreeing on today, which is that, together, you will build the kingdom of God. The simple truth is that the kingdom cannot be built unless we move deeper and deeper into relationship with Jesus Christ and we cannot move into deeper relationship with Christ without being

changed. So being changed, while it might be uncomfortable, is simply a prerequisite for the task that is set before you today.

Doug chose today's readings because they encapsulate his vision of ministry. Listen again to Saint Paul's words, words he wrote to the members of a fledgling church in Philippi. Paul says "Every time I think of you, I thank my God, and whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it... because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news." You see, part of the transformation is going to be your own empowerment—remember what I said earlier about working together on your goal. You have called Doug to be your shepherd, but that doesn't mean that you are called to be sheep. I don't know if any of you have spent any time with sheep. No offense, but sheep are not very smart animals. They need to be led around and watched over, every step of the way, or they end up in terrible predicaments! That romantic notion of being a helpless little lamb in the arms of Jesus the Good Shepherd is meant to be taken figuratively. We all start out as helpless lambs; and yes, we'll always need the guidance and help of Christ throughout our lives, but there comes a time when we, every one of us, you and me, have to stop being carried comfortably and start helping with the carrying, and that's what we're about today: you are being called on to share in Doug's ministry, to "take part in spreading the good news."

**There's no easy way to prepare ourselves and others
for the coming of the kingdom.**

This is an invitation to claim your own priesthood as baptized members of the church, and that, in itself, will be life changing: changing from sheep to shepherds, so that, with Doug, you can "discern what is best" for this community and for those outside of this community and beyond. There's no easy way to prepare ourselves and others for the coming of the kingdom. If you don't believe me, maybe you'll believe W.C. Fields. On his deathbed he said to his priest, "I've spent my whole life searching the Bible for loopholes." Friends, there are no loopholes; there is no easy way; the work is hard and there's plenty to do; but unless the work is done with gratitude and joy for the blessings that have already been bestowed, and unless that joy is clearly seen and shared, there will be no reason for new sheep to come, there will be no new shepherds, and there will be no evidence that God's work is being done here.

Let me end with this little story about a man named Nasrudin. Nasrudin used to take his donkey across a frontier every day, with baskets loaded with straw. Since he was a known smuggler, the frontier guards would search him every time he went through their territory. They searched his person, they sifted the straw, they steeped it in water, they even burned it from time to time to find what he was smuggling, but they never found anything. Nasrudin and his donkey continued to pass through the frontier, and meanwhile, he became visibly more and more prosperous. Eventually, Nasrudin retired and went to live in another country. There, years later, he met one

of the customs officers who said to him, “You can tell me now, Nasrudin, now that I am no longer a customs officer and all these years have passed; tell me what it was that you were smuggling on all those trips, that we could never catch you?” “Donkeys,” said Nasrudin.

You see, that story is about missing the obvious; so don’t miss the obvious about today. Don’t miss that today is as much about you as it is about your new rector. Doug will be the happiest when you are sharing in his ministry, when he is ministering *with* you as well as *to* you; and when you are ministering to one another, and to him—that’s another thing I hope you will always remember: that your priest is one of you; he has a different role among you, but nonetheless, he needs to be cared for and loved, and you need to be there for him, just like you will expect him to care for and love you and to be there in your difficult times.

So, friends, take this to heart. Today is as much about Doug’s invitation to you to begin ministering to one another as it is about your invitation to Doug to begin his new ministry among you. Today is as much about the invitation of the church for each of you to claim and live out your baptismal promises as it is about Doug’s promise to help our bishop baptize. Today is as much about your invitation to become shepherds by moving deeper into your relationship with Jesus Christ, by growing in your love of God and for one another, as it is about Doug’s promise to be among you as a man of prayer, as your pastor and as your priest. Today is as much about you being filled with joy when you think of Doug Fisher and his ministry in this place, as it is about Doug’s joy when he thinks of the part you have played in “spreading the good news of the Gospel” with him.

**Today is as much about Doug’s invitation to you
to begin ministering to one another
as it is about your invitation to Doug
to begin his new ministry among you.**

And so, I join Saint Paul in his prayer. I pray that your love abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you, Doug Fisher, and you, the people of Grace Church, Millbrook, might be able to discern what is best for this place, and that, together, you might partake in the miraculous work of God, and that you might be pure and blameless until the day of Christ’s coming. May God grant all of you a holy, happy and life-giving ministry. Amen.

Richard John

This sermon was preached at the Institution of the Rev Douglas J Fisher as Rector of Grace Church, Millbrook NY last October

