



THE SERVANT



Mortal pride
and earthly glory,
sword and crown
betray our trust;
though with care
and toil we build them,
tower and temple
fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple
and my tower.
—Robert Bridges,
after Neander

*This photograph was taken
in the late 70s.*

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Fall-Winter 2001

A BROTHER'S VOWS

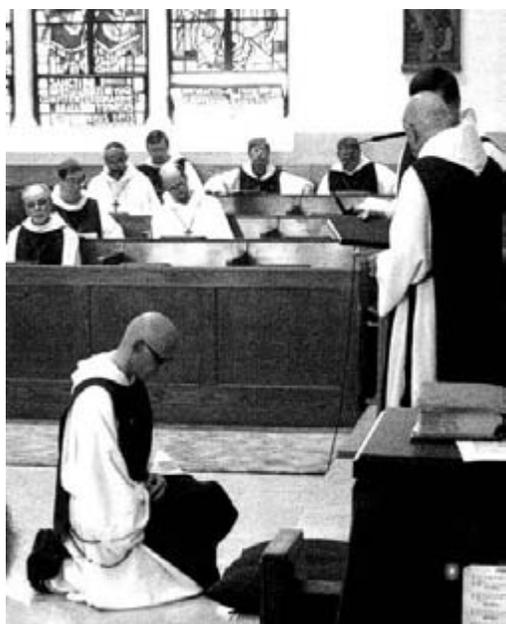
“Good morning Father, as I awake and open up to you; my spirit and my will to take, as I seek passage through the doorway to your kingdom that lies deep within my heart.”

The doorway: this afternoon it opens one last time and in an instant and with the making of a solemn vow, slams shut and locks! Quite a few years ago now, that door opened in a parish house in White Plains NY. A rather strange-looking young man (well, a young adult) entered my life and the life of the parish. He was wearing a bandana on his shaved head, some unusual combination of threads, and a button which read, “I wondered where I was, and then I realized I’m here.” You all know who that person is; the story has been recounted many times.

In our psalm for this liturgy, we find the phrase “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Karekin



Richard Thomas, Founder and Minister General, delivers the charge to all gathered.



Karekin Madteos kneels to receive a blessing.

has searched in many highways and byways for that rock—and in typical Karekin fashion, he continues to seek that rock, for the search is never-ending. Taking a small step outside the box here, I am reminded of the Armenian in Karekin, when, as part of my choir in White Plains he sang those very words in the anthem with that psalm-text, written by the Armenian composer, Alan Hovhaness. It is titled “From the end of the earth” and Karekin, as many of you know, has searched the ends of the earth for the rock that is, in fact, higher than all of us.

We are all reminded that our lives as Christians have but one purpose—and that is to share the love of Christ and love others. The Rock is that love—hard to attain



Donovan Aidan “crowns” Karekin at the reception following his life profession.

and hard to live but necessary to our salvation.

“In your mercy, Lord, you called me, taught my sin-filled heart and mind; else this world had still enthralled me, and to glory kept me blind”—from our hymnody for this liturgy. Partnered to those powerful words, the following by another mystic and hymn writer: “My offering of self I make before the day can start; this matchless day *I will by choice* and make *your* will my own.”

Giving up and giving in; so much of what we do and say as we make vows and promises is a mirror of Jesus giving up his

will for that of his Father. Going back to the readings for this liturgy, we are reminded of our stewardship—of our gifts and our openness to God’s will for us. We are again the mirrors. Who but Jesus gave us a better example of stewardship of gifts: giving his life—a gift for us—to save us. And we as religious in a very un-religious world, try to mirror that gift to others.

“Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” Gifts, I believe, are what the religious life is all about. I was given the gift of the founding of this community—it was dropped on my head! But it was a gift! Each member who comes and stays; and those who come and do not stay, are all gifts in some way. When we think of gifts, the immediate picture in our minds is a box wrapped in paper and tagged for someone: a blue Tiffany box; flowers wrapped in cellophane. Gifts are deceiving and come in many shapes and forms. Many cannot be seen but are felt. “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”

It’s hard to separate Karekin from gifts and service. His gifts can be seen in the Brotherhood’s training and formation materials; with Francis Andrew and others, he was responsible for a large part of that work. Karekin’s gifts are tricky, though, and you have to be careful so as not to be caught off-guard: “What’s that sound I hear? Is it a house? Better duck!” “You’re just upset because a house fell on your sister!” The gift of abandon—the gift to laugh and be downright silly. The important gift of taking the mundane and ordinary—yes, in the church too; and moving them into a new and different space.

In the style of Sophia Petrillo: Picture this—2000, Graymoor Chapel, it was cool. (Okay this is Sophia!) A small figure sits in a Christian chapel, in a Jewish prayer shawl. Is it a rabbi? What is it? It’s Karekin! And that’s it—taking all of us off guard and lifting our thoughts and minds to a new understanding of the space. The *gift* of

something new; and something that we all should be doing. Showing others new ways and new approaches to God. Leaving the norm!

