

The Servant



*Angel Gabriel
lights the fire
to IGNITE the
retreat*

#254

Epiphany 2020

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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.

Gifts and the Season of Giving

We have just gone through the “holiday” season. I don’t like that designation, but it is all around us. The Magi, we are told, brought gifts to the Christ Child. I am sure this is mired in legend; we are really not sure what they actually brought — even if they existed.

Moving on, I have been thinking of what we, as a religious community, have brought and continue to bring to the church and to the world.

Recently, I received two gifts: a Memory Box and a binder — filled with letters of congratulation from many bishops of the church. I have spent time reading and re-reading these letters. These illustrate what I see as the gifts we, as a community of brothers — and I as the founder of this band of brothers — give to the church and the world.

In the letters, most of the bishops cite the devotion and care of our brothers. Since these letters are addressed to me, they talk of my devotion and care for the Brotherhood. The underlying sentiment is that we, as a “new” expression of religious life have brought a sense of renewal and “new wind” to the religious life in the Episcopal Church.

I think the gift for me personally, the gift I have received in all these years, is the connection that, through my service at the national level and in the office of the General Convention, I experienced with the bishops I served. However, as I consider gifts given, I can only thank my brothers, some of whom have served at my side for close to 50 years! They are my gift this season. They are the gift given to the church in so many ways.

The Memory Box which now contains my original profession cross — and on the cover are the words in the cloud pictured above — BSG, Life, Community Love, and Ministry. These are the gifts we all receive as “servants of the servants of God” — and, as Bishop Paul Moore once called us, “the Flexible Friars.”

RTB



Community Notes

Special Events

As of this issue, four Gregorian Friars have been elected to represent their dioceses at the 2021 General Convention, to be held in Baltimore. Angel Gabriel Roque (Southeast Florida) has been elected a Deputy to that event, and Richard Edward Helmer (California), Scott Michael Pomerenk (Colorado), and David Benedict Hedges (Arizona) have been elected as Alternates. Blessings and congratulations all 'round!

Community-wide Events

The Brotherhood's Council held its Fall 2019 Meeting on November 15th and 16th at The Maritime Institute, Linthicum, Maryland. Before the meeting began, brothers made two belated presentations to the Brotherhood's Founder and Minister General, Richard Thomas Biernacki, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the community's foundation. The first was a keepsake box with a special design on it's lid — a design that appeared in the Summer 2019 issue of this publication: a "word cloud" based on a community exercise reflecting on "What BSG means to me." The second gift was an album of letters sent by bishops from all around The Episcopal Church and abroad, congratulating Richard Thomas on the anniversary. On presenting the album James Teets said: "Fifty years ago you said one little word which has changed the lives of countless people in our church; you said 'Yes!' to the Holy Spirit, and we are all the proof of your response! We and the whole church thank you!" This little ceremony ended with applause, hugs and not a dry eye in the room!

The Minister General then opened the meeting with prayer and the roll call, which was followed by a special order of business — addressing Karekin Madteos Yarian's request for withdrawal from the community. Karekin Madteos was present for a period of questions and answers, then left the meeting room as Council discussed and approved the request. On her return, Minister Provincial Richard Edward Helmer gave formal notice of the approval, and a time for expressions of good will and fond farewell followed. Karekin Madteos then left the meeting but continued to participate through the weekend in the daily offices, meals and social time. We give thanks for the time Karekin spent with the community, and pray for every blessing in the years to come.

The session continued its work with reports from officials. Director of Education David Luke Henton noted that, given his increasing responsibilities toward ordination to the priesthood, he would not seek re-election when his current term ends this summer. Council set up a nomination process.

Director of Postulants and Novices Tobias Stanislas Haller nominated two current postulants for reception into the novitiate during Winter Convocation 2020. Director of Vocations Ronald Augustine Fox reported that there may be as many

as three new postulants in the year ahead. Treasurer James Teets proposed the budget for 2020, which Council adopted. Webmaster Richard Edward Helmer reported on his work keeping us linked together and providing for the many visitors to our website and the very popular Daily Office app.

