



HE SERVANT



#214

Epiphany 2010

THE OBLIGATION OF CHOICE

We have just gone through the Christmas season with all the work and preparation — which for many meant spending endless hours shopping for gifts that friends and family do not truly need. The Kings, we are told, brought gifts to the Christ-child. What was the most important gift — the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh — or the fact that they knelt in homage. When was the last time many of us knelt in a similar manner — to honor the ones whom we love with the gift of our selves?

Many of you know that I served for close to 22 years on the staff of several Presiding Bishops. I have seen much and I know where the bodies are buried. I also know that the sense of humility and awe of the Lord Jesus is often “not there” because, while meaning well, the administrations for all those years and the ensuing years since my “retirement” in 2004 have continued to serve themselves. We still hear that “the Executive Council is searching for its new role” and “this reorganization will enable Mission to go forth.” Things have not changed since my time on the national staff.

It is time to act like the Kings. They had only one purpose: to adore the Child! How long will we discuss these endless topics which serve to separate us from the real world? How long will we “reorganize” and develop “mission teams” when really, none of it does much in the end? Over the years, through several reorganizations, the church has lost many good and loyal servants. We are poorer for it. More have been lost recently — one of our own brothers is on the list. It is time for humility and love. We are supposed to be serving God, who gave us his only Son — yet we continue to believe that we need to “manage” that gift. The Kings brought gifts and made no demands.

John Denver, in one of his early songs, used the words, “Gotta serve somebody.” Interesting where our choices end up. We often serve what we have set up as an institution rather than serving the ends for which that institution exists. The obligation of choice is ours. Serve God and not mammon. The Episcopal Church is not 815 Second Avenue. It is all of us who must choose whom we will serve this day. Choose— it is never too late.

RTB

Here and there with the brothers

COMMUNITY NOTES

Province 1

Ciarán Anthony DellaFera is continuing his medical studies, and has applied for permission to take Step 1 of the US Medical Licensing Exam in June. It has been a long five years of study, with the most recent semester a particular challenge.

There were exams almost every Monday, with a focus on rapid-fire practical diagnostic skills. In September he passed the practical physical diagnosis exam during which he had to repeat, from memory, all 258 steps of a head-to-toe physical, followed by a 30 minute diagnostic interview exam. After passing Step 1 in June, he is set to begin two years of clinical rotations, culminating in passing (God willing) the Step 2 exam, and the conferring of his MD in June 2012.

Province 2



*The American Prior invests William Henry Benefield as an Officer, as Stephen Storen assists
(Photo: J Higgins).*

The first weekend in November was truly a “Saint John’s Weekend” in New York City: both The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem and the Sovereign Order of the Orthodox Knights Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem scheduled their annual investiture services at that time. For The Most Venerable Order, the annual meeting, reception and banquet were all held at Manhattan’s University Club, while the Service of Rededication and Investiture took place at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine at which our own Tobias Stanislas Haller, William Henry Benefield and Associate Nevin Brown were invested as Officers. Bishop of New York and Sub-Prelate of The Order Mark Sisk officiated the service and James Teets and Stephen Storen (plus several

hundred others) were on hand to support our brothers.

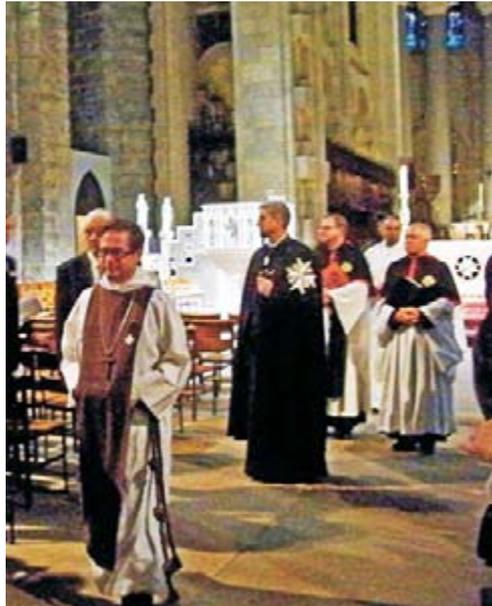
Richard Thomas Biernacki, Founder and Minister General, together with John Henry Ernestine and Bishop Rodney Michel were all involved with the service for the Orthodox Knights, and Richard Thomas gave the following report: “At the OCA Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection in New York City, we celebrated the Installation of our new Grand Prior, Hereditary Family Commander Count Alexander Woronzoff-Dashkoff. Father Christopher, Dean of the Cathedral, celebrated a Te Deum of Thanksgiving and Bishop Rodney, Grand Prelate of the Order, gave a short address. John Henry and David Henritzky were joined



