

HE SERVANT



*The silent fraction of
the Bread at the
climax of Dzieci's
"Fools' Mass"*

#229

Michaelmas 2013

Publications from the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory

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THE VOWS IN BRIEF

People have often asked me to distill the three evangelical counsels (our vows) into what we see as essential, in order that we might live them while being fully in the world. Far from being “simpler” than the traditional vows, they are in some ways more difficult in that they apply to every relationship that we encounter while being religious living fully in the world.

Poverty—No matter what you have, it isn’t yours. Use everything in your possession for the benefit of God’s people and for God’s glory. It’s not about what you have, but what you do with what you have.

Chastity—People are ends and not means. They are not possessions. They have integrity and dignity and wholeness and so should you. Free yourself to love.

Obedience—Freedom is not about doing what you want. It’s about being released from the prison of selfish desires. Stop manipulating circumstances and people to get what you want.

When vows become an end rather than a means to an end, they turn quickly to false idols. When Poverty becomes just about money and possessions, Chastity merely about sex, Obedience solely about submission to authority, then we lose the opportunity to focus on what the vows are meant to accomplish. We miss the thing to which they point. Vows don’t lead to the relinquishment of the will, but our stretching of it so that it can be conformed to the will of God—which is to love God and neighbor.

Karekin Madteos Yarian



Richard Edward Helmer offers himself to God in symbolic death to self, as Charles Edward LeClerc chants the Litany, and the Minister General presides.

Here and there with the brothers

COMMUNITY NOTES

Annual Convocation 2013



Members of Dzieci grace the community with a sung blessing before the midday meal.

Gregorian Friars gathered at Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls, New York in July to celebrate the 44th anniversary of the foundation of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory and to welcome the beginning of a new year in ministry and service to The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion through our Rule of Life.

This year's major retreat was provided by Dzieci, a transformational theater group headquartered in Brooklyn, New York. Having previously experienced Dzieci's signature piece, entitled "Fool's Mass," Blane

Frederik van Pletzen-Rands commended this group to our Education Committee last year, and I think it is safe to say that all who attended this year's Annual Convocation found great peace and productive enjoyment as the members of the Dzieci troupe



The "Fools" draft Richard John Lorino to read the lesson at the "Fools' Mass."



Joseph Basil Gauss, verbally clutching his holy text, makes his way through the gauntlet of a communal birth canal...

presented the “Fools’ Mass” on Wednesday evening and included our office of Compline into it. It’s safe to say that we were all touched by this moving experience. Since Dzieci travels throughout the USA and internationally, we highly recommend them for similar retreats, and whenever you see the “Fools’ Mass” being presented locally, *don’t miss it!* They are on the web at dziecitheatre.org.

The six days of Annual Convocation were packed with liturgies, prayer and meetings of the several groups within the Brotherhood, including the Chapter, each of the five provinces, the Council, the Education Committee, and the Ministers Provincial. By the end of the week, the Festival Holy Eucharist summed up much of what we had experienced together as we celebrated new ministries, the advancement of members among us, and the welcoming of new beginnings. On Friday at Evening Prayer William Van Doren (California) was received into the novitiate and given the name of William Carl; Mark Williams (East Tennessee) was admitted to the postulancy, and the following Gregorian Friars were commissioned for new or renewed ministry among us: Minister Provincial of Province 1: Enoch John Valentine (Rhode Island); Minister Provincial of Province 2: Edward Munro (Maryland); Director of Vocations: Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago); Director of Education: Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands (Western New York); Chapter’s



... to be received, reborn, by the virtual mothers who offer comfort after the ordeal.



Peter Budde reminds all of the important distinction between religion and faith.

and with the blessing of our Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Rodney R Michel (Pennsylvania). Prior to the vows, he lay prostrate in the center of the choir as Charles Edward LeClerc (New Hampshire) sang the litany. As he knelt before Founder and Minister General Richard Thomas Biernacki (New Jersey) he stated his vows among us, and signed those vows in our presence. We wish our newly-professed brother every blessing and a sufficient sense of success as his vocation further develops in the future!



Edward Munro and David John Battrick administer laying of hands with prayer for healing.

