

HE SERVANT



*The winter sun
shines through the
windows of the
Chapel of the
Stigmata, at
Mount Alvernia
Retreat Center,
Wappingers Falls
NY*

#243

Spring 2017

ADAM FOUND THE TREE OF LIFE

For many years I searched to find this place. The way
was watched by angels armed with swords;
and yet in seeking it I felt the Lord's
love guiding me. With hope and fear, by grace
I made my way — I'm sure it was God's will.
It was the Tree of Knowledge God forbade.
Its bitter fruit our innocence unmade;
had we kept faith we'd be in Eden still.
But this, the Tree of Life, was only lost
because we fell. In Paradise once more,
I looked upon the Tree, and what it bore.
The Tree had brought forth fruit, but at what cost!
I saw a wonder hanging from that Tree;
a man was nailed to it; he looked like me.

Tobias Stanislas Haller BSG (1988)

The Servant

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A REFLECTION ON WINTER CONVOCATION 2017

For this Convocation, much thanks is due to our Education Committee and its Chair, David Luke Henton. This was one of the more inspired and inspiring gatherings in the Brotherhood's life. While we daily pray the Community Collect and honor our patron by living "in the world but not of it" we are not always cognizant of Gregory in the shadows — in worldly terms, that Gregory "has our backs." Through the workshops and visuals, we were able to get closer to the person — the man — that Gregory was, and indeed is for us daily.

With both the written and spoken word and images of our patron, we began the process (which is ongoing) of discovering the subtleties and inner realities of Gregory, as man, pope, and saint. In addition to encountering Gregory through images, and in reflection and contemplation, we were treated to a live exchange of meetings between Gregory and clerics of his time. I must admit that, when in 1969 at the Visitation Monastery with Sister Helen Marie, my only connection with Gregory was Gregorian chant! There is — as we all discovered — so much more. I give thanks for this wonderful beginning and continued exploration into the life of our patron — Gregory the Great!

RTB

Here and there with the Brothers

COMMUNITY NOTES

Winter Convocation 2017

Those who remember Winter Convocation 2016 — how, in just 72 hours much of the East and Mid-Atlantic Coast of the USA was inundated with up to three feet of snow — had nothing like that to fear this year. Gregorian Friars from around the country traveled by car, train and air to Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls, NY, arriving safely and without incident on Monday, January 23rd. That said, we did have a last-minute cancellation due to an unexpected medical procedure, but otherwise everyone who intended to be there was there.

As has become traditional, Retreat Director Fr Roch Ciandella OFM gave a warm welcome. The retreat center is operated by the local province of the Order of Friars Minor (RC) — and Fr Roch and the other members of the Franciscan community resident there, together with their staff, were on hand to make the Gregorian Friars feel right at home.

The Brotherhood's Education Committee, chaired by David Luke Henton, developed the retreat agenda centered on Pope Saint Gregory I, the Great, the



(l to r) Robert James McLaughlin, Joseph Basil Gauss, David Luke Henton, and Scott Michael Pomerenk, at the Tuesday morning workshop on Gregory in Words and Images

community’s patron. Three morning programs provided this year’s Winter Retreat schedule.

Tuesday’s retreat was titled, “An Introduction to Gregory the Great in Words and Images” and was presented by David Luke, who began the session by asking the gathered brothers to brainstorm about three statements:

- ☐ When I think of Saint Gregory the Great, three words or phrases that first come to mind are...
- ☐ What I’d really like to know about Gregory is...
- ☐ An interesting fact about Gregory the Great that most people don’t know is...

Responses came easily as each in the circle added a comment or a biographical fact, or asked a question of other brothers who have studied the life and times of our patron over the years. Gregory of Rome was a complex historical figure who lived in unsettled times and who gave his life to the service of the church, aptly adopting the title “Servant of the Servants of God.” His life is important to each Gregorian Friar and is included in the Rule, under the section called “Of Private Devotion:” “The example and teachings of our patron, Saint Gregory the Great, shall be held in high esteem by each brother. A portion of his biography or his



Icons, windows, and illuminations provide insight into Gregory the Great.



