

The Servant



*Bishop Michael Hunn
presents a Bible to newly
ordained deacon David Luke
Henton as a sign of his
authority to proclaim the
Gospel.*

#260

Summer 2021

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Founder's Forum

Zooming in the Spirit


They were all together in one place... — Acts 2.1

The Brotherhood's members, as with many religious communities, have carried out their various ministries by Holy Zoom. We are yearning to be in one place. With that sense of yearning, I offer this reflection on the Holy Spirit.

Where there is a surrendered heart there is a wonderful work of the Spirit. The phrase "all together" indicates the surrendered hearts that were present at Pentecost. Whatever the disagreements, the agreements were more important. The disciples were not *uniform* but they were *united* in the Spirit. Whatever the phrase may suggest, they established their togetherness on one thing—Jesus was the Lord of life. They laid aside all to follow him. That following led to an upper room and they became the recipients of God's Spirit. Their togetherness centered around one thing: that God was going to do something wonderful with their lives.

The trust and hope in that which is yet to be opens us up to the working of the Spirit. If we think that all our wonderful experiences are behind us, our spiritual experiences are over. We have killed the future. The believers in the upper room surrendered their belief to God. When this happens, great things are possible. Further, where there is a sharing heart there is a wonderful work of God. "We are all witnesses" (Acts 2.32). This summarizes the second stage of Pentecost: sharing. The first stage was receiving. All of us need to share. The Pentecost event didn't stop, because the receivers became sharers. Whenever they shared, the wonderful works of God continued. The sharing then became service—service which requires setting aside self will, and doing what God wills in obedience. This surrender in obedience carries through on the receiving and enlivens the sharing. These three responses bring to life and communicate the wonderful works of God, and we are all witnesses to those wonderful works. With surrendered hearts, we go forth sharing this witness; and there is no end to the wonderful works the Holy Spirit inspires.

RTB



Here and there with the Brothers

Community Notes



CAROA/NÆCC Annual Meeting

Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago), Director of Vocations and representative to the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NÆCC), was elected to a three-year term as Secretary of NÆCC at its annual gathering on April 20. This year's gathering was held virtually due to COVID-19. Ronald

Augustine reported that some 76 members of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) and NÆCC were present at the gathering.

The Rev Masud Ibn Syedullah TSSF — president of NÆCC — and the Rev Chuck Kramer of Roots and Branches examined anti-Black racism through the lens of Christian theology and spiritual practice, using texts by George Yancy and Gerald May. A lively discussion ensued. A practical presentation on possibilities for online liturgical, catechetical and other ministries in a variety of settings was given by Garland Pollard, director of communications for the Diocese of Southwest Florida. Members also gathered for an online presentation by noted spiritual director and teacher Br Don Bisson FSM, on how the traumas of the pandemic year have created the potential for profound spiritual reawakening and a call to those in Religious Life to respond.

It was agreed that there should be a joint effort by CAROA and NÆCC to propose a motion to General Convention creating an annual “Religious Life Sunday” in The Episcopal Church on the third Sunday after the Epiphany.

A highlight of the meeting was an address by Bishop of Quebec Bruce Myers OGS, Chair of the Religious Life Committee in the Anglican Church of Canada. Bishop Myers reviewed the situation of Religious Life in Canada and the work of the committee. A significant difference from the American model is that the CAROA General Secretary and representatives of Religious Orders in Canada attend the committee’s meetings. There is no equivalent as of yet to NÆCC in Canada. Several NÆCC community members spoke of having members in the Anglican Church of Canada, including the Third Order Society of Saint Francis, the Community of the Mother of Jesus, the Sisters of Saint Gregory, the Community of Francis and Clare, as well as the Brotherhood (as Richard Matthias serves as a deacon in the Diocese of Ottawa).

The bishop told the sisters and brothers to take heart, and to continue to be steadfast and faithful “as you all are.” He said that the pandemic has tested the limits of us as individuals and as disciples of Jesus, but noted the hope in seeing so many religious gathered, and that he was encouraged by their candor. The bishop affirmed that religious life is at the “very heart of our church” and that he is grateful for our prayers and rhythm of life.