Representatives to Council: John Henry Ernestine (New Jersey), Tobias Stanislas Haller (New York); The Minister General's Appointees to Council: Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago), David Luke Henton (Texas); Secretary: Thomas Bushnell (Los Angeles); Administrator: Robert James McLaughlin (Pennsylvania). Our congratulations and our thanks for their service accompany each brother as he carries out his ministry among us and on our behalf!

The Convocation's Holy Eucharist on the closing day drew us together as we approached being sent forth to do the work God has called us to do. A focus of this liturgy was the rite of first profession of annual vows. Richard Edward Helmer (California) made his first annual profession in the presence of the community assembled

We were also delighted to welcome Brothers Robert Sevensky and Raphael Dixon OHC among us; Robert is the Superior of the Order of the Holy Cross and is a long-time friend of the Brotherhood and many of our friars.

In addition to the Solemn Festival Holy Eucharist on Saturday, which was celebrated by Bishop Rodney, the daily masses were celebrated by Gregorian Friars Tobias Stanislas, David John Battrick (Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia), Blane Frederik and Richard Edward and were assisted by Gregorian Deacons Edward, Charles Edward, Virgilio Fortuna (Massachusetts) and Gordon John Stanley (Chicago), with the support of other Gregorian Friars. Preaching always brightens the daily masses and was accomplished this summer by Bishop Rodney, Karekin

Madteos Yarian (California), Peter Budde (Texas), William Henry Benefield (Chicago) and Ron Fender (East Tennessee). The full round of the Daily Office was also said/sung each day, officiated by the brothers, and the week of music was thoughtfully planned out by our Director of Convocation Liturgy and Music, Nathanael Deward Rahm (Chicago), with the assistance of Gregorian organists Richard John Lorino (New York), Enoch John, William Henry and of course Nathanael Deward. Mention must also be made of Nathanael Deward's skill as Director of the Schola each summer, and this year's Festival Holy Eucharist on Saturday included a recently-written piece conducted by him, entitled "The First Thing," as the Offertory.



Karekin Madteos Yarian presents and assists in vesting the new novice, William Carl Van Doren.





Mark Williams reads a lesson.

Bishop Rodney also made time to meet individually with every member present for the convocation, which is one of his responsibilities through the House of Bishops Committee on Religious Communities.

In his time and ministry, Jesus called his followers aside to a quiet place for rest, reflection and renewal; Gregorian Friars today find that needed peace and regeneration in convocations, retreats and gatherings throughout the year, as time and the demands of other ministry responsibilities permit. As we begin our 45th year of the faithful observance of our Rule, Constitution and Customary, we give heartfelt thanks for the opportunities for service provided to us each and ever day, and for the times of prayer, worship and fellowship we enjoy throughout each year.

The Sisters of Saint Gregory

Our prayers and heartfelt congratulations arise for Sr Laurie Joseph Niblick SSG upon her election as Community Leader of the Sisters of Saint Gregory during their Annual Convocation this year! May Our Lord grant her every blessing in wisdom, patience and grace for the work that is before her!

Province 2

Edward Munro shared the following update on his ministry: “Yesterday was my last day as deacon at Saint Christopher’s Linthicum Heights, Maryland, after seven years. They gave Barbara and me a great send-off. Next week I start at Saint Philip’s Annapolis. I look forward to new challenges.” We know you are more than capable of surmounting any new challenge and we also know that the good people of Saint Philip’s will soon realize what a wide variety of ministries and talents you bring to their parish, and what a blessing Barbara and you are to them! Congratulations, dear brother!

Province 4

David Luke Henton is supporting the Women’s Cooperative of Palomas, Chihuahua, Mexico in marketing their handmade artisan clothing and artwork. Working with Ms Susan Hutchins, Chair of the diocesan Commission on International and Border Ministries in the Diocese of the Rio Grande, David Luke has traveled to Palomas, met with the women and toured their workshop, and sold almost \$1,000 worth of their products at the Church of the Ascension in Cloudcroft, New Mexico, where he is a seasonal resident. He also brought some of their products to Annual Convocation, where brothers generously purchased everything available to them! He appreciates his brothers’ support for this ministry, and next year plans to bring twice as much merchandise to convocation! He continues to provide a seasonal retreat and hospitality ministry at Saint Brigid’s Rest in the southern mountains of New Mexico.