Our work and mission as religious in this church (we are dangerous, you know) is to show others the way of love which Jesus commanded. All of the fancy liturgies and fancy vestments; all the beautiful music and choirs are nothing if love



is not preached in that places we serve. In 1 Peter a phrase that really caught me was, “Be hospitable to one another without complaining.”

Can you imagine this? What if every Palestinian treated every Israeli as he wanted to be treated? What if every white Anglo treated every person of color as he or she wanted to be treated? What if the church was truly hospitable to every gay and lesbian person who in fact, make up a viable percentage of the church? What if our churches and their altars were open in the same way we open our homes to invited dinner guests? Imagine!

“I’ll offer up with gratitude, my thanks for all you give; remembering with gentleness, it’s by your grace, I live.”

So, striving to love, being stewards of the great bounty of God lavished upon us, today, Karekin and in fact, all of us, promise that gratitude.

Karekin: Your charge. Continue to be poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is promised. You will, like all of us, have times of mourning; comfort is promised. Keep that meekness; inheritance is promised. Hunger and thirst after righteousness; the menu is filled with choices to fill you. Be merciful to all; by your mercy *they* will learn to be merciful. Be pure in heart; God waits to be seen! Continue to be a peacemaker; they are called by God as his children. You will be persecuted for what you believe; there is that kingdom again. Remember that when you are reviled and persecuted and people call you names, (and you’ve been there!) there have been many before you and they all found that the salary of a martyr is very much below standard!

Lord knows, you know all about salt—keep a fresh outlook—lift up out of the norm! Be a light to the world; never hide that light. They and we and the whole world will see the good works.

“At night, as dreams begin their press, your name will kiss my lips as dancing moonbeams do caress prayer folded fingertips!” Bless you—be faithful.

RTB



Bishop Michel leads the brothers in thinking about Orders and Ministry.

Here and there with the Brothers

COMMUNITY NOTES

Annual Convocation 2001



Gordon John proclaims the Gospel.

The Brotherhood’s first Annual Convocation of the new millennium was held at Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls, New York, in late July. An extensively renovated and modernized facility, Mount Alvernia is operated by the Order of Friars Minor (Roman Catholic) and the Brotherhood’s presence marked it’s first major retreat since reopening earlier this year. All agreed that “Franciscan hospitality” is alive and well there. Visitor Bishop Rodney Michel’s presence was very welcome and he participated in the round of the Daily Office, preached, and celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the

community. While health concerns kept three Gregorian Friars from attending, a number of Associates, inquirers and friends came from across the country to share in a moment of Gregorian spirituality.

This year’s retreat at the Brotherhood’s Annual Convocation was centered in the study of the orders of ministry. Entitled “Equal in Glory,” the program began with an extensive introduction by the Bishop Visitor, who carefully explored the his-



The brothers prepare to celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

tory and spirituality of the ministry, the orders of bishop, priest and deacon compared and contrasted with the laity. The second session examined the parallels and the incongruities between the orders of ministry and the experience of the religious life, where the division is between “regular” (the Christian life lived according to a rule) and “secular.” For this session the community was separated into three conversation groups: laity, episcopate/presbyterate, and diaconate, which proved to be both stimulating and isolating. The following day’s session, “Changing Your Ministry,” offered opportunity to discuss and explore new ministries and the possibility of changing one’s order of ministry. The subject matter for this retreat had been requested of the community’s Education Committee for some time and was very well received. Everyone congratulated Francis Andrew, the community’s outgoing Director of Education, for his efforts.



Mount Alvernia, Wappingers Falls

Each year’s Annual Convocation features the celebration of the rites of the community, in which God’s presence in the lives of its members is expressed liturgically. At this gathering Karekin Madteos made his life profession of vows and Peter made his first profession at the festival service at week’s end. At Evening Prayer the previous



Charles Edward proclaims the Gospel.

day, three postulants entered the novitiate as Joseph Basil (Chicago), Mark Andrew (Florida) and Emmanuel (Oregon), and Richard O Matthias from Northern California was admitted to the Brotherhood’s postulancy.

The impact of the friars of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory throughout the Episcopal Church can easily be seen in the variety of locations from which these men come; their quiet ministry of prayer, presence and service expresses God’s continual call to the contemporary religious life.

Boca Raton, Florida

It is often the experience that when a man returns to his home parish after being admitted to the postulancy or received into the novitiate, his rector and parish congregation don’t know quite just what to do with him—how to refer to him, what he is expected/expecting to do, whether his friends are still his friends—but Mark Andrew



Convocation is a time for fellowship and conversation; here James shares some stories from the early days of the community.