Portraying characters in Scenes from the Life of Gregory the Great (l to r) Thomas Bushnell as Augustine of Canterbury, Christopher Stephen Jenks as Archbishop Natalis of Salona, Richard Matthias as Archdeacon Honoratus, and Tobias Stanislas Haller as Gregory

writings shall be included in the annual reading of each brother, to be assigned by the Minister General at Annual Chapter.” At the close of this retreat session, everyone was encouraged to visit and to pray with a display of beautiful and moving icons and historic likenesses of Gregory assembled by Joseph Basil Gauss in the friary’s library. This display remained for purposes of meditation and admiration throughout convocation.

On Wednesday the convocation enjoyed “Scenes from the Life of Gregory the Great,” — three vignettes drawn from the historic accounts of Gregory’s life, and from Gregory’s sermons and correspondence developed into a readers’ theater presentation by Tobias Stanislas Haller — who also took on the role of Gregory himself. In the first piece, Gregory laments his life since his election to the Pontificate of Rome — when he was poised to retire to the life of a monk, something he had longed to do throughout his career in service in several roles in the Roman bureaucracy, including as papal representative to Constantinople and as archdeacon and prefect of Rome. Just when he was set to retire to the ancestral home which he had given over to his monastic order, he was elected pope! Gregory had much to say about what he had looked forward to and also what he actually found as the successor to Saint Peter. Tobias Stanislas did his best to capture all of this in

his presentation. This solo scene was followed by a dialog between Gregory and Augustine — soon to be known as Augustine of Canterbury. Drawn from historical accounts and copies of their correspondence, this scene told of how Gregory sent Augustine and a small band of fellow-monks from his monastery in Rome to Britain for the purpose of bringing the gospel to the “angels” of that land. Augustine (portrayed by Thomas Bushnell) wrote to ask all sorts of questions about the many problems that he encountered in his ministry in Canterbury — and this scene portrayed Gregory’s re-



Richard Matthias, assisted by Joseph Basil Gauss, prepares the gifts for consecration.

sponse to each question with counsel, pastoral support, “tough love” when necessary, and personal care for Augustine and his brothers. The final scene took the form of a conversation between Gregory, the Archbishop of Dalmatia (Christopher Stephen Jenks), and his archdeacon Honoratus (Richard Matthias). This scene was crafted from the surviving letters that detailed the controversies into which the convivial bishop entwined himself. Problems had begun during the time of Gregory’s predecessor, when the archdeacon complained that the archbishop was squandering the wealth of the church and throwing huge feasts regularly which turned out to be drunken parties. The archbishop — in an effort to keep the deacon quiet — ordained him to the priesthood and sent him to serve a remote parish. At this point the deacon-now-a-priest began writing to the pope to seek justice, only to find the archbishop adeptly countering or thwarting each of Gregory’s attempts to restore proper decorum, in a fashion reminiscent of any number of crafty politicians (in church or state!). In the end the pope demanded that the archbishop remove the priestly ordination from the deacon and return him to his former service. The scene told us a good deal about both church politics and how people of the turn of the seventh century thought about Scripture and tradition.

The third day of the retreat took the form of “An Emmaus Walk with Gregory the Great” in which the brothers were paired up and sent off to have conversations together as we read in the Gospel of Luke 24:13–35, charged with speaking of Gregory and the experiences of his life and ministry. While there was no formal “reporting out” from these pairs of their experiences and learnings from one-another, all were quite satisfied with this traditional means of sharing while deepening relationships, all toward welcoming God into their midst in new and unexpected ways.

As always, the daily retreat sessions were set within each day’s round of worship, prayer and refreshment as formed by the Daily Office, the Holy Eucharist and ample time for conversation and rest. The masses were celebrated by Tobias Stanislas, Richard Edward Helmer and David Benedict Hedges with the assistance of deacons Edward Munro, Gordon John Stanley and Richard Matthias, with many other members of the community providing the liturgical support as lectors, servers, and sacristans, headed by John Henry Ernestine and assisted by Scott Michael Pomerenk. As always, fine preaching highlighted each day’s mass,



David Benedict Hedges with Joseph Basil Gauss

as presented this week by Thomas, Richard Edward and David Benedict, and the daily music schedule was thoughtfully organized by Nathanael Deward Rahm, Director of Convocation Liturgy and Music, and ably provided by Nathanael Deward and Enoch John Valentine at the console.