I'LL BE A SON OF A... ZEBEDEE!

After forty-three years of ordained ministry I finally get to preach on the feast of Saint James the Apostle. I have to tell you that this sermon is much like the loaf in the belly of the fool at last night's "Fools Mass." The sermon needs some more rising and forming and baking—so bear with me as we get this loaf produced.

A few things to remember about dear Saint James: James and his brother John were sons of a prosperous Galilean fisherman named Zebedee. James and his brother John, along with Peter seemed to have belonged to a small privileged group that *might* have looked like favorites of Jesus—indeed they were private witnesses to the Transfiguration, the healing of Jairus' daughter and the agony in the garden. Did you ever think how the other nine felt about that? When we are in positions of leadership we have to walk a rather fine line when it comes to having favorites, because others feel the exclusion, and it can create division.



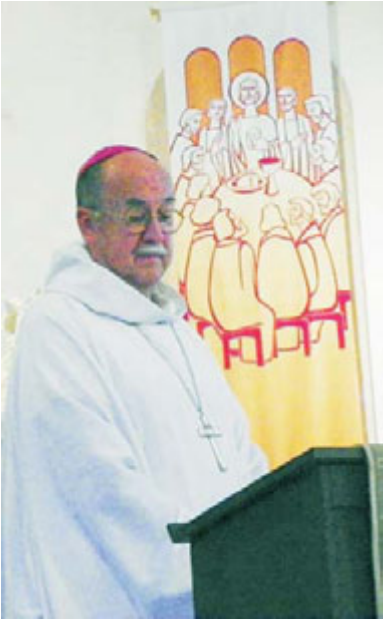
The brothers and Dzieci pray a benediction over members of the community in turn.

And don't forget that scene from

today's gospel where Lady Zebedee comes to Jesus with her boys and asks our Lord if Jimmy and Johnny can sit on Jesus' right and left when he comes into his kingdom. Jesus made an object lesson of the occasion but I can just hear the other ten saying, "Oh, those sons of Zebedee, what will they be wanting next?"

Jesus nicknamed the Zebedee boys "*Boanerges—Sons of Thunder*" because they were both hot-headed, impetuous and sometimes acted or spoke before they thought. Actually, a number of Jesus' disciples were impetuous, prone to temper fits and often spoke or acted before they thought. Another reason for me to think the other disciples might have called the Sons of Thunder "those sons of a Zebedee" in an off moment.

Wow! I must be careful here as I seem to be walking the fine line between exegesis and eisegesis.



Bishop Michel

Jesus' community wasn't together long enough to draft a constitution and rule, like the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, but I believe that these are sacred and important texts for the community and its members and need to be remembered and followed.

James the Apostle was the first to be martyred for his faith in Jesus Christ, drinking that cup that Jesus had spoken of on that day with the Jewish mother and her boys. According to an ancient tradition the body of James was taken to Compostela, Spain which has been a shrine for pilgrims for centuries. Isn't it strange that on this feast day the terrible train accident has taken place in Compostela killing a number of pilgrims? Compostela seems to have become *the* place for pilgrimage these days, as I have known any number of folks who recently walked the road to Compostela though it wouldn't be enticing for me, even with my new titanium knees—it is a long, long walk.

Quite a fellow—this Saint James the Apostle.

I still believe we can learn much about living in the kingdom and walking the faith journey by turning to the lives and examples of the saints, and one another; and I encourage you, my brothers, to read about and emulate the lives of the saints. We are especially

blessed to learn from this wonderful band of brothers and as I look out over you I see James and John and Peter and Matthew and all the other disciples and that is such a blessing. We have Boanerges, Sons of Zebedee and a wide variety of others but that is what makes this community so rich and interesting.

In our collect for this day we prayed “that God will pour



Robert James McLaughlin, Enoch John Valentine, and Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands enjoy a light moment in the snack room.

out upon the leaders of the Church that spirit of self-denying service by which alone they may have true authority among God’s people.” Let that be the prayer, the goal and the hope of all in leadership and indeed, of every single one of us, so that we might have integrity among God’s people—be fools for Christ’s sake—and like Saint Gregory be true servants of the servants of God. Soli Deo Gloria!

