



HE SERVANT



**THE LEAVES
OF THE
TREES
SHALL BE
FOR THE
HEALING
OF THE
NATIONS**

*Drugs destined for
disuse are recovered,
sorted, and put to use
through the efforts of
RAMP*

#204
Summer 2007

Publications from the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory

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The Servant

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WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY?

I continue to see, from time to time, wrist bands and pins which say WWJD — What would Jesus do? I often wonder what Jesus would actually say? With summer upon us — spring was short and we nearly missed it, I offer some thoughts:

- Ⓣ We have destroyed lands and fields throughout this country and we wonder why animals and plants are disappearing; animals entering into “our” lands and bothering us.
- Ⓣ We have changed the nature of the landscape and we continue to strip and destroy forests and fields to erect McMansions and houses that shame this county and make us greedy land barons — in places where such land does not exist!
- Ⓣ We have stripped Iraq both in buildings and land AND in people. How do we suppose Jesus would react here?
- Ⓣ We wonder why the Ice Cap is melting but we continue to view commercials advertising bigger and more powerful SUVs and trucks! Vehicles which cost in excess of 40-50 dollars to fuel!

What would Jesus say? I think he would first have to stop crying in order to speak. This WWJD stuff is non-action! We keep asking that question and we get no answer. Why can't *we* take action? How long will this great nation (disliked in so much of the world, and weakened through the less than wise exercise of our strength) allow the government to be corrupt and militant? How long will we look at the growing list of the dead, with tears in our eyes and the eyes of their loved ones — and do nothing.

I believe Jesus would say, “Get going and do something.” I think he'd say that we have upset the balance set in place, feeding our “needs” and our SUVs while sisters and brothers starve, and the world melts. We continue to do so and we know the consequences. We now see that contaminants that found their way into animal food are present in our food as well — in “acceptable” levels; so we reap what we sow. And who “accepted” them? Perhaps we need to revolt — and not just so the king in the old story could say, “They certainly are!” when told the people were revolting. It is time to take this seriously! The bee population is dying as well — and with no more pollination, you know what? No more food.

We forget we are all connected. Remember how the young son in Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons* confronts his father when he finds out that the father's corrupt business practice caused the death of his older brother and so many other pilots: “Don't you live in the world!?”

Jesus, the Son, isn't talking to his Father, but to us, and he is saying one thing: You have really messed up! It is time for us to start to veto some things. It is not too late. View the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. Or find a copy of *All My Sons* — 60 years old this year but it speaks to us still of our responsibility to each other, and to the world. For in the end Jesus would probably say *act* and *act now*.

RTB

Here and there with the brothers

COMMUNITY NOTES

New Jersey

Robert James McLaughlin and John Henry Ernestine both represented their parishes at the annual Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey on March 2-3. John Henry notes: “We had a fine time at the convention. It was good to see Robert James and the other delegates and parishioners from his parish. He and I spent time catching up at the dinner on Friday. During the day on Saturday, when we were not at the plenary or occupied with the guts of the work of convention, we enjoyed the opportunity to walk around the convention hall and meet other clergy, religious and friends in our diocese.”

New York

Bishop of New York Mark S Sisk holds an annual meeting and luncheon with the superiors of religious communities active in the Diocese of New York, and such a gathering was scheduled for Tuesday, March 6th. Due to a schedule conflict, our Minister General, Richard Thomas Biernacki, was unable to attend this year, so he appointed Richard John Lorino, Minister Provincial of Province 2, to attend in his place. Richard John reports that it was a fine occasion – one of fellowship both with the bishop and with the leadership of a number of other communities with local members – and it provides an opportunity for the bishop to keep abreast of activities in the lives of these orders who function throughout his diocese. Many thanks, Bishop Mark, for your hospitality!

Tobias Stanislas Haller lead a retreat for the Diocese of New York’s ordinands at Holy Cross Monastery in mid-March, focusing on the role of the Daily Office and the Holy Eucharist in the life of ministry.