Tobias Stanislas reported on the development of a new profession cross for the community, which James Patrick Hall and he have been working on and testing for most of 2019. While we all had high hopes for the cross in current use, instituted in 2012, it has turned out to be a disappointment, in that the finish and material are not durable. The new design is both more durable and lighter, and a test run approved last summer has shown the new design holds up to wear. Council approved the manufacture of a full production run, and the new design will replace the one in current use during Winter Convocation in late January.

Richard Edward, with James' consultation, has been researching appropriate action to take in addressing the community's carbon footprint. He provided an analysis of the travel impact of the Brotherhood, and Council decided unanimously to begin a relationship with Terrapass in order to acknowledge our responsibility for adding to global warming, and the Brotherhood will begin an annual contribution beginning 2019.

Richard Edward also presented the revised job descriptions for all of the elected and appointed positions within the community. These have been the object of a long process of information-gathering from (and review by) all of the serving officials. Council adopted the revisions, subject to any further amendment needed. Council then adjourned to meet as the board of its corporate entity, at which Ronald Augustine proposed Joseph Basil Gauss as secretary. He also will continue to hold the responsibility of Convocation infirmarian.

Another piece of annual corporate work is the signing of the community's Conflict of Interest Policy statement. That accomplished, the corporate meeting was adjourned and the Council went back into session. Other business was completed, including a brainstorming session around the qualities sought for the new Director of Education, which would be incorporated into the new job descriptions, and the meeting adjourned

Province 1

On Saturday, October 26th, the Diocese of Maine held its 200th convention at the Cathedral Church of Saint Luke, Portland, and Donovan Aidan Bowley attended, representing his parish of Saint Thomas, Camden, as a delegate. A feature of this convention was the enthronement of Bishop Thomas James Brown. Bishop Brown was ordained and consecrated on June 22nd, but the official seating was deferred to the time of the convention.

Province 2

Bishop Andrew Dietsche of New York convened the annual luncheon for the leaders of religious orders and communities serving in the Diocese of New York at Donegan Hall on the Cathedral Close on October 24th, and John Henry Ernestine, Minister Provincial of Province 2, represented the Brotherhood. These



Angel Gabriel administers communion at the IGNITE retreat.

gatherings are always a high point in our relationship with the diocese and with the leadership of the other communities there. John Henry was seated at a table which included Bishop Mary Glasspool, Bishop Assistant of New York, and they conversed about how important it is for the church to utilize the gifts offered by members of religious communities.

Province 4

In mid-October Angel Gabriel Roque (Diocese of Southeast Florida) led the first IGNITE retreat developed over the last year by the Young Adult Ministry Council. Nine team members and twenty candidates from all over the diocese participated. The same month, Angel Gabriel attended the convention of the diocese, and was elected a deputy to the General Convention. The Rev Dr Gay Clark Jennings, President of the House of Deputies, appointed him to serve on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.



Richard John delivers a meditation.

Gregorian Friars resident in three Florida dioceses converged on Vero Beach on Saturday, December 14th, to participate in a Quiet Day titled “Wait Training: A Spiritual Workout for Advent.” This day-long event was hosted by Saint Augustine of Canterbury Church (Diocese of Central Florida), where Richard John Lorino serves; attending from Southeast Florida were Angel Gabriel and Tommy Mandri, and from Southwest Florida postulant Thomas Scott Burnham. Vocationer Carlos Fernandez also attended, as did a number of parishioners from Saint Augustine’s.

The day included Morning Prayer officiated by Richard John, Noonday by Angel Gabriel, and a Holy Eucharist closing the event, celebrated by parish clergy.



Reciting the Daily Office

Three meditations focused on what one can expect from the season of Advent: “A Time of Waiting,” delivered by Richard John; “A Pregnant Time,” presented by parishioner Yvonne Tso; and “Our Weary World Waits in Hope,” by the Rev Denise Hudspeth, the assisting priest at Saint Augustine’s.

