



The Servant



*Crossing from Holy Week
into Eastertide*

The bridge to the gazebo on
the grounds of St Mary's
Seminary and University,
Baltimore

#267

Holy Week / Easter 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.



Tobias Stanislas Haller celebrates the Holy Eucharist, assisted by Bo Alexander Armstrong, Gordon John Stanley, and Eric Shelley.



A candid shot of Carlos Roberto Fernández snapped in his parish shortly after his first profession

Founder's Forum

Cross and Crosses



Our world is full of crosses — plastic and gold, ordinary and very fine; some strange in their design and others so simple as to evoke great emotional response. Our world is filled with such religious crosses, but too empty of the crosses upon which we are willing to hang ourselves in the name of justice and love. “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” If the Crucified One were to look out upon our world today and see us pitted



against one another as violently as we are, his words might very well be the same. Humility may save us. Its source is the Suffering Servant who became the Risen Servant. Resurrection, not grief, is our password. The way, though it leads through death, leads to happiness. The tree of sorrow turns into a tree of life. That is both the possibility and the promise of community-in-Christ and it is welcome news for our times.

RTB

Here and there with the Brothers

Community Notes

Religious Life Sunday

General Convention, meeting in Baltimore in July 2022, approved observance of a Religious Life Sunday on the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, and the first observation of this new event took place this January. Gregorian Friars took part in this observance in their local parishes.

⊕ Canon Lisa Fry, rector of Saint Thomas', Camden, Maine, asked Donovan Aidan Bowley to share information about the Brotherhood and Religious Life in The Episcopal Church at both the 7:30 and the 10:00 AM worship. Each of these took the form of an informal talk, rather than the more formal homily or sermon. Following each liturgy he was able to talk with interested folks and share some copies of our newsletter and our Rule of Life. As an added enhancement was the presence of the Rev Dr Tom Pike, an old friend of the Brotherhood from its early

days, the first Chaplain of the Brotherhood, present at the inaugural liturgy of the community at the Monastery of the Visitation of Holy Mary in Riverdale, The Bronx, on Holy Cross Day 1969. At that time our Founder, Richard Thomas, was the organist at Saint Andrew’s, Yonkers, where Dr Pike was rector.



⑦ Mark Andrew Jones’ parish, St Nicholas, Pompano Beach, Florida, observed Religious Life Sunday with a cake honoring the three communities represented in the parish: Francis and Clare, Anamchara, and BSG.

⑦ Francis Jonathan Bullock led a presentation for Religious Life Sunday at All Saints, Indianapolis. His talk consisted of a brief overview of religious life in

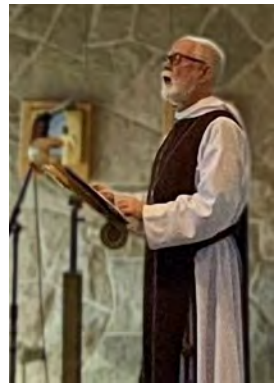
The Episcopal Church and the many gifts that religious have to offer. He shared some of his own experiences in the Brotherhood. Also participating were Didier Bertrand p/OSB, Father Gordon Chastain (Oblate-OJN), and Peter Kyle, sharing their experiences of religious life from a variety of perspectives.”



Didier, Francis Jonathan, Gordon, and Peter



⑦ Two of our Gregorian brothers preached on Religious Life Sunday in their home parishes: Minister Provincial Nathanael Deward Rahm (seen at right) preached at Our Saviour, Elmhurst IL, where he serves as organist and choirmaster. Ronald Augustine Fox (to the left) preached at Church of the Atonement, Chicago.



Winter Convocation 2023



The Winter gathering of the Brotherhood took place at Saint Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore on January 23-27. Given the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and its effect upon gatherings of all sorts, the Brotherhood hadn’t held a Winter Convocation for the whole community since the gathering at Mt

Alvernia in New York, January 2020. Winter Convocation 2021 was a virtual event and Winter Convocation 2022 was a two-day event hosted by Province 3 at Saint



Gordon John chants the Litany.

Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. The good reception of this event spurred holding a Winter Convocation with greater participation this year.

