



The Servant



Brothers prepare to assist at
the ordination of David Luke
Henton.

El Paso, Texas

#266

Epiphany 2023

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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.

Manifest . . . but missed?

How many times have we heard someone say, “I think I have just had an epiphany?” Well, they could have said *manifestation* or *revelation*. This is what the Wise Men experienced when they greeted the Christ Child. Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th. You are supposed to have drummers drumming and swans swimming — and don’t forget the partridges! Gather them all up on the Eve of the Epiphany to celebrate the 12th Day of Christmas. Shame that few people today are either unaware or choose to ditch the tree at the curb on December 26, and Christmas is over as far as they and the tree are concerned.

Epiphany in the early church was a major holiday, second only to Easter in importance. Even Easter is watered down today. I often wonder if all the blow-up figures have any real significance for the people who litter their lawns with such inflatable displays. A home in my area even has flamingos.

So why doesn’t anything happen on this important and significant day? For the most part, through Advent, the world at large is only looking towards Christmas Eve and Day and the gifts the culture demands be given. The feasting is a bit like that at The Wedding at Cana — crowded, with only a few aware that Jesus had worked a miracle in their midst. The crowd *was* aware, however, that the wine was flowing!



The Christ Child rushes to embrace the world, his arms outstretched to welcome all; a light of revelation to the nations, and the glory of his people Israel.

Let us try a little counter-culture: If we don’t already, take the time to expect, to keep the twelve days as holy and prayerful. For our community, who say the offices daily, the Scripture helps us in that expectation and “revelation.” You can have this as well; the Book of Common Prayer and its offices and lectionary. And if not, the Bible is always there for the whole story rather than the excerpts.

Bethlehem was so crowded that Mary and Joseph could not find a room. Only a handful paid any notice to the new life that has changed all of history, bright stars and shepherds and magi notwithstanding. But we have a better word: Watch, wait, and expect. Have an epiphany!

RTB

Here and there with the Brothers

Community Notes

SPECIAL EVENTS

As announced in the previous issue of *The Servant*, last summer's General Convention of The Episcopal Church passed a resolution establishing "Religious Life Sunday" throughout our church, and the inaugural event of this annual observance will take place on Sunday, January 22, 2023! For more information, please visit: www.religiouslifesunday.org.

Fall Council of the Brotherhood, 2022

The Fall Council Meeting took place via Zoom on Saturday, November 12th. After reports from all officials were presented, Treasurer James Teets (Maryland) presented the draft budget for 2023; it had been prepared with the participation of all of the provincials and other community officials, and it passed without any changes or revisions. Director of Postulants and Novices Tobias Stanislas Haller (Maryland) presented the petition for first profession of vows from Carlos Roberto Fernández (Southeast Florida). Council approved his petition, and commended the petition to the professed members of Province 4 for their approval. [Minister Provincial Bo Alexander Armstrong (East Tennessee) later reported the positive response of the province. So Carlos Roberto is scheduled to make his first profession at Winter Convocation this January.]

Tobias Stanislas moved resolutions to update the summary document recording the Brotherhood's governing documents, which Council approved. Bo Alexander proposed a committee be established to study Article XII.G of the Constitution on active and inactive membership status for possible changes. Council agreed, and the Minister General appointed a committee consisting of Mark Andrew Jones (Southeast Florida) as Chair, James, Thomas Bushnell (New York), Bo Alexander, and Eric Shelley (Southwestern Virginia).

Province 1

On October 28-29 Minister Provincial Virgilio Fortuna attended the annual Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts and he reported that he was elected to the Commission on Ministry. He also reports that the convention adopted a resolution on vocational deacons' stipends, making it the second diocese in New England to do so, joining Western Massachusetts.



Members of the Province met on Thanksgiving at Virgilio's home and enjoyed a time of food and fellowship. (l to r, Christopher Stephen Jenks, William Francis Jones, Virgilio, and Enoch John Valentine. Ciarán Anthony DellaFera took the photo.

