

THE SERVANT



*O, how good and
pleasant it is...*

*The community
gathers for the Holy
Eucharist.*

#251

Spring 2019



About half of the community was able to gather for Winter Convocation 2019.

The Servant

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

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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.

Behold how good it is when brothers gather



The Founder reflects on fifty years of change.

of the Visitation Monastery in Riverdale, New York. There I met Sisters Rose Angela and Mary Rose — and life changed forever. In a couple of weeks I met Mother Marie Agnes Anduze and Sister Margaret Mary Joyce. That was a meeting of the minds between Margaret Mary and myself. She and I would meet several times in the parlor, she behind the grille and I in a wooden chair outside the enclosure. The new community was being born! We would spend several evenings putting together the first liturgy of the Brotherhood — the Bible Vigil written by the sisters — in which we would make first profession of vows. We worked to finalize the Rule which I wrote and to which we would give our promise to live out as a new community of brothers. It is hard to imagine that in 1969, at the early days of ecumenical exploration, we would do this with the permission of Cardinal Spellman — another first. So this July 6th, we will celebrate with a Jubilee celebration at Mount Alvernia in Wappingers Falls. We will gather once again that week for Annual Convocation and Retreat. We will have conversations around the foundation of the Brotherhood. But more importantly, we will, once again live out the Rule — written 50 years ago and still vital and alive, fulfilling and engaging. Once more, “What a time, what a time, what a time!”

RTB

It is hard to imagine and comprehend that the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory has been gathering for 50 years. I am reminded of the words of Bishop Barbara Harris who began a sermon with the words, “What a time, what a time, what a time!” This is that kind of remembrance.

I am taken back to a day in 1969 when I walked through the grounds



The Bible Vigil: signing the Rule

Here and there with the brothers

Community Notes

Winter Convocation 2019



Winter gatherings — especially in upstate New York — can be “iffy” things, given the weather, and this year’s retreat and convocation was held in late January amid a traditional Christmas scene...though a month late. Snow was on the ground from beginning to end, and treacherous weather conditions in Chicago and throughout the mid-west made travel very difficult for many Gregorians. Some experienced flight cancellations day after day, so their hope of spending a few days with their brothers were buried under piles of snow on the runways.

Those who managed to get through — about half of the brothers — gathered at Mount Alvernia in Wappingers Falls for five days of spiritual and personal refreshment from January 28 to February 1. This marked the thirty-fourth convocation we’ve held at Mount Alvernia, and our eighteenth winter event there.

The Brotherhood’s Education Committee, chaired by David Luke Henton, provided a varied retreat schedule in six sessions:



Brothers share a moment of levity during a workshop session.



Brothers reflected on how the place where prayers are made shapes the prayers themselves.

† Thomas Bushnell presented “The Environment of Prayer,” about how locus has an impact upon one’s prayer life in relationship with commitment to the Daily Office. Each brother present was asked to describe and discuss the various situations where he regularly prays.

† David Benedict Hedges shared a two-session talk about his recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Other brothers who had visited Jerusalem, Israel, and Palestine over the years added to the descriptions of the many holy sites that pilgrims visit as they tour the Holy Land.

† Tobias Stanislas Haller and Peter Budde led the community in a discussion titled “Inter- and Intra-Faith Healing and Community,” evoking a lively conversation about interfaith and ecumenical experiences various brothers shared.

† Scott Michael Pomerenk presented Jean Renoir’s classic 1932 film, “Boudu Saved from Drowning,” followed by a discussion and reflection session.

The daily retreat sessions were set within each day’s round of worship, prayer, and refreshment as provided by the Daily Office, the Holy Eucharist and ample time for conversation and rest. The masses were celebrated by Tobias Stanislas, Mark Andrew Jones, Richard Edward Helmer and David Benedict with the assistance of deacons Edward Munro and Gordon John Stanley, together with other members of the community providing the serving staff, lectors, offertory participants and sacristy staff headed up by Scott Michael. As always, sermons illuminated each day’s mass, as presented this week by Tobias Stanislas (filling in for Bishop Rodney Michel, who was unable to attend), Ronald Augustine Fox, and David Benedict. (Texts of two of these three sermons appear later in this issue;



Brothers listen attentively to Richard Edward Helmer’s account.



