

## HE SERVANT



**THE BARBER  
AND THE  
BROTHER**

*see the story on page 6*

**#230**  
*Epiphany 2014*

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## *The Servant*

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*Published quarterly. Address all inquiries concerning this publication to the Editor.*

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*All checks must be drawn on a US bank in US dollars payable to:*

*The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory—Publications*

*Mail all payments to:*

*The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory*

*Saint James' Rectory*

*2627 Davidson Avenue*

*Bronx NY 10468-4103 USA*

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## BEHOLDING GOODNESS

*Hine ma tov u ma na'im shevet achim gam yachad  
Behold, how good and beautiful when brethren dwell together.*

At this time of gifts and kings and all that comes with the season just past, I am reminded of the tremendous gift I have received from this community for more than forty years. It is a gift whose dimensions cannot be measured; one which is felt and is always there though in differing intensities as circumstances warrant. In recent months the Brotherhood has seen changes and shifts and there is no way to explain what the support of my brothers has meant to me in and through these changes.

There is also a connection with the Epiphany: The kings or magi of the east—whatever they really were—showed up! This is the first expectation and desire for support and I have received it from and with my brothers: that “showing up.” We show up for each other and for the church because that is what we are called to do. How does this connect with the Epiphany? Gifts were brought; gifts were offered. We do the same in our community with each other. The support and love I receive from the Brotherhood gives me strength to lead and in turn to give my brothers all my support and love. As we think back on the gift-giving and the gifts the three kings brought, let us all consider what gifts we have to offer to each other and to the church—some of them yet undiscovered and un-named—some as simple as that first and crucial “showing up.”

In the early days of the Brotherhood, there were two amazing women, members of Saint Bartholomew's Church in White Plains, sisters Cecil Berges and Marion Pierce. They knew about giving and gifts; they knew how to see needs. They also knew how to “be there”—the gift of “showing up.” There was an occasion that lives on in my memory and I will name it here: we were at the Church of Saint Luke in the Fields in Manhattan for a Eucharist following a meeting at the Episcopal Church Center with Presiding Bishop Browning. As I walked in the procession, and past these two dear women, Marion reached out and said, “Kid—just look at what you've done.” There was another gift from them—two women from a “low church” tradition who saw the gift of the Brotherhood to the church—and to God—a “high church” notion if ever there was one.

*Hine ma tov u ma na'im shevet achim gam yachad*  
Behold, how good and beautiful when brethren dwell together.

RTB



*Cecil and Marion  
with James Teets*

*Here and there with the brothers*

## COMMUNITY NOTES

### *Notice*

**BSG has ceased using Post Office Box 57, White Plains NY, as a mailing address, and all mail should be addressed to BSG at Saint James' Rectory, 2627 Davidson Ave, Bronx NY 10468.**

### *Province 1*

Our deeply heartfelt congratulations go out to Helen Bernice Lovell SSG as she approaches her centenary birthday celebration in February. Her home town of Cornish, New Hampshire has decided to honor her birthday with a celebration at Town Hall, and we hope a number of Gregorian Friars will be able to be there with her family members, numerous friends, and the Sisters of Saint Gregory, to give thanks to God for her hundred years, much of it spent in intercession and service. We are daily blessed to know you, dear sister.



*Helen Bernice in 2006*

### *Province 2*

Foundation Day for the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory is the Feast of the Holy Cross, and it is celebrated in prayer and liturgy throughout the community. Our Founder and Minister General, Richard Thomas Biernacki, wrote to the community on Sunday, September 15th: "Today, the Foundation of the Brotherhood and my first profession 44 years ago, was celebrated at Holy Trinity in South River, New Jersey. What is especially wonderful is that my parish knows BSG, and of course Elizabeth Mary Burke SSG was very much involved and known here. Fr John J Negrotto, our interim rector, prayed over me, asking God to bless the brothers and the sisters; he named our Saint Gregory the Great in the Great Thanksgiving; it was so gratifying to be in a place where we are known and loved. They even gave me flowers to take home! I just wanted to share that—and by the way, I stopped at the place in the Memorial Garden where Elizabeth Mary's ashes reside and said a little prayer from all of us. Sol Deo Gloria—To God Alone the Glory!"

