



# THE SERVANT



*Elizabeth Mary Burke at her first profession of vows*

**#212**

*Transfiguration 2009*



## REMEMBRANCE: ELIZABETH MARY BURKE SSG

The Rev Canon Edward Nason West, while he was Warden of the Community of the Holy Spirit in NYC said to Mother Ruth, “Your community will be great when you have a sister in heaven.” That came for the Sisters of Saint Gregory in earlier years when Sarah Elizabeth Wells died — new in profession. Elizabeth Mary was not new in profession; she was seasoned in “the life.”

From the words of my favorite poet, Grace Bush:

Today you are not here!

But my life still feels the radiance upon it,

As the light of sunset is caught in golden ripples on the river

While twilight falls!

As I think of EM (as she was called by many), I am also reminded of the words of Scripture: *Raise a loud shout to him with Psalms* — and our dear sister did that with very little expense of energy. She was a true presence of God’s joy. EM was one of the early members of the Companion Sisterhood, as it was called during its pregnancy and childhood. We often said that “the brothers will be mothers” and EM was, in a true sense, a daughter to me.

She served in many ways but I think most of all, loved being with the brothers — and if she had been given the choice, the sisters would never have become independent. But she knew that the original vision was of independence, and that happened June 24, 1999 at Graymoor in Garrison, NY. Shortly after that day, EM began service in many ways, including service as superior for a time. Her health began to take a very serious turn and the next years would not be kind to her. This last year was the hardest of all, and she was hospitalized much of the time. That suffering ended on April 30, 2009.

EM will be remembered for many things; her joy of singing (usually quite loud); her love for the church and its liturgies and ceremonies; laughter and silliness! She loved to laugh and because of that incredible voice, we knew she was in the building before she was seen!

Sister dear, we all miss you terribly and we know that, somewhere in heaven, God and the angels are saying, “Where did that soprano come from?”

Rest in peace.

RTB



*Here and there with the brothers*

## COMMUNITY NOTES

Bishop Rodney Michel, our Episcopal Visitor, has been called as Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. On April 1st, he began a full-time ministry there for the next three years. The diocese has been through much stress in the recent past, and Bishop Rodney's careful, thoughtful hand, pastoral care and administrative experience will serve the diocese well. We are delighted to share our Bishop Visitor with the Diocese of Pennsylvania as we pray for a bright future there.

The annual meeting of the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities – NÆCC – took place on May 6-9 at the Siena Center, a conference center of the Racine Dominicans of the Roman Catholic Church located on the shore of Lake Michigan. James Mahoney, who serves as NÆCC's Treasurer, also represented the Brotherhood at this year's meeting. A major attraction of this meeting was the presence of Bishop Russell Jacobus of the nearby Diocese of Fond du Lac, current Chair of the House of Bishops' Standing Committee on Religious Communities. Discussion included the mandate for the Religious Communities to create a "safe church" through liability insurance, background checks for prospective members, sexual abuse prevention training, and periodic private meetings between each member and the Episcopal Visitor. Depending on community size and resources these can



*James Mahoney (center front) represented BSG at the meeting of the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities.*

be difficult measures to achieve, potentially causing some to lose their status under the canons. NÆCC members stressed the differences between the Orders and the Communities, but acknowledged that the legal issues and safeguards were significant, and that the lines of difference continue to blur and crossover as both the Orders and Communities evolve.

## Province 1

Virgilio Fortuna, Minister Provincial of Province 1, has been formally admitted as a Postulant to the Diaconate in the Diocese of Massachusetts. We join our voices and our prayers in supporting our brother as this new ministry unfolds for him.

In mid-March Ciarán Anthony DellaFera participated in a medical mission to the city of La Romana in the Dominican Republic along with 25 of his fellow students and doctors. He shared this overview of the mission trip: “We’ll be there for seven days providing medical aid to the Haitian people living in the Dominican labor camps (*bateyes*). Each year some fifteen medical teams from different non-profit groups visit one or more of the 107 *bateyes*. They see close to 30,000 people and save the lives of many. The combination of medical professionals in the *bateyes* and the hospital in the city has significantly improved the health of families in the *bateyes*. Our patients work and live in the sugar