A new office of Vice President was created for NÆCC Communities, and the Rev Sr Judith Liro SHC, was elected to a provisional term of one year.

The next joint CAROA/NÆCC meeting will be May 2-7, 2022 at the Siena Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin.

Spring Council Meeting

The Spring Council Meeting was held via Zoom on Saturday, April 10th. Minister General Richard Thomas Biernacki (Diocese of New Jersey) began this gathering as Officiant of Noonday Prayer. He continued with his overview of the activities of the Ministers Provincial, followed by the detailed report of each of the Ministers Provincial on events held in each province and the

ministries of the members of each province. Next came the reports of each of the community's officials, which included the Directors of Education, and of Postulants and Novices. As part of these discussions Council approved the release of Thomas Burnham from the novitiate.

Treasurer James Teets' (Maryland) financial reports were received with thanks, and Council entered into an in-depth discussion concerning the viability of an in-person gathering of the community for Annual Convocation 2021. We are blessed to have medical professionals on our Council team, including Infirmarian Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago), Administrator Eric Shelley (Southwestern Virginia) and Minister Provincial of Province West William Henry Benefield (West Texas), and with their valuable input Council decided that it was too early to pronounce on the question, and decided to meet again at a later date to discuss and decide this issue, in the light of more up to date medical/CDC and government information available at that time.

Council elected brothers to fill the following positions in terms to begin this summer: Director of Postulants and Novices: Tobias Stanislas Haller (Maryland); Director of Convocation Liturgy and Music: Nathanael Deward Rahm (Chicago); Director of Public Relations and Treasurer: James Teets; Administrator: Eric Shelley; Infirmarian: Joseph Basil Gauss. The Secretary noted that the Ministers Provincial will be elected by the professed members of each province, at Annual Convocation.

A major feature of each Spring Council Meeting is the approval of Outreach Grants. The following charitable organizations received funding for their ministries:

- ⌘ Saint Nicholas Episcopal Church in Pompano Beach, Florida, for "The Holy Grill" mobile food ministry which provides a hot breakfast and dinner for the homeless and working poor in northeast Broward County, on Tuesday through Thursday each week. Since it's foundation in September of 2016 this ministry has served many thousands of meals there;
- ⌘ Christ Episcopal Church in Middletown, New Jersey, toward the parish's Bell Tower Restoration campaign;
- ⌘ Sutton Scholars, a program of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland which bears Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton's name and primary support, in an effort to help disadvantaged African-American young people through four years of high school;
- ⌘ Lazarus Gate in Denver, Colorado, a program that provides shelter to homeless people with terminal illness, so that they may have a stable, appropriate environment for hospice agencies to deliver care. This year our grant will be used toward supporting the interviewing process for a new Executive Director for this program;
- ⌘ Church of the Atonement, Chicago, supporting their efforts in the "Return and Renewal Project," toward enhancing the parish's audio/visual capabilities;

- Ⓣ Cooperative Christian Ministry in Middlesboro, Kentucky, a program which provides cost assistance to families struggling to maintain electricity, water and gas at their residences;
- Ⓣ Rio Grande Borderland Ministries, an agency of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande which provides food, clothing, infant and child care supplies and other services to those in need on both sides of the US/Mexico border. This year’s grant will support the benefits package for the program’s Bridge Chaplain, the only full-time employee serving this program;
- Ⓣ Saint Augustine of Canterbury Church, Vero Beach, Florida, to help achieve their efforts to inaugurate a parish food pantry; and
- Ⓣ Social Justice and Outreach Committee of Saint George’s Episcopal Church, Glen Dale, Maryland, as they provide bag lunches in the Warm Nights Homeless Shelter there.

Through our annual Outreach Grants, the Brotherhood is able to support the ministries of our brothers where they are, and we thank God for the ability provided by our individual tithes and investments to respond to local needs throughout the USA. Though the Brotherhood is not a classical “charity” — rather it is a religious community which provides educational support toward enhancing the ministry of its members — it is a great pleasure to be able to consider such Outreach Grant Applications submitted by our brothers toward ministries they are personally involved in or familiar with.