The Brotherhood's Education Committee, chaired by Director of Education Thomas Bushnell (Diocese of New York), developed a varied retreat schedule for this winter, presented in four sessions during our time

together. Two sessions were devoted to talks convened by Thomas on the philosophical and theological implications of embodiment. Jason Peter Seta (Diocese of Pennsylvania) gave a presentation on the nature of breath and breathing. Scott Michael Pomerenk (Colorado) organized a viewing of Wim Wender's *Wings of Desire* — which also touches on the theme of embodiment, as an angel (in a similarly divided and dualistic Berlin) yearns to share the sensations of the many humans he has until then passively observed and recorded.



Jason Peter describes the flow of breath.



David Luke preaching

These daily retreat sessions were set within each day's round of worship, prayer, and refreshment as provided by the Daily Office, the Holy Eucharist, shared meals, and ample time for conversation and rest. The masses were celebrated by Tobias Stanislas Haller (Maryland), David Luke Henton (Rio Grande) and Richard Edward Helmer (California), with the assistance of deacons Edward Munro (Maryland) and Gordon John Stanley (Chicago), together with other

members of the community providing the serving staff, lectors, offertory participants and our sacristy staff, headed up by Eric Shelley (Southwestern Virginia). As always, fine preaching highlighted each day's Eucharist, with sermons





Presenting Michael Quinlan for admission

by Thomas, David Luke, and Richard Edward (see the latter's sermon on Florence Li Tim Oi later in this issue), and the daily music schedule was thoughtfully organized by Nathanael Deward Rahm (Chicago), our Director of Convocation Liturgy and Music, and ably provided by pianists William Henry Benefield (West Texas) and Nathanael Deward.



Presenting Carlos Roberto... to make his first vows...

Special events are also a hallmark of any convocation, and three celebrations of the Rites of the Brotherhood took place during this Winter Convocation. The first came at Evening Prayer on Wednesday, January 25th, when Director of Vocations Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago) and Director of Education Thomas presented Michael P Quinlan of the Diocese of Central Florida to Minister Provincial 4 Bo Alexander Armstrong (East Tennessee), for admission to the postulancy of the Brotherhood. Later that evening, Minister Provincial 3 Edward received Jason Peter's first renewal of vows. On Thursday, January 26th, during the Holy Eucharist, Thomas and David Luke presented Carlos Roberto Fernández to Bo Alexander, presiding in the Minister General's absence, to make



and sign the profession certificate.

his first profession of annual vows. This was another joyous occasion, ending with Bo Alexander exclaiming: "Greet our newly-professed brother," to which the chapel rang out with: "Glorify the Lord, O you servants of the Lord; let all that you do be done to God's glory." A hearty round of applause followed this acclamation!



Carlos receives a blessing and acclamation.

Every opportunity for our brothers to gather is important to each of us and, while attendance at Winter Convocations

is not mandatory, and is difficult or even impossible for some, it is always a time of good cheer and catching-up, regularly punctuated with laughter and even a few tears of remembrance. We give thanks for these opportunities throughout the year as they serve as our needed “times apart,” when we can restore our souls and return home to our many ministries refreshed, reinvigorated and anxious for our next gathering. To God alone the glory!

Province 3



Novice Clayton Johnson served as thurifer for the celebration of Confirmation at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral on Saturday January 7.

The province held a virtual morning of reflection on March 18, beginning with Morning Prayer, a brief update on life situations, and a discussion of an excerpt from Archbishop Desmond Tutu on the theme of reconciliation — all via Zoom. We then adjourned and all were invited (as was the whole community) to log on to the YouTube Live stream of Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold’s funeral at St Luke’s Germantown, Philadelphia. Two of our members serve in that parish, and they took up their roles in the liturgy: Clayton Johnson bearing the Paschal Candle, and later the processional cross, and Jason Peter Seta as chorister and cantor for the gradual and alleluia.



After the Griswold funeral, Clayton and Jason Peter posed with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and his predecessor, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori.

Province 4

Richard John Lorino (Central Florida) led a quiet day for his home parish, Saint Augustine of Canterbury, Vero Beach, on February 18th, entitled, “From Light into Night: Our Journey from Epiphany into Lent.” This retreat was sponsored

by the parish's Episcopal Church Women, and twenty-two attended and expressed their thanks for the event. The Rev Julie McPartlin, a retired priest from New York, celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the gathering.