The community at Evening Prayer



David Benedict preaching

David Benedict preached from notes which did not survive the trip back to Tucson.) Nathanael Deward Rahm organized the weekly round of liturgy, and he and fellow-organist brothers Richard John Lorino, William Henry Benefield, Enoch John Valentine, and Tommy Mandri put their musical talents to good use at the console.

This coming July will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood, and as we approach that time of thanksgiving, the Golden Jubilee committee was hard at work planning for the event.

The Brotherhood's Council also met during the week, and accepted Jason Seta of Philadelphia as a postulant-prospective. He was admitted as a postulant during Evening Prayer on Thursday of the Convocation.



Jason with the Minister General



The Holy Eucharist is the central liturgy each day. Here Mark Andrew Jones presides.



Brothers shared their experiences of interfaith and ecumenical work in their congregations.

Province 2

Thomas Bushnell has relocated from Province 8. We warmly welcome him to the east coast and Province 2.

† Richard Nash Smith has withdrawn from the postulancy, and we wish him every blessing in the future.

† In October, William Henry Benefield attended the annual conference of the Society of Catholic Priests, at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in New York City. This was the tenth anniversary conference for this organization of clergy and religious.

Province 3

Tobias Stanislas Haller's new book, *Re-membering God: Human Hope and Divine Desire* (Church Publishing), appears in April and we wish him very well with this fifth volume from this church publishing arm. Here is a synopsis of its content:

Reflections on tradition and change for the twenty-first-century church — something for both newcomers and those familiar with liturgy and spirituality, *Re-membering God* serves both as critique and encouragement for the church in the early part of the twenty-first century. It seeks to reclaim the foundational riches of the church's liturgy and spirituality in the face of cultural change. These resources, some lost or neglected and others under-utilized, can help rebuild the church, raising up what has been cast down and renewing what has grown old. This series of reflections explores the deepest and most enduring human needs and hopes, which only God can answer. *Re-membering God* puts liturgical and spiritual practice into terms easily understood by both newcomers and seasoned devotees, for the benefit of this and future generations. Understanding the value of the past and with an eye to the future, this book will inform our conversations about evangelism and church growth.



Edward Munro, David Benedict Hedges, and James Teets serve as ministers of the Holy Eucharist.

† Tobias Stanislas is also the curator for Episcopal Church & Visual Arts spring exhibit, “Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.” It can be found online at ecva.org.

Province 4



In January Angel Gabriel Roque traveled to Camp Mikell Conference Center outside Atlanta to take part in the “Open Paths” retreat, sponsored by the campus ministry of the Diocese of Atlanta. The retreat consisted of adults and young adults and focused on what faith may look like during life transition.

† Since our last issue of *The Servant*, Richard John Lorino has relocated from Province 2 to Province 4, where he begins new ministries in the Diocese of Central Florida. We wish him very well indeed!



Angel Gabriel with John Hamilton

Province 7

James Patrick Hall has shared an exciting new ministry in Denver. He writes,

A little over two years ago, a friend who was doing her CPA at a local hospital spent the night with a homeless fellow dying in their facility. She asked me where homeless people die that weren’t in the hospital. I told her that they die in alleys, under bridges, on friends sofas, etc. She said “no one should die alone” — I couldn’t more strongly agree. So, for the last two years, a small group of friends and I have been meeting and planning to create a social model hospice house for homeless folks. We are now moving from plans to reality! We just incorporated in the State of Colorado, have opened a bank account, filed for our 501c3, and have entered into talks with the Denver Rescue Mission for initial rooms. The idea is to create a place where hospice care can occur. That will be done by the hospice services. I’m very excited about this idea coming to fruition; it was the subject of my capstone project at Regis, and they have been using a lot of my research. So I ask for your prayers as this new venture starts taking baby steps into reality, and I look forward to helping bring restoration to the last chapter of some of our friends’ lives. Here’s the website: lazarusgate.org.

Province 8

Karekin Madteos Yarian has just published a collection of poetry titled *tribe: fire-songs*, available in both print and e-book format. JD Cerna, a GLAAD Media Award nominated writer, describes the work as follows:

This collection is a confession, in the truest sense, of the ultimate freedom, beauty, and delightfulness of our human bodies and the celebration of them by the Universe that brought them into being. Yarian's poems are lush and lovely rides through exquisite landscapes of lust, life, death, dreams and divinity's seeming omnipresence. Yarian is a master — no, a sorcerer — of words, able to string together seamless and stirring images that provoke the reader into his or her most intimate intuitions and emotions. Love shows up everywhere in their work. These poems are intensely personal and naked dives into being alive and vulnerable. Mostly, they are a loving call to action. If we don't wake up as their poems call us to, we die.