□ A construction crew of six parishioners from Ælred Bernard Dean’s parish, Saint Mary’s Episcopal Church in Middlesboro KY, spent the weekend of October 25 building two access ramps for residents in McDowell County, West Virginia. The team specializes in building access ramps for homes in the region. This trip included ramps to assist a renal patient and a double-amputee. Ælred Bernard noted, “We are blessed to have members who want to share their love to help God’s people through the ministry of building ramps. Being able to give mobility to those living with movement limitations is important to us.”

Province 5



Last summer, Ronald Augustine Fox donated vestments to his parish, Church of the Atonement in Chicago, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood. He appears in the accompanying photo with Deacon Charles Farrell and Subdeacon Meghan

Murphy-Gill, who wear the new vestments: a dalmatic and tunicle made by Atonement parishioner Michael Spear.

□ Joseph Basil Gauss wore many hats at a fall ministry fair at Atonement, Chicago, shown here representing the



community, and also on hand for people interested in joining the Saint Cecilia Choir, or for people interested in serving as an acolyte. Then, just a few days later, he was joined by Ronald Augustine at the convention of the Diocese of Chicago, on November 23rd. Joseph Basil was a convention delegate from Church of the Atonement, and Ronald Augustine staffed the Bexley Seabury Seminary table. He works as the assistant to the Rev Dr Micah TJ Jackson, president of the seminary.



☐ Ronald Augustine was honored on Christ the King Sunday at Atonement, Chicago, as a “treasure of Atonement.” Rector the Rev Erika Takacs congratulated him and offered thanks for his long tenure and faithful service.

Province 7



The members of the province met for retreat in the Diocese of Colorado in Denver September 20-22. Those in attendance were Minister Provincial William Henry Benefield, James Patrick Hall, David Luke Henton and Steven Poindexter. Province 8 brothers, Scott Michael Pomerenk and David Benedict Hedges joined them.

Saturday’s retreat program was held at Saint Gregory’s parish and was led by their priest in charge, the Rev Liz Costello and her husband, the Rev Joseph Wolyniak. We were joined by local Franciscan, Nicholas Patrick, and other members from Scott Michael’s parish. The retreat focused on unity and the writings of our patron Saint Gregory the Great.

Saint Gregory’s parish had been built and consecrated in unison with a Roman Catholic parish back in 1972 and there were plans for an Orthodox parish to be built on the same property for joint ecumenical ministry. Mother Liz has the intention of restoring some of the history of that parish with joint liturgies such as the Liturgy of the Palms, and the kindling of the New Fire for the Great Vigil.

Saturday afternoon the gathering celebrated the feast of Saint Matthew in a chapel with an icon of Our Lady of Walsingham and our patron, Saint Gregory. That evening Tony, James Patrick’s husband, provided a wonderful dinner at their home in the garden, and Scott Michael’s wife and daughter, Erica and Trixie, joined in. Sunday morning the Gregorians met at the Saint Francis Center for an early healing mass with homeless friends in Denver before departing.

At the recent annual convention of the Diocese of Colorado, James Patrick and Nicholas Patrick Pijoan FOCD manned a booth sharing information about religious communities in the Episcopal Church. Nicholas Patrick shared information about the Franciscan Order of Céli Dé and other Franciscan groups, and James Patrick shared information about “The Gregorian Way.” There were numerous visitors and many were surprised to learn that the Episcopal Church has religious communities at all.



David Luke Henton continues his ministry in Cloudcroft, New Mexico: in addition to providing hospitality for individuals, families, and non-profit boards and organizations, a major focus at Saint Brigid’s Rest is serving the church. Saint Brigid’s hosted the Rio Grande Borderland Ministries for their border pilgrimage planning retreat in August; and then the diocesan Brotherhood of Saint Andrew chapters gathered for retreat sponsored by the Church of the Ascension, Cloudcroft, in November, featuring the Rev Dr Matt Williams leading reflection on “Excellence in Ministry and Veterans’ Affairs.” The retreat focused on the dual themes of moral injury among veterans and making our parishes more veteran-friendly.