Province 2



On Tuesday, September 27th, Bishop of New York Andrew ML Dietsche held the annual luncheon for the religious communities active in the Diocese of New York, and Thomas Bushnell attended on our behalf. This joyous event, as always, included introductions, and camaraderie among long-time friends. Present were Bishop Dietsche, Bishop Suffragan Allen K Shin, and Bishop Assistant Mary D Glasspool. In addition to the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, the communities present included the Community of the Holy Spirit, the Community of Saint John Baptist, the Order of the Holy Cross, the Society of Saint Margaret, and the Rivendell Community. Thomas reported that there were two members of Chemin Neuf, a Roman Catholic community with an ecumenical emphasis (and membership) that is recently in residence at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine.

Province 3

On Sunday, October 23rd, Edward Munro and Christopher Robert Werth (both of the Diocese of Maryland) presented a talk to members of Christopher Robert's parish, Saint Martin's in the Fields, Severna Park, on topics relating to Episcopal religious orders and communities, the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, and personal stories of their own spiritual journeys. Barbara Munro, Edward's wife, was also present, and she shared some of her experiences as spouse of a religious brother and of friars she has come to know as a result of Edward's involvement. Those present had good questions and came away with new insights about religious life in The Episcopal Church. Following the presentation, James and Tobias Stanislas joined them in attending the second liturgy and the following coffee hour, and meeting members of the Saint Martin's congregation. As a follow-up to the presentation and visit, a number of parishioners have spoken with Christopher Robert about the Brotherhood and related topics.

☩ On November 20th, the last Sunday after Pentecost and the observance of the Reign of Christ, Jason Peter Seta (Pennsylvania) preached at the principal liturgy at his home parish, Saint Luke's, Germantown, in Philadelphia. (The text of his sermon appears on page 10 of this issue.)





⌘ Two weeks later, on December 4th, Jason Peter took up a different task, and reprised his role as beloved Saint Nicholas of Myra — that being the Sunday closest to the saint’s feast day December 6th. He addressed the congregation with a message from Myra, and met with the children and other parishioners after the liturgy. [Photos are by Christine Broome.]

Province 5

On Saturday, September 17th, Paula E Clark was ordained and consecrated as the 13th Bishop of Chicago, and Nathanael Deward Rahm, Minister Provincial of Province 5, and Joseph Basil Gauss, Secretary of the Brotherhood (both of the Diocese of Chicago), were delighted to be present and to represent The Brotherhood. Clark’s journey to this day had been particularly difficult. Joseph Basil — who is a registered nurse — recounted a few of these difficulties from his medical perspective. Prior



to her planned consecration in 2021, she suffered a massive aneurysm. Through months of intense rehab, she made her way back to the day of her consecration, made all the more poignant due to the death of her husband from cancer while she was making her recovery from the aneurysm.



⌘ Chicagoans Ronald Augustine Fox and Joseph Basil didn’t wait for Religious Life Sunday to spread the word: they shared about our community and religious life in general at an adult forum on November 20th at Church of the Atonement. They were joined by Brother Will White CMJ, who also serves at Atonement.



⊕ The two also took part in Atonement’s Advent Lessons and Carols, seen above at the end of the liturgy during “Lo, he comes!” Joseph Basil sang in the choir, and Ronald Augustine was master of ceremonies and thurifer.

⊕ Province 5 brothers held an Advent Retreat in December at Saint John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Flossmoor IL. Minister Provincial Nathanael Deward invited the Rev Meghan Murphy-Gill, Curate of Church of the Ascension in Chicago, to facilitate. (Nathanael Deward is Parish Administrator there.) She



presented “Waiting with the O Antiphons — an Advent Retreat,” including material by poet Malcolm Guite, an Anglican priest, singer, and songwriter. There were plenary sessions and opportunities for individual retreat time. Brother Jeremy Froyen CFC was host and participated in

the retreat. He is Rector of Saint John’s, Dean of the Joliet Deanery in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, and a member of the Community of Francis and Clare, another Christian Community in TEC. He celebrated the Eucharist with the Province 5 brothers.