Friends and Confrères at the Investiture Eve reception: (l to r) Stephen, Andrew Brooks, Peter Grandell, Tobias Stanislas, James, and David Chhieng (photo J Higgins)

by Stephen at the ceremony. I was humbled and honored to be promoted to the rank of Commander, with the title Lieutenant Grand Councillor to Countess Nicholas Bobrinsky, Grand Councillor of the Order. This came as a total surprise to me and I am tremendously grateful.” Your brothers add a congratulatory “Amen” to that!

At the end of August, while on a vacation in Rome with his partner David Henritz, Richard Thomas was able to visit the Monastery of Saint Gregory, on the Galician Hill, above the Coliseum. Once there, they discovered that the main chapel was closed by order of the fire department because of structural concerns. Richard Thomas found an intercom box and rang, and a Camaldolese monk an-



Tobias Stanislas in the retiring procession at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine (photo M Cook)



The Minister General at Gregory's throne

swered. When he mentioned the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, he immediately welcomed them into the courtyard and monastery. The only open area is the small chapel containing Gregory's throne and altar. Richard was moved to be able to place his hand on the throne. This was a real connection with the Patron of the Brotherhood — the focus of our vocations.

Luke Anthony Nowicki was guest preacher at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church in Mount Joy, Pennsylvania on its patronal feast. The Rev Peter Greenfield asked



A multiple birthday celebration

him to preach about the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory and the Sisters of Saint Gregory, and about his life in the community. He also led an adult forum after worship, at which members of the congregation welcomed him warmly and expressed their thanks for learning more about the religious life in The Episcopal Church.



Prior to Evening Prayer at the South Salem celebration of Foundation Day, Robert James McLaughlin, Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands and James Mahoney were joined by the ever-faithful Hilda.



Combining work with celebration, the Province 2 brothers (here including Millard Cook and Richard John Lorino, in addition to those pictured with Hilda above) work on putting labels on the previous issue of The Servant.

Tobias Stanislas took part in a panel discussion on the religious and political implications of “Gay Marriage” at Christ Church, Poughkeepsie. The event was well attended and the discussion lively.

Brothers, Friends and Associates joined to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Foundation of the Brotherhood in South Salem NY. The celebration also coincided with a joint birthday celebration for Stephen and Tobias Stanislas.

Beginning to take up his new responsibility as chair of the House of Deputies Study Committee on Church Governance and Polity, Tobias Stanislas attended the first meeting of the various “interim bodies” charged with implementing ministry and program for The Episcopal Church, held in Chicago.

Province 4

In late September, Ælred Bernard Dean joined novice Bo Alexander Armstrong in Chattanooga to participate in an “End of Summer” picnic for the homeless. This was an ecumenical event hosted by Forest Avenue UMC. Volunteers from



Posing during a pause in the events surrounding the March Against Poverty: (l to r) Bo Alexander Armstrong, Fran Holt, Mark Andrew Jones, Ron Fender, and Ælred Bernard Dean.

four local churches prepared and served the meal. Although the turnout was light due to torrential rain, volunteers were able to collaborate on a project with people from different faith traditions. Participants were also challenged to consider some of the hardships confronting those who live on the streets. The purpose of the event was not only to provide a meal for hungry people but also to promote future collaboration on efforts to provide adequate housing for our homeless neighbors.

Early October saw the second march against poverty in Chattanooga. Seventy people marched in solidarity with our poor and homeless friends including: Ron Fender, Mark Andrew Jones, Ælred Bernard and Associate Fran Holt. They marched and chanted through downtown Chattanooga and gathered at Miller Park to listen to those on the front lines fighting against poverty and the misconceptions of the poor taught by society. Food Not Bombs provided food for the marchers and the homeless. For more information about the Poor People Campaign please visit: poorpeoplescampaignppc.org and Food Not Bombs: foodnotbombs.net.