The 52nd Precinct Community Council of the Bronx—a community organization created to further cooperative relations between local police, elected civic leaders and their constituencies—held their 10th Annual Fellowship Recognition Breakfast on October 25th at King Hall of Monroe College. Among the political, police and other

civilian community leaders receiving awards that day, our own Tobias Stanislas Haller received this year's Clergy Recognition Award for his years of service to the Precinct's Community Council through Saint James' Episcopal Church, Fordham. Also present to support Tobias Stanislas were James Teets, Deacon Bill Cusano (of Saint James' Fordham) and the Rev Leo W Curry, Pastor of Fordham Methodist Church, one of Saint James' Bronx neighbors and a good friend.



*James, Tobias Stanislas, William Henry and Stephen, at St Thomas Church, NYC*

November 1–3 was ‘Saint John’s Weekend’ in New York City and a highlight of that three-day period took place at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, with the 53rd Service of Rededication for The Priory in the United States of America of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem. The service included a sermon by the Rt Rev Mark S Sisk, TSSF, the recently-retired Bishop of New York, who was invested as a knight in this historic order of chivalry whose American Priory focuses support for the Saint John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. More than 170 men and women were admitted or advanced within the order at that service, among which was James Teets as he was decorated as an officer. Among those busily serving at the Investiture was Stephen Storen, who was promoted to the rank of commander last year, while Tobias Stanislas Haller and William Henry Benefield—both ranked as officers—were on hand to experience the solemn pageantry that Anglicans do so well!

At the 237th Convention of the Diocese of New York, delegates elected Tobias Stanislas as a Deputy to General Convention and Provincial Synod.

On November 17, Richard Thomas Biernacki and John Henry Ernestine attended the investiture ceremony for the Orthodox Order of Saint John, Russian Grand Priory, at the Cathedral of Holy Virgin Protection in NYC. Richard is a knight commander and editor of the order's newsletter. A highlight of the afternoon was the induction of Cathy Lee Crosby of TV fame, and the brothers had some wonderful conversation with her at the reception. Another luminary inducted was Princess Mere Raponi, leader of the Maori Tribe in New Zealand.

In a serendipitous moment of grace, Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands had driven down to Springville from Buffalo early one morning for a pastoral visit. After visiting with the family, he experienced what can only be described as one of those in-breaking that occur from time to time. As he describes it:

“I found a place to eat when I noticed a barbershop across the hall. I went in for a haircut and beard trim (still in habit) and met the barber, James Paul, who told me of his recent conversion to Christ, his return to sobriety, and his first week in business as the ‘Soli Deo Gloria Barbershop.’ He was being interviewed by the local press at the time, and when he and the interviewer saw my Brotherhood cross, engraved as it is on the front with that very motto, they both experienced a profound moment of grace and cried openly. I later consecrated water in a shaving mug and, using a comb, sprinkled holy water in blessing.”

#### *Province 4*



*Mark Andrew and Bishop Leo*

The Institution of the Third Rector of Saint Nicholas’ Episcopal Church in Pompano Beach, Florida was celebrated on September 7 with great joy and festivity. Mark Andrew Jones was instituted by the Rt Rev Leopold Frade, Bishop of Southeast Florida, who also served as preacher. Bishop Frade is a long-time friend of our community and was effusive in welcoming us and sending his greetings to all of our brothers. Saint Nicholas’ is a tri-lingual congregation and the spectacular liturgy was cele-

brated in English, Spanish and Portuguese. The reception that followed was a multi-cultural festival complete with Brazilian dancers in complete regalia and a live Mariachi band. The food was bountiful and represented many regional cuisines. Celebrants ate, drank, danced and sang deep into the tropic night in astounding thanksgiving. Mark Andrew and his wife, Diane, hosted visiting brothers with amazing hospitality. The future of the ministry and community at Saint Nicholas’ Church seems charged and unlimited with potential and promise. Soli Deo Gloria!

On October 6th Mark Andrew shared the following vignette: “About an hour ago I shook hands with His Royal Highness, Prince Andrew, Duke of York, who is at Saint Andrew’s for the international Round Square of great schools. I was told not to touch,



*(l to r) Thomas Lawrence Greer, James Patrick Hall, Diane Jones, Bishop Frade, Mark Andrew, Ron Fender, David Luke Henton, and Eric Shelley*

but the Prince extended his hand as he asked if I was the “resident vicar.” Who am I to snub the lucky and the royal? For the record, when I tried to explain that I was present at the event not because I was chaplain but because I was being the “loyal spouse,” His Royal Highness seemed confused, even though I was standing next to Diane, whom he had just met!” Diane Jones serves on the staff of Saint Andrew’s School, a major private J-12 day and boarding college preparatory school located in Boca Raton, Florida.

