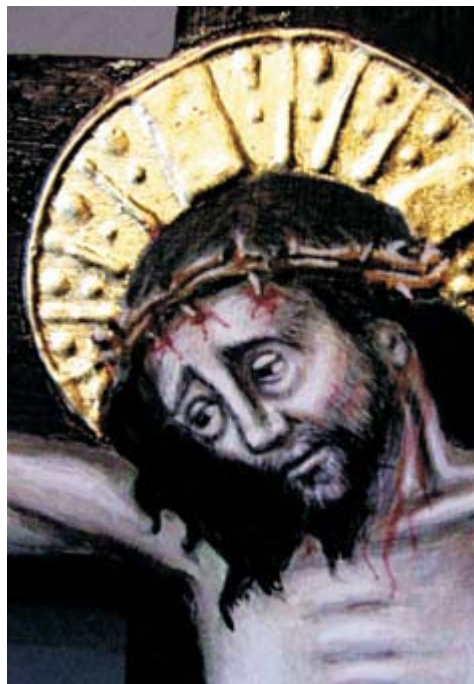




# HE SERVANT



**IS IT  
NOTHING  
TO YOU  
WHO PASS  
BY?**

**# 188**

*Lent 2003*

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### *The Servant*

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## COMMUNITY NOTES

### *Winter Convocation 2003*

Winter Convocation was a time of rest and refreshment – from a programmatic as well as a spiritual point of view. Twenty-nine of the community’s forty-one members journeyed to Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls, New York, for the week-long gathering. More than a foot of snow welcomed the travelers, who came from as far away as Alaska, California and Florida for this time apart with their brothers, and more than a foot of snow was still there when they left. The mid-January week featured some of the coldest weather any could remember, as the thermometer hovered around zero, day and night. But the fellowship was warm inside the walls of the retreat center, where no one seemed to mind – or even to notice – the cold and snow outside. Occasional small groups of brave and energetic Gregorians would venture forth for an invigorating walk around the grounds, but for most brothers, the indoors had it all over the outdoors that week!

Though there was no structured retreat program during the convocation week, five services marked the passing of each day. The four-fold Daily Office and the Holy Eucharist brought the Gregorian friars to the chapel for worship and prayer, and some



*Karekin Madteos preaches on the love of God and the human response to it.*

joined in extra-liturgical devotions at other times of the day and the night. Bishop Rodney R Michel, the Brotherhood’s Episcopal Visitor, came for two days to be with the brothers in prayer and fellowship; he celebrated the mass each day and preached on the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, the convocation’s closing day. Other thoughtful sermons were provided by Christopher Stephen, Karekin Madteos, Thomas and Peter; Tobias Stanislas was celebrant at the remaining Eucharists, and Edward, Charles Edward and Gordon John executed their diaconal ministry. Music is also an important feature of Gregorian worship, and Postulant Deward Rahm took to the bench at the or-

gan console to assist in making each day joyful. While not every convocation has been noted for its qualities of rest and relaxation, Winter Convocation 2003 will go down in the books as such a time – and everyone seemed the better for it!

### *Norwalk, Connecticut*

In early December Gregorians from Province II traveled to visit the Minister General’s parish, Grace Church, in this picturesque Connecticut town and to participate in an Advent Day of Recollection, Fellowship and Prayer. Organized by Minister Provincial James Dunstan, this time together featured the Daily Office officiated by the brothers and the Holy Eucharist celebrated by the Rev William E Hardwick of

Grace Church, who also preached and gave a warm welcome to the Gregorians. Reflective meditations were provided by Richard John and Robert James. A number of the members of the parish also attended this public Quiet Day, and it was a treat to get to know them.

### *New York, New York*

As one of IBM's out senior technical leaders, Ciarán Anthony has just been appointed technology liaison to Harvey Milk High School in NYC. His first big activity was as technical lead for the National Engineers Week activities that IBM jointly sponsors with HMHS. HMHS is a part of the Hetrick-Martin Institute (<http://www.hmi.org>). Founded in 1984, it is the unique result of HMI's collaboration with the New York City Board of Education, the first and largest accredited public school in the world devoted to the educational needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. These students are given the opportunity to complete the Board of Education high school curriculum in a safe and supportive environment. The school also offers a full college preparatory program, and the overall average on the New York State's Regents exams is 85 percent, with one third of the graduating class admitted to college programs.

