

The Servant



#264

Summer 2022

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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.



Tobias Stanislas' icon of Mary and Martha appears in July's volume of Give Us This Day published by The Liturgical Press of the Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville MN. (Story, page 7)

The Lord who Serves

With the Brotherhood's General Chapter approaching, this column is devoted to some of the qualities of Jesus which we try to emulate as Servants of the Servants of God. We perceive by faith, faith tested and being tested by scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, that Jesus Christ is Servant-Lord. He is God with us in the realities of our common life. Within these realities he claims authority over our corporate and personal thoughts, words, deeds, and relationships, but does not force our obedience. He challenges us to choose from between his Servant-Lordship and the lesser lords who seek to manipulate and control us.

⊕ He is Servant-Lord of all creation. The whole created order is sacramental because it is permeated — perhaps almost saturated — with his efforts to provide an adequate life-sustaining context for communities and persons who are traveling by his gracious favor from sin to salvation. Through the whole creation are traces of the Servant-Lord at work on our behalf.

⊕ He is Servant-Lord of nations. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-19 deserves more careful exegesis than it usually gets. In it the Risen Lord said “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” The word for ‘nations’ in the Greek text means literally ‘multitudes associated or living together; a company; a troupe.’ We see, therefore, that Christ is Servant-Lord of nations, communities, and groups, and that he expects to be recognized as One who creates, re-orders and sustains Kingdom-directed social and systemic values.

⊕ He is Servant-Lord of persons. In John 20 there is the record of Thomas and his doubting, but also of Thomas and his confessing. When the disciple recognized Christ, risen and present, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” We see that individuals, as well as nations, may come consciously under the Servant-Lord and there find new status.

We believe we participate in this everywhere that we work. This is what it means to be a Servant of the Servants of God — not the subscription to a creed, but the loving attachment to a person — a Servant-Lord: Jesus Christ.

RTB

Here and there with the Brothers

Community Notes

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Brotherhood was delighted to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of our Bishop Visitor's Ordination and Consecration on April 12th! Even though it was during

Holy Week this year, some events take precedence and must be celebrated — though omitting use of the “A” word was appropriate — and it was our great privilege to congratulate the Rt Rev Rodney R Michel with great joy on this 25th Anniversary of his consecration to the episcopate of The Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion!

CAROA and NÆCC Annual Meeting

Due to continuing pandemic concerns, the joint meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) and the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NÆCC) met via Zoom on May 2-6. Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago), our Director of Vocations, is the Minister General’s representative at the leader’s meeting. Following up, and expanding upon one of last year’s presentations (“Repairing our Vision: The Beloved Community”), this year’s joint meeting focused on the issue of racism in society, in our Religious Orders and Christian Communities, and in ourselves.

Members of CAROA and NÆCC expressed their appreciation to Fr Masud Syedullah TSSF (President of NÆCC and Director of Roots and Branches), Br Reginald Martin OHC, and Sr Monica Clare CSJB for leading us in exploring this critical and painful subject in three sessions which included videos, small group work, and a toolkit to help those attending take what they have experienced back to their communities. The presentations suggested resources and video links that were shared with those who attended.

Sisters and brothers of CAROA and NÆCC participated in the online meeting with Bishop Jeff Lee, Provisional Bishop of Milwaukee and Chair of The Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops’ Standing Committee on Religious Communities. In response to our joint Memorandum to the HOB Committee sent last summer, Bishop Lee reported that the Committee is supportive of the proposed resolution to General Convention regarding “Religious Life Sunday” and that he is happy to propose it. He expects it will be approved and placed on the Convention’s agenda, but he warned that the sheer volume of Resolutions may mean that ours gets little “air time,” given the very few days and the resultant very tight legislative schedule at this year’s General Convention session.

A wide-ranging discussion followed about how the religious life can be more a part of TEC’s mission. Bishop Lee warned that programs do not seem to have a lasting effect and that the formation of lasting relationships is likely to be more fruitful than more formal strategies. He said that faithfulness to vows by its practitioners is the best advertisement for the religious life. It was noted that prayer and spiritual direction were the obvious gifts religious orders and Christian communities bring to the needs of the church and the world, but that we are also sometimes the bridge to re-entry into the church for those who have been hurt by it. Religious communities are a sign that very diverse people can live together in love and are a kind of microcosm of church life generally (as are

marriage and other forms of community). The vowed life addresses the longing for deep engagement and takes the long view in a world addicted to a “seven-minute news cycle.” *Stabilitas* is hard for moderns.

In response to a question from Ronald Augustine, Bishop Lee enumerated the current members of the HOB Standing Committee: Bishops Jeff Lee, Nedi Rivera, Steven Miller, Matthew Gunter, Todd Ousley, and Michael Garrison.

Next year, CAROA and NÆCC will meet separately, with time to each to explore concerns in traditional and contemporary Religious Life.

Spring Council of the Brotherhood

Council met via Zoom on Saturday April 23rd beginning with prayer by Minister General Richard Thomas Biernacki (Diocese of New Jersey). Secretary Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago) called the roll — all members and officials were present.