Richard Matthias receives the Brotherhood Postulant/Novice Cross.

tells of quite a different homecoming at the Chapel of Saint Andrew. “I have been received as a friar novice in our parish with great support. On Thursday morning, as I served in habit for the first time, the assisting priest presented me to the small congregation that attends the Holy Eucharist before work. At the Peace she invited those gathered to welcome me as ‘Br Mark Andrew.’ It was wonderfully warm and intimate! Then, on Sunday, I served at the 8:00 am service. With both the Old Testa-

ment and the Gospel as his starting point, the rector (the Rev Stephen F Zimmerman) spoke about the wealth of the world. Then he spoke of Saint Francis’ reaction. And then, without me knowing where he was going, he brought it back to modern religious life and the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, and he introduced me to the parish as ‘Br Mark Andrew!’ Father Steve spoke very positively of the religious life, and he encouraged me to stay in habit after the service for a photo opportunity and to answer any questions. I served again on the last Sunday of the month at the 10:30 am service. Father Steve was scheduled to be away that day, so he asked me to speak about the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory!” The text of Mark Andrew’s address appears later in this issue.

Natchitoches LA

Michael David was back at work as scene-painter for two summer theater performances at Northwestern State University, “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor

Dreamcoat” and “Cotton Patch Gospel.” Both productions were quite well received. Michael David also performed on the harp at the 150th anniversary of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Campti. He performed in the LSMSA Faculty Showcase by singing in the faculty chamber choir, performing in the NSU harp ensemble, and singing the solo, “Mr. Cellophane.” Naturally his work also appeared in the current art exhibition. In further work with the NSU harp ensemble, he performed in four concerts, and for the national music educators association in Baton Rouge. In addition to all of the extracurricular activities, he has a full plate with teaching assignments, as so many students want to study the arts. This semester and next he will be taking over the stagecraft class. He is proud to relate that LSMSA has been named with the 15th highest ACT test-scores in the US, and top scores in math in Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

A novice’s address

THE GREGORIAN WAY

When Father Steve suggested I speak about my vocation in the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, I said “yes” almost without thinking. After all, this parish community has been wonderfully supportive of me during the discernment process. Then, after hearing the news that I had been accepted into the novitiate and was now a novice friar, I received a very warm and congratulatory welcome home from Convocation, complete with hugs and kisses and even an enthusiastic thumbs-up with a wink and the statement, “You’re in; you made it,” from Doug Drouin.

Yes, I leapt at the chance to stand here today, but because I wanted to say something personal: that from the bottom of my heart I love you, and that I will be forever thankful for all the support and nurturing and growth that you’ve brought about in me. Praise God and give him thanks, for the Holy Spirit is among you and works through you. I can only hope and pray that as I serve among you I might reflect back the same Spirit that I have encountered through you.

Perhaps this is the point at which I should speak about the vowed religious life, and thus honor my commitment to Steve.

From the very earliest days of Christianity there have people who have lived under a special rule of life (some celebrating fellowship and others asceticism). All of them united in an attempt to respond faithfully to the Gospel and to the call of Jesus in their lives. The vowed religious life is a rich and influential part of Christian history and tradition. Though perhaps less well known these days, the vowed religious life is also a rich part of our Anglican tradition.

It’s important to emphasize, however, that in the Anglican tradition the religious life is not a “higher” or a “better” way of Christian life, but simply one of many ways of living out our common Christian vocation that we all assume in our Baptismal Covenant.

There is no time here today to provide the details of the rich heritage that has been the religious life down through the centuries. I’ll say only a few things. Saint Gregory the Great, after whom the Brotherhood is named, himself touched the English church when, as pope in the late sixth century, he sent a monk by the name of August-



The Minister General binds Mark Andrew with the cincture.

tine on a mission to the English. England's own Venerable Bede called Gregory "the Apostle of the English." And when Henry VIII broke with Rome he cited Gregory's counsel to Augustine in urging the independence of the Anglican church.

It would be incorrect to assume, however, that religious life is a story solely of males, monasteries and hermits. Women leaders and lay communities have enriched the tradition a great deal from very early times down to the present day.

Through the ages Christian religious life has also changed and adapted itself to varying societal needs and thus evolved various spiritualities. Significant examples include the Dominicans and the Franciscans, and I dare say the Gregorians.

The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory was founded as a contemporary, nonresidential religious order on the Feast of the Holy Cross in September 1969. There is a companion Sisters of Saint Gregory as well.

Our order is canonically recognized by the

national Episcopal Church, and Bishop Suffragan Rodney Michel of Long Island is our Visitor. He joins us at each Convocation. And, as Steve has previously mentioned, our own Bishop Frade is an associate of the Brotherhood.

Although a contemporary order, we have adapted but not abandoned many of the traditions inherited from our monastic brothers and sisters. Ours is a life of action rooted in prayer. A regular routine of prayer has been transforming for me. Our Rule requires that we say the full four-fold Daily Office, and that we meditate each day. The periods of meditation are especially important, because that's when we set aside all thoughts, desires and wants and even *talking* to God in order that we might just sit back and *listen*, listen to what God wants to say to us in our lives. We also supplement that period of contemplation with spiritual reading. And naturally we try to worship in the Eucharist as often as possible.

Among the other monastic traditions that Gregorians retain in an adapted form are the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. God-willing I will make my initial profession of vows in two years. Steve wanted me to speak specifically about those vows. At first glance some might believe the vow of poverty should be expressed in terms of simplicity; but, as I've studied the matter during my formation work, I've come to appreciate the deeper, less common meaning of the traditional vows.