Christopher Stephen served as cantor and crucifer for the life profession of vows of Br Anthony-Francis as a solitary religious in the Diocese of New York, at the Church of the Holy Rood. Bishop Mark Sisk received Anthony-Francis' vows in the presence of a large congregation, which included representatives from several religious communities, including the Community of the Holy Spirit, the Order of the Holy Cross, and the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (RC), and many clergy. Br Randy Horton, also a solitary in the diocese and worker with Christopher Stephen and Patrick Ignatius at Fessenden House (and as organist at Saint James', Fordham, the Bronx, with James and Tobias Stanislas) served as organist and music director for the liturgy. Anthony-Francis was formerly a member of the Order of the Incarnation, which disbanded several years ago. Convinced that he was still called to a religious vocation, he approached Bishop Richard Grein, to test his vocation as a solitary religious — a process that continued when Bishop Sisk took up that office. In the program for the liturgy, Anthony-Francis made special mention of the Brotherhood, particularly Christopher Stephen, Francis Andrew and Richard John, who “were a rock of stability during a time of crisis.”

### *Bronx, New York*

Tobias Stanislas served as master of ceremonies for the institution of friend and former “815” colleague the Rev Timothy Holder as rector of Trinity Church, Morrisania. The beautifully restored small church was packed with parishioners and visiting clergy and religious, led in procession by a piper. The celebration was rich with symbolism, solemn and yet tempered with good humor: among the gifts presented to the new rector was a bottle of Pepto-Bismol! The festive liturgy concluded with Bishop Sisk's releasing two doves to symbolize the hope for peace on the Eve of the Presentation.

### *Nashville, Tennessee*

Postulant Thomas Greer reports that he made a presentation on the religious life in the Anglican Communion at his parish, Saint Ann's, and has been active with a spiritual formation group in his area: "It is an interdenominational format called Companions in Christ. We have explored topics such as sharing journeys of faith, the Christian life as a journey, studying scripture, and group meditation."

### *Shreveport, Louisiana*

Anyone lucky enough to attend the service of "Recognition and Investiture of the Rt Rev David Bruce MacPherson" last Holy Cross Day – also the Brotherhood's Foundation Day – at the Cathedral Church of Saint Mark in the see city of the Diocese of Western Louisiana would have seen our own Michael David at his best – he was one of *four* thurifers for the event, reminding all in attendance of the prayers of the faithful combined with the cloud of witnesses that has gone before us! Glory to God in the highest, in the liturgy and in the hearts of his faithful people, and warmest wishes for the ministry of Bishop David Bruce.

### *San Antonio, Texas*

Saint Paul's Grayson Street is in for a wonderful experience as it welcomes Aelred Bernard as retreat leader for a Lenten Quiet Day entitled "Windows into Heaven." Postulant William Benefield has arranged for Aelred Bernard to come to Texas and lead his parish in an extraordinary opportunity to experience the spiritual life through mediation and the use of icons in prayer.

### *Irvine, California*

Thomas was delighted to tell us that he has passed his portfolio exam, meaning that he is now a Master of Arts! Our sincerest congratulations to him for this important accomplishment – though those who know Thomas will also know that this is but one facet in his academic career. He is also working toward his Doctorate in Philosophy, and this new credential has brought him within range of a dissertation that will achieve that goal. Congratulations, dear brother, we are very proud of you – and we realize that the truly *hard* work is still ahead of you. But we also know that you can achieve this goal, given the support of prayer that comes from all quarters of the community!

### *Auburn, California*

Novice Richard Matthias organized a group of eighteen participants for a workshop on the Daily Office, studying the history, learning the chant tones and how to conducting services in community. They spent the day in study and prayer, carefully learning the BSG format for Noonday Prayer and Compline and the singing with great passion. There were representatives from six different parishes, some traveling over 70 miles to attend, as well as several clergy and the chair of the Lay Ministry Commission. (Note: The *new* BSG music book with expanded music and psalmody will be available later this year.)

## *Seward, Alaska*

Novice Emmanuel has been keeping busy with many projects this winter. He is the officiant at weekly Evening Prayer at his parish of Saint Peter's, where he is also a Lay Eucharistic Minister and visits the sick and shut-ins. He also heads up the training of new LEMs. He preaches once a month, and especially rewarding to him was the opportunity to preach at Midnight Mass this past Christmas Eve. Saint Peter's is a small parish, and Emmanuel has obviously pitched in to share his gifts with the congregation. As a member of the Altar Guild, he is working on creating a complete new set of Advent paraments for the church and has designed a set of kneelers for the Needlepoint Guild to begin working on. He also uses his business acumen to assist the building fund drive in an effort to reshingle the 100-year-old church.