The Minister General then began the Reports section of the agenda with his overview of the Brotherhood’s life since the meeting last November, greatly influenced by lock-downs and other gathering restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Next came a detailed report by each Minister Provincial, on events held in each province and touching upon the ministries of each member in his province.

This was followed by the reports of officials, which included the Directors of Education, of Postulants and Novices — with detailed information about each member in his oversight — and of Vocations, followed by the community’s Treasurer, James Teets (Maryland) — whose report included the closing figures for 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 — and Administrator Eric Shelley (Southwestern Virginia). This last report included the listing of the dates and locations for each Convocation through 2025. This list of dates and places was the culmination of the work produced by a committee that met on a number of occasions over the past year to discuss and consider locations for future convocations — this work being necessary given that the Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in upstate Wappingers Falls NY has been unable to confirm requests for convocation dates because of COVID restrictions. The committee included Eric, James, Tobias Stanislas Haller (Maryland), Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago), and Thomas Bushnell (New York).

Next came the elections of officials whose three-year terms are expiring this summer — Director of Vocations Ronald Augustine and Secretary Joseph Basil were both elected by acclamation to continue their roles in ministries which they have individually perfected, with the heartfelt thanks of each Council member.

Joseph Basil announced the 2022 Outreach Grants scoring which had taken place online over the previous weeks. Grant recipients are ministries with which our brothers are familiar in their parishes, dioceses or areas, and in which some of our brothers are personally involved; this year’s recipients include:

⊕ Help Right Here, an emergency assistance program for homeless folks in

the Chattanooga area, including the eventual establishment of a restoration housing village for those who have lost their affordable housing;

- ⑦ Cooperative Christian Ministry in Middlesboro, Kentucky, a program which provides cost assistance to families struggling to maintain electricity, water and gas at their residences;
- ⑦ Chicago's Church of the Atonement for the improvement of their sound system;
- ⑦ Rocky Mountain Refuge a/k/a Lazarus Gate in Denver, a program that provides shelter to homeless people with terminal illness, so that they may have a stable, appropriate environment for hospice care. This year's grant will be used toward resident staff support;
- ⑦ 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;
- ⑦ 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 again support the benefits package for the program's Bridge Chaplain, the only full-time employee serving this program;
- ⑦ 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;
- ⑦ and lastly, assistance to the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande's three programs for young people: Youth Ministries, Young Adult Ministries, and Campus Ministries.

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 investment income 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 applications submitted by our brothers toward ministries with which they are personally involved or familiar.

Council then approved novice Christopher Robert Werth's (Maryland) petition for first profession of vows. (This request then went to all of the professed brothers in his province — Province 3 — who also approved.) Christopher Robert is scheduled to make his first vows during Annual Convocation in August. Heartfelt congratulations go out to him.

Next came a series of “housekeeping” resolutions from Thomas Bushnell (New York), dealing with members’ wills, funeral arrangements, and the transfer of records when a Minister Provincial retires.

Transition is always a concern for good organization, and James brought up the matter of his planned retirement as Treasurer of the Brotherhood, a position he will have faithfully executed for almost 37 years when he retires at the end of his current term in 2024. As an aid in transition, James brought a resolution to appoint an Assistant Treasurer to work with him in order to guarantee a smooth transition. This matter was supported by Council, and after further discussion, Jason Peter Seta (Pennsylvania) was appointed to this new position. Council extends great thanks to Jason Peter for his willingness to take up this important ministry among us.

A final piece of business came from Gordon John Stanley (Chicago), the community’s habilitamentarian who keeps all of the brothers looking their best as he takes care of securing the various habits (and parts of habits) for the community. This important ministry has been even more stressed in its execution as the pandemic interrupted the sources for those pieces of vestiture over the past two years. James brought a resolution suggested by Gordon John, to create a small stock of vestiture in order to avoid being caught short when a brother enters the novitiate or makes his first vows. The resolution passed with thanks from all present.

Province 3

On Saturday, May 21st, Tobias Stanislas was guest host on a virtual meeting of ECVA Conversations, a program sponsored by the Episcopal Church in the Visual Arts, where he discussed his portrait series of icons of saints from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. Tobias Stanislas is an iconographer, and visual artist, and has served as an ECVA curator and exhibitor. His icon — “Mary and Martha of Bethany” — appears as one of the illustrations in the July 2022 issue of *Give Us This Day*, a monthly guide to the Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Hours and Mass published by the Liturgical Press, an apostolate of Saint John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. (See inside front cover.)

✠ Province 3 held an Embertide Retreat at the Maritime Conference Center in Baltimore on June 10-11. During the time together, a vocations team met with and interviewed Clayton D Johnson of Philadelphia for admission to the



postulancy. Our Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Rodney R Michel, was also able to attend the retreat.

In addition to the full round of the Daily Office, Tobias Stanislas Haller led a Bible study session on the works of the Spirit, which brought input from all present as they explored 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

Also present for the retreat were Ronald Augustine Fox (Director of Vocations) and Thomas Bushnell (Director of Education), who traveled from Chicago and New York City respectively, to participate in the interview with Clayton, who was welcomed as a postulant-prospective to attend Annual Convocation in August.