INTERCESSIONS

The Brotherhood

Episcopal Visitor *Sun*

Rodney R Michel

Episcopal Visitors Emeriti

Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91

Paul Moore, jr

Walter D Dennis

Life and Annual Professed Brothers

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*

Damian-Curtis Kellum

Richard John Lorino

Ronald Augustine Fox

Maurice John Grove

Charles Edward LeClerc

Francis Andrew Phillips

Andrew Fortuna *Thu*

Gordon John Stanley

Karekin Madteos Yarian

Robert Michael Burnham

Alban Patrick Thompson

Stephen Julian Moss

Gabriel Liam Everett

Thomas Bushnell *Fri*

Thomas Mark Liotta

James Dunstan Mahoney

Patrick Ignatius Dickson

Robert James McLaughlin

Novices *Sat*

Peter Budde

John Henry Ernestine

Francis Sebastian Medina

Aelred Bernard Dean

Postulants

G Joseph Gauss

Mark A Jones

Scott Williamson

Associates

Cecil Berges d 10.16.90

Marion Pierce d 12.26.91

Helen Marie Joyce, VHM

Grosvenor Calkins

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

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

Grant Walsh

Jeffery L Benson

M Eugene Ellis

Mark Harris

Enrique Antonio Illarze

Dennis W Pattey

John A Bell

Gerard F Beritela

Perry L Conley

Wilhelmina Barton

Raymond E Barton

Gabriel McGovern

Ethel B "Ettye" Hurley

Amy M Barron

Leopold Frade

Diana D Frade

Robin Stephanie Steele

Ulric Van den Berghe

Carol Gwynn Hays

James David Walley

David Benzshawel

Robin R M'Kay

Theresa Allan

Glenn R Charlton

Betsy Kardos

David Burton

Timothy Lundy

Wiley W "Jack" Merryman

Albert O Cantwell

Graham Thomas Prosser

Philip L Hewitt

Michael S Parenti

Mark L Raper

Laurie A Wiegand

John-Albert Moseley

JoAnn Tomback

Carl Lindgren, OSN

R Tony Cable

Lynne J D McQuade

Zech Schariah

Lydia Karlo

Steven Bright-Jordan, OSJ

Ruth Richmond Laning

Denise A Tivedo

Kathleen C Klee

Sarah Elizabeth Wells, SSG

d 5.8.2000

Patrick Bell Schwing

R William Franklin

Martín Barahona

M Carl Lunden

Patricia A Ahearn

David Alvarado

Jay Frank Crosthwaite

Paul E Van Brunt

M Sharon Ryan

Virginia E Holloway

Charles C Nichols, jr

Kevin Heckman

Margaret J Faulk

Paul G Power

Ruth G Power

Laurie Wescott Niblick, p/SSG

George L Vizvary

John R Coyle

Melissa Colby

Barbara Ann Jensen

Robert R M Bagwell

William Russell

Bruce N Gardner

Mark Palcanis

Malcolm Roberts III

Cynthia Cheski

Jim Elledge

Jeffrey Linden

James E Cyphers

Michael D Bond

Mary Jean Bond

Nancy R Fifield

Frederick L Nestrock

Brad Hicks

Gina Stickelmaier

Howard B Bowlin

Carin Bridgit Delfs, SSG

Sue Bradley

Jospeh Lynn Spears

& The Friends of the

Brotherhood

Religious Communities

The Sisters of Saint Gregory

Sacramentine & Visitandine

Nuns

Society of the Atonement

Order of Agapé &

Reconciliation

Camaldolese Benedictines

Society of Saint John the

Evangelist

Community of the Paraclete

Intercessions, continued

Congregation of the Anglican
Oblates of Saint Benedict
Community of the
Transfiguration
The Order of Julian of Norwich

For healing

For our brothers Luke Anthony,
Thomas Joseph, Charles,
Damian-Curtis, William
Edward, Edward Ramón,
Karekin Madteos, Christopher
Stephen, Andrew, Patrick
Ignatius, James Dunstan,
Stephen Julian and Robert
James

For our sisters Clare,
Lillian-Marie, Elizabeth Mary,
and Susanna Bede

For all who live with HIV/AIDS

Ian Frazier
Jane Bowley
Scott Wager
Elizabeth Williamson
Denis Sennet, SA
Jonathan Zimmerman
Elizabeth Dean
Charles H Long, Jr
George Ward
Tony, Tina & Margaux
Barbara Emmons
Brigid Kenney
Donavan Pliasance
Bob Butler
Sean Mason
Angela Evans
Art Neighbors
James Viggiano
Jim O'Neill
Margot Evangelista
Gail Finley

Jim De Graci
Ralph Croisant
David Hunter
Tina

Departed

Charlotte B Morgan
Arsene and Louise Lemarier
J Norman Hall
George T Koerner
Henry N Fukui
J Steward Slocum
James R Gundrum
Everett Barrows
Louis Edmondson
Dorothy Agard
Ruth Pierdon
Irene Jackson
Angela Tatulli
Charles T Gaskell
Robert N Mattis
Ibrahim Haddad
Terriann
Dora "Kitty" Baker
Everett Barrows
Charles H Long, jr

Intentions

Joseph Richey House
Saint Gregory's Retreat Center
Brother Bernard Fessenden
House
Saint James' Church Fordham,
Bronx
Baltimore International
Seafarers' Center
Our brothers William Francis,
Stephen, Ciarán Anthony,
Karekin Madteos, Gabriel
Liam, Francis Andrew, Thomas
Mark, James Dunstan, Aelred
Bernard and John Henry

Saint Nicholas' Fellowship,
Dennard AR
Trinity, Stoughton MA
Lisa and Alexis
Steve & Kathy Zimmerman
Barbara Connors and Deacons
House
Eliza Davies
John
Heather
Stewart & Debbie
Kelly Emmons
Faik & Sophie Haddad
Christina
Debbie & Terry
Teresa Butler
Diane Mason
Joseph Leonardi
Matthew Haines
Milton, Daniel & Kelly
Manley Baker
Helen Croisant
George, Stephen, Mark & David
The people of Ireland
The Mansons
Heather
Richard and Joan Grein
Ann Barrows

Thanksgiving

The ordination of Ellen Francis
Poisson, OSH to the priesthood
The institution of Leopold
Frade, a/BSG as Bishop of SE
Florida
The marriage of Stephen Julian
and Elena Moss
The life profession of Thomas
Ferrell, CSL

WHERE THERE'S A WILL

You can assist and further the ministries of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory by remembering the community 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, and its successors for ever \$_____ and / or _____ percent of my estate to be used in such a manner as determined by its Directors.