From Chattanooga, Ron Fender writes: “We have had a wonderful visit from the Rev Nadel Bazar, the founder of the Awareness Project. He is the only Anglican priest who is a native of Syria, and is a diligent peacemaker in the Middle East. I spent the afternoon taking a class he taught and heard him preach three sermons yesterday. He is a holy and blessed man, and sends his greetings and love to our community. I assured him of our prayers.”

### *Province 5*

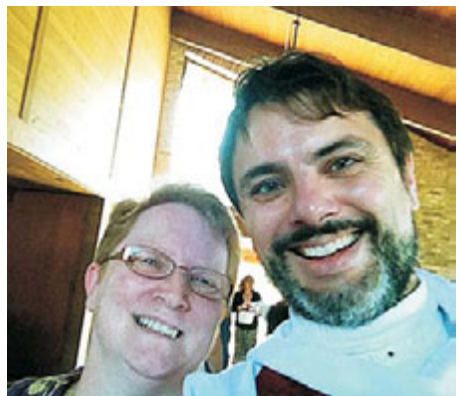
From Ronald Augustine Fox on the Sunday following Foundation Day: “We had a great BSG recognition at Atonement, Chicago, on Sunday. We transferred Holy Cross Day. William Henry Benefield preached, Gordon John Stanley was deacon, I was MC, and Will Harpest and Francis Jonathan Bullock were in habit, processed, and were seated in the sanctuary. At the Prayers of the People in the thanksgiving, one of the petitions was for ‘Br Richard Thomas Biernacki’s vision on this 44th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory.’ At the announcements,



*Joseph Basil Gauss, Ronald Augustine Fox and Nathanael Deward Rahm with the Rev Elizabeth Butler Jameson at her installation as Rector of Saint Simon's Episcopal Church in Arlington Heights, Illinois. (David Medsker photo)*

Rector John David van Dooren talked about the anniversary, and said the BSG brothers were the 'prayer warriors' of the parish and were a 'great blessing' to Atonement."

Ronald Augustine's essay, "Contemporary Religious Life in the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory," appears in the new edition of *Anglican Religious Life 2014-15*, published by Canterbury Press Norwich. Our Director of Vocations knows better than almost anyone else the depth of issues surrounding God's call to holiness of life and work. Thank you, dear brother, for speaking the truth in love!



*Laurie Joseph Niblick SSG and Richard Edward ran into each other in Minneapolis, and sent this "selfie."*

### *Province 8*

The California Diocesan Convention elected Richard Edward Helmer as a Deputy to General Convention.



## EVEN AT THE GRAVE, WE MAKE OUR SONG

*I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



*Ron Fender acts as “a mother” to those undergoing rebirth, at last summer’s Convocation workshop with Dzieci.*

Beloved brothers, we refer to today’s Eucharist as our Healing Service. We pray for our own healing and for the healing of those whom we love and care for. We are anointed with the oil and blessing of healing and we celebrate the mystical and holy healing of Christ’s love and mercy. I have hungered for this sacred ritual for some time. I often close my eyes and in my mind and heart come to this room just to sit and pray in your presence. Just being with you fills me with a sense of love and healing that I find impossible to express. Words, for all their power, cannot begin to say what we carry in our hearts.

In this past year, I have learned something about healing. I have learned that the tricky part of the healing process is letting go of my pain. We humans tend to hold on very tightly to our own pain and suffering, for it is uniquely ours and in many ways it defines us—it is so dependable, it is always there.

**I** have learned that the tricky part of the healing process is letting go of my pain.

The second important lesson I learned is that healing requires faith. When Jesus performed miracles of healing, the miracles depended on the recipient’s belief in him. As you know, in February [2013], I suffered a small stroke and was hospitalized. For a couple of days, my hospital room resembled a diocesan convention, there were so many priests and Episcopal folks coming and going with portable communion kits and little jars of healing oil. It was so sweet and truly wonderful to experience so much

love and concern. But my true healing came, of course, from God and his hand was not as gentle as those human expressions of care.