As with all Brotherhood convocations and retreats, the sound of laughter is gently mixed in our memories with the prayerful solemnity of the Holy Eucharist and our times spent in prayer and reflection together. These annual “times apart” provide refueling for our hearts and our spirits as we go out to meet our Lord in the faces of all whom we see, serve and work alongside. To God alone the glory!

Province 2

Minister General Richard Thomas Biernacki has begun a new ministry as Minister of Music at Saint John’s United Methodist Church in Hazlet, New Jersey. He will be working with a large Allen organ, an adult choir of 14 members, handbells and a small praise team. He had subbed on Christmas Day and the congregation’s leadership were impressed. We send our congratulations, both to our Minister General and to Saint John’s Methodist Church for their wise and spirit-filled decision!



David John Battrick joined his wife Luisa to spend Valentine’s Day doing New South Wales (Australia) Rural Fire Service training.

Province 3

At the call from Minister Provincial Edward Munro, brothers and friends assembled on March 11th at the home of James Teets and Tobias Stanislas Haller in Baltimore for a Lent Ember tide gathering. Attending were James, Tobias Stanislas, Edward, and Eric Shelley, together with the Rev Timothy E Kroh, Rector of Church of the Advent in Federal Hill, Baltimore, and Mr Chris Werth, a vocationer from Saint Philip’s Episcopal Church, Anapolis — where Edward also serves. The day included the Noonday Office, luncheon and the Holy Eucharist celebrated by Tobias Stanislas and assisted by Edward and James. The day’s discussion focused on two quotations selected from “The Wisdom of Desmond

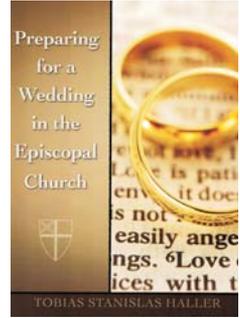


(l to r) Eric Shelley, Edward Munro, Timothy Kroh, James Teets and Chris Werth

Tutu,” by the Rev Michael Battle. The quotations dealt with the powerful implications of the social gospel of Jesus, and hours of lively conversation about where the gospel intersects with political realities today and throughout the ages brought out many personal facets from the lives of the six men who talked and prayed together that day.

Eric Shelly was elected as an Alternate Lay Deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia at that diocese’ recent convention. We send you our sincere congratulations and thanks for your willing ministry, dear brother!

Tobias Stanislas Haller’s latest book *Preparing for a Wedding in the Episcopal Church* has been published by Church Publishing Incorporated. It is a large-format practical guide for clergy and couples alike, aimed at guiding them through the requirements and opportunities of the church’s law and liturgy. It is widely available in both print and electronic (Kindle and Nook) editions.



Province 4



David Luke Henton and Angel Gabriel Roque in a Gregorian selfie

Over the weekend of February 24–26 the Brotherhood’s Director of Education, David Luke Henton, paid a quick visit to novice Angel Gabriel Roque in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. David Luke had hoped to also visit postulant Tommy Mandri in Miami, as well as Mark Andrew Jones in Deerfield Beach, but time was short and schedules were very tight so Angel Gabriel was the only Gregorian he was able to visit. David Luke enjoyed meeting Angel Gabriel’s spouse, Darwin, and enjoyed Angel Gabriel’s hospitality, culinary skills, and the jubilant worship of his extraordinary parish, Saint Mary Magdalene in Coral Springs. The parish is vibrant, diverse, joyful, and Spirit-filled, an inclusive and loving Christian community with exuberant worship and ministries, and David Luke found our novice brother well engaged in service, and also deeply appreciated. During the Holy Eucharist, David Luke joined four sisters and brothers of the Anamchara Fellowship, who have been very supportive of Angel Gabriel in his journey with BSG.