## *Manila, Philippines*



*Bishop Botengan, Coadjutor Bishop Dixie Taclobao, Maurice John, Associates Fr Ned Mapangdol, Fr Leon Cadsap and Rolando Bacoy, with others at the summit*

Maurice John has been invited to join a committee working on revising the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Central Philippines. He reports that he has also become acquainted with the newly-consecrated Bishop Coadjutor of that diocese, Bishop Dixie Taclobao. He attended a summit meeting held in Baguio, the center of Episcopal influence here in the Philippines.



*Maurice John with Rolando Bacoy, Frs Cadsap and Andres, and Bishop and Mrs Botengan*

## **STEADFAST FAITH**

*Strengthen us to endure all adversity with invincible and steadfast faith.*

Over the past couple of years I have ended up preaching on the commemoration of some martyr or another with increasing frequency. My mind has been filled with vivid images of a woman having her breasts cut off because she refused to marry a pagan nobleman; or of a deacon being barbequed because he laid up for himself and his church treasures in heaven, which his persecutors could not steal; or of a little boy embracing the cross on which he would be put to death because he and his family refused to renounce Christ; or of a young seminarian being shot to death in the Deep South during the Civil Rights movement while protecting a comrade; or of a Baptist preacher being assassinated while standing on the balcony of a motel in Memphis, Tennessee; and today I'm preaching on Vincent of Saragossa, deacon and protomartyr of Spain, who endured grotesque torture and mutilation before being put to death during the persecutions of the Roman Emperors Diocletian and Maximian in 304. I have to admit, all this talk of martyrs is making me a little nervous. Is God trying to tell me something?

Like many of the early saints, numerous legends have grown up around Vincent that obscure the historical record, but this much about him we can be reasonably sure is true. He was a deacon to Bishop Valerius and served as something of a spokesman or mouthpiece for the bishop, who had a speech impediment. During the persecutions, when he and Valerius were called upon to renounce their faith by Dacian, the Roman governor of Spain, Vincent, with the bishop's blessing and encouragement, basically told the governor to "shove it." Dacian became so enraged that he ordered Vincent mutilated and tortured to death. Bishop Valerius was merely exiled.

While meditating on today's lessons in relation to Vincent's martyrdom, several themes struck me with particular force. First of all, Vincent and all of the martyrs I know anything about, displayed tremendous courage. Courage is one of the cardinal virtues of our faith, but we certainly do not have a monopoly on it. All cultures and all religious traditions I know of value courage highly. Almost anybody I know, if put to the test, would be willing to die for the sake of someone they love or for the sake of a deeply held cause or belief. We have been seeing a lot of examples of self-giving courage in the media lately, both in its most noble and in its most disordered aspects: the Franciscan friar and chaplain who was killed while giving last rites to a fallen fire-fighter amid the debris raining down from the towers of the World Trade Center; or the suicide bomber, who blows himself up in the hopes that his act of self-sacrifice will kill as many people as possible, and leave the survivors wounded, terrorized and traumatized. On the face of it, the courage of the martyrs doesn't seem to be a particularly Christian virtue. On the face of it, there is nothing distinctly Christian about the courage they displayed other than the qualities of self-sacrifice – of "laying down one's life for one's friends" – that we, as Christians, seem to share with most of the world's cultures and religions.

Another theme that struck me was that of witness. In today's gospel Jesus says: "Everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God."

As I think all of us here know, the word *martyr* means "witness," and even with what little we know about Vincent, he exemplified that witness to Christ in the face of intense persecution. The martyrs in any age were not martyred simply because they were Christians in any sort of passive sense. They did not merely privately acknowledge and practice their faith. They publicly proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God and the son of Mary; that he forgave sins; that he healed people of their infirmities, both physical and spiritual; that he was crucified under Pontius Pilate for blasphemy and sedition; and that he rose from the dead and showed himself to his disciples; and that he is alive still and that he still brings forgiveness and healing to all people. The martyrs proclaimed this in their words and in their actions by continuing the ministry of Jesus – by being his Body in the world. They proclaimed this in the face of the powers and principalities of this world. And like their master, they were murdered for their witness.

Sometimes we need  
to tell the powers  
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Most of the martyrs I know about tended to be "in your face" kind of people. Like Vincent, they often come across as incredibly reckless and confrontational. I must confess, I am uncomfortable with this. Even when I read the story of the martyrdom of Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles, I can't help thinking, "It's no wonder that everybody was so pissed off at him. Couldn't he have been just a little less confrontational, a little more diplomatic, a little more tactful?"