Sermon from Convocation: Vocation in Daily Work

The dignity of human labor



The idea of offering our work to God in the Holy Eucharist is not new. At the offering of the bread and wine, some priests, especially in Anglo-Catholic parishes, use the following ancient words, based on the traditional Jewish table graces:

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation; through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation; through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

Bread and wine — both described as “the work of human hands,” both offered to God. In these words we are indicating a belief that God intends human work to contribute to his own sacred purposes.

How can this be? What if our work isn't particularly “sacred?” Many express that feeling, reflecting a persistent misunderstanding that work is only worthy if it is directly to do with preaching or spreading the Gospel, or at the very least with care-giving work. Thus, the jobs of the priest, deacon, chaplain, or the member of the so-called “caring” professions are acceptable to God, while all the rest (the vast majority of jobs) are not.

On the contrary, any job which contributes to meeting human need — of whatever kind — is relevant to achieving God's purposes. The work of architects, ac-

countants, planners, farmers, and factory workers is as relevant as that of doctors, teachers, nurses, and social workers in contributing to fullness of life.

The Brotherhood's *Rule* is very clear about work. It reads:

Work, being our share in creation and partnership with God in that creation, can be sanctified. All labor is equal in glory, honor and importance and the work of a brother should bear these qualities. Keeping in mind that all talents are gifts of the Holy Spirit, the work of all brothers must be to the greater glory of God. Work is an oblation to God, as is service to our fellow man. We must therefore give the best that we can offer.

So whatever our occupation, let us see in the offered bread and wine symbols of our own work. At the moment of the offertory let us offer our particular work, our particular Monday-to-Friday occupation, to God. Not just today, but each time we are at Eucharist.

Many people ask, *Who am I? What am I supposed to do?*

These questions are essentially two sides of the same vocational coin. "Vocation" is from *vocare*, Latin "to call." *Who am I and what am I supposed to do with my life? What am I called to be and to do?* For all of us here, we're called to be Gregorian friars, some of us lay and some of us ordained. For most of us, we're called to work daily in earning our living, and are thus able to contribute to our community.

Many brothers in the workaday world go from being Brother on Sunday, to Mister, Doctor, or Nurse, or our Christian name on Monday. Yet in both situations, we're still brothers, building relationships, helping people, and trying to move towards hope in the unseen. Sometimes, maybe we need to approach our work tasks as ministry, by asking ourselves, "What would be the most loving and honoring way to handle this with my colleagues?" We can pray for our co-workers each morning, mentally going around the office. People may find that this is the community they were given to love. I think people will find it so incremental that most won't realize what is happening. I think people may begin to hear their call differently, as that of a brother in daily work. Multi-vocational, living out the authority we're all given in baptism to be ministers in the world, whichever day of the week it is.

Unfortunately, many — including priests and bishops — hear the word *calling*, and equate it with ordained ministry. Someone comes in to see the bishop or priest with a sense of call, and they automatically say, "Oh, you have to be a priest," or "Oh, you have to be a deacon." No mention is made of religious life as



Our newest postulant, Jason, with Richard John Lorino

a calling, or the calling to bloom where planted and bring forth fruit equal to the work of doctor, nurse, teacher, or farmer.

But Scripture and history demonstrate that a dramatic “call” to religious life is rare. Far more often, a call arises from one’s natural inclinations, interests, and abilities, comes out of what one truly loves, has a passion for, and for which there is often an “open door” of circumstance and possibility.

Many of us have known people who regularly think the only way their vocation can be fulfilled is by being ordained. As Director of Vocations for the Brotherhood, this is something I regularly see when people write about their perceived call. And while I truly love all of my ordained brothers, I tell people ordination may not be what they are looking for, and certainly not a requirement to do ministry in the church.

Some people have, from their earliest memory, a clear sense of what they are called to be, akin to being on an elevator that shoots them straight up to the skyscraper’s observation deck and its panoramic view, but I suspect far more of us find ourselves trudging up step by step, at times unsure as we stumble in the dark stairwell. I have to admit — when I was a kid I knew I was going to be a police officer and a fireman — and I became both.