While the schedule seems full in reflection, there was also time for the brothers and Bishop Rodney to catch up with each-other's activities since Annual Convocation in July of 2021 — Winter Convocation 2022 having been cancelled due to the pandemic — and for everyone to meet and begin to get to know Clayton. A wonderful time, without doubt!

Province 5

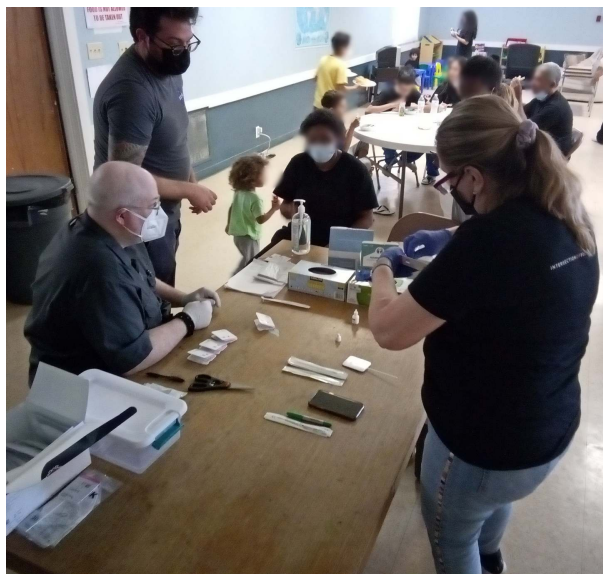
Francis Jonathan Bullock (Indianapolis) took part in a mission trip serving those in need along the Rio Grande border, at Saint Christopher's Church, El Paso, which houses a temporary shelter for asylum seekers. Each Monday, a bus transports 20 individuals, a variety of single adults and families, to the church. Staff assist them in contacting their sponsors. They are then expected to make travel arrangements to family members in the US or their sponsor. On Monday Ecuadorians, Venezuelans, Cubans, and Brazilians came to the shelter; the youngest was a 10-month-old baby with his mother. After they arrived, Francis Jonathan assisted with COVID testing. He reports that he found it difficult holding back tears when looking at those gathered, a living reality of the Matthew 25 Gospel narrative:

"As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." Christ was truly present in these individuals, and that parish hall was holy ground.

Rilke writes, *Go to the Limits of Your Longing; Let everything happen to you; beauty and terror. / Just keep going. No feeling is final.*

I certainly experienced the longings of my heart during my time working at the shelter in El Paso. I longed to bless others with the work of my hands, to be the feet of Christ that go about doing good, and to be the eyes of Christ that look out at the world with compassion. I was able to do this during my time at the shelter through the meals I prepared for the asylum seekers, ensuring these individuals had clothes to wear and clean rooms to sleep in. Through acts of kindness, I was able to show compassion to those who were "strangers in a strange land." I genuflect to the Christ that I beheld in these individuals I served.

— *Francis Jonathan reflecting on his experience of service*



Francis Jonathan (seated at left) joins Canon Lee Curtis (left) and Deacon Sondra Jones in a COVID screening station as part of their service with the immigrant community at Saint Christopher's, El Paso. (Photo by Chaplain Ana Reza. See full story on the previous page.)

Province West

On April 19th *VoyageDenver* published a piece titled “Daily Inspiration: Meet James Patrick Hall,” which provided an interview with our brother. This interview focused on his work in bringing to life the concept now known as Rocky Mountain Refuge (RMR), “a safe, dignified and sustainable place for individuals experiencing homelessness to live during their last days.” This vision, first articulated in 2017, came to reality this past February when its first guest took up residence there. We are so proud of our James Patrick, and we support him with our prayers and very best wishes!

⑦ James Patrick took part in a panel discussion at the Colorado Health Ethics Forum in Thornton CO. Dr Michelle Ferguson, an RMR board member, joined him, along with Susan Finke (Denver Hospice) and Chad Hartmann (TRU Community Care Hospice). The discussion was titled, “End of life care for those who lack housing.”



They directed the presentation to health professionals from all across Colorado and had a lively question and answer session where they responded to many questions concerning unhoused neighbors and their access to hospice care. The two partner hospice agencies addressed the problems they encounter when attempting to take care of a person on the streets, such as, “How can you control symptoms when you can’t leave a supply of pain medications?” They were happy to explain how to provide shelter and the custodial care that a family would normally provide.

✝ William Henry Benefield (West Texas) reports that he has been in the process of becoming permanently licensed to practice psychopharmacology in New Mexico, in several long term care facilities, as contracts with his company have increased there and diminished in South Texas. Most of his patient consults will remain remote though he anticipates being physically there to cover other colleagues from time to time. He passed the board exam and should be licensed soon. Our prayers and congratulations go out to him!



Angel Gabriel Roque preaching at Saint John's Cathedral, Albuquerque NM.