James Teets was both delighted to receive the announcement of his second Honorary Canonry, this one from Trinity Cathedral in Monrovia, Liberia, awarded in thanksgiving for his more than two decades of collegial service to the Bishop of Liberia and many in that recently war-torn diocese. Liberia was founded in the 19th century as a Mission Territory of The Episcopal Church, then recognized as a formal diocese, and finally in 1982 transferred to the Church of the Province of West Africa. Some will recall that James was named Honorary Canon of the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in San Pedro Sula, Honduras in 1994.



Retreatants gather with Sandy the potter in Chattanooga (story next page).

Chattanooga

The second annual Chattanooga retreat took place in late April, co-sponsored by Ron Fender and the Episcopal Church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Ooltewah TN. Those gathered with Ron included Aelred Bernard Dean, Thomas Lawrence Greer, novice David Luke Henton, postulant-prospective Bo Armstrong and associates Lyman Grant and Eric Taylor. Saint Francis of Assisi offered generous hospitality by housing the group in a large cabin on their property. This allowed the brothers, associates and friends of the Brotherhood to meet for prayer, food and fellowship.

The retreat began with dinner and Evening Prayer, followed by a time of fellowship and getting to know some of the parishioners of Saint Francis who came by to welcome the gathering to their community and to the greater Chattanooga area.

Saturday, after breakfast and Morning Prayer, they traveled to downtown Chattanooga to the studio of Sandy Booher, a potter who happens to be blind. She demonstrated the biblical story of the potter in clay. The group lunched, then chanted the



Sandy throws a pot while novice David Luke looks on.



"Lift up your heads" to see the retreatants gathered on the hillside!

Noonday Office in the Arts Bluff area, later returning to the cabin where parishioners were busy preparing authentic Southern barbeque. The brothers, associates, parishioners from several churches, members of the Community Kitchen and residents of Saint Matthew's Shelter gathered together for Evening Prayer before participating in the 8th sacra-

ment: good food and fellowship! The evening ended with Compline. On Sunday, Aelred Bernard preached at both the 8 and 10 AM liturgies. Brothers also served as lectors and chalice bearers. After cleaning the cabin they gathered at Saint Matthew's Shelter to meet the residents and to talk about the ministry of the shelter in the community of Chattanooga. The weekend was filled with many moments of grace and refreshment. As one associate said, "This weekend allowed me the space I needed just to be,"—a sentiment agreed upon by all.



Associate (and Aspirant) Blane Van Pletzen with Emmanuel Williamson. They met when Blane was interviewing at Vancouver Theological Seminary.

Baltimore

The Episcopal Church's Companion Diocese Network met at the Maritime Center in the Baltimore suburb of Linthicum Heights in early May. James Teets is the National Coordinator for Companion Diocese Relationships and Edward Munro is the appointed CD Consultant for the church's Province III. It's a small group consisting of the nine provincial representatives plus a colleague from the Anglican Church of Canada and two staff officers from the Episcopal Church Center in New York, but their work together represents more than 100 international relationships between dioceses of The Episcopal Church and dioceses from throughout the Anglican Communion's 37 other provinces.

Chicago

Eleven Province 5 brothers, associates and an inquirer gathered at Saint Andrew's Chapel of Saint James Cathedral in Chicago in early March for a provincial day. Minister Provincial Nathanael Deward Rahm and community associate Deacon Michael Bond presented "Gefilte Fishing: a Guide to Spiritual Awakening," as the retreat program. As noted in the introduction by Rabbi Rami M Shapiro, "Gefilte-fishing is the art of living with full attention. Living life with full attention is also called spirituality. Gefilte fishing is the art of spiritual living."