With regard to the vow of poverty our Rule states that "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." At an absolute *minimum* this means tithing. The Brotherhood must receive a minimum of five percent of a brother's income, and an additional

one-half percent is dedicated to building up a trust fund for the relief of brothers in sickness or unemployment. The vow of poverty, however, really deals with much more than money, time and talent. It calls for living a life of gratitude for the gifts of God, with proper stewardship, self-appraisal and self-giving—all to the glory of God. The Brotherhood's motto is *Soli Deo Gloria*—to God alone the glory. This entails developing a lifestyle of appropriate priorities so that things, desires and wants do not interfere with giving God alone the glory; and this is true for all walks of life. All that we do, even the work we do out in the world, is sacred. We are called to offer not just our work, but our very selves to the glory of God.

The second vow, chastity, is often misunderstood as celibacy as opposed to the original meaning of being chaste. According to the Rule, "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 excess, in order to be free to love others without trying to possess or control." Such love must be grounded in a personal relationship with Christ. We are to love as he loves. We should also desire for others what Jesus desires for them. In this way our relationships should empower others and point them toward the wholeness that can only be known in Christ Jesus.

The third vow is obedience: This is the easiest of the vows to understand (even if many might recoil from a limitation on individualism in this age of autonomy). The 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 to the Minister General and other pastoral officials as appropriate." Through our obedience we witness to a particular path in the search for truth. We affirm that relationships known in community, rather than through autonomy, matter most of all. Arrogant self-will lies at the root of much evil and pain in the world and in our lives. We are keenly aware that we meet and serve Christ Jesus in others. That being the case we cannot be dismissive of any relationship and we must be open to the answers that come from those relationships.

Now some may ask, Why subject yourself to the requirements of a rule of life? Why spend eight months in the application process and a full year as a postulant, and why intend to spend at least two years as a novice, followed by at least five more years in annual vows before making a life profession of vows? And why do these things in order to be subject to the Rule and to these vows hopefully for the rest of my natural



The Minister General with all of the brothers in formation



Convocation 2001

life? I gave the answer at last year's Discovery Weekend: I believe that God calls me to the discipline of the religious life simply because I need it. All Gregorians have a deep and abiding recognition of our own utter brokenness and complete dependence on God.

I really began to finally wrestle with these issues during the Faith-Seeking Journey. For me the program lived up to its billing. It helped me answer a question that had existed for decades, "What is God calling me to do?" The meaning of our vows—that is what I aspire to and what I believe I'm called to be, but I'm not there yet; and it will only be possible in my life by the grace of God.

Although as a vowed religious I might walk a slightly different path than you, we are on the same faith journey in that we are all called to live out the same Baptismal Covenant. A central message of that Covenant, and perhaps of all the readings for today, might be summed up by the Psalmist: "God is our refuge and strength." Amen.

Mark Andrew

The woes of September

DISASTER AND RESPONSE: BEING THERE

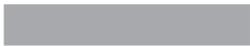
No one old enough to remember anything at all will ever forget the horrible events of September 11, 2001—a day not unlike another tragic day which a shocked President then called "a date that will live in infamy." The World Trade Center and the Pentagon were/are national and international in their scope, and while none of our Gregorian Friars—and so far as we know, none of our Associates—was injured or killed in

those terrible events or in the crashed airliner in rural Pennsylvania, many of us have friends and colleagues whose offices were once there, or who were among the police officers, firefighters and EMS workers lost in the collapse of the Towers. Such events have a way of reminding us how fragile and temporary all of life is, how few the occasions we each have to thank God for our countless blessings and to hold tightly to our loved ones, to kiss and hug them and to tell them how much we care for them, for it just may be the last opportunity.

The tragedy of September 11, 2001 was truly a national event, and each of our friars and Associates pitched in to help, right where they are. Not everyone could don a hard hat and travel to the sites in New York City and Washington DC or to that woodland in Pennsylvania, nor did they have to. The scope of these events shook the entire nation—the whole world—and the aftershocks appeared in every community, town, village and city almost instantly. Reports of our brothers' activities are still coming in, but it's certain to say that we were there, present with those around us who needed a shoulder to cry on or a hand to hold, or to hear a word of comfort and of hope at a time when many questioned why God would allow such a horrible thing to happen. One of our newest Associates, Bob White, is an EMS technician in Manhattan and he worked night and day from the first word of the first plane crashing into Tower #2. Gregorians opened their churches along with their hearts, leading prayer vigils and assisting at masses across the country. James Dunstan recounted that he accompanied the priest-in-charge of his parish, the Rev Judy Ferguson, into West Point to conduct a worship service for the cadets, and to be the church in that place, at a moment when Christian ethics and military training were crashing head-on. Richard John and his chaplaincy colleagues at the Westchester County Medical Center, and Robert James at the Atlantic City Medical Center, were at their posts, ready to receive the injured and the traumatized. Aelred Bernard served on a panel offering reflections at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, sharing his thoughts in a prayerful reflection on tolerance. Tobias Stanislas, as chair of the New York Diocesan Liturgical Commission, was called upon to draft a form of Prayers of the People for the following Sunday, and conducted a number of special services in his Bronx parish. No matter where we were, we were there for those who needed us, who need us now, and who will need us in the weeks and months ahead.