*Ciarán Anthony with some of the children of La Romana*

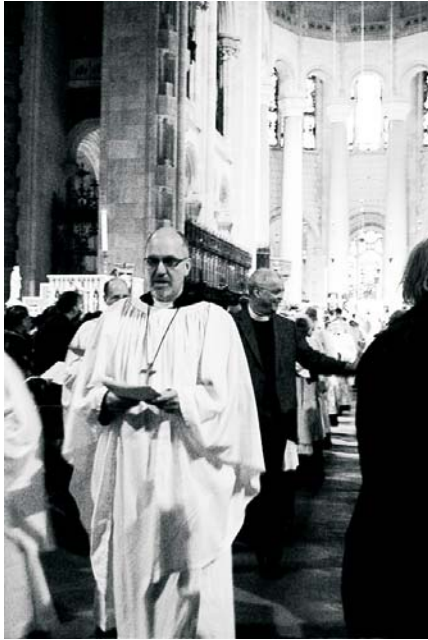
cane fields surrounding the city of La Romana; they live in a world where basic sanitation and health care is virtually non-existent. Our traveling clinics provide essential medical aid and resources to the local community. Our goal is to continue the work that has been started [by previous mission trips], and to do our part in sustaining a model of continuous health care delivery for the *bateyes* in La Romana.” Similar mission trips from Episcopal dioceses and parishes annually provide medical care and aid throughout Latin America, many resulting from Companion Diocese Relationships.

## Province 2

The meeting of The Episcopal Church’s Province II Synod was held on May 7-8 in Albany, New York. Gathering once every three years, this body conducts essential provincial business and serves as preparation for those who will be attending General Convention in Anaheim, California July 8-17 on behalf of their respective dioceses. The Synod offered presentations on several key items related to General Convention. The keynote address by Tobias Stanislas Haller explored the convention’s theme of “Ubuntu.” Our long-time friend and colleague, Bishop Christopher Epting – the Presiding Bishop’s Deputy for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations – presented an overview of the ongoing dialogues toward deepening unity between The Episcopal Church and the Moravian and United Methodist Churches. The Rev Dr Gregory Straub, Executive Secretary of the General Convention, also made a presentation on the upcoming convention. The Synod took part in training for the Public Narrative Project, which will be extended to General Convention in the summer.



Bishop of New York Mark Sisk invited representatives of the many religious communities active in his diocese to a luncheon meeting in early May. BSG was represented by Richard John Lorino, Minister Provincial of Province 2, and James Mahoney, the Brotherhood's liaison to NÆCC. A good of friars, sisters, monks and nuns – the Diocese of New York being home to many orders and communities – and our long-time friend, Bishop Herbert A Donovan jr, made for a productive and enjoyable meeting! The Rev Constance Coles, Canon for Ministry Development, was also present to speak about the Diocese's desire to include religious communities in its ministry discernment process.



*Blane Frederik at the Taylor Farewell Liturgy*

After 15 years as Vicar Bishop of New York City, the Rt Rev E Don Taylor prepares to return to his homeland of Jamaica, where new ministry opportunities await him. The Diocese of New York celebrated a wonderful liturgy at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in thanksgiving for Bishop Taylor's devoted service. James Teets and postulant Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands represented the Brotherhood, while the Bishop and Bishop Suffragan of New York, former Mayor David Dinkins and his wife, several

other noted politicians, and bishops, clergy and religious from around the church made for a liturgy fitting Bishop Taylor's many years of service. His new diocesan, Bishop Alfred C Reid of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, delivered the sermon as he welcomed home Jamaica's beloved son.

May 16th also marked two very sad occasions for the community. Sr Elizabeth Mary Burke, SSG, a/BSG died on April 30th at the end of a long series of illnesses, and her memorial service was scheduled for that day at Holy Trinity, in South River, New Jersey. "EM" – as she loved being called – was a former superior of the Sisters of Saint Gregory and was the senior member of that community which the Brotherhood founded and which gained autonomy in 1999. William Francis Jones and James Mahoney brought the sincere condolences of the Gregorian Friars to their beloved sisters. The worship was powerful, the singing bold, the sermon personal and true to EM's heart. Her ashes were interred beside those of Sister Sarah Elizabeth Wells SSG.

A further shock was the death of Bishop Rodney Michel's wife, Marie, on Saturday, May 9th, without warning or illness. Her Requiem was scheduled for May 16th at Saint James' Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Present for this service, bringing the love and the support of the Brotherhood to their Bishop Visitor in his grief were the Minister General, Richard Thomas Biernacki, together with Edward Munro,

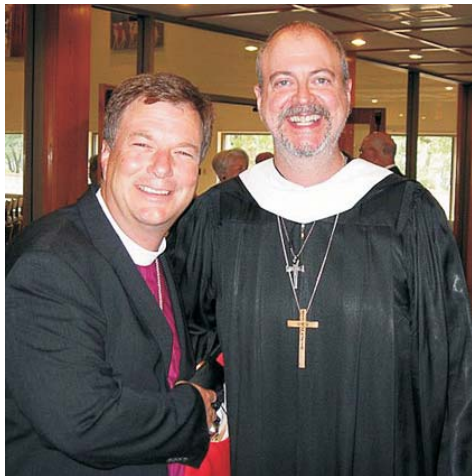
Thomas Mark Liotta, Robert James McLaughlin, and the Rev Dr David G Henritz, OSL.