The gathering welcomed a new Anamchara companion and commissioned a new verger for the parish.



David Luke, Angel Gabriel, and Terrence Declan Arnold (photo: Rose Vance)

On Ash Wednesday Mark Andrew Jones extended the ministry of Saint Nicholas Church, Pompano Beach, Florida, to the local train station, for Ashes-to-Go.

Javier D Garcia has withdrawn from the postulancy.

Province 5

Ronald Augustine Fox has been awarded the Master of Ministry degree, *magna cum laude*, through a program of the Providence Theological School. We can only add, well done, good and faithful servant. Your brothers are well beyond proud of you.

Province 7

The Province met March 10-12 in Austin/Georgetown, Texas for a seminar on lay pastoral ministry. The weekend began with Evening Prayer, a supper and Compline at Betty and Peter Budde's home. On Saturday morning, following Morning Prayer, under the leadership of the Rev Dr David Scheider, Director of The Loise Henderson Wessendorff Center of Christian Ministry and Vocation of the Seminary of the Southwest, those attending explored the role of the laity in the pastoral ministry of the church. Following the admonition of Saint Gregory that people called to pastoral ministry must step up and accept that calling, the discussion was based around the pastoral aspects of the various established ministries of



Angel Gabriel and Mark Andrew Jones at "Ashes-to-Go"



(l to r) Tim Kruse, David Luke Henton, Peter Budde, and David Scheider (photo: Betty Budde)

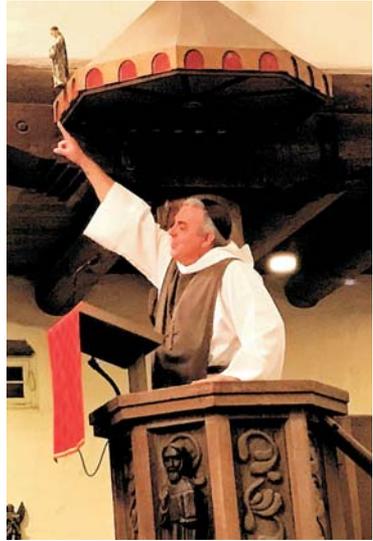
those present. Exploring the various aspects of ministries (healing, guidance, teaching, service, shepherding, administration), each was asked to consider the overarching pastoral nature of the calling and consider how this fits in with the traditional clergy-centered identity of pastor. After a Eucharist celebrated by Fr Scheider, all had the privilege of dining with the seminarians.

Evening Prayer, supper and Compline were held at David Luke Henton's and Tim Kruse's house in Austin. Sunday Morning Prayer was

prayed in the nave of Saint Joseph’s Episcopal Church in Salado, followed by the Eucharist and a brunch in Georgetown, ending the weekend of exploration.

Province 8

In mid-January, Thomas Bushnell, William Henry Benefield and David Luke Henton, together with Minister Provincial Richard Edward Helmer, attended the institution of David Benedict Hedges as Rector of Saint Michael and All Angels, Tucson, Arizona. They were warmly hosted at the parish guesthouse, and Thomas preached during the institution liturgy, pointing out the care and love the community has shared across the generations. A few of the brothers also enjoyed visiting Saguaro National Park just outside of Tucson, and all sampled the great local food.



Thomas Bushnell makes a point from the pulpit of St Michael & All Angels, Tucson.



(l to r) Bishop Smith, David Benedict, William Henry, Richard Edward, David Luke, and Thomas

Following the liturgy, the brothers gathered with Bishop of Arizona Kirk Smith, beneath the antiphonal organ pipes of the adobe church, with its sign that reads “Soli Deo Gloria” — the motto of the Brotherhood!

We congratulate David Benedict, his wife Carly, and their daughter Zoe on their new ministry and life at Saint Michael and All Angels, which hosts a highly regarded parochial school, where Zoe now attends.