Province 8



David Benedict Hedges attended the Diocese of Arizona convention in mid-October, the first with new diocesan bishop, the Rt Rev Jennifer Reddall. He was honored by being named an honorary canon of the Diocese and of Trinity Cathedral in Phoenix, and was elected first alternate deputy to General Convention.

David Benedict attended a December 5 meeting with Bishop Reddall along with most of the members of religious communities in the Diocese of Arizona; he attended via teleconference, as did two others. Twelve others attended in person at Trinity Cathedral in Phoenix. Communities represented, in addition to

the Brotherhood, were the Community of Saint Mary of the Annunciation (one of four Canon Communities of Saint Benedict), the Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit, the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, the Order of Saint Francis, the Anglican Order of Preachers (Dominican), and the Community of Solitude (a dispersed ecumenical community of hermits).

Each attendee shared his or her community's name, and their stage (postulant, novice, professed, life professed), and described their ministry in the community and a particular charism of the community. Bishop Reddall, an Associate of the Community of the Holy Spirit in New York, expressed her support for religious life, and the way members of communities enrich the church's life.

The bishop and those present expressed interest in forming a council or committee at the diocesan level which would facilitate communication and fellowship among the various religious in the diocese, and educate the church at large about their ministries, and vocational processes. One religious noted that most Roman Catholic dioceses have an office or vicar for consecrated life, but that he knew of no similar standing provision in any Episcopal diocese.

A sermon on Phillips Brooks

Brooks no obstacle — to the Gospel

I pray . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

In the summer of 1976 I made a visit to Boston to sing a concert with other students enrolled in the Young Vocalist's Program at Tanglewood. During a break in our rehearsal schedule a bunch of us decided to take a look around, and we made our way to Copley Square, where we were confronted with the granite and sandstone magnificence of Trinity Church. It was my first time seeing it in person, and it was like a sock in the jaw. It is the architectural masterwork of the nineteenth-century architect Henry Hobson Richardson, and it looks like a cross between a cathedral and a castle — the material embodiment of Martin Luther's great hymn, "A Mighty Fortress." Inside the church we were overwhelmed by the splendor of John LaFarge's murals of prophets, apostles, and evangelists, the glow of the magnificent stained-glass windows, and the shafts of light streaming down into the center of the church from the high windows in the great tower. Standing there, we were inspired to sing a Johannes Brahms' setting of the Sanctus, in German, for double choir. The sopranos started with a soft, high *Heilig* and the other parts of the choir joined in, descending through the circle of fifths, until the basses finally came in, and the lush, rich harmonies filled the building, the two choirs tossing the different phrases back and forth across the vast space until we came to the final, climatic "Hosanna!" We ended on that triumphant chord and stopped.

Silence.

We expected to hear the echo of our final chord reverberating through the space, but we heard only silence. Trinity Church has always had a fine music program, and lush, Romantic music, like Brahms, works well in the space, but the space was not designed for music; it was designed for preaching, and an echo would have made any preaching unintelligible. Trinity Church was designed for the preaching of one man in particular: Phillips Brooks.

He was the rector when the current building was constructed, and the guiding spirit behind its design. Richardson, LaFarge, and the other artists involved in its creation, gave concrete form to Brooks' ideas, but the ideas were his. The building is stamped with his personality, his vision, his conception of ministry and worship. This is reflected, certainly, in the acoustics, but also in the overall layout. The nave is short, while the galleried transepts are wide and shallow. In a church that holds about 1,500 people, no pew is more than 100 feet from the chancel steps – all within easy reach of the preacher's voice.