#### Province 4

The Spring Retreat of the Brotherhood's Province 4 gathered once again in Chattanooga, Tennessee and on nearby Lookout Mountain on the weekend of May 8-10. Ælfred Bernard Dean, Minister Provincial, entitled the retreat: "Poverty: Living Beyond the Tithe," and he described the concept as follows: "With the worldwide down-turn of the economy, our vow of Holy Poverty guides and informs us in how we should live with one another. We're going to look at our vow in terms of how it helps us to rejoice

and celebrate God's abundance while being faithful stewards. While affirming that the tithe is the minimum standard of giving, we will discuss the implications of living beyond the minimum in a cooperative, supportive and non-legalistic environment."

Ron Fender was again the guest preacher on Maundy Thursday at the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Chattanooga. This was his sixth visit with that parish on this holy evening, the sacred beginning of the three holiest days of the Christian Year, and Ron was in fine form as he addressed those fortunate fellow-travelers. Ron has also been featured in artist Mia Bergeron's series, "The Faces of Chattanooga." You can see his smiling face, and the painting in the works at [thefacesofchattanooga.weebly.com](http://thefacesofchattanooga.weebly.com).



David Luke Henton (r) with Bishop Rickel



Elizabeth Mary signing the instrument of life profession

David Luke Henton was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM) with a concentration in Spiritual Formation at the 58th annual Commencement of the Seminary of the Southwest on May 12th. At even-song the previous evening renowned silversmith James Avery presented the new graduates with sterling silver replicas of the distinctive cross he designed for the seminary in the 1960s. Joining David Luke's brothers and sisters from Saint James Church in Austin for the celebration was his former rector, Bishop Greg Rickel of Olym-

pia, who is a seminary trustee and long-time friend. In addition to continuing his full-time employment as Clinical Assistant Professor and Field Director for the School of Social Work at Texas State University, David Luke has begun a new ministry of spiritual direction. The heartfelt congratulations of each Gregorian Friar goes out to our brother.

Mark Andrew Jones reports that he has been accepted as a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Southeast Florida and will begin his studies in August toward a Diploma in Anglican Studies at the School of Theology of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. He has been pursuing the educational credentials required for the priesthood over the past years and has been studying part-time at the Florida Center for Theological Studies in Miami. Having completed all of the required courses there, he will begin this last work at Sewanee this summer and hopes to sit for the General Ordination Exam in January of 2010. We are with him in support and prayer, every step (and book and paper and test!) along the way.

### Province 5

On May 2, the brothers met at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston for a province day of gathering. Prior to the day, the brothers had read Henri Nouwen's *Life of the Beloved, Spiritual Living in a Secular World*. When the designated retreat facilitator was unable to be present, Novice Will Harpest stepped up and facilitated a lively discussion of the book. The Rev Juan Reed, adjunct faculty member at Seabury and former Benedictine, adjusted his schedule and presided at the Holy Eucharist for the brothers. Later that day, Joseph Basil Gauss hosted a dinner at his home, assisted by Provincial Nathanael Deward Rahn and Novice Francis Jonathan Bullock.



Province 5 Dinner chez Gauss

Tobias Stanislas attended the spring meeting of the Chicago Consultation held at Seabury Western. While there he had a chance for a brief visit with Ronald Augustine Fox, and enjoyed taking part in the celebration of Bishop Barbara Harris' 20th anniversary of ordination to the episcopate. The Chicago Consultation is a group of Episcopal and Anglican bishops, clergy and lay people,

supporting the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Christians in The Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion.



## **THE GREENING OF A PARISH**

The parish community where I both worship and work has been moving in the direction of reducing its carbon footprint. The last two years Epiphany has won awards as being one of the most “green” churches in Georgia. What does greening the church look like for us who don’t fall into the category of organic granola-eating, birkenstock-wearing, dreadlock-weaving tree-hugger? (As they say in New Jersey, “No disrespect.”)