- ☒ Thomas Bushnell has recently relocated from Los Angeles to Sunnyvale, California, to be closer to his work as an engineer with Google.
- ☒ Novice Scott Michael Pomerenk has settled into married life in Denver with his wife, Erica, and a new parish, Saint Thomas, where he serves in a variety of ministries.
- ☒ Richard Edward and his family recently moved into a new rectory in Corte Madera, California, near the parish where he serves as rector, Church of Our Saviour, Mill Valley.
- ☒ Karekin Madteos Yarian has taken up an old joy by returning to parish ministry as Administrator at Trinity+St Peter’s Church, San Francisco.



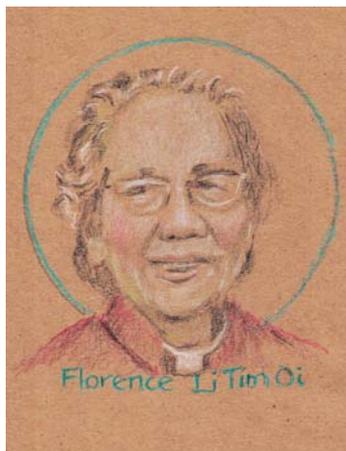
Members of the congregation present David Benedict with items embodying his new ministry.

Convocation Sermon

NOT ONLY FIRST

I must confess, brothers, that I am suspicious of new additions to the Sanctoral Calendar of the Church, and that goes doubly for anyone in the last two hundred years. When I first became aware of the addition of the Ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi, I was torn. Naturally, her import cannot be underestimated as she was the first woman to be ordained a priest in the Anglican churches. And today’s commemoration is, to be quite correct, chastely named “The Ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi,” after the event, and not the person herself. Nonetheless a commemoration like today’s runs the risk of people understanding Tim-Oi herself as a saint, and not in the Pauline sense; to this end there is even a parish church in Ohio with a stained-glass window of her.

In the midst of all the ruckus of the past few years over the Sanctoral Calendar, and the progression from *Lesser Feasts*, to *Holy Women Holy Men*, to *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*, I heard a very potent comment in committee at the 2012 General Convention from the Bishop of Springfield, who said, “firstness is not a theological virtue.” He was reacting to a number of proposed new commemorations of people who were the first to do or be this or that; but of course, a sanctoral should celebrate and honor the faith, hope, and charity of the saints, not the order in which they bore these graces.



That is an important thing to consider — but brothers, if we reduce Florence Li to her firstness, or if we reduce our celebration this day to the uniqueness of the event of her ordination, we are doing her memory a disservice. My early suspicions of this commemoration were grounded in my ignorance; or at best in the shallowness of what I knew. For all I knew was her firstness. This, I would imagine, is what most Anglicans know of her, if anything. We need to know *her* and remember her for more than being first.

Florence's ministry came about in Hong Kong and Canton at a time when China was under the shadow of Japanese domination, and eventually occupation. She heard a preacher's call for women to serve in the church's ministry — and she answered it. Hearing how few the laborers were, she let the Lord send her out into the harvest. Without a separate order of deaconesses in the Chinese church, she was ordained deacon in 1941, and sent to Macau, which was neutral territory and thus full of refugees fleeing the warfare. She threw herself into vigorous ministry, preparing record numbers of young people for baptism; providing food for the hungry; visiting those in need — saying to them that the kingdom of God was near. As the occupation worsened, priests could no longer travel the dangerous journey to Macau to celebrate the Eucharist in the church over which she had charge. Florence was already where the need was — she did not need to travel to make Eucharist; she merely needed the faculty ordination would provide. It wasn't her idea. It seems that, like many of the famous bishop saints of the early church, Florence had to be talked into it — but the bishop convinced her, and on January 25 she was ordained. And so we have our commemoration today. Amen, alleluia, alleluia.

It is what happened after this that we might be tempted to forget if we were to limit today's celebration to remembering her ordination as an event, and even if we expand it more widely to her ordained ministry in Macau during the war. It is after the war that this faithful disciple's tale comes into sharpest focus.