However, Trinity Church was not just designed for preaching, as important as Brooks believed that to be. It was designed for the worship of the Episcopal Church, and Brooks had strong opinions on how that liturgy should be conducted. At a time when many Episcopal churches were abbreviating their services, merely tacking on sermons to the end of Morning Prayer, Brooks insisted that the full service of Morning Prayer, Great Litany, Ante-Communion, Sermon, and Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church be offered every Sunday in its entirety, as directed by the Prayer Book, with the General Confession and Holy Communion added on the first Sunday each month. Many believe that Brooks was "Low Church," but this isn't quite accurate. While certainly not a Ritualist, he was like an old-fashioned high churchman in the 17th-century sense, similar in many ways to Lancelot Andrewes or Jeremy Taylor, with a strong dash of George Herbert's mysticism and pastoral skill thrown in for good measure.

The arrangement of the chancel was unusual, reflecting Brooks' liturgical principals. The apse is gigantic, and in Brooks' day it wasn't filled with choir stalls as it is today. In the center of the chancel was an altar in the form of a huge oak table, sitting on a platform surrounded on all sides by the communion rail, which could accommodate 200 communicants at once. Well in advance of the 20th-century liturgical movement, the celebrant at Holy Communion faced the congregation in the nave, rather than taking the "North End" position common in Episcopal churches at the time, or the eastward position used by Ritualists.

Brooks was celebrated as a great preacher, one of the greatest in Christian history, but his sermons seem dated to a modern reader. He was a man of his time and used the rhetorical flourishes that the great orators of his time used. But his sermons were not meant to be *read*; they were meant to be *preached*.

Considering this, it is surprising to learn that Trinity Church had no pulpit when it opened in 1877. Brooks preached from the chancel steps, using a portable lectern for his notes. Some years later a prominent pulpit was erected, and it was used every Sunday for the reading of the Gospel, but after trying it out a few times for preaching, Brooks decided to continue his practice of preaching from the

chancel steps. He disliked the pulpit because, in his words, “It places too much emphasis on the preacher, to the detriment of that which is preached.” Unlike many of the popular preachers of his day (and today) he avoided dramatic gestures and bizarre vocal affectations. He placed the emphasis squarely on what was preached, not on who was preaching it.

An aspect of his ministry, often forgotten in the glare of his reputation as a preacher, is his deep passion for social justice. He hated the distinctions between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, black, brown, and white, that infect American society to this day. For example, at a time when most Episcopal churches relied on pew rent as a major source of income, Brooks insisted that one-third of the pews at Trinity remain free and open to all. These pews were not in the dark corners of the church or in any way inferior to the rented pews. They were the pews in the transepts and transept galleries, closest to the chancel steps. Visitors and those unable to pay for their seats got the *best* seats in the house, and no distinction was made as to their color, manner of dress, or station in life. This scandalized some members of the congregation, but Brooks came by these convictions honestly from his early days as an abolitionist. In a speech he made to an Abolitionist society in Philadelphia in 1863, he stated,

We hear a great deal about radicals and radicalism. In God’s name, let us try to get back to the radicalism of our Master; a radicalism so deep that it cuts to the root of every sin.

He expanded on this in a sermon preached at Holy Trinity in Philadelphia.

If the negro is a man, and we have freed him in virtue of his manhood, what consistency or honor is it which still objects to his riding down the street in the same car with us if he is tired, or sitting in the same pew with us if he wants to worship God? Brethren, the world is not all saved yet. There are a few things still that “ought not to be.”

These words would have been considered radical in many parishes in the 1960s. In the 1860s they were almost too much, even for ardent abolitionists.

Lastly, Phillips Brooks was first and foremost a pastor. One Sunday, when he was greeting congregants at the front door of Trinity Church as they were leaving, a wealthy member of the church, one of the parish’s major benefactors, asked to meet with Brooks immediately. Brooks replied that he could not meet with her at that moment, but that she was welcome to come by the rectory that evening. “Why can’t we talk now?” she demanded. “I need to make an urgent pastoral call.” “Can’t the Assistant Minister do that?” “No. This is something I must do myself.” Brooks then left in his carriage and rode to one of the poorer parts of town to take communion to a dying African-American woman, a woman born into slavery, and to spend some time with her in her final hours.

This is how one answers the prayer, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.”

Christopher Stephen Jenks