Let me first share a story on moving away from a community that used disposable products to one that not only recycles but composts as well. It is Easter morning 2008. The air is cool and crisp for Atlanta and the parish community is gearing up to serve its annual parish breakfast: a feast to break our Lenten fast as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. The tables in the parish hall are laden with all types of tempting foods as both children and adults anticipate this marvelous meal. The doors of the parish hall open and the feasting and celebrations begin; and all have a good time! A group of us that stay to clean up this parish-wide event set to work. I get the dubious task of hauling trash to the curb for pick-up the following day. I haul twenty-seven extra-large bags of garbage to the curb. When I see the mountain of trash I wonder to myself, “How can we be a green church when this is what we’re producing.” I mention this to the Green Guild and a slow metamorphosis begins to take place.

Over the next months, we began to move away from disposable plates, cups and utensils to items we could wash and reuse. At first there was a little balking from the parish community because we moved away from the ease of disposable to the intentional discipline of being mindful of our stewardship of the environment. After some time the parish got the hang of what actually was “trash,” what could be recycled, and where dirty dishes went. It was a huge hurdle to jump but one that made sense. Then the Green Guild wanted to ‘press the pedal to the metal’ of this well-oiled machine and introduced composting to the mix. This started on Easter Day 2009. The same wonderful and magical preparation took place but now we had sentinels placed at the three waste stations around the parish hall. Each station had a container lined with white bags for true “trash,” containers with blue bags for recyclables, and containers with green bio-compostable bags for, as you may have guessed, compostables. The education process began. All were getting into this new three-container system and by the end of the day the results were astonishing: five blue recycleable bags; seventeen bio-green compostable bags and one bag three-quarters full of actual trash. Now that’s truly green! And what a difference from just one year before.

Also in our arsenal of green materials we as a parish community have purchased: cups (that look like plastic) made from sugar cane and compostable back to usable soil in less than a month; and utensils made from potato starch that also compost down to soil in the same amount of time.

Not only has the parish community invested itself in this ministry of stewardship, but we have also had energy audits of the entire campus and we’re implementing the various recommendations, which are already making an impact as we re-use, recycle and compost.



*Ælred Bernard Dean*

I consider this ‘greening of the church,’ rather the Christmas greening we’re all familiar with, as a spiritual discipline. It is an intentional discipline that calls for our stewardship of this our fragile island home in the vast interstellar sea, as we witness to the One who is the Light. I can be the first to admit the shift is not an easy one, because it moved me out of my easy conveniences to intentional living of ecological justice which embraces issues of social, economical and global justices as well.

The more I thought about green living as it relates to faith, I realized that built within my vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are the ecological justice issues. The vows are all-encompassing as they guide me in my journey and all I have to do is open my eyes and mind to see how the Spirit uses our vows in new and exciting ways.

*Ælred Bernard Dean*

### *A reflection*

## **LIVING THE VOWED LIFE**

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 and our vows. 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, living the vowed life is rooted in this Gregorian community. Our vows, all that they address and all that to which they lead us to aspire, is relational in character. We are called to be 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 community. And it begins here. We acknowledge in the Gathering Service that, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we experience the love of God in Christ Jesus, and share that love with others. And we affirm with Psalm 133, “How good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity.”

Being a nonresidential community without a commitment to live in one place for the rest of our natural lives, does not mean we can simply trade out. While it is right and proper for some who test their vocation with us to discern the need to leave, when one comes to fully embrace the vows, we also embrace how we have changed and be-

come part of one another: how we live for one another. Our Gregorian community is the nurturing 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 homes and parishes and find support for our vowed life. Beyond those communities, however, I suspect the amount of support we encounter for our vowed life is spotty at best. Having been in a large business enterprise, I have found little support save for individual relationships. Instead, there is a highly competitive culture that places a premium on not who one is or even what one did yesterday but on what one can contribute today and tomorrow. One's value is largely defined by one's economic contribution.

For me, therefore, living the vowed life is often a struggle and a confrontation with the powers and principalities of this world. Incidentally, on this subject of the spiritual powers and principalities of this world I recommend the work of Walter Wink.

Now it is important to clearly state that my struggles in living out the vowed life in the for-profit business sector are not exclusively external. No, brothers, 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 of my psyche leads me away from God. I have come to realize that one's ego has virtually an infinite array of rationalizations for compromise and course adjustments.

For me, then, leading the vowed life is about trying to maintain a focus on God as opposed to the many distractions one encounters in the world. *Focus* is necessary but not sufficient. I also strive to live in *gratitude*. When faced with challenges and obstacles, be they external or when I am forced to confront some internal defensiveness around a personal preference for my way as opposed to God's way, I find it immensely helpful to engage in prayers of thanksgiving.