Our prayer is for moderation and for cool heads and warm hearts. It is the human condition to want to strike back immediately, and yet we know that the loss of innocent life and harm to innocent people grieves the Holy Spirit. It is not God's way to cause the innocent to suffer, in the United States or in Afghanistan or anywhere in the world. Let us remain among those who help to bring peace, God's peace, to this world of pain and anguish, so that every day following this "date that will live in infamy" will be seen to be a new opportunity to bring healing to those who hurt and health of body, mind and spirit to all we meet.

James



IN TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS

In the silence after each bidding, the People offer their own prayers, either silently or aloud.

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for our Bishop Mark; for Catherine his Suffragan and Don his Assistant; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people: that they may witness to the love of God. Pray for the Church.

Silence

I ask your prayers for peace in the midst of conflict; for goodwill among nations in the midst of growing fear, distrust and hatred; and for the well-being of all people, in the midst of threats to life and health. Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the leaders of the nation, for the leaders of the world, and for all whose lives will be forever changed by their decisions and actions. Pray for the world.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison; for those injured, maimed or wounded in the horror of our current conflict. Pray for those in any need or trouble. [We pray especially for _____.]

Silence

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, for all who question God, for all who doubt God, for all who are moved to ask God, "Why?" Pray that they may find and be found by God.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the departed; for those who have died in peace, and those whose lives have been taken by violence. Pray for all who have died. [We pray especially for _____.]

Silence

I ask your prayers for _____.

Silence

I ask your thanksgiving for the countless heroes who risk their lives to save others, to recover and heal the wounded, and to find and bury the dead. Give thanks for their great hearts and generous spirits.

Silence

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored: the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who have suffered for the sake of Christ [especially _____]. Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

Silence

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

O God, you are the source of all wisdom, justice, love and peace: Give us in our present conflict the gleanings of your wisdom, the courage of your justice, the patience of your love, and the assurance of your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Tobias Stanislas prepared these Prayers, based on Form II, for use in the Diocese of New York, in response to the tragic events of September 11.

GOD FOR DUMMIES—NOT!

I recently had a chance to visit a new Barnes and Noble bookstore in my area. I had been browsing through shelf after shelf of books. I stopped at a section which really caught my eye, “Books for Dummies,” I call it. I really had to chuckle to myself at the number of them. I had heard of *Microsoft Windows for Dummies*, and *Word for Dummies*, but I had never seen, *Woodworking for Dummies*, *Plumbing for Dummies*, or the one which really gave me a laugh, *Electricity for Dummies!* I was shocked! I had no idea that dummies were messing with electricity. Society is always looking for the easy way, the quick and simple answers, the 1–2–3 snap it’s done solution.

Thomas á Kempis’ book, *The Imitation of Christ*, is *not Heaven for Dummies*; it is *not* a step by step blueprint to heaven. It is an invitation: an invitation to see the world and life, and ourselves anew; to see creation and human experience as Christ saw it—as if through his eyes; to *live* our lives as Christ lived his; to experience the totality of God’s creation—all of it, not just the good and pleasant and the warm fuzaiies but the poverty, dejection, oppression, trials and persecution of this world.

Saint Luke tells us that Jesus went with his newly chosen apostles to meet a great multitude of people seeking healing for their diseases. “And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and he healed all of them.” When Jesus pronounced the Beatitudes, he looked at his disciples and said, “Blessed are you . . .” He was speaking to the disciples, those who were there to learn and follow.

One night, a man sat in a darkened church, just about sunset. He was praying—more like a gushing out of his entire life to this point. Life for him had almost come to a complete stop. He seemed to be living in a constant whirlpool. Turning and turning and getting nowhere in a downward spiral. He prayed, of course, he always prayed. His prayer never seemed to be answered. He was on the edge, desperate! Staring at the crucifix hanging above the altar, he cried, “What is it I did?” Finally, in a rage of anger he stood up and screamed at the top of his lungs, “What more do you want of me?” The answer to the first question was simply, nothing. He had done nothing, nothing which brought him closer to God. His whole life he had devoted to himself. He did what he wanted, when he wanted. He did nothing. The answer to the second question was, I want you. I want all of you. I want you to be with me. I want you to experience my love for you for the first time. I am yours; I want you to be mine!

It takes love to respond to this invitation. It takes an unrequited love to imitate Christ. It takes the complete emptying of self and the acceptance of God’s gift of his love. There is a Country and Western song called “Looking for love in all the wrong places.” God is love and we are sometimes afraid to look where we will surely find him. We have to search for him in our failings and shortcomings, in the difficulty of sharing, in the heartbreak of loss, the hard work of loving. This is the imitation of Christ—by following him in the difficulty of living with the stubborn insistence that life is to be lived, even if it leads to the cross. It is the patient determination to live into the mystery that defies our sense.