Ælred Bernard, James Patrick Hall, David Luke Henton and associate Fran Holt gathered at the Osage Forest of Peace, a Benedictine Ashram, just outside Tulsa OK in mid October. The main reflection dealt with living in the world as Gregorian Friars and to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Brotherhood. They participated in times of meditation and offices of those living at the community and broke bread at table sharing vegetarian meals and lively conversation. Saturday night James Patrick introduced the group to a local Emergent church where the brothers and associates offered laying on of hands for healing. Sunday morning they went to Saint Patrick's Episcopal Church and received a warm welcome.

As an ongoing commemoration of our community's 40th Anniversary, Compline followed the Saint Paul's Chattanooga parish dinner and meeting in early November. The icon of Saint Gregory is on loan to the parish and looks magnificent on the high altar. It has also visited the Church of the Nativity and plans are made for a visit to Saint Francis and the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Mark Andrew Jones was back from Sewanee to South Florida for interviews with the Standing Committee and Commission on Ministry. While there he joined his wife Diane in preparing for the parish rotation hosting several homeless families. As he was finishing packing in anticipation of the trip back to Sewanee, Bishop Leo Frade called with the good news (which he didn't wish to delay by first writing) that Mark Andrew is now a candidate for ordination. By the time you are reading this note, he may well have completed the General Ordination Exam, set for early January.

Province 5

Brothers celebrated the Eve of the Holy Cross (the Foundation Day of the Brotherhood) at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church in Chicago in fine style with Evensong officiated by Bishop Jeff Lee. Nathanael Deward Rahm played a magnificent voluntary prior to the office; Gordon John Stanley was thurifer; Joseph Basil Gauss,



Nathanael Deward Rahm conducts the choir at the Foundation Day Evensong.

crucifer and reader; William Henry was a torchbearer and reader; and Francis Jonathan Bullock was a torchbearer; Will Harptest sang in the choir, and Ronald Augustine Fox preached. A good crowd turned out, including the Rev Sarah Fisher, rector of Saint Peter's; and the Rev John David van Dooren, rector of Atonement. The music was spectacular, and all present celebrated a great festival.



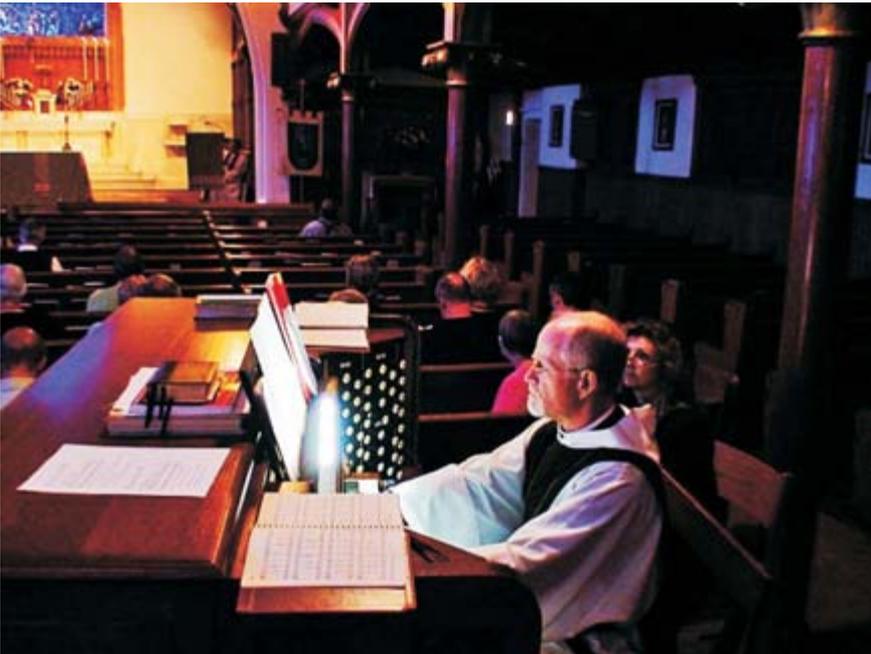
(l to r) Gordon John Stanley, Bishop Lee, and Ronald Augustine Fox

A sermon for the Conversion of Saint Paul

**PICK YOURSELF UP,
DUST YOURSELF OFF...**

I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.