First, due to the controversy engendered by her circumstances, once the war was over and male priests could do what only she had been able to do, she gave up her license to officiate. She did not want to be a scandal; she did not want to be a center of controversy. She saw that the time for her ordained ministry had come and gone, even as she saw that the time for her ordained ministry was yet to come again. But by no means did she cease her ministry; her work for Christ's kingdom was changed, not ended — as she again administered a parish, and ran a mater-

nity home to save the lives of young girls. Though she did not exercise sacramental ministry; her bishop insisted that she still be called a priest.

Second, under Maoism, her lot, with that of other faithful Christians, grew more and more difficult. At first she worked to continue Christian ministry under the strictures laid down by the government; but with the Cultural Revolution all churches were forcibly closed. Florence was put to work on a labor farm; the Red Guards forced her to take scissors and cut up her vestments; she was accused of being a counter-revolutionary and made to undergo state re-education in detention. She stayed away from other Christians so as not to endanger them. She found a way, though, each day, to go out to the hillside and pray by herself. But the communist brainwashing nearly drove her to suicide.

In 1971, her orders were again recognized when the Church in Hong Kong ordained two more women priests; in 1974 she was allowed to retire from the farm where she worked. In 1979, churches were opened again and she began to minister publicly once more. In 1981 she was allowed to visit family in Toronto and never went back. When she reached the fortieth anniversary of her ordination in 1984, Westminster Abbey was the site for the celebration, and her visit to Archbishop Robert Runcie convinced him to get off the fence on women's orders. Brothers, we celebrate today her ordination, but why only that? Why do we not celebrate this woman's sainthood in her own right? She surely is more than the first. She surely is a bearer of faith, hope, and charity. She surely is a confessor of the faith — a woman who, though not a martyr, nonetheless bore prodigious personal suffering for the glory of God and the kingdom of his Christ. And we of all people should recognize in her the traits we ourselves strive for — quietness, patience, humility, charity, courage, and prayer.

David Benedict Hedges, n/BSG



Brothers in choir at Morning Prayer

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

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

Christopher Stephen Jenks Tue

Ciarán Anthony DellaFera
Damian-Curtis Kellum d 10.9.07
 Richard John Lorino
 Ronald Augustine Fox
 Maurice John Grove
 Virgilio Fortuna
 Gordon John Stanley

Karekin Madteos Yarian Wed

William David Everett
 Thomas Bushnell
Patrick Ignatius Dickson d 7.20.05
 Robert James McLaughlin
 Peter Budde
 John Henry Ernestine
 Francis Sebastian Medina
 Ælfred Bernard Dean

Joseph Basil Gauss Thu

Mark Andrew Jones
 Richard Matthias
 William Henry Benefield
 Nathanael Deward Rahm
 Thomas Lawrence Greer
 Enoch John Valentine
Ron Fender d 1.29.16
Michael Elliott d 2.8.12

David Luke Henton Fri

David John Battrick
 Bo Alexander Armstrong
 Francis Jonathan Bullock
 James Patrick Hall
 Richard Edward Helmer
 Eric Shelley
 Larry Walter Reich

Novices Sat

Max Steele
 Scott Michael Pomerenk
 Angel Gabriel Roque
 David Benedict Hedges

Postulants

Russell W Gallagher
 Tommy Mandri

Postulants-Pro prospective

Jason Carroll LaFolette
 Robert Parker (Beau) Surratt III

For Religious Communities

Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns
 Society of the Atonement
 Order of Friars Minor
 Community of the Paraclete
 Companions of St Luke~
 Benedictine

Community of Celebration

Little Sisters of St Clare
 Anamchara Fellowship

Anglican Order of Preachers

Rivendell Community
 Sisters of St Gregory
 Third Order SSF
 Worker Sisters & Brothers of the
 Holy Spirit

Camaldolese Benedictines

Society of St John the Evangelist
 Anglican Oblates of St Benedict
 Community of the Gospel
 Community of the Transfiguration
 Oratory of the Good Shepherd
 Community of Solitude
 Companions of Dorothy the
 Worker

Oratory of St Mary and St John

Order of Julian of Norwich
 Order of the Holy Cross

Order of St Helena

Community of St John Baptist
 Society of St Francis

For Ministries

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

For the Departed

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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.