We come to the altar, our source of rest, refreshment and renewal as often as we are able. It is here that we find solace and comfort, strength and love in the communion

of the saints. It is here that we imitate Christ in his sacrifice of his body and blood. It is here that our robes are made white in the blood of the Lamb. Indeed, our hands, and feet, our entire body is made white in that blood.

Each day we pray the Community Collect asking God that we might imitate our patron, Saint Gregory, as servants of the servants of God. We also pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives and works that we may possess Gregory's zeal and devotion to God's holy Church. May each of us, my dear brothers, live our lives in such imitation of Christ's life, that God's people may come to live in that spirit of devotion: *Soli Deo Gloria*—to God alone the glory.

Robert James

Sermon for the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

SPACE FOR GOD

Today is the feast day of Anne and Joachim. From the Bible we know nothing of Mary's parents, but other sources tell us that their story closely parallels the story of Hannah (which translates to "Anne") and Elkanah. Just as Hannah and Elkanah dedicated their son Samuel to the service of God after his birth, so was Mary dedicated to the service of the Lord in the temple after the wish of Anne and Joachim was granted to have a child. Although we are not able to verify this story, it is clear from the Gospels that Mary had a strong religious upbringing.

In today's lessons we hear how two faithful people, Abraham and Mary, respond to God's will through faith and obedience. Faith and obedience are keystones to our lives as Christians and religious. Faith is holding on to beliefs when there is nothing tangible to grasp. How do we maintain our faith? Saying we have faith when times are good and life is going well for us is much easier than when life takes a turn and we find ourselves confronted with crises, illness, hardship, disillusionment, or death. Bad times are when we need faith most and when faith can be the most elusive.

In our study of the scriptures we learn that God never promises us an ideal, care-free, trouble-free life. God does, however, promise us faithfulness. Studying the Old Testament, I am always amazed at God's faithfulness to the Hebrew people although they often stray very far from the covenant made with Abraham. Please pardon my judgment here, but they often do not deserve God's faithfulness, love and forgiveness. We of today's society are no better than the people of the Old Testament. One could easily argue that we are worse. The 20th century was the most genocidal in recorded history. Each of us as apostolic religious can probably testify that being an overt and practicing Christian in the world today is counter-cultural, and I am sure that most, if not all of us can relate instances when we have been met with disdain, suspicion, insult, and even belligerence. Alarmingly some of that negativity is aimed at us from within our own church and even from other religious. How do we withstand such opposition to what we hold true in our lives? I believe that it is through faith and obedience.

There is testimony in the faith of both Abraham and Mary. God told Abraham to abandon the life he had known and to set out for a new land. All Abraham had was

God's promise of faithfulness—nothing tangible to hold on to, no travel brochures or video of the new land, nothing. Through faith Abraham obeyed. He heard, he discerned, and he obeyed. Mary is a very young girl when God asks her to bear the son who is to be the Messiah. When she naturally asks, "How can this be...?" the angel Gabriel reassures her by replying, "Nothing will be impossible with God." On that brief encounter Mary obeyed. Her heart, like Abraham's, was filled with faith in and love of God, and she obeyed. How can we come to that place where we have such faith and are able to hear the will of God and obey?

Before I tell you this story, I want to assure you that I may be strange and silly, but as crazy as I am, I am not schizophrenic. This incident was so powerful in my life that it helped me to change its course. I had never had an experience like it before nor have I had one since.

When I lived in Philadelphia in the late 1980s, I was just beginning to reenter the church and was learning all sorts of new things like the 1979 Prayer Book, bread instead of wafers, and women priests. Although I did attend church sporadically in New Orleans, there were no women priests there; the bishop would only ordain women to the diaconate. So there were many changes to absorb. The time in Philly was when the Diocese of Massachusetts nominated Barbara Harris as suffragan bishop. To be honest I did not know what to think. I was just beginning to get used to the idea of women priests—and now a bishop! I was terribly confused and filled with ambivalence. The people around me did not help. Some were against the ordination of women period, and this nomination really put them in a tailspin. I will not repeat some of the awful things they said about Barbara Harris, and I did not know what to think or believe. Since she was from Philadelphia, I thought perhaps they knew what they were talking about. The whole issue had me very upset.

One night I had a dream unlike any other dream I had ever had. All of my dreams are normally visual but this one was only auditory. It was a voice that told me to put aside any fears or misgivings that I had about Barbara Harris' election because the voice said, "This is my way of making known to the whole world that absolutely everyone is welcome in my church." The voice was strong, clear, and loving and spoke with an absolute authority that I had never heard before. Needless to say, when I awoke, I thought to myself, "OK. That is issue is resolved. Next!"

I only wish that obedience could be that simple all the time. Unfortunately, it is not, and I have to rely on other means of discerning God's will. How can I, how can we all, come to that point where we, like Mary, can say, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word?"