And then, Jesus' words from today's gospel, come to mind:

When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.

Sometimes recklessness is called for in our witness to the Gospel. Sometimes confrontation is called for in our witness to the Gospel. Sometimes we need to tell the powers and principalities of this world to "shove it" in no uncertain terms. Sometimes this is the Holy Spirit telling us exactly what we need to say in that very hour. Sometimes, this will make us martyrs – witnesses to the Gospel. And sometimes, this will get us killed.



But this martyrdom – this witness – bears fruit. The martyrdom of Stephen led directly to the conversion of Saint Paul, even though Paul himself participated in putting him to death. The martyrdom of Vincent led directly to the conversion of Spain. The martyrdoms of Jonathan Daniels and Martin Luther King jr and so many others bore fruit in bringing about reforms in the racist laws and customs of this country – reforms that are ongoing.

When I was a kid, I had the impression that “real” martyrs didn’t exist anymore, except maybe in some far-off mission fields in incredibly primitive places that we now refer to as the “Third World.” We, as contemporary Christians, were called to a daily martyrdom of self-denial and humility before God. In a sense this is true. We are called to a daily martyrdom of self-denial – of weaning ourselves away from the little idols we have set up in our hearts – idols that separate us from the love of God and love for one another. But “real martyrdom” still exists, and it always has. It exists not only in distant lands and foreign countries and cultures. It exists right here, right now. And, in the ultimate obscenity, many of those who are martyred for their faith – for being witnesses to the saving power of Jesus – are being put to death by people who themselves profess to be Christian. There are those in this world for whom being Christian is a form of political, ethnic or cultural identification, not faith in the living God as revealed in Christ Jesus, and the results of this misidentification can be disastrous. There are those in this world who call themselves “Christian” who so distort the message of the Gospel and the teachings of the church as to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Think of the many who preach hate and intolerance in the Name of our Lord and Savior, or those who threaten, terrorize and murder abortion providers and their clients in a hideous perversion of the church’s teaching.

Just two days ago we commemorated one of the great martyrs of our time in a secular holiday – a holiday that was established by our political leaders in an attempt to rob Martin Luther King’s witness of its power and grace by turning him into an excuse for a three-day weekend. And yet Martin’s witness – his martyrdom – easily overwhelms the cheap grace that our secular culture would try to pass off as his witness; just as Vincent’s witness – his martyrdom – still rings out with authority and grace after seventeen-hundred years.

We are living in dangerous times. We all know this. There are wars and rumors of wars. Nations are rising up against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms. There is nothing very unusual about this. It’s been going on through all of recorded history and probably much longer, but we, in this country, have been insulated from this for a long time. Although we have had outbreaks of violence and small wars, no major war, with all its terror, carnage, destruction and mass murder, has touched the continental United States for almost 150 years. We have lived in an illusion of security and prosperity, safe in the knowledge that no one would dare attack us. That all changed on September 11, 2001, and we now know that our illusions were just that – illusions. We are living in a new age, an age in which martyrs are going to become increasingly common – and we need to prepare ourselves. We need to cultivate a particularly Christian form of courage – a courage that is different from ordinary, run-of-the-mill courage. Christian courage flows out of the love that we are called to have for every man, woman and child we encounter. It is a courage that flows out of the love we have not just for our most intimate family and friends, or our tribe, our culture, or our nation,

or our religious community. It is the courage born of the love Jesus calls us to have even for our bitterest enemies. It is the love that Stephen showed not just for the widows and orphans of Jerusalem, but for those who were stoning him to death, including a man named Paul who was holding the cloaks of his murderers. It is the love that Vincent showed not just for Jesus, or his bishop, or the church that he served, but also the love he showed Dacian, his tormentor, and the emperors Diocletian and Maximian. It is the love that Martin Luther King showed not just for his own people, or those who joined his cause, but for the people of our nation and the world who are held in the bondage of the sin of racism and bigotry. It is a love that has the courage to tell the powers and principalities of this world to “shove it” not just for the sake of the persecuted, but also for the sake of the persecutors.