It follows, at least for me, that living the vowed life begins by living in obedience to the Rule. This is supplemented and nourished by obedience to all pastoral officials and spiritual directors or advisors. By the way, I cannot stress enough the importance of having a regular routine for spiritual direction with one or more trusted spiritual advisors. So the vow of obedience, the vow that I believe is perhaps discussed least of all, is for me the stepping stone for living the vowed life generally. By being faithful to the Rule, we live a life of prayer, which predisposes one to live with a prayerful sense of felt gratitude. This, in turn, serves as a springboard for living our vows of chastity and poverty. Lived gratitude predisposes one to being less controlling, more respectful and loving. Lived gratitude predisposes one to being more generous with one's time, talent and treasure.

To sum it up, living 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, which finds its expression in our Rule and our vows, we develop a prayerful relationship of trust in and with God that allows one to live out of a sense of gratitude, praising and serving God in all whom we meet.

*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

*John Peter Clark d 2.25.94*

William Francis Jones Mon

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*

*Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93*

Donovan Aidan Bowley Tue

*Edward Riley d 9.15.05*

Christopher Stephen Jenks

Ciarán Anthony DellaFera

*Damian-Curtis Kellum d 10.9.07*

Richard John Lorino

Ronald Augustine Fox

Maurice John Grove

Charles Edward LeClerc

Virgilio Fortuna Wed

Gordon John Stanley

Karekin Madteos Yarian

William David Everett

Thomas Bushnell

Thomas Mark Liotta

James Mahoney

*Patrick Ignatius Dickson d 7.20.05*

Robert James McLaughlin Thu

Peter Budde

John Henry Ernestine

Francis Sebastian Medina

Ælred Bernard Dean

Joseph Basil Gauss

Mark Andrew Jones

Emmanuel Williamson

Richard Matthias

William Henry Benefield Fri

Nathanael Deward Rahm

Thomas Lawrence Greer

Enoch John Valentine

Ron Fender

Michael Elliott

David Luke Henton

## Novices

David John Battrick

Will Harpest

Bo Alexander Armstrong

Francis Jonathan Bullock

## Postulants

Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands

Brad Pethoud

Terry Wayne Hall

## Religious Communities

Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns

Society of the Atonement

Community of the Paraclete

Companions of Saint Luke~

Benedictine

Community of Celebration

Little Sisters of Saint Clare

Anamchara Fellowship

Anglican Order of Preachers

Rivendell Community

Sisters of Saint Gregory

Third Order SSF

Worker Sisters & Brothers of the

Holy Spirit

Camaldolese Benedictines

Society of Saint John the

Evangelist

Anglican Oblates of Saint

Benedict

Community of the Transfiguration

Order of Julian of Norwich

Order of the Holy Cross

Order of Saint Helena

Community of Saint John Baptist

Associates and Friends of the

Brotherhood

## For the intentions of

Joseph Richey House

Fessenden Recovery Ministries

Baltimore Int'l Seafarers' Center;

Saint Paul's Grayson St, San

Antonio

Brothers Edward, Ronald

Augustine, Karekin Madteos,

William David, Thomas,

Thomas Mark, Emmanuel, Luke

Anthony, Charles Edward, James

Mahoney, Ælred Bernard, John

Henry, Ron, David John

Aldersgate UMC Dobbs Ferry,

Saint Christopher's, Kileen TX;

Saint James, Austin

White Plains Hospital

Episcopal Parishes of Yonkers

Ian, David, Dennis, Dean, Scott,

Tim, Johanna, Virginia, Nancy,

Kathleen, Debra, Steven, Austin,

Tom, Maureen, Deborah,

Richard, Elizabeth, Derek, Troy,

Jim

## For the Departed

Benefactors, Friends & Associates:

Charlotte Morgan, Arsene &

Louise Lemarier, Norman Hall,

George Koerner, Henry Fukui,

J Steward Slocum, James

Gundrum, Cecil Berges, Marion

Pierce, Helen Marie Joyce

VHM, Kenneth Staples,

Elizabeth Holton, Richard A

Belanger, Brendan W Nugent,

Sarah Elizabeth Wells SSG, Sue

Bradley, Jack Merryman; Paul

Power, William Russell, Mark

Domoguen; Elizabeth Mary

Burke SSG

Lila Palestine Blackburn

Loretta McNutt

Carole Chetrick

Linford Burnett

Patricia Dilger

Iona McAllister

Zack Satterfield

Ryan

Bill Janutka

Albert Walsh

Charles L Young sr

Sarah Wolf

Dan Witry

George Schneck

Ruth Swigert

Beverly Gurley

Ann Storen

Frank H Yamada

Richard Herman

Linda Mitchell

Elise Hagood Wade

Scott Fisher

Paul Wessinger SSJE