Someone has said that in each of us there is a place that is reserved for and can only be filled by God. We can assume that Mary and Abraham were able to fill that space only with God because of their example of faith and obedience. In today's world people try to fill that space with other things such as money, possessions, and power. When one fills that space with that which is other than God the result is emptiness and an increasing feeling of neediness. Filling that space with God is not easy because there are so many things that can distract us from the discipline it takes to do so.

One of the blessings of my life, and I believe of the lives of you, my brothers, is the Rule which we who are professed have vowed to follow. The Rule provides us the tools we need to fill ourselves with God, to remind ourselves of God's love and faith-



Francis Andrew and Gabriel Liam present Peter to make his first vows of profession.

fulness, and to know that we are called to serve God throughout our daily lives. The Daily Office helps us to begin each day with the reminder that God is with us. At midday we are again reminded. At evening we end our day's toil with the peace and quiet that Evening Prayer can bring to us. Then, before we close our eyes for the night, we have the opportunity to examine our activities and ourselves during the day, give thanks for the blessings of the day, and pray for our own needs and the needs of others. Our Rule gives us the opportunity to sit quietly each day to meditate. How often when

we are still and our minds are quieted, do insights come to us! Regular reading and study helps us to see God, life, and ourselves through another's perspective. We are given the opportunity to learn. Our Lord in the sacrament feeds us. Four times a year we examine our lives in relationship to the Rule by writing an Embertide letter and sharing it with our minister provincial. All of these are valuable instruments to help us to live the Rule and to serve God and the Church as we are vowed to serve.

One criticism that may come from other religious communities is that due to our apostolic nature we do not have stability. I beg to differ. Our stability is in our Rule and in our community. It is true that we move around from place to place, change jobs, or residence. But our stability is found not within a place but within each other. It is found within our Rule and our vows. It is found in our willingness to fill God's place within us with God, so that we may be a "servant of the Lord." One of the prayers I say each morning is the Collect for Guidance, which says, "We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but remember that we are ever walking in your sight." It helps me to remember who and what I am and what I need to do to fulfill my vows as a religious. It helps me to remember to obey.

Obedience is difficult to learn. Hearing what we need to know and/or to do may come to us from many sources. At times we discern it from reading Scripture or other writings. We may hear it in a sermon or a hymn. What we need to know comes at times through the voice of a brother, a friend, a colleague, a family member, or even a stranger. Hearing what we need to do and acting upon it are the two parts of obedience. Both can be challenging. For us "feeling" types doing what is right "feels" right. For "thinking" types (and you know who you are) doing the right thing seems logical. For both types we know what is right. We are vowed to obey: to do what we feel, think, and know is right.

We as brothers have answered God's call to be witnesses in the world. We are vowed to live the Rule, which enables us to say when we are called, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