Brothers and associates presented readings from Rabbi Shapiro's guide, with each reading preceded by an eclectic assortment of music on a CD "mix" provided by Nathanael Deward. The Very Rev James Dunkerley, rector of Saint Peter's (where Nathanael Deward is the parish administrator and organist/choirmaster) said mass for the brothers at Saint Andrew's Chapel, and honored our patron Gregory the Great. In his brief homily, Fr Dunkerley told the group that he always thought Gregory was a visionary, and he thought it quite appropriate that BSG had Gregory as its patron, since the Brotherhood is such a visionary religious community in the church. In the afternoon session, Nathanael Deward facilitated a discussion on community associates and their Rule. The associates in attendance had some good feedback, and

their ideas, along with others presented at the session, were forwarded to Director of Associates Peter Budde for his review.

Several of the brothers attended a showing of the film *Becket* Saturday evening, and Chicago brothers Ronald Augustine Fox, Joseph Basil Gauss and postulant Will Harpest, joined by William Henry Benefield of San Antonio went to the morning liturgy at Saint Peter's, and Gordon John Stanley served as one of the deacons. On the Feast of Saint Gregory, Will served the 7:30 AM mass at Atonement where Gregory was celebrated by the Rev Thomas J Brady. At Saint Peter's 6 PM Saint Gregory celebration, Fr Dunkerley presided, Gordon John was deacon, Ronald Augustine served and Nathanael Deward and Joseph Basil were in the congregation.

We are happy to report that Joseph Basil was awarded the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing at Loyola University.



Attendees at the meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders of the Americas meeting in Racine, Wisconsin

Racine WI

Tobias Stanislas attended the annual meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders of the Americas (CAROA), as convener of the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NÆCC), at the Siena Center in Racine Wisconsin. The conference participants addressed the many issues confronting religious communities, and explored the impact communities can have in the ecological movement. It was an opportunity to renew many old friendships and make some new ones. We look forward to continued cooperation and interaction between the Religious Orders and Christian Communities of The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.



David Bryan Hoopes OHC, President of CAROA, and Tobias Stanislas Haller, Convener of NÆCC

Irvine CA

Thomas Bushnell is scheduled to graduate from the University of California at Irvine with a well-earned PhD on Sunday, June 17, 2007. Such degrees are not only rare but require many years of effort and focus – all of which Thomas has given to this program. And now he will be free to pursue his next challenge: ordination to the priesthood, and is set to enter Virginia Theological Seminary this fall.

A mission trip to Africa

TAKING THE ON-RAMP

I have just recently returned from overseas in conjunction with an organization that my colleagues and I run called the Recycled AIDS Medicine Program and another organization called Zimbabwe AIDS Relief. My partner and I and our colleagues traveled to Central Africa loaded down with suitcases full of collected medications to distribute to people with HIV at an open clinic in Zimbabwe. We held our first clinic in Harare and our second at the Mother of Peace Orphanage in Mutoko. In doing so, we most certainly saved the lives of over 400 people.

Our culture is saturated with abundance. We are truly one of the most affluent nations on the planet. We consume abundantly and we are consumed by our own abundance. And our great shame is that even while surrounded by so much, we have absolutely no concept of value.

As one living a vow of poverty, I am aware of nothing more than the opportunity, as such, to learn the relative value of things. Having seen first hand endemic poverty in Zimbabwe, and the lack of choice the people have in living that way, I am aware that, for me, poverty is a counsel about *mindfulness*. It is about *counting the cost* of what I have and what I need over and against the real value for someone who has nothing. RAMP is one of the ways I do that.

RAMP exists because it understands that the value of HIV medications has not been diminished because the medications are no longer used by those who received them. Medications worth many thousands of dollars languish in closets and cabinets because the recipients of them no longer need them. They are just shy of refuse. Insurance companies have received their money and they don't want them back even unopened. Agencies in the United States can't take them because they are too worried about legal liability. So medications that can cost \$30,000 a year or more go to waste.

RAMP collects them. We took suitcases full of these medications to Zimbabwe early this year. 17 people each laden with the maximum number of bags allowed by the airlines, most of which were full of these medications that we had carefully collected, sorted, bagged, and la-



Bags of medicine awaiting transport and distribution

beled in individual three-month supplies. We took them hoping that we would not be stopped by customs agents in the airport, knowing that if discovered they would be confiscated and likely sold on the black market somewhere for high prices to desperate people.