Bishop Rodney Michel

Profession sermon

A JOURNEY IN FAITH

Normally, I would not be eager to preach at this particular liturgy, given the weightiness of it. Knowing that our beloved Minister General and our Bishop Visitor usually preach made it even more difficult to request the chance to speak to you today. But I asked nonetheless because someone that I care about very deeply is making his first profession of vows today. For all of you, my brothers, I hope that you find thoughts to take away and strengthen you from what I say here, but today I speak to you, Richard Edward. I speak as someone who is privileged to know you, and to have had the opportunity to watch you grow over these last several years.

Today is a big day for you. A step, in fact, at the beginning of your journey in religious life. Your time of postulancy and novitiate has been much like preparation and packing before the journey begins. And now you’re going to take the first step on the road that, God grant you, will be long indeed!

What a joy! And what a terror! Just ask the sons of Zebedee. They, like you, don’t quite know what lies ahead. Oh, you might think you know what it means to follow Jesus. You might think you know what you are asking when you choose to make your vows today in the presence of your brothers. You long for the kingdom life, and to you, as to James and John, Jesus poses a question: “Are you able?”



Richard Edward makes his vows.



David John Battrick censes the altar.

Before we get to that question, however, let's take a look at who surrounds you right now: A community of men who are on the road following the Teacher; following the Lord, whose kingdom is not of this earth. Remember that. It is a kingdom not of this earth, and so the kinds of power and privilege one might expect in an earthly kingdom are not the kind we would suppose. James and John didn't know this. Neither did the other disciples; sometimes we forget too.

Jesus has to remind them—and us—that there are no positions of power here. “It is not so among you,” he says, “but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first must be slave of all.”

Jesus has to remind them—and us—that there are no positions of power here. “It is not so among you,” he says, “but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first must be slave of all.”

Now, let's get back to that question. “Are you able?” Jesus asks them, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” And Jesus knows that they will. And he also knows that the road will lead to suffering even in the midst of joy.

I want to ask you to remember a moment a long time ago, on a snow-bank, where you and I know this journey really began. A moment of pain, a crisis of sorts, through which God finally



Karekin Madteos Yarian



Brothers present Richard Edward, with the helpful reminder to humility at the side: Please Step Down!

and ultimately blew open all of the pre-conceived ideas you had about who you were and where your life would take you. And I want you to look at where you are now.

Are you able to remember that moment, clearly? Are you able to remember and hear the call of God begun in those moments, and to trust that today you are closer than ever to answering that call?

Like Samuel, perhaps it took a while before it sunk in that it was God speaking. Take a look around you at this room full of men who will, like Eli, help you to answer when God calls and you don't quite recognize that it is him. "Go back," we will tell you, "and say 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening.'"

I listen to today's gospel and I recognize you in it, in James and John. Men with ambition in the kingdom, who do not realize what they are asking for when they ask to sit at Jesus' right and left hand.

I remember asking you once, early in your postulancy with the Brotherhood, "If this is all that God has planned in you—this parish, this small town, the members of this parish, this family, the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory—if this is all there is, is it enough?"



Virgilio Fortuna prepares the altar.



Dzieci turned the refectory tables on the community several times during the week.

Are you able to accept it, if this might be all that God has planned for you, and see it as a gift? Are you able to drink this cup?”

I know that this is a question that you’ve wrestled with, to discover what it means to be content where you are until God calls you elsewhere. Unlike James and John, perhaps you now recognize that power and authority are different in the kingdom than they are in the world. And I am so very proud of you.

Are you able to be a brother among brothers? With our faults and flaws and drama

and all the normal things that come with human communities? There is a song I love, by a contemporary pop artist named Jason Mraz titled, “A Beautiful Mess.” It is about the depths and realities of relationships and ways that they change and challenge us, and sometimes in the process of that change or challenge, we experience pain—sometime deep pain. But listen to these words:

Through timeless words and priceless pictures
 We’ll fly like birds not of this earth;
 And tides they turn and hearts disfigure
 But that’s no concern when we’re wounded together.
 What a beautiful mess this is.
 It’s like taking a guess when the only answer is yes.