Yesterday afternoon Edward and I were having a conversation about the problems in The Episcopal Church and as we stepped off the elevator Edward said, “Ya’ know, Chris; the church is a hospital for sinners, not a country club for saints.” That was a blast from the past. My dad used this little saying throughout his ministry. He would say this in private conversation, discussion forums, and sermons over and over again. Obviously it wasn’t original with him; but it formed a kind of *leit-motif* to his ministry. This constant theme was a conviction of my father’s that grew out of his experience growing up in a Wisconsin mill town during the Great Depression, serving in the Air Force during World War II, and then all through his ministry starting in a black ghetto on the south side of Chicago, continuing in midtown Manhattan and ending in a post-industrial mill town in western New York. My dad couldn’t stand the typical Episcopal congregation of his youth. He found most of them to be smug, self-satisfied, lily-white, reli-



Nathanael Deward performs a Voluntary prior to the Foundation Day celebration.



Ronald Augustine preaches at the Foundation Day celebration.

giously-flavored country clubs that worshiped respectability as *the* transcendent value and a hazy, nostalgic vision of English parish church life. They were not communities of faith. They were not the Body of Christ in a form that was recognizable to him.

This may not seem to have much to do with the Conversion of Saint Paul, but my dad's vision of what the church should be, what the church is called to be, was very much informed by Paul's conversion and ministry, and it informs mine in much the same way.

We tend to turn the story of Paul's conversion into a kind of caricature of itself. Purely bad Saul turns into purely good Paul, sort of like Clark Kent turns into Superman. First there's the mean, nasty Saul of Tarsus, an evil, wicked man, consenting to the death of Stephen and holding the cloaks of those who stoned him. Then, with the authority of the chief priests, he heads for Damascus with

the intention of doing more of their dirty work for them when — POW! — he gets knocked off his high horse and has an encounter with the risen Lord; and Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, rises from the ground with a fully formed halo ready for pious depictions in gaudily painted plaster statues.

This is, of course, simplistic. Paul was a lot more complicated than that, both before and after his conversion. In today's epistle Paul states that, "I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors." He was a student of Gamaliel, one of the greatest rabbis of his age, who, if his brief appearance in the Acts of the Apostles is to be believed, was a prudent, temperate man with a wisdom borne of years. "Keep away from these men and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God!" (Acts 5:38-39)

Paul may have had great learning, but he doesn't seem to have picked up on his teacher's wisdom and prudence. He was passionate, even fanatical. In his own words, he was "violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it." (Galatians 1:13) I suspect Paul believed that the Jewish nation in all its expres-

sions — religious, cultural, ethnic and political — was at great risk, and that this weird sect of Nazarenes could destroy the delicate equilibrium that the Jews in Palestine had established with their Roman overlords, and, as it turns out, this fear was completely justified. Paul’s conversion certainly turned his belief system upside down, but I don’t think it changed his personality all that much. Reading his letters and even Luke’s recounting of his ministry in the Book of Acts, Paul comes across as someone who has a great deal of difficulty understanding or accepting people who disagreed with him. He could be rigid, snide, sarcastic, self-righteous and condescending. For example, in 2 Corinthians he says, “I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles...How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!” (2 Corinthians 12:11-13). Or to the Galatians, “You stupid Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” (Galatians 3:1) Paul also had a temper. He publicly confronted Peter over his refusal to have table fellowship with Gentile Christians, and he and Barnabas parted company because of a “sharp disagreement” over whether Mark should accompany them or not. And of course there is his angry outburst to the Galatians. “I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!” (Galatians 5:12)

But whatever his personality, Paul’s conversion did turn his life upside down. Some of you may remember an old song by Paul Simon — from back in his “Simon and Garfunkel” days – called “Flowers Never Bend.” One line of the song reads as follows:

I am blinded by the light
Of God and truth and right
And I wander in the night
without direction.