What was the benefit of this journey? Well, ask any one of the over 400 people who now have medications to keep them alive for the next three months until the group goes back again for another open clinic. How do you measure the value of over 400 people who now have an opportunity for life they didn't have before? Contemplate the ripple effect on families and children who now have hope they didn't have before that their family members will stay healthy. A child who may now not lose her mother to HIV? A woman who will now not lose the economic support of her husband? Suddenly, the *cost* of this transaction doesn't seem to matter at all. But the *value* is immeasurable.

Our organization, by the way, does what we do on an annual budget of \$5,000. Last year, we gave away nearly \$2 million worth of medications. Most of our budget is spent simply getting word out about who we are and what we do and where people can drop off or send medications.

RAMP is busy collecting medications for the next open clinic in June. We are about to have an auction to raise money for Zimbabwe AIDS Relief. There are real faces embedded in my heart and mind of the people who these medications will save. Children and adults and whole families whose lives will be saved by something just languishing in our closets and drawers; something vital.

What is abundance? And what is scarcity, truly? What are the implications of a Christian



Karekin Madteos with one of the children in Mutoko



economics when so much can be done with so little? And what does it mean for us as a culture that throws so much away, for the way we spend our money, or what we toss aside without contemplating the value? What does it mean for the way we give ourselves in relationship to others? For the way we perceive our responsibility to others? What are the implications for the environment? For social and economic justice? Look around you and see what can be done. Then pray for guidance, and then go do it!

Karekin Madteos Yarian



Sister Ruvacliki with Karekin Madteos

To learn more about RAMP, visit

<http://www.rampusa.org>. To read a longer account of this mission trip, visit

http://www.punkmonksf.com/blog/2007/03/africa_journal.html

A meditation on the vowed life

THE SPIRIT'S DWELLING

I am mindful and grateful that we are a community, made so by our common response to the workings of the Spirit in our lives. That common response finds expression in our Rule. In community we lean on one another, encourage and build up one another. And, lest it go unspoken, we sometimes annoy one another. There can be times for admonishment and calls for obedience. Even then — perhaps most particularly then — there is love and the working of the Spirit. All that we experience together helps us grow in our ability to live the vowed life.

For me, this life is rooted in Gregorian community. Our vows, all that they address and all that to which they lead us, is relational in character, in relationship with God and with one another. Living the vowed life of a Gregorian is not a solitary affair. Although we are not a *residential* community, we must inevitably live out our vows in *spiritual* community. And it begins here. We acknowledge in our annual gathering liturgy that, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we experience the love of God in Christ, and share that love with others. And we jointly affirm, "How good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity." When we come fully to embrace the vows, we also embrace how we have changed and become part of one another — how we live for one another.

Our community is the environment that prepares us to carry our experience of the vowed life back to the world at large, to the other communities of which we are a part. In those various communities we are to strive to witness to the sacredness of all life and labor by living out our vows. The vowed life is the essence of our witness.

We are fortunate if we return to our other communities and find recognition and support. This is most often the case when we return to our spouses, partners and fam-

ilies. To a greater or lesser extent we find this in our parish family as well. Beyond those communities, however, I suspect the support we encounter is spotty at best.

Being in a large, publicly held business enterprise, I find little support except in individual relationships. Instead, there is a highly competitive culture that places a premium not on who one is nor even what one did yesterday, but on what one can do today and tomorrow. Value is defined by economics. For me, therefore, living the vowed life is often a struggle and a confrontation with the powers and principalities of this world. My struggles in living out the vowed life in the for-profit business sector are not exclusively external. No, the spiritual powers of this world, that competitive culture rooted in economic definitions, rises up from within me. I am keenly aware of how much my psyche leads me away from God. I have come to realize that my ego has an infinite array of rationalizations for compromise.

For me, living the vowed life is about trying to maintain a focus on God as opposed to the many distractions one encounters in the world. I also strive to live in gratitude. When faced with challenges and obstacles, be they external demands or internal defensiveness, I find it immensely helpful to engage in prayers of thanksgiving.