Relationships with others have a way
of revealing just who we are...

But we remember that a fall from the top can be quick and devastating, and the reality is that for most of us God’s call comes not through burning bushes or in heavenly visions but in the still, small voice of discernment. That required attentive listening, and that usually takes place within a particular community, often among those who know us best and so are able to help us see new and wonderful possibilities, people who for us can be beacons of God’s own light upon our path.

Whatever our actual labor may be, our calling in life will most likely not be found in any formal job description that we have at any given point. Our calling, our vocation, our true work is often more about the potentially transformative relationships we have with others, those for whom and with whom we work, and this is true whether or not we are paid for the work.

These relationships with others have a way of revealing just who we are by what we actually do. And this is as true for the person long since retired as the student or the one who is entering or trying to reenter the workforce. These relationships—at times tremendously exciting and at other times tedious and exhausting—can actually be the work wherein we discover value and worth, find dignity and meaning, engage and re-engage our calling. These relationships are where character can be forged in the cauldron of compassion. These are the relationships that provide surprising opportunities for forgiveness that lead to new begin-



James, Richard Thomas, and Peter Budde at Evening Prayer on Thursday of Convocation

nings for others and for ourselves. In these relationships love becomes a concrete, flesh-and-blood reality.

How we work with others leads us to find what it is that we truly believe and just how closely that belief approximates what we say we believe on any given Sunday. Where we might discern any cognitive or spiritual

dissonance, it need not be cause for despair but rather a catalyst for repentance and renewal and for mercy for others who will from time to time disappoint us.

Who am I? What am I called to be?

As I look through our roster, as a sample of my brothers' vocations in daily work — I see current and former jobs as Presiding Bishop's staff, organist, firefighter, doctor, chaplain, nurse and nurse assistant, software engineer, parish administrator, social worker, and priest, just to name a few vocations.

Hear then these words again from today's Collect, and apply them to all these vocations:

Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Ronald Augustine Fox



Mark Andrew Jones lays on incense.

Convocation Sermon: Sam Shoemaker

The Reluctant Healer

This is to some extent the Bishop Rodney pinch-hitter sermon, since I am filling in for him. So I suppose I really ought to start this off with a joke, as is his wont. I'll try to keep it short. You've probably heard the one about the spiritualist medium who had a drinking problem — she was communing with the wrong kind of spirits. (I said I'd keep it short. I never promised it would be good. I can say the same about this sermon.)



(l to r) Tobias Stanislas, Gordon John Stanley, Richard Edward Helmer, and Eric Shelley

Now, in spite of this being an observance commemorating Sam Shoemaker, what troubles Jerusalem in the text before us isn't alcohol, and in spite of the reference to leaven, Corinth isn't troubled by fermentation, either. Both the alcohol and the leaven are figures of speech.

Daughter Jerusalem — as the text says — is not staggering drunk with wine, and the Corinthians are not puffed up with leaven. These two towns, Zion and Corinth, are drunk and bloated with *faithlessness* — whether brought on by ease and comfort and wealth in Jerusalem, or pride and self-satisfaction — with factions and malice — in Corinth.

As Thomas noted the other day in his workshop about the location of prayer, comfort is not always our spiritual friend; and whatever else they may be, pride and division are always our spiritual enemies. We are presented, as it were, with urban examples of two case studies of spiritual illnesses, diseases of the soul; and in both cases faith is the cure — a restored faith in daughter Zion, a new-found faith in Corinth.

The evidence for faith being the cure for these spiritual illnesses lies in our gospel text, where we are reminded that Jesus' primary mission is to spread the Good News and awaken faith — to spread the good news *of* faith. The Son of God did not become incarnate in order to set up shop as a small-town doctor, peddling miracle cures in the Galilean outback. He came to revive faith in God — faith in him as Son of God — a good physician who knows the best cure sometimes is nothing other than faith at work in the heart of the one in need of healing.

How often did he not say, "Your faith has healed you; go in peace?" He does not see healing the sick as his primary work — half the time he just seems an-



Peter Budde (l) and Christopher Stephen Jenks in the workshop on prayer

noyed with the sick or disabled who importune him, responding with a bedside manner that makes Doc Martin seem winsome; and the other half of the time he just wants to get on the move and be about his business — which is to spread the Good News that evokes and embodies faith. He is the divine catalyst in this faith healing who brings about change and transformation — and healing as a result, almost as if drawing forth the healing from within, rather than imposing it from outside, the divine placebo whose effect relies on the inner transformation of the heart.