This seems to sum up Paul’s predicament pretty well. He was literally blinded for a few days, and he was confused and disoriented for quite a while after that. For the rest of his life he struggled between his pride in his identity as a Jew, and his conviction that the new covenant in Christ’s blood was open to all people, not just Jews. This is where I think Paul has the most to say to us today. This was the first great battle in the church between inclusivity and exclusivity, and Paul, despite his privileged position as a strictly observant Jew, a student of a great rabbi, and a man known for his zeal for the faith of his ancestors, welcomed Gentiles into the fold and convinced the leaders of the church in Jerusalem to do the same. Without him, Christianity would probably have remained a small sect within Judaism, if it survived at all. Because of him, the church became what we know it to be today, in all its glory and in all its brokenness.

As you all know, today is the last day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and I’m sure we’re all thinking that we could use a good dose of unity right now. That would be nice, but looking over the history of the church it’s not very realistic. What we are going through in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion right now is part of a pattern that reaches right back to Peter and Paul bickering over table fellowship with Gentiles. The early church fought battles

over the doctrine of the Trinity and the divine and human natures of Christ. Iconoclastic battles raged in and around Constantinople in the eighth and ninth centuries and different factions in the dispute kept anathematizing and excommunicating each other over and over again. The Great Schism of 1054 definitively divided eastern and western Christendom, and in western Europe the increasing consolidation of ecclesial authority in the person of the pope eventually led to the Protestant Reformation. The Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Great Awakening, the American Revolution, the Abolitionist movement, the Oxford Movement, Christian Socialism, the ordination of women, and a host of other issues all threatened to a greater or lesser degree to tear the church apart.

And don't fool yourselves; these disputes were not just about theological differences. Politics and power played at least as large a role in all these controversies as anything else. And now we are being roiled by controversies about the inclusion of gay men and lesbians in the church, and, just as importantly, questions of local and universal authority in the church's governance. The specific issues may be particular to our time and culture, but these are basically the same battles that were being fought by Paul 2,000 years ago. Who's in and who's out? Who do we welcome as members of the Body of Christ, and who is consigned to the place of "wailing and gnashing of teeth?" Is the Church a country club for saints, or a hospital for sinners?

Yet in all these controversies, in all our anger with those with whom we disagree, we need to remember that fundamental insight that Paul so eloquently expressed: We are the Body of Christ. The Real Presence of Christ dwells within us as fully and completely as it does in the consecrated Bread and Wine of the Holy Eucharist. We are his feet, to take him to those who long for the gospel of peace. We are his hands, to hold and to heal. We are his ears, to listen to the cries of those who sit in darkness and deep gloom. We are his mouth, to speak the word of salvation. God knows we do not do this perfectly. God knows that we often seem more intent on crucifying one another than we do on proclaiming Christ crucified. That Body may be broken and bleeding from our self-inflicted wounds. It may be gasping its last breath on the hard wood of the cross. But none of that absolves us from our high calling — our great responsibility.

We are the Body of Christ in the world today. We have been knocked off our high horse, "blinded by the light...wander[ing] in the night without direction." But the same Jesus who appeared to poor confused Paul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus appears to us as well, no matter how confused and disoriented we may be. And he is saying the same words: "I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you."

So let's pick ourselves up from the ground and dust ourselves off. Let the scales fall from our eyes and let's polish up our halos. And then, let us go out into the world as living monstrances, showing forth Christ's glory in the world today.