So, with all this talk of martyrs, is God trying to tell us something? Yes! We are all called to be martyrs. We are all called to be witnesses to the power of Christ and his resurrection in our words and in our actions. We are all called to tell the powers and principalities of this world – all those little idols that set themselves up as gods in the form of religious fanaticism or political systems or nationalism or economic systems or anything that would separate us and our brothers and sisters from the love of Christ – we are all called to tell those idols and their prophets to “shove it.” For some of us this will mean the martyrdom of being politely ignored. For some of us this will mean the martyrdom of being ridiculed and scorned. For some of us this may mean the martyrdom of imprisonment and torture. For some of us this may even mean the martyrdom of death. “Strengthen us to endure all adversity with invincible and steadfast faith.”

*Christopher Stephen*

### *Reflection from Honduras*



## **IS IT NOTHING TO YOU WHO PASS BY?**

How does one speak of images which defy words? In January I wrote to the brothers about the death of a street kid in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, named Belsy Helga. Belsy was one of the one hundred million children world-wide who live on the streets of some town, village, or city without adult support; forty million live in Latin America. In writing about him I must say I never met Belsy and yet I know him. He was a brother to so many children living on the sidewalks and in the crevasses of his community, living off of the garbage and the largess of a deeply divided society intent upon being a parody of the culture of the United States. Somehow he was murdered. Somehow he got in the wrong place at the wrong time and died and he was only fourteen.

Belsy had been in a number of relief shelters and programs in his brief life, all of which are designed to handle the heartbreaking mass of boys seeking help, looking for some respite from danger, violence and hunger. But such help, done in large groups, can do little to heal frightened hearts and change the chemically captive



*A child sleeps in drugged oblivion at the street-side.*



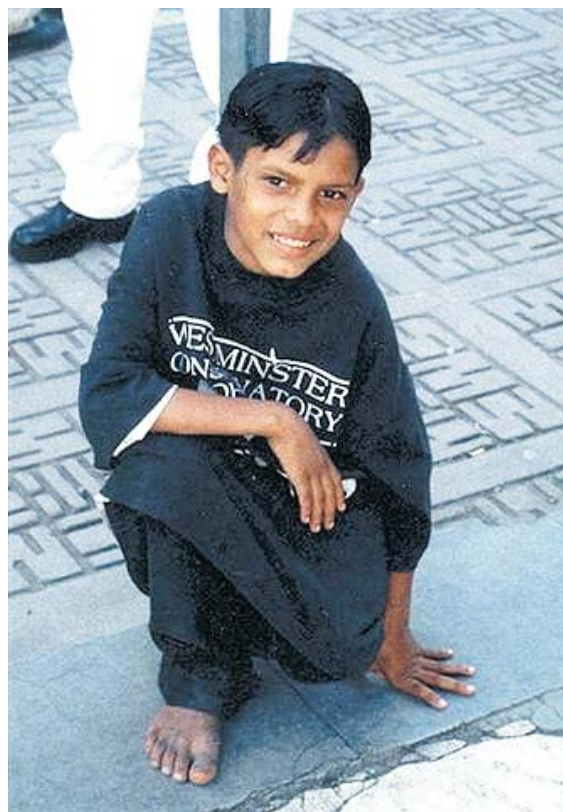
*The Micah Boys: top row Miguel, Oscar, Marvin, Danilo, Olvin, Jose; bottom row David, Edwin, Pedro, Cristino, Harvin, Darwin*

minds of young boys. Moving from one to another of the various under-staffed programs, sniffing an addictive yellow glue all the while, creating irreparable brain damage, giving an intoxicating facade to a life of grave danger and constant hunger, Belsy, like so many others, learned the rules of his cadre. What made him move on rather than stay in one spot I do not know. To a boy who knows not a single space on the streets to be his own, how does he come to understand someone else wants to give him a place of his own? Maybe the money ran out. Maybe the rules of the streets invaded a shelter. Maybe safety was not a recognizable part of his life. Maybe children, regardless of worldly condition, know when a place is just a “program” and when it is a gift of the Spirit. So he moved and he died.

How I came to know of Belsy is through Michael Miller, the founder and director of the Micah Project. I met Michael during our year in Tegucigalpa. A friend took us to the Micah House and from there it was love at first sight: twelve boys, clean, well groomed, dressed modestly in school uniforms. Each of these boys had been just like Belsy, living on the streets. Each found their way, by invitation of Michael, into the Micah Project. Each has been the recipient of volunteer work from many people to give them a good secular education, Christian education, English as a second language, a social responsibility to work with the boys on the streets, build homes for the homeless from Hurricane Mitch of 1998, and be missionaries to people who do not know the power of Easter.