Are you able to drink this cup? Are you able to love us, and be challenged



Richard Edward signs the Instrument of Profession as James Teets indicates.

by us and to challenge us, and be messy with us as we continue to grow and learn how to love one another? When you or I or any of us is wounded, God is with us.

I have so admired watching you over the last three years as you've embraced the perspectives of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and to embrace them not as ends but as means. Means of transformation, means of spiritual growth, means of answering the call of God so that you can show the world what the love of God looks like from the perspective of one who has received it. And now you are prepared to take these vows up. Or rather, you are ready to take up the struggle with them, and the pains and joys of the transformation they will bring to you, to your family, to your parish, to your friends—to the world.

God lit a fire of love in your heart on that snow-bank, and God will work with you to stoke that fire until the flames can warm your heart enough should you ever reach another time or moment in your life where pain or sorrow make it feel cold.

You and God, with the love and help of your brothers, will stoke those flames until they refine you like silver, helping you to burn away the dross—of ambitions, and assumptions, and attempts to do your own will to determine the outcome of the future or of our present circumstances.

You and God will stoke those flames until they dance on your very head as you spread the gospel in the part of the world that God has set aside for you.

And, as you near the passage from this life to the greater life that waits for us all, you and God will stoke the flames of that love until they become so powerful that they consume your spirit and carry your remains on the mighty rushing wind to the throne of God.

Are you able to be baptized with this baptism? Are you able to drink this cup?

My brother—we have all taken up the cup. And we all take it up daily. And able or not, we trust in God to help us. We have taken up the baptism that Jesus shows us, unsure of what that holy fire will do in us. But, unlike James and John, we know where it will lead us. All of us, through this life and inexorably to our death and our entrance into the greater life that waits. We know that it may lead to struggle and messiness. But we also know that it *will* lead to joy—inexpressible joy. We are so glad you've chosen the road ahead. We don't know where it will take us, but we are with you, should God will it and you persevere, whatever happens as we travel together. Let us pray:

O Holy One, watch over the times of your beloved children, and grant us peace as we step into the joys and anxieties of unknowingness. For all things find their moment in you. And nothing is until it is. But you always are. *Amen.*

Karekin Madteos Yarian



INTERCESSIONS

For the Brotherhood

Episcopal Visitors Sun

Rodney R Michel
Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91
Paul Moore, jr d 5.1.03
Walter D Dennis d 3.30.03

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

Edward Riley d 9.15.05 Tue

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

Gordon John Stanley Wed

Karekin Madteos Yarian
 William David Everett
 Thomas Bushnell
Patrick Ignatius Dickson d 7.20.05
 Robert James McLaughlin
 Peter Budde
 John Henry Ernestine
 Francis Sebastian Medina

Ælred Bernard Dean Thu

Joseph Basil Gauss
 Mark Andrew Jones
 Richard Matthias
 William Henry Benefield
 Nathanael Deward Rahm
 Thomas Lawrence Greer
 Enoch John Valentine
 Ron Fender

Michael Elliott d 2.8.12 Fri

David Luke Henton
 David John Battrick
 Will Harpest
 Bo Alexander Armstrong
 Francis Jonathan Bullock
 Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands
 James Patrick Hall
 Millard Cook
 Richard Edward Helmer

Novices Sat

Eric Shelley
 Larry Walter Reich
 William Carl Van Doren

Postulant

Mark Williams

For Religious Communities

Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns
 Society of the Atonement
 Order of Friars Minor
 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
 Oratory of the Good Shepherd
 Community of Solitude
 Order of Julian of Norwich
 Order of the Holy Cross
 Order of Saint Helena
 Community of Saint John Baptist
 Society of Saint Francis

For Ministries

Joseph Richey House
 Fessenden Recovery Ministries
 Baltimore Int'l Seafarers' Center
 Saint Paul's Grayson St, San
 Antonio
 Aldersgate UMC Dobbs Ferry
 Saint Christopher's, Kileen TX
 Saint James, Austin
 White Plains Hospital
 The Community Kitchen
 Cathedral of St John, Providence

For the Departed

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