Province 1



Donovan Aidan Bowley (Diocese of Maine) joined the other members of the Down East Singers for a Memorial Day Concert. The Bay Chamber Players provided accompaniment as the singers sang — masked — in a seaside hayfield. The program included portions of Rachmaninoff’s *Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom* and selected instrumental music by the same composer. The group dedicated the event to the medical and scientific community whose efforts and skill have brought us through the challenging months of the pandemic.

Province 4

Postulant Carlos Fernandez received news that the Bishop of the Diocese of Southeast Florida likes his proposal regarding diocesan representation at the various South Florida Pride Events, and wants him to take up work with the diocesan social justice ministry. Congratulations!

Province 5



Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago) took up his role as faculty secretary at the May 2021 commencement of Bexley Seabury Seminary announcing graduates. In the photo at left James Olson is seen receiving the Diploma in Anglican Studies from acting Academic Dean the Rev Dr Jason Fout. Others shown are seminary President the Rev Dr Micah TJ Jackson and outgoing board chair the Rev John Denson jr, of the Diocese of Indianapolis. The

commencement was at Saint Paul and the Redeemer Church in Chicago.

Province West



David Luke Henton graduated from Iona Collaborative of the Seminary of the Southwest, receiving a Certificate of Theological Studies from SSW at the conclusion of a three-year program. He is seen here (left) with Bishop Hunn and Angel Gabriel Roque. (Photo by Jill Cline)

☩ Angel Gabriel recently accepted a call from the Diocese of the Rio Grande to become Youth and Young Adult Missioner; he has moved from the Diocese of Southeast Florida to New Mexico, where he has been welcomed heartily by Bishop Michael Hunn and the diocesan staff. There is much for Angel Gabriel to do there, and he has begun this new ministry with all of the exuberance that everyone knows he holds! His brothers are almost as excited about this new challenge as he is!

☩ Richard Edward Helmer (California) and his family joined members of their parish, Church of Our Saviour, at a vigil in solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander community on Sunday, March 28th, in downtown Mill Valley, California.



☩ David Luke was ordained to the transitional diaconate on June 19th. Due to ongoing pandemic considerations, the service allowed only limited public participation. Herewith are two additional photos of the happy event, in which David Luke was one of six ordinands.

The image to the right, taken by Dean Kristina Maulden, shows the “moment” of ordination, as Bishop Hunn lays hands on David Luke.





(Left to right) Angel Gabriel, who served as “lay” presenter for David Luke; Tim Kruse, who assisted in his vesting with the diaconal stole; Bishop Michael Hunn; ordinand David Luke; and clergy presenter Fr Michael Drinkwater. The photo was taken by David Luke’s seminary classmate, the Rev Jill Cline.

A Convocation Sermon from 2004

Called by Name

In his 25th Homily, our patron Gregory addresses the Gospel for the feast of Mary Magdalene. He spoke of Mary’s tearful search for her crucified and buried Lord. He describes the scene this way: “Being inflamed with the fire of her love, she burned with desire for him who she believed had been taken away.” One need not look far for the inspiration that lay behind this imagery. Implicitly in Homily 25 — and explicitly in Homily 33 — Gregory identifies Mary with the prostitute who bathed Jesus’ feet with her tears. By the end of Homily 25, Gregory urges anyone who, “being enkindled with the fire of lust, has lost the purity of his body: let him look on Mary, who purged away the love of her body by the fire of divine love.” Gregory was right to point to Mary of Magdala as an example for us; but wrong in his reason for looking to her. Tradition depicts Mary as a reformed prostitute — a scarlet woman in contrast to blue-robed Mary, the virgin mother. The weight of scholarly opinion suggests, however, that our patron’s choice to identify Mary with the “woman of the city” was misguided. In the 1960s — following Vatican II — the Roman Catholic Church admitted as much.

Now, in our own day and “new age,” thanks in part to *The Da Vinci Code*, we have progressed from the accusation that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute to the suggestion she was Jesus’ wife, and that the prostitution allegation was part of an elaborate cover up by the Roman Catholic Church. In such New Age circles, inspired by many Gnostic texts, Mary Magdalene appears to be more than just a power behind the throne.