Province West

The brothers of Province West gathered for a late Holy Cross Day/Foundation Day retreat September 23rd-26th in El Paso, Texas in conjunction with the ordination to the priesthood of David Luke Henton (Diocese of the Rio Grande) by Bishop Michael Buerkel Hunn of that diocese, on Saturday, September 24th. Joining Province West Brothers Angel Gabriel Roque (Rio Grande), David Benedict Hedges (Arizona), James Patrick Hall (Colorado), Scott Michael Pomerenk (Colorado) and Minister Provincial William Henry Benefield (West Texas), were Brothers Francis Jonathan Bullock (Indianapolis), Gordon John Stanley (Chicago), and Peter Budde (Southwestern Virginia), as well as Gregorian spouses Betty Budde, Carly Flagg Hedges, and Tim Kruse.



Pictures from David Luke's ordination, from prayer to blessing

The brothers arrived on Friday, gathering in the afternoon for Evening Prayer and then dinner together with other out-of-town friends on the eve of the ordination. Early Saturday morning, the brothers and spouses prayed Morning Prayer together prior to the rehearsal of the liturgy. The 10:00 a.m. ordination at Saint Christopher's was streamed live and is archived on the Diocese of the Rio Grande Vimeo site. David Benedict was preacher; Gordon John chanted the Litany; Angel Gabriel and William Henry served as Presenters, and William Henry also chanted the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and vested the new priest, along with David Luke's spouse, Tim Kruse; and Peter, Francis Jonathan, James Patrick and Scott Michael served as crucifer and acolytes. The ordination was followed by a beautiful luncheon provided by the diocese and organized by parishioners of Saint Alban's and Saint Christopher's Episcopal Churches. After siestas and Evening Prayer, the brothers and their spouses enjoyed a festive Mexican dinner together, hosted by William Henry and Province West.

Sunday morning, the brothers and spouses joined the community of All Saints Episcopal Church, where David Luke celebrated and preached, and Gordon John served as Deacon. In addition to the ordination, a highlight of the weekend together was the rhythm of the Offices and Gregorian prayer, fellowship and service together. David Luke shared that a particular blessing of the weekend for him was the gift of the Gregorian presence throughout, and the opportunity for

his Gregorian family to meet his Diocesan family, and especially his new convocational family in the El Paso Episcopal community where he will be serving.

As for the Gregorians unable to be present physically, most were glued to monitors that morning, enjoying and participating in that beautiful live-streamed liturgy in prayer from all across the country. David Luke is precious to all of us, and is delighted and excited to be serving at All Saints Episcopal Church in El Paso, where he has been appointed as Priest-In-Charge

☩ Richard Edward Helmer (California) served as Secretary to his third diocesan convention in late October — and was elected for another year in that role — along with the mandate that the session next year will be face to face. He was also elected as Deputy to the 81st General Convention in Louisville, set for the summer of 2024.

☩ On October 2nd Angel Gabriel visited Saint Michael & All Angels Church in Tucson to preach for the observance of the parish's patronal feast. His sermon and presence were warmly received by the people of the parish, whose Rector is our own David Benedict.

☩ William Henry Benefield traveled to England and France in late October for a brief pilgrimage. He attended most of the liturgies for the All Saints Festival at All Saints Margaret Street in London; First Evensong for All Saints at Norwich Cathedral; a Eucharist on All Saints Day at the Shrine of Saint Edward the Confessor at Westminster Abbey; he also made a pilgrimage to the Anglican Shrine at Walsingham to carry prayers for others who had requested them.



Angel Gabriel traveled to Baltimore to attend the meeting of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (together above) on November 14-17. This was the first in person meeting since the pandemic began. He reports that much good work is being done.

Sermon for Christ the King

Saving kingship

We have come to the end of the liturgical year. The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe; Christ the King. The liturgical year began last November with the season of expectation, Advent; expectation not only of the Nativity, but indeed of the second, final coming of Christ. Then we read and prayed and sang through Christmas and Epiphany. Then later in the year we prepared in the season of Lent through Holy Week and on to the Resurrection; then Pentecost and the long days after Pentecost.

During all that time, we have heard the Word together. The mystery of the Incarnation and God's coming into history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; the prophetic readings from the Old Testament; the Gospel stories of his earthly ministry; his Passion, death and resurrection; the coming of the Holy Spirit; the work of the Apostles and the early church; the apocalyptic writings from the Old and New Testaments and of course the Epistles. All of that leads us to today when we celebrate Christ the King and his dominion over all things.