Gabriel Liam



INTERCESSIONS

The Brotherhood		Grosvenor Calkins	Denise A Tivedo
Episcopal Visitor	<i>Sun</i>	Jeff Emmett	Kathleen C Klee
Rodney R Michel		<i>Richard A Belanger d 11.21.94</i>	<i>Sarah Elizabeth Wells, SSG</i>
Episcopal Visitors Emeriti		Joseph di Mauro, SA	<i>d 5.8.2000</i>
<i>Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91</i>		Catherine W Sturm	Patrick Bell Schwing
Paul Moore, jr		Mary Helen Clare	R William Franklin
Walter D Dennis		Maryann Wolff	Martín Barahona
Life and Annual Professed		Joseph F O'Day	M Carl Lunden
Brothers		Stephen D Montgomery	Patricia A Ahearn
Richard Thomas Biernacki		Fidel Flores	David Alvarado
<i>John Nidecker d 6.20.88</i>		<i>Brendan W Nugent d 10.10.96</i>	Jay Frank Crosthwaite
James Teets		Sheila Gould	Paul E Van Brunt
Luke Anthony Nowicki		Earl Christian	M Sharon Ryan
<i>John Peter Clark d 2.25.94</i>	<i>Mon</i>	Lawrence LeRoy David	Virginia E Holloway
William Francis Jones		<i>Kenneth Staples d 10.6.92</i>	Charles C Nichols, jr
Stephen Storen		David Smith	Kevin Heckman
Thomas Joseph Ross		William R Munroe	Margaret J Faulk
Tobias Stanislas Haller		Wendell Allen	Paul G Power
<i>William Bunting d 10.12.88</i>		<i>Elizabeth J Holton d 8.27.93</i>	Ruth G Power
Edward Munro		Roland "Randy" RR Pryor	Laurie Joseph Niblick, n/SSG
Charles Kramer	<i>Tue</i>	Grant Walsh	George L Vizvary
<i>Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93</i>		Jeffery L Benson	John R Coyle
Donovan Aidan Bowley		M Eugene Ellis	Melissa Colby
Michael David Elvestrøm		Mark Harris	Barbara Ann Jensen
Edward Ramón Riley		Enrique Antonio Illarze	Robert R M Bagwell
Christopher Stephen Jenks		Dennis W Pattey	William Russell
Ciarán Anthony DellaFera		John A Bell	Bruce N Gardner
<i>William Edward Orce</i>	<i>Wed</i>	Gerard F Beritela	Mark Palcanis
Damian-Curtis Kellum		Perry L Conley	Malcolm Roberts III
Richard John Lorino		Wilhelmina Barton	Cynthia Cheski
Ronald Augustine Fox		Raymond E Barton	Jim Elledge
Maurice John Grove		Gabriel McGovern	Jeffrey Linden
Charles Edward LeClerc		Ethel B "Ettie" Hurley	James E Cyphers
Francis Andrew Phillips		Amy M Barron	Michael D Bond
Andrew Fortuna	<i>Thu</i>	Leopold Frade	Mary Jean Bond
Gordon John Stanley		Diana D Frade	Nancy R Fifield
Karekin Madteos Yarian		Robin Stephanie Steele	Frederick L Nestrock
Alban Patrick Thompson		Ulric Van den Berghe	Brad Hicks
Gabriel Liam Everett		Carol Gwynn Hays	Gina Stickelmaier
Thomas Bushnell	<i>Fri</i>	James David Walley	Howard B Bowlin
Thomas Mark Liotta		David Benzshawel	Carin Bridgit Delfs, SSG
James Dunstan Mahoney		Robin R M'Kay	Sue Bradley
Patrick Ignatius Dickson		Theresa Allan	Joseph Lynn Spears
Robert James McLaughlin		Glenn R Charlton	Rolando Q Bacoy
Peter Budde		Betsy Kardos	John Calella
Novices	<i>Sat</i>	David Burton	Robert Thomas
John Henry Ernestine		Timothy Lundy	Robert J White
Francis Sebastian Medina		Wiley W "Jack" Merryman	Elizabeth Mary Bruke, SSG
Aelred Bernard Dean		Graham Thomas Prosser	Stephen Moss
Joseph Basil Gauss		Philip L Hewitt	& The Friends of the
Mark Andrew Jones		Michael S Parenti	Brotherhood
Emmanuel Williamson		Mark L Raper	Religious Communities
Postulant		Laurie A Wiegand	The Sisters of Saint Gregory
Richard Matthias		John-Albert Moseley	Sacramentine & Visitandine
Associates		JoAnn Tomback	Nuns
<i>Cecil Berges d 10.16.90</i>		Carl Lindgren, OSN	Society of the Atonement
<i>Marion Pierce d 12.26.91</i>		R Tony Cable	Order of Agapé &
Helen Marie Joyce, VHM		Lynne J D McQuade	Reconciliation
		Zechariah Schariah	Camaldolese Benedictines
		Lydia Karlo	
		Steven Bright-Jordan, OSJ	
		Ruth Richmond Laning	

more

Intercessions, continued

Society of Saint John the Evangelist
Community of the Paraclete
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, William Francis, Thomas Joseph, Charles, Damian-Curtis, William Edward, Edward Ramón, Patrick Ignatius and James Dunstan

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

For all who live with HIV/AIDS

Ian Frazier
Jane Bowley
Patricia J Matthias
Scott Wager
Kathy Cooper
Walter Hale
Mary Haller
Walter D Dennis
John Aguilar-Cruz, BSF
Helio
Charles Miller
Gordon Gauss
Gail Finley
Pauline Brulé
S Burtner Ulrich
Anthony H Jewiss
Sylvia Howard
Wayne Owens
Ruth Cooper
Tina Stipula
Louise Dobson
Drew Jones
Mary Beasley
Scott & Charles Edward

Departed

Charlotte B Morgan
Arsene and Louise Lemarier
J Norman Hall
George T Koerner
Henry N Fukui
J Steward Slocum
James R Gundrum
Joel Strever
Larry Hayes
Jeanette
Paul Hewett
Michael
Jane MacDonald
Marilyn McCullough
Stewart Carroll
Margo Grossman
John Gannon
David R Hunter
H Pierre LaMarre
Nancy Roberts
Helen Lucrecia
Harry E Shelley, jr
Peter Charles Eberhardt
Mychal Judge, OFM
Wilfred Niblick
Archibald Murray
Michael Andrew Bane
Laura Snik
Steve Jacobson
Tim Grazioso
All who perished in the terrorist acts of September 2001

Intentions

Joseph Richey House
Fessenden House Recovery Ministries
Saint James' Church Fordham, Bronx
Baltimore International Seafarers' Center
Our brothers William Francis, Karekin Madteos, Francis Andrew, Thomas Mark and John Henry
Trinity, Stoughton MA

Lisa and Alexis
Diana, Jennifer, Sage, Creed and Drew
Adam
John and Barbara
Sylvia Carroll
Kathleen Gannon
Lynn Harrington
Marian
Donald Bane
John Snik

Thanksgiving

The first profession of vows of Ursula Beguine Hendrick, Connie Jo McCarroll and Mary Julian Croissant, SSG

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 and its successors for ever \$ _____ and / or _____ percent of my estate to be used in such a manner as determined by its Directors.