This is good news — good news to daughter Zion, to get herself out of the gutter and set her feet on the paths of righteousness; good news to the people of Galilee and beyond — that the cure for the pang of sin lies within, an immanent word of love, only awaiting the external word to enliven that faith and bring it forth; and finally good news to us as to the church of Corinth — that we may do away with the leaven of malice and evil, renew our faith, and partake of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth — freely offered and freely received “by the mean of faith.” Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.

Tobias Stanislas Haller

A reflection on the motto

Soli Deo Gloria

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counselor? or who has given a gift to him to receive a gift in return? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. — Romans 11:33-36

When we affirm “to God alone be glory” or “Soli Deo Gloria,” we want to emphasize that all the glory relative to salvation belongs exclusively to God, excluding any work or merit, by which one can boast, as if in some way worthy of that glory. Truth be told, that glory belongs to God alone.

It is the amazing plan of salvation, the one that leaves the apostle in wonder and perplexity: the atonement, the justification, the faith, the grace, the predestination, and the work of the Holy Spirit lead the apostle to explode in adoration in that exclamation from Romans. These same verses inspired Martin Luther in the quest to restore the glory of God in his church, not as the earnings of works, but the free gift of God. And



Tommy Mandri reads the crèche for Christmas.

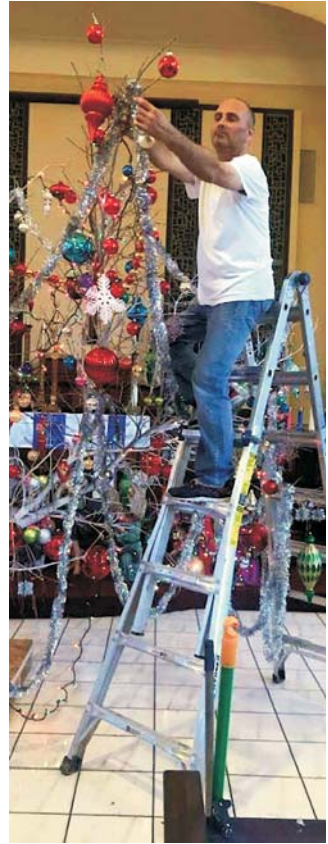
now I make them mine, to restore my soul, my heart and my spirit, and give the glory to God alone: “Soli Deo Gloria.”

So what does it mean to me, this motto “Soli Deo Gloria?” I express it with the biblical text found in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” Through the time that I have been with our Brotherhood I have learned that I can say: “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” This is so, and so radical, extreme, selfless, that the “Pauls” do not abound on this planet. Cross out Saul of Tarsus, cross out Paul. Moreover, kill him! Crucify all that is Paul and leave only Christ! Have Jesus Christ enter and occupy the same body that Paul had used. Really, this is too big for a man! And especially for me. Who is able to receive it? To practice it? To cross himself out so that Christ lives in him?

By studying and analyzing this problem, I find divine light and solutions in the example of Paul himself. When Paul says “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live ...”, I understand that the “I” that no longer lives is the “I” of his old man; that “I” of Saul of Tarsus later called Paul. This is the one who was “crucified” with Christ. The proud “I,” fanatic and boastful. The “I” who prided himself on nationality, religious party, academic preparation, and his excellence among his compatriots. When that man had his encounter with Christ and heard his gospel, he renounced his carnal and worldly “I”! He denied himself. He denied continuing that life. He refused to follow that path, which would have undoubtedly led him to the pinnacle of success and earthly glory. But he denied everything, finding the message of Christ and the life he taught much more excellent.

In the same way that Paul felt, I feel now, renouncing myself, letting Christ live in me to glorify his name. In reality, the dividends of “denying oneself” are tremendous. Among them, I have experienced better physical health, a calmer life, more simplified, relaxed, and therefore, more pleasant. I find growing within me a stronger character in the face of the inevitable tests: the joy of sharing with others in this abnegation, humility and sincere love; and above all, eternal life in a new land, with new heavens.

Tommy Mandri



More Christmas decorations