In our observance of Christ as King, we apply earthly concepts of royalty to the person of Jesus. Crowns, scepters, opulent robes, a throne — all standing in contrast to the humiliation of the crown of thorns, the mocking robe thrown on him by his torturers, the cross. We view Christ in terms of human dominion as a reminder that whatever governments we inflict on ourselves, they will come and go. God's dominion is eternal and takes in all of creation. But, of course, human images of grandeur do a poor job of describing God's dominion. As Cyril of Alexandria said, Christ "has dominion over all creatures, a dominion not seized by violence or usurped, but his by essence and by nature." Christ's dominion is bound up in the union of his divinity and humanity. Pope Pius XI wrote in his encyclical, *Quas primas* in 1925,

He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. (33)

When we contemplate God's dominion, we see the mystical union of the divine and human, of the finite and the infinite — very different from human expectations of dominion, which is often little more than a synonym for subduing, overpowering, and breaking down.

To be sure, Jesus subverted expectations throughout his time on earth. From parables exposing the hypocrisy of religious power-brokers to the example of the Good Samaritan — the hated foreigner who turned out to be the true, merciful neighbor. Jesus did not always tell people what they wanted to hear. And indeed,

many of his followers expected something less mystical and more practical from the rabbi Jesus. They expected a political king, a secular liberator. They expected him to take up arms and mass his followers into an army and free Israel from the oppression of Roman occupation. And to rule as king of Israel, reviving the house of David in temporal power, then and there, here and now.

But Jesus turned those expectations upside down. His kingdom, he said, is not of this world. In the Gospel today, we see the King nailed to a cross, dying slowly. Another gruesome, public display of the empire's might; a corruption of dominion: domination. It was a warning and a threat. It was enough to send most of the apostles into fearful hiding. Who would be next? At his feet beneath the cross, Mary, his blessed mother, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene, and John, the beloved disciple. And the crowds: jeering, mocking. Even the man dying beside him jeered and mocked by his ironic appeal, "Save yourself! Save *us!* You're supposed to be so powerful, right? You're a King, right? Then *do something!*" I wonder how many of us would have said the same thing? Out of spite? Or maybe with a hint of expectation that somehow at the last minute, Jesus would cause something to happen to change our fate?

And of course, that is exactly what he did. Jesus overturned that expectation as well. The other condemned man, maybe with a glimmer of understanding of what this Messiah really was, simply asks, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom," — trusting that the kingdom would come, somehow, despite the awful reality of that moment. And rather than calling down legions of angels to defend him, to save them all, and to cast out the Romans, and to do all those things that the world thought the Messiah would do — he died. And then turned death upside down at the resurrection. "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul says, "He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins... All things have been created through him, and in him all things hold together." He reconciled himself to all things, to all of creation, by the blood of his cross.

And then Paul also prays that the Colossians — that we — will be made strong; prepared to endure everything with patience. We have been rescued from darkness. Note, he writes that "He has rescued us and transferred us into the kingdom," in the *past tense*. *It has been done*. We have redemption, now. And now, we endure everything with patience. His kingdom does not mean that life on earth will be wine and roses. But our sure and certain hope has already come to pass. The beginning and the end are in Christ. The beginning that is always on the horizon, and the ending that has already come. We have not gotten to the end yet. But Christ has: he is the eternal beginning and the eternal ending, present at all times, in all places, sovereign over creation.

Today's celebration of Christ's Kingship leads us into Advent and to the expectation of Nativity and the second coming, the end of time when his kingdom will be established to the ends of the earth. We see Christ today as he truly is. The King, not of the world's imagination but as one who transcends time and space, one whose actions in history changed eternity, one who suffered and died. He is one who can forgive us, but not just through a pardon issued on paper telling others that they cannot punish us for our wrongdoing. He forgives us in the deepest part of our failing. He meets us where we are. There is no depth we can descend but he is there. In all of our fear and error, and all of our brokenness, he is there.

Earlier in Luke's gospel, we read the story of poor Lazarus, taken up to Paradise, and the rich man thirsting in Hades, separated by a chasm that could not be crossed. Jesus, the king who went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified, bridges the chasm between us and the Almighty, reconciles us to God and has made a place for us in Paradise.