Belsy wanted to be a part of the Micah Project because Belsy had known some of the Micah boys when they roamed the streets together. Michael writes how Belsy begged to be taken in there, but there was no room. Twelve boys are crammed into one house occupying all the space available. Neighborhood boys would come in during the day to be with the Micah boys, to know the fellowship of hope, but they would have to leave when evening came and the house was shut down for the night. Belsy wanted to be there, to live there, and yet there was no room.

How do children get to the streets? We talk about the elderly in this country having to choose between medicine and food. Some parents in Honduras have to choose between their own children. The meager income of the parents requires that children as young as eight go out and take care of themselves, at least during the daylight hours. But as Robert Frost writes, “way leads on to way,” and they somehow get into the streets full-time. The point when this happens is not all that noticeable. Or they leave home because of grotesque phys-



*Belsy Helga*

ical abuse, some of which is brought on by anger and alcoholism germinated in the constant failure of a parent to be able to care for children. And sometimes a parent's death becomes a sentence of exile for a child.

The poor of Honduras do not fit into any category we know in the States. The annual income of people in the States who receive welfare assistance live on as much money as the middle class do in Honduras. Albeit the cost of living is higher in the States, the bottom of the ladder in Honduras is not even visible to the casual observer until time spent in-country, clearing the eyes of suppositions and expectations, makes the Honduran poor magically appear. People visiting Honduras are just not prepared to see the unthinkable, especially when there are so many people in Honduras who look like us and act like us as they pass us in the McDonald's doorway. But there comes a time when the cultural haze disappears and then there are tears.

Walking up the hill toward San Filipe Hospital from Boulevard Morazon, having just left my daily Spanish class, about four in the afternoon, right in front of the hardware store, directly across from the funeral home, there was a gaunt teenager sitting on the edge of the street with his head in his left hand, elbow on his knee. He wore no shirt. The crusted dirt was visible on his brown skin. His hair was so dirty it stood out in all directions. His pants were filthy, the pant legs six inches too short. He was barefoot. This was a daily image one sees because Honduras does not hide its poor – it merely ignores a problem which seems too large to solve. Sometimes, however, in a political campaign, a clean-up program targets these children and these familiar faces just disappear, never to be seen again. To be sure, they are quickly replaced by others, faces soon familiar to the neighborhood.

There was nothing unusual about this boy, too soon old, until I noticed his right foot. The skin on the bottom of his foot was laid back from toe to arch, filleted, like a detached sole of an old shoe. The flap of skin just hung there as he held his head, holding his damaged foot about four inches off of the ground, the foot trembling. Within sight of a major hospital, not open to him, he sat in great pain, and in great danger of infection. And I, taking Spanish lessons, pretending to be a missionary in Honduras, discovered later that evening I had truly discovered myself, because that afternoon, I walked on by that boy.

And I think of Michael Miller who is deeply troubled because another boy, the boy he turned away, is dead. This dear man, who gave up everything in his promising life in the States to go to Honduras, felt such deep sorrow and responsibility for Belsy. Belsy was on the streets not because of Michael, but because of history and politics, and expectations. And Belsy died on those streets not because of Michael but because once a world of violence is born it will most certainly be true to itself and live by its own rules.

Michael did not walk past Belsy because Michael, in the words of the prophet Micah, has done justice, loved mercy and walked humbly. It was I who passed on by — and I did not even know his name.

*Peter*



## THE FIRST “DESERT STORM”

When the words *desert war* are mentioned — if we aren’t already at war again by the time this essay appears — images of “Stormin’ Norman” and Saddam Hussein are likely to come to mind. Just a few short years ago, who didn’t watch the on-the-scene coverage of the Desert Storm operation with fascination? And when I say on-the-scene, I mean on-the scene! With modern technology you could follow the course of a missile as it homed in on its target, pinned in the crosshairs of the pilot’s viewfinder, until it, and the target with it, blew to smithereens. For the younger generation, that’s what desert war is all about: almost a video game, a high-tech shoot-em-up played at long distance.

For those of us with a few more years on us, however, the words desert war might conjure up instead names like Montgomery and Rommel and El Alamein, visions not of high-tech missiles but the tawny tanks of the Afrika Korps, strangely decorated with palm trees and swastikas.