It came like this: back last Christmas Day [2012], I was at the Community Kitchen, as usual. We were feeding Christmas dinner and preparing for the arrival of Santa Claus to pass out the goodies to the homeless men, women and children all gathered there. There was a man I had known and dealt with for several years. His name was Mark and I loved him dearly. He had been barred from the Community Kitchen due to his outrageous and pitiful drunkenness. Mark walked in to the Kitchen and asked me if he could please eat Christmas dinner. He was very shaky and really stinky, but fairly sober, and, as always, something about Mark touched my heart and moved me deeply. I explained that I would love for him to have dinner but that I had to clear it with the administrator on duty. I went to the administrator and asked permission to allow Mark to eat and visit for a minute with Santa Claus.

Permission was denied. Anger and frustration rose in me like bile, and as those angry tears scalded my face, I gathered some fruit and candy and socks and gloves and whatever little things I could fit into a bag and gave them to Mark. We hugged each other tightly and I told him I was sorry. He was so gracious and understanding and left, telling me that he was grateful and that he loved me. It was the last time I was to see him.

**A**nger and frustration rose in me like bile, and as those angry tears scalded my face, I gathered some fruit and candy and socks and gloves and whatever little things I could fit into a bag and gave them to Mark. We hugged each other tightly and I told him I was sorry.

When I was in the hospital, word came that Mark was downstairs in the morgue; his body had been found out in the woods. I wanted to cry, but I couldn't. For in those quiet moments, there in that hospital room, God spoke very clearly to me and said: "You have cried too many tears. You have wept enough. It is time for some dancing lessons. You must learn to sing again."

I was reminded that this community was founded by a man of music. When Enoch John and I made our first profession of vows, Richard played a strange and beautiful Brazilian instrument called a tongue drum. He accompanied Karekin who sang "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence." It was one of the most transforming and magical moments of my life. In that moment, I understood that the only true, lasting and eternal relationship I ultimately need is my love affair with Jesus Christ. And the path to that relationship is my love affair with each of you, my brothers and my bishop.

Earlier this summer, I had the great privilege to hear a sermon by Bishop Robin Wright. Bishop Wright makes a room far better just by walking into it; he is one of

those people. His sermon included a quote from the great hymn composer, Carole King:

Lookin' out on the morning rain,  
I used to feel so uninspired  
And when I knew I had to face another day  
Lord, it made me feel so tired  
Before the day I met you,  
life was so unkind  
You were the key to my peace of mind.  
When my soul was in the lost and found  
You came along to claim it  
I didn't know just what was wrong with me  
Till your kiss helped me name it.

When Bishop Wright spoke these words, it was you, each one of you, that I saw before me. And I wanted to tell you this: our community has wept enough tears. Jesus has seen and loved us in times of illness and loss and sorrow. He has sustained us in times of confusion and exhaustion and strife.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering...  
He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;  
The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

**G**od spoke very clearly to me  
and said: "You have cried  
too many tears. You have wept enough.  
It is time for some dancing lessons.  
You must learn to sing again."

I have learned to thank God for handing me a stroke and offering me the chance to change my life. And I thank him for giving me the healing strength to continue my journey by your side on this holy Gregorian road. Allow me to say this one last thing to you, through the words of another great composer of hymns, Carly Simon:

Suffering was the only thing that made me feel that I was alive  
Though that's just how much it cost to survive in this world  
'Til you showed me how, how to fill my heart with love,  
How to open up and drink in all that white light  
Pouring down from the heavens.  
I haven't got time for the pain.  
I haven't got room for the pain.  
I haven't the need for the pain.  
Not since I've known you.

*Ron Fender BSG*

# 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  
**Postulants Prospective**  
 Donald J Sutton III  
 Thomas Luther Curnutte

### 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

The Profession of Life Vows of  
 Sister Sally of the Grace of God,  
 Episcopal Carmel of Saint Teresa

## For the Departed

### Benefactors, Friends & Associates:

Charlotte Morgan, Arsene &  
 Louise Lemarier, Norman Hall,  
 George Koerner, Henry Fukui,  
 J Steward Slocum, James  
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