



The Servant



*Angel Gabriel Roque delivers
a meditation at the Diocese of
the Rio Grande LGBTQ+
Evensong.*

#259

Eastertide 2021

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Peter Budde delivers a meditation on Solitude at the Province 3 Lent Quiet Day.

Missing the "Church"

Are you missing the "church?" That short question probably seems simple — but it is not! Many of us do indeed miss the church. Speaking for myself, this is the first time in my 58 year ministry as an organist and choirmaster that I have not played for Christmas or Easter. It is also the first time for many of us that we have not been in church for more than a year. These are strange and difficult times: organs not being played, choirs not singing, clergy not preaching and most of all, we are missing all the wonderful ceremonial of Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and above all, Easter! We are challenged. We are, indeed, challenged.

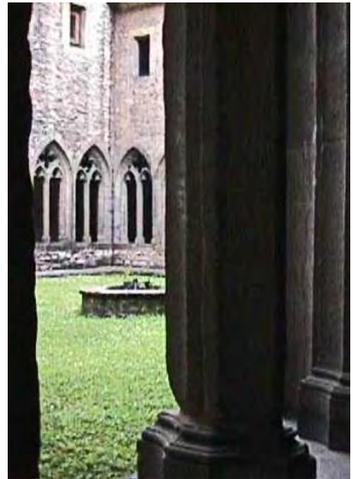
How do we cope? Does virtual worship and ceremonial work? Spiritual Communion? I must say that I have encountered a friend who said, "I don't miss church." I wonder how many of us think that but do not proclaim it in public? A few weeks ago we set the clocks ahead for daylight saving time. I caught myself thinking, better be sure to do that, or we'll be late for church. Old habits!

I would give you this: how many times have we heard or said, "The church is not a building; the church is us, the people of God!" I would hope that this time of "enclosure" or of "quarantine" has encouraged us to pray and worship in the home. Prayer in the garden can be an amazing and powerful experience.

I suggest we focus less on the temporary loss of the church, the loss of the building, but focus more on the work of the Spirit at work in us. Open your hearts and minds to whatever God has in store for you. If you are praying and meditating daily, you will miss church less; you will be connected by prayer to the church that isn't just gathered in a building. And when we do finally return to the church building, we will be prepared for what we find. We will also be surprised: the church after COVID-19 is sure to look and feel different.

But however changed, however different, we can trust one thing: God will bless us and guide us along right pathways for his Name's sake.

RTB



*Inside or outside?
A church or a garden?
What do we make of it?
What does God make of us?*

Here and there with the Brothers Community Notes

Winter Convocation 2021 – Virtual



Brothers and the Bishop Visitor gather in virtual space for Winter Convocation.

As with Annual Convocation 2020, which had to be observed via Zoom due to the COVID-19 epidemic, so too with Winter Convocation 2021. The Brotherhood's Education Committee developed a program for this community-wide event, and arranged a Zoom schedule which sought to be easier to handle than the normal five-day retreat, since no in-person meetings and events could yet be arranged. Events were scheduled on three days over two weeks, and included time for a virtual "Common Room" for members to gather for chat and catch-up, as well as for the regular Daily Office at the appropriate times.



Joseph Basil's sacred space at home

own interpretation of his own sacred space, then the conversation was opened to all present and the lively conversation continued until it was time for

On Saturday, January 23rd, the brothers joined in a workshop titled, "Sacred Space at Home," exploring the on-the-ground experience of this time of quarantine and restriction on public gathering. A panel of four brothers — Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago), Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago), Bo Alexander Armstrong (East Tennessee) and David Benedict Hedges (Arizona) — began the discussion, each with his



Panelists discuss the nature of sacred space in the time of pandemic.

Evening Prayer. David Benedict was officiant, and Donovan Aidan Bowley (Maine) served as Reader; David Luke Henton (Rio Grande) preached a short homily. The day's events concluded with more time for conversation among the members, as their own time permitted.



David Luke delivers a homily at Evening Prayer.

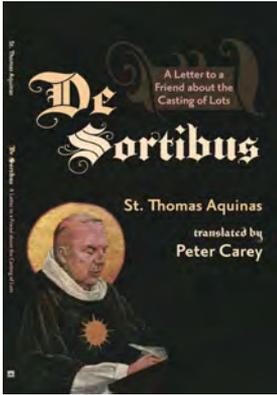
The final day of our Winter Convocation came on January 29, beginning with another hour of time open for members to join Zoom for casual conversation, prior to Evening Prayer. This office included the admission of two postulants to the Brotherhood: Michael Yates-Stallone (Arizona) and William Edward Gallop Jr (Southwestern Virginia). Minister General Richard Thomas Biernacki (New Jersey) served as officiant, with Joseph Basil as reader and Director of Vocations Ronald Augustine and Director of Postulants and Novices Tobias Stanislas Haller as Sponsors for the two candidates. The Rites are always a touching part of any Brotherhood Convocation, as they always recall each member's entrance into religious life, as well as their movement through novitiate and profession of vows.



Ed Gallop and Michael Yates (center row, l & r) enter the postulancy via Zoom.