When I first began to rely on this approach I was beset by all kinds of thoughts, chief among them the realization that I am praying to a God that let his Son be crucified. It seemed prudent to manage my expectations and not expect any better treatment. There is no great temptation to despair because prayer engenders trust in God. Living out the vows is rooted in prayer, which is largely regulated by the Rule. It follows, at least for me, that living the vowed life begins by living out our vow of obedience to the Rule.

This is supplemented and nourished by obedience to pastoral officials and spiritual directors. I cannot stress enough the importance of having a regular routine for spiritual direction with one or more trusted spiritual advisors.

The vow of obedience is the stepping stone for living the vowed life generally. By being faithful to the provisions of the Rule, we live a life of prayer, which predisposes us to live with a sense of gratitude. This, in turn, serves as a springboard for living our vows of chastity and poverty. Gratitude predisposes one to being less controlling, more respectful and loving. Gratitude predisposes one to being more generous with one's time, talent and treasure.

In my view, the vowed life is *nourished* in our Gregorian community and *expressed* in the various communities in which we participate. In fidelity to our common response to the workings of the Spirit in our lives, expressed in our Rule and our vows, we develop a prayerful relationship of trust in and with God that allows us to live out of a sense of gratitude, praising and serving God in all whom we meet.

On a final, pragmatic level we also should approach this entire subject mindful of our Minister General's familiar refrain: each person who comes to us changes us. Just as we as a community are open to that process of change, growth and discovery, each of us as an individual should be cognizant of the impact that we might have on this community. We are in relationship with one another and this entails accountability and responsibility for and to our community. Certainly, let all things be done lovingly.

Mark Andrew Jones



INTERCESSIONS

The Brotherhood
 Episcopal Visitor *Sun*
 Rodney R Michel

Episcopal Visitors Emeriti
Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91
Paul Moore, jr d 5.1.03
Walter D Dennis d 3.30.03

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

Luke Anthony Nowicki *Mon*
John Peter Clark d 2.25.94
 William Francis Jones
 Stephen Storen
Thomas Joseph Ross d 12.18.01
 Tobias Stanislas Haller
William Bunting d 10.12.88
 Edward Munro

Charles Kramer d 10.23.06 *Tue*
Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93
 Donovan Aidan Bowley
Edward Riley d 9.15.05
 Christopher Stephen Jenks
 Ciarán Anthony DellaFera
 Damian-Curtis Kellum

Richard John Lorino *Wed*
 Ronald Augustine Fox
 Maurice John Grove
 Charles Edward LeClerc
 Virgilio Fortuna
 Gordon John Stanley
 Karekin Madteos Yarian

William David Everett *Thu*
 Thomas Bushnell
 Thomas Mark Liotta
 James Mahoney
Patrick Ignatius Dickson d 7.20.05
 Robert James McLaughlin
 Peter Budde

John Henry Ernestine *Fri*
 Francis Sebastian Medina
 Aelred Bernard Dean
 Joseph Basil Gauss
 Mark Andrew Jones
 Emmanuel Williamson
 Richard Matthias

William Henry Benefield *Sat*
 Nathanael Deward Rahm
 Thomas Lawrence Greer
 Enoch John Valentine
 Ron Fender

Novices
 David John Battrick
 Michael Elliott
 David Luke Henton

Postulants
 Will Harpest

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 Benedict
 Community of the Transfiguration
 Order of Julian of Norwich

For the intentions of
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 Fessenden Recovery Ministries
 Dove House
 Baltimore Int'l Seafarers' Center;
 Saint Paul's Grayson Saint, San
 Antonio; St James Fordham
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 Edward, Ronald Augustine,
 Karekin Madteos,
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 Thomas Mark, Emmanuel,
 Luke Anthony, Charles,
 Damian-Curtis, Charles Edward,
 James Mahoney, Aelred Bernard,
 John Henry

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Thanksgiving
 The ordination of Eugenia
 Theresa SSG to the diaconate