But if we go back further, much further, to the times told of in Mark’s Gospel, we will find a desert war of far greater antiquity, and of far greater consequence, than either the long battles fought in North Africa during the Second World War, or the campaign against Iraq. For here we come upon the primeval battle of Good against Evil which is the model and prototype for all others. Here we are not dealing with Field Marshal Montgomery or General Schwarzkopf, but with God’s Holy Spirit and God’s beloved Son. And although it is tempting to dress up Saddam Hussein in red tights, with a pointed tail and horns, in our Gospel reading today we encounter no counterfeit second-rate devil, but Satan himself.

We can read detailed histories of the Second World War, or review the live-action video from the cockpits of high-tech fighter-bombers over Iraq, or the on-the-spot coverage from CNN. But Mark, our evangelist-reporter for the first Desert Storm, gives us few details, only the barest outline of this battle in the desert. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark doesn’t tell us how Satan tempted Jesus, only that he tempted him.

But Mark does tell us something, in spite of the brevity of his terse report, something the other evangelists gloss over, something that at first glance appears troubling. While Luke and Matthew tell us that Jesus was “led” by the Spirit to go into the wilderness, Mark uses stronger active language. He tells us that the Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness; and that doesn’t mean the Spirit was serving as chauffeur! This is not the language of mere transportation, but the language of compulsion, of force and power, surprising language that tells us surprising things about God, God’s Holy Spirit, and God’s beloved Son. This is no-nonsense language about why God’s Son was born, what he came to do, and how he would go about doing it, as Peter tells us, “once for all.”

The Apostle Peter, in his first epistle, gets right to the point, doesn’t he? And it’s the same point Mark is making in his Gospel. Jesus came to save us, to suffer and die “for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.” What the evangelist Mark

describes in today's Gospel is the first sortie, the first battle in a war that would end with a death upon a green hill far away, outside a city wall, a death that signified not a loss, but the final victory over death. This is the beginning of the greatest war of all, the war in which all of humankind is at stake, and Mark is setting the stage to tell that greatest war story ever told.

The Spirit of God, having descended upon Jesus in the River Jordan and equipped him with power and grace, clothing him in righteousness, sends him forth into battle like a general commanding his army. The Spirit drives Jesus out into the wilderness to face his enemy and ours, the old serpent, Satan.

Satan is the Adversary, the Obstacle, the stumbling-block. Satan is one who can't create anything or accomplish anything; he is utterly powerless since he has cut himself off from God the source of all light and life. But he can get in the way, the perfect illustration of the phrase "dead weight." While the Spirit is the one who gets things going, Satan is the one who tries to bring them to a halt. If the Spirit is the engine, then Satan is the brakes: but brakes that don't work as they should — Satan's brakes come on unexpectedly when you're driving fine, but fail you when you're heading down a sloping hillside. Satan is the one who gets in the way, the stumbling-block, the dead weight that opposes and drags down. Satan is the blocked-up spiritual sink that overflows and makes a mess of your life.

Satan is the inner voice that says to a hopeful young person planning for college, "You'll never make it." Satan whispers to the woman who's raised a family and now wants to realize her dreams for a career, "Who do you think you are?"

Satan says, "It can't be done!" But the Spirit answers, "With God all things are possible!" Satan may be the one who gets in the way, but Jesus, driven by the Spirit, compelled by the Spirit of God, is the one who can and will plow through Satan's obstacles, conquer the adversary, and remove the stumbling block on our behalf.

But it isn't easy. This is a Desert War, not a Desert Picnic. And this battle in the desert is just the start of a war that will last three years. And more: for it is a war that is still played out in human hearts and souls when we forget that Christ is victorious and all we need to do when Satan blocks our way is to remind ourselves of Christ's victory on our behalf.

For Satan has been defeated. He is still alive, if you can call it living; and as Saint Peter also said, he is on the prowl like a hungry lion, to do damage where he can. But though he may fume and spit and try to spread his poison, his weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed by the One who had the power to conquer him.

God's Holy Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, and Jesus overcame that obstacle in the power of the Spirit. He overcame the opposition of small-minded folk who thought he was claiming too much for himself. He overcame the religious leaders who thought they had God in their pocket. He overcame Satan in the wilderness and on the cross. He overcame death and the grave, and he gave us the power to overcome sin and death in him and through him. Christ fought for us on earth, and he rules for us in heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Tobias Stanislas*