Christopher Stephen Jenks

INTERCESSIONS

For the Brotherhood		Novices	<i>Sat</i>	For the Departed
Episcopal Visitor	<i>Sun</i>	Bo Alexander Armstrong		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
Rodney R Michel		Francis Jonathan Bullock		Carol Valerio
Episcopal Visitors Emeriti		Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands		Shirley Whipper
<i>Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91</i>		Tikhon Pethoud		Jonathan
<i>Paul Moore, jr d 5.1.03</i>		James Patrick Hall		Kari Clawson
<i>Walter D Dennis d 3.30.03</i>		Postulants		Garland Bell
Professed		Eric L Turner		Jack
Richard Thomas Biernacki		Millard S Cook		Kathryn Christianson
<i>John Nidecker d 6.20.88</i>				Kathleen Beach
James Teets		and for Associates and Friends of the Brotherhood		Tyrone Stone
Luke Anthony Nowicki				Matthew Adams
<i>John Peter Clark d 2.25.94</i>		For Religious Communities		Janey Duncan
William Francis Jones	<i>Mon</i>	Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns		Ronald Paschal
Stephen Storen		Society of the Atonement		Robert Scott
<i>Thomas Joseph Ross d 12.18.01</i>		Order of Friars Minor		Joy
Tobias Stanislas Haller		Community of the Paraclete		Hugh Adams
<i>William Bunting d 10.12.88</i>		Companions of Saint Luke~Benedictine		Edel Ferguson
Edward Munro		Community of Celebration		Robert Ray Parks
<i>Charles Kramer d 10.23.06</i>		Little Sisters of Saint Clare		John Backus
<i>Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93</i>		Anamchara Fellowship		William Walker
Donovan Aidan Bowley	<i>Tue</i>	Anglican Order of Preachers		Mildred & John Petras
<i>Edward Riley d 9.15.05</i>		Rivendell Community		Marie Petras
Christopher Stephen Jenks		Sisters of Saint Gregory		Elizabeth Morgan
Ciarán Anthony DellaFera		Third Order SSF		Orlando Musngi
<i>Damian-Curtis Kellum d 10.9.07</i>		Worker Sisters & Brothers of the Holy Spirit		Alvin van Pelt Hart
Richard John Lorino		Camaldolese Benedictines		Evangeline Anchundo
Ronald Augustine Fox		Society of Saint John the Evangelist		J Wilson Reed
Maurice John Grove		Anglican Oblates of Saint Benedict		Richard Worster
Charles Edward LeClerc		Community of the Transfiguration		Luis M
Virgilio Fortuna	<i>Wed</i>	Order of Julian of Norwich		H Lawrence Bond
Gordon John Stanley		Order of the Holy Cross		Dan Evans
Karekin Madteos Yarian		Order of Saint Helena		Simon Verruchio
William David Everett		Community of Saint John Baptist		David Cane
Thomas Bushnell		Society of Saint Francis		Brian O'Donnell
Thomas Mark Liotta				Steve "Cubby" Ruh
James Mahoney		For Ministries		William Leech
<i>Patrick Ignatius Dickson d 7.20.05</i>		Joseph Richey House		Charles Glidden
Robert James McLaughlin	<i>Thu</i>	Fessenden Recovery Ministries		Donald McCall
Peter Budde		Baltimore Int'l Seafarers' Center		
John Henry Ernestine		Saint Paul's Grayson St, San Antonio		
Francis Sebastian Medina		Aldersgate UMC Dobbs Ferry		
Ælfred Bernard Dean		Saint James Fordham, Bronx		
Joseph Basil Gauss		Saint Christopher's, Killeen TX		
Mark Andrew Jones		Saint James, Austin		
Emmanuel Williamson		White Plains Hospital		
Richard Matthias		Grace Cathedral, San Francisco		
William Henry Benefield	<i>Fri</i>			
Nathanael Deward Rahm				
Thomas Lawrence Greer				
Enoch John Valentine				
Ron Fender				
Michael Elliott				
David Luke Henton				
David John Battrick				
Will Harpest				

Annunciation and Response

She knelt beside the neatly planted rows
of cummin, dill, and mint. The clear March sky
was bright; a flock of birds flew high.

She pinched a leaf;

then, suddenly, she froze —
a voice had spoken. There was no one there.

It spoke a second time; she looked around.

“How can this be?” she asked the vacant air.

Once more it spoke, yet there was not a sound.

She paused again; her answer in her mind.

In thirty years and three, her words would find
an echo: “Not my will, but thine be done,”
said in another garden by her son,
while three friends slept.

So here none heard her words —
except an angel, a high flight of birds,
and three neat rows of cummin, mint, and dill:
“Be it to me according to thy will.”

Tobias Stanislas Haller

April 7, 1989

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.