What a thing to contemplate. We name God King, rightly. I suspect the cosmic reality, the mystery of his reign is so much more than human words, certainly more than I can conceive of. And in the meantime, we endure; we wait, wait for that which has already come, the King who subverts expectations.

What expectations are we subverting as we wait; while we are here in this life? I say we can subvert what the world thinks a Christian is. We are not stereotypes of political affiliation and classism and racism. We are called to live as messengers of God's light. We must throw off the labels and assumptions people make about "us" and show the world that God is love; that his gospel is good news to the poor. We must look unblinkingly into the eyes of hatred and respond with love. His love knows no bounds; our love is bound only by our fears. Cast fear aside! Live in hope, in expectation! Welcome the unwanted, feed the hungry, embrace the addicted, house those without shelter, work for reconciliation with your neighbor, work for justice in this world, forgive those who do wrong; in short, proclaim the good news!

We are God's hands, the agents and ambassadors of our King, charged to act in the world. Justice, and righteousness, and love, and mercy are now our duty in our worship of — and work for — Christ the King. So go out into the world, as the familiar dismissal says, rejoicing in the power of the spirit — and do something!

Jason Peter Seta





A letter to the parish on a new ministry

Through the long week

The Rector at Christ Church, Martinsville Virginia, invited novice brother Mychal Joseph Gallop to begin a ministry with the homeless — an Undercroft drop-in ministry four days a week. What started as an experiment is evolving into an ongoing ministry of the church. In this letter to the parish, Mychal Joseph offers his rationale.


The homeless are often treated as lepers; people avoid them as though homelessness is a contagious disease. When you're homeless, as I was many years ago, you can begin to think of yourself as subhuman, a stain on society without whom the world would be better off. It becomes very difficult to continue justifying the struggle when you don't feel you deserve to survive.

When volunteering at the Warming Center last winter, I began ministering to our clients as a friend hanging out with other friends: sitting and listening to their stories, playing chess together, or simply being present over a cup of coffee. I wasn't trying to solve their homelessness or behaving as though there was a vast gulf between their humanity and mine. Although there are many services in our community that address the physical needs of the homeless, no organization exists solely for the purpose of addressing this spiritual need, making each individual feel that they are fully human, a beloved child of God.

Over the past several months, I've spent around seven hours a day, four days a week, in the Undercroft. I keep a pot of coffee hot for visitors and have some food to share as well. Thanks to the generosity of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, I have food, clothing, blankets, and more that I can distribute as needed. The chapel is open for prayer and reflection, and I have consecrated Bread so I can offer Communion to those wanting such spiritual food. All of this helps create a safe space in which we can talk and see each other as equals, in the hope of extending to the least of these the same compassion and understanding that Christ Church extended to me and my family.

I invite you to join me in this ministry with your prayers and presence. While I certainly will not refuse donations of food (non-perishable items that don't require preparation) or other supplies, I especially ask you to pray for me and those to whom I minister, and I invite you to join me in the Undercroft to meet those who are experiencing homelessness. While they may look scary, they are our siblings. Most are dealing with years of painful trauma, many have addictions and mental health issues, and they may be timid and feel out of place thanks to years of rejection. Whether you can volunteer to join me on a regular basis or just drop in while running other errands, I will gladly introduce them to you, that the welcoming and healing love of Christ may transform us all.

Mychal Joseph Gallop



A poem for hope, looking towards Lent

The Thirsty Ground

Blades lay brown and parched
like hearts laid bare
in dust.

Rooted in the dry
madness of rush and rust
crumbling to nothing;

The black sky and cold moon
over shadowed clouds
bright stars and winged planets.

Come rain to stir the earth,
bringing life in death and
futures in past,

Troubling the stagnant pools
and the waking blades shake
sleep to bed
and peek out.

But bring more than water;
Bear truth and justice
where dry lies
and fatal power
have shattered hope,

And marred the dear land
with greed and blood
and bare teeth.

Bring new life here:
this soil and time
for love anew,
passed along to seeds
await in the deep.

For we are soil
and earth,
and the dry blades,
and perhaps even rain:

This hour stirred up to
pool and dance of new.



Richard Edward Helmer