Following Evening Prayer and the Rite, time was provided for any member to stay online and get to know the two new postulants, as well as to maintain the personal connections upon which our community depends. While Winter Convocation '21 will not be recalled as in any way typical, it was an appropriate and fulfilling opportunity for members from across the country and around the world to be together again; and that is what *community* is really about!

Province 3



On January 28, the feast of St Thomas Aquinas, the Rev Peter Carey announced publication of his new book, the first English translation of a minor epistle by the Angelic Doctor, *De Sortibus: A Letter to a Friend about the Casting of Lots*. The volume also includes a number of essays and commentaries, two of which were contributed by Tobias Stanislas Haller. The cover of the volume includes a portrait of St Thomas by Tobias Stanislas, from his series of portraits of the saints and luminaries included in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. (In this case, the model for St Thomas was our own Thomas Bushnell.) The book is published by Wipf and Stock.

□ Tobias Stanislas also provided an icon of Blessed Absalom Jones for St Peter’s Church in Lewes, Delaware. On Sunday, February 14, Rector Jeffrey Austin Ross, assisted by the Rev Gill Carlyle, dedicated and blessed the new icon, a witness to the fact that Jones was born into slavery near where the church building stands, and this icon will stand at the entrance to the church as a sign that all are welcome to share in the ministry of liberation.



□ Province 3 held a Lenten Embertide Retreat via Zoom on Saturday February 27. All members were present, and we were delighted to welcome our Episcopal



Visitor, Bishop Rodney Michel — who lives and serves in Province 3. The day began with time spent sharing the latest news and activities of all present. Minister Provincial Edward Munro (Maryland) officiated at Morning Prayer, assisted by other members. Peter

Budde (Southwestern Virginia) offered a reflection on the topic of “Isolation and Solitude.” Given the COVID-19 pandemic, and adding to it the circumstances of Christian life in search of reflective solitude, this was a doubly appropriate subject to explore, and each member added to Peter’s reflection from his own ongoing experiences. Noonday Prayer closed this retreat, with novice Christopher Robert Werth (Maryland) as Officiant. Bishop Rodney sent each Gregorian on his way with his blessing.

Province 4

Postulant Carlos Fernandez has been elected to serve on the vestry of his parish, Saint Bernard de Clairvaux, North Miami Beach, Florida. Vestry service is indeed an important calling, and we wish Carlos strength and every blessing in his new ministry. This parish church is also quite interesting, beginning life as a 12th century Cistercian monastery in Segovia, Spain; purchased by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst in 1926; dismantled and shipped to the US intended for San Simeon in California, but due to Hearst’s financial difficulties, sojourning in 11,000 crates in Brooklyn NY until purchased by entrepreneurs who shipped them to Miami for reassembly as “the Ancient Spanish Monastery” in 1964; finally purchased by Bishop Henry Louttit on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of South Florida, as the Episcopal Church of Saint Bernard de Clairvaux.

Province 5



Province 5 brothers spent Saturday March 13 in a Lenten Zoom Retreat with the Franciscan Friars stationed at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in New York City, along with other Saint Mary’s parishioners and friends. The day was spent in an exploration of spiritual language through the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. Br Thomas Steffensen SSF facilitated, using some of Rilke’s poems *Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*. There was ample opportunity for everyone to offer a perspective on the poems. Prior to the virtual gathering at Saint Mary’s, the Province 5 brothers met together for Zoom Morning Prayer before joining the Franciscans on another Zoom platform. As a good example of what

Zoom can do in these times of separation, Minister Provincial Nathanael Deward Rahm, Ronald Augustine Fox, and Joseph Basil Gauss joined the retreat from Chicago; Gordon John Stanley from Sarasota, FL; and Francis Jonathan Bullock from Richmond, IN. SSF Friars participating with Thomas were Desmond Alban, the Minister Provincial, and Damien Joseph.

Province West

On January 7, 2021 Angel Gabriel Roque reported that he had accepted the call from the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande to become their first Diocesan Youth Missioner. This is quite an exciting (and challenging) development, including relocating from Florida to New Mexico during this time of pandemic.

Angel Gabriel is already involved in the life of his new diocese; he was the guest preacher at a virtual Service of Evening Prayer for the LGBTQ+ Community on February 14 (see cover photo). Several brothers from other parts of the country joined in the virtual liturgy, officiated by the Rev Kristin Kopren.

□ The Bishop of the Rio Grande has informed David Luke Henton and his three classmates that they will be ordained to the transitional diaconate at the Cathedral Church of Saint John, Albuquerque, on Saturday, June 19. Assuming that the COVID-19 travel restrictions will still be in effect at that time, we hope the diocese will provide a way to participate in the liturgy online. Needless to say, we are delighted with this great news as we extend our prayers and our congratulations to our beloved Brother David Luke! □



Before undertaking his move to the Diocese of the Rio Grande, Angel Gabriel spent some vacation time visiting in Puerto Rico. He appears here with Bishop Morales at the Cathedral gift shop.

As part of the Winter Convocation reflection theme, brothers spent some time in small groups in Zoom Breakout Rooms to reflect on their personal attitudes toward sacred space.