To take Gregory's side for a moment, it is helpful to note that his emphasis was not on Mary's alleged past sins, but with the power of love to bring redemption even to one sunk very low. I can understand why our patron made use of this trope. I find the New Age views stranger, but perhaps they speak to a need as well. Unfortunately, by co-opting Mary for what might be described as partisan reasons, we have nearly lost touch with the real Mary of Magdala. Too often we can yield to the temptation of crafting the example we think the world needs as opposed to dealing with the example that God and his servants have provided us.

In Mary Magdalene God has given us a prominent example indeed. She is named explicitly at least eleven times in the Gospels. In Luke we learn that Jesus exorcized seven demons from her. To our modern ear this might sound strange. However, there is an interpretation of this theme of demonic possession that suggests it is not the devil's work; but rather the addictive, habitually compelling and compulsive forces that take over someone's life. These might include substance abuse, as well as bitterness, despair, and — the most destructive of all — self-hatred. All give rise to a strong tendency toward self-destruction, a tendency which often destroys innocent loved ones in the process.

Whatever the exact nature of Mary's demons, or the suffering and unhappiness that accompanied them, we know that Jesus cast them out and healed her. The Lord is "God of the lowly [and] savior of those without hope."

Thereafter Mary became a prominent follower of Jesus. In Luke we learn that she helped support Jesus' ministry. She may have been a woman of considerable means or simply driven by gratitude to be generous out of her humble estate.

We do know of her deep personal devotion to Jesus. When the disciples abandoned him and fled — and after Peter denied even knowing Jesus and lied about his own identity — Mary Magdalene followed Jesus all the way to the cross, and was with him as he died. Think of the roller coaster of emotions; how she must have hurt — to have first lived a life of unhappiness and suffering without hope and then to be healed, given purpose and love — only to lose all of it on the cross.

At that point the demon's temptation to despair must have been great indeed; but Mary's devotion to Jesus did not die, and she did not yield to the demon of despair. All four gospels record Mary's trip to the tomb. In the Gospel of John, she comes by herself and is the first witness to the resurrection. Because Mary then reported this good news to the disciples she has become known by some as the Apostle to the Apostles. And Gregory rightly pointed to the fruit of Mary's perseverance.

We brothers understand that perseverance is a constituent element of our vow of obedience. When discussing Mary's perseverance, Gregory states, "So it happened that she who stayed behind to seek him was the only one who saw him. Surely the essence of every good work is perseverance, and Truth has told

us that the person who perseveres to the end is the one who will be saved.”

Now to be sure, Mary had her frantic moments, and at the empty tomb in the desolate garden, was no doubt distraught until Jesus called her by name. Whenever I read this Gospel, I think of a passage in Isaiah: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” (43:1). We too have been called by name — called by God to live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and was raised for us. Our collective experience testifies that there are no real meaningful answers in alcohol, drugs, material possessions, money, power, or pleasures of the flesh — or anything else apart from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As the Psalmist says, we are to put our trust in God. Out of that trust, our obedience flows as naturally as water from a spring.

We too have been called by name — called by God to live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and was raised for us.

I’ve known moments of unhappiness and angst and I have experienced a disquieting sense of emptiness in my soul that seems to undercut any trust. I’ve wrestled with my demons, and wrestle still with some. The world offers — and I have explored — many purported solutions. But only one redeems and gives peace. With my heart’s eye I have seen the Lord.

I dare say we all have in some way seen or heard the Lord; it’s why we’re here. Now, with the example of Mary’s experience and reward, we should be urged on by the love of Christ, thankful also for the examples of both junior and senior brothers in this Brotherhood, to persevere in the face of the world’s demons and go to our brothers and sisters in the world, especially to the lowly, the oppressed, the weak, forsaken and hopeless, and repeat by word, or as Blessed Saint Francis might say, better by deed, perhaps one of the most primitive formulations of the Christian faith: “Jesus is Lord.” He is from our God and our Father, “who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” Let us live out that ministry sharing God’s purpose and hope in witness that no one, regardless of how enslaved they are to personal demons, absolutely no one is beyond God’s love and healing grace. Lord, may we be instruments of your peace.

Mark Andrew Jones