# INTERCESSIONS

<u>The Brotherhood</u>		Associates and Friends of the	Departed
Episcopal Visitor	Sun	Brotherhood	Charlotte B Morgan
Rodney R Michel		Religious Communities	Arsene and Louise Lemarier
Episcopal Visitors Emeriti		The Sisters of Saint Gregory	J Norman Hall
<i>Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91</i>		Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns	George T Koerner
Paul Moore, jr		Society of the Atonement	Henry N Fukui
Walter D Dennis		Order of Agapé & Reconciliation	J Steward Slocum
Life and Annual Professed		Camaldolese Benedictines	James R Gundrum
Richard Thomas Biernacki		Society of Saint John the	Grace Clement
<i>John Nidecker d 6.20.88</i>		Evangelist	Sergio Perez
James Teets		Community of the Paraclete	Shirley Thompson Carter
Luke Anthony Nowicki		Congregation of the Anglican	Ned Cole
<i>John Peter Clark d 2.25.94</i>	Mon	Oblates of Saint Benedict	Brad Reetz
William Francis Jones		Community of the	Charles Gaines
Stephen Storen		Transfiguration	Mair Downes
<i>Thomas Joseph Ross d 12.18.01</i>		The Order of Julian of Norwich	Richard Geliebter
Tobias Stanislas Haller		For healing	Joffrey Andawi Jr
<i>William Bunting d 10.12.88</i>		Luke Anthony, William Francis,	Joan Peabody
Edward Munro		Charles, Damian-Curtis, William	Neil Fruge
Charles Kramer	Tue	Edward, Edward Ramón, Patrick	Tug Araujo
<i>Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93</i>		Ignatius, Gabriel Liam, James	Caroline Sparks
Donovan Aidan Bowley		Dunstan	Mike Carty
Michael David Elvestrøm		For all who live with HIV/AIDS	R Kirk Galloway
Edward Ramón Riley		Ian Frazier	Betsy Helga
Christopher Stephen Jenks		Jane Bowley	Harold Emile Funck
Ciarán Anthony DellaFera		Mary Haller	Spaulding Howe
William Edward Orce	Wed	Paul Moore jr	Betsy Powers
Damian-Curtis Kellum		Walter D Dennis	Susan Griffin
Richard John Lorino		Betty Budde	Tommy Sawyer
Ronald Augustine Fox		David G Henritzky, OSL	Richard Geliebter
Maurice John Grove		Kay Benefield	Intentions
Charles Edward LeClerc		Anthony DellaFera	Joseph Richey House
Francis Andrew Phillips		Thomas Gumprecht, SA	Fessenden Recovery Ministries
Andrew Fortuna	Thu	Lou Goodwin	Dove House
Gordon John Stanley		William Mason jr	Baltimore International
Karekin Madteos Yarian		Linda White	Seafarers' Center
Alban Patrick Thompson		Betty Brannon	Saint James' Fordham; Trinity,
Gabriel Liam Everett		Susie Jones	Stoughton MA; Saint Paul's, San
Thomas Bushnell		Mary Earle	Antonio; St John's Brooklyn
Thomas Mark Liotta		Raye Benefield	Karekin Madteos, Francis
James Dunstan Mahoney		Art Neighbours	Andrew, Gabriel Liam, Thomas
Patrick Ignatius Dickson	Fri	Griffin Rivers	Our Lady of the Rosary, Yonkers;
Robert James McLaughlin		Maribeth Osgood	Aldersgate UMC Dobbs Ferry
Peter Budde		Jill Reintjes	Michael, Frank, Christopher,
John Henry Ernestine		Claire Chetrit	Chester, Manuel, Charles, Don,
Francis Sebastian Medina		Gabriel, Ruth, Millie William,	Tammy, Roger, Aileen, Susan,
Aelred Bernard Dean		Patricia, Donna, Ali, "J"	Thomasina, Stevie, Sarah & Josh
Novices	Sat	Amy Suchich	John Downes
Joseph Basil Gauss		Harold and John Dickson	Anne Schaeffer
Mark Andrew Jones		Laura Simpkins	Thomas & Stephanie Blackburn
Emmanuel Williamson		Madelein Mairi Boerckel	James Dyer Muir
Richard Matthias		David Zanger	Thanksgiving
Postulants		Nadia Bohlman	Election of the Rev Masud I
William Benefield		Sarah Nestrock	Syedullah, as NA Minister
Deward Rahm		James Dean	Provincial, TSSF
Thomas M Greer		Arlene White	Ordination of Donna Lise
Postulant Prospective		Joseph DiMauro, SA, a/BSG	Dambrot to the priesthood
Kevin Harrop Valentine		Virginia Hollingsworth	The promotion of Robert White
		Dean Rice	a/BSG to Lieutenant FDNY
			(EMS)