Province 5



Brothers of Province 5 gathered for a retreat and fellowship at Saint Matthew's, Indianapolis, on March 10th, where the rector, the Rev Frank Impicciche, was the retreat leader. In the photo (l to r): Francis Jonathan Bullock, Ælred Bernard Dean (Indianapolis), Joseph Basil Gauss, Nathanael Deward Rahm (Chicago), and Fr Frank.

Province West



Province West gathered on March 10-12 for a retreat observing the Feast of Saint Gregory the Great. They met at Saint Michael and All Angels, Tucson, where David Benedict Hedges is Rector. In attendance (l to r) were David Luke Henton (Rio Grande), David Benedict, James Patrick Hall (Colorado), Angel

Gabriel Roque (Rio Grande), and Minister Provincial William Henry Benefield (West Texas). Also attending, seen in the photo at right with David Benedict, was Bonifacio Gutierrez, a guest who is interested in the community from



the Diocese of the Rio Grande. The retreat was grounded on pilgrimage and the members visited two pilgrimage sites on Saturday.

The day began with Morning Prayer, followed by a Eucharist to commemorate the Brotherhood's Patronal Feast of Saint Gregory the Great. The group then journeyed to the Mission San Xavier del Bac on the Tohono O'odham Nation that serves the San Xavier Indian Reservation. Noonday Prayer was prayed during their visit. The afternoon was spent driving up Mount Lemmon to visit the Shrine of Saint Mary Untier of Knots, a Byzantine Catholic chapel. Custodians of the shrine gave the group a tour, including the amazing iconography within the chapel and an introduction to the

patron title of the shrine. The brothers were given use of the chapel for meditation and prayer. On Sunday, William Henry was the guest preacher at both liturgies.

Picture it!

Ashes to Go

Brothers took part in distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday, in liturgical settings, and in a few cases, on the go — some of them almost gone due to high wind conditions.



Clayton and Jason Peter at Saint Luke's Germantown, Philadelphia



Angel Gabriel and Bishop Hunn administered ashes to each other before heading out into the windstorm, below.



The Commemoration of Florence Li Tim-Oi **Yet if You Say So**

As much as many of us would like to be first at something at least once in our lives, we easily forget just how hard it can be to be first. We have heard over the past few weeks in our Sunday lectionary various gospel accounts of being the first among Jesus' followers. Was it Andrew as John would have it? Andrew and Simon together with James and John as Matthew had it last Sunday? Or Simon, then James and John, as Luke's narrative suggests in what we just heard?

Andrew almost disappears into John's mystical telling, quickly upstaged after he invites along his brother, Simon, whom Jesus nicknames "Rocky" — as if to describe the difficult road ahead for the impetuous fisherman. James and John are nicknamed "sons of thunder" probably because of their hotheadedness and sometimes naked aspiration. All will be a constant source of our Savior's exasperation and "teachable moments."



It gives me cause to wonder if this confused mess of gospel narratives about the first disciples might be an indication that, by the end of the story, no one wanted to be counted first. In hindsight, it was just too hard, and the mistakes and missteps were far too embarrassing to clearly remember, let alone disclose.

Yet isn't that true of all our vocations? When we are called, we are like Simon in the boat with the torn and fragile nets of our work, bone tired with our efforts, our gaze bloodshot from being up too long. The leap of faith, when we are told to keep going, is to say what Simon said to Jesus: "Yet if you say so..."

Florence Li Tim-Oi, the first woman ordained a priest in the Anglican Communion, was a disciple like this. Born in 1907, her name means "most beloved daughter" — a testament to her parents' resistance to their culture's norm of cherishing sons more than daughters. In keeping with that sort of counter-cultural

path, at her baptism as a student, she took the name Florence after another pioneering witness in vocation: Florence Nightingale. Like her namesake, Tim-Oi's path was set with barriers to break; to respond to God with a determination not at all unlike Simon's: "Yet if you say so."

She grew to adulthood in the shadow of world war, graduating at 31 from Canton Union Theological College in Guangzhou just in time to see militarism consume much of East Asia. As a lay minister, she journeyed to Macao where, in May of 1941, she became a deaconess serving the needs of the church in a Portuguese colony overtaken by refugees from the growing Pacific War. When Imperial Japan occupied Hong Kong that same year, the church in Macao was cut off from the ministry of Anglican priests.

With this tattered pastoral, theological, and liturgical net in her hands, Florence would faithfully continue her ministry, even as the horrors of starvation set in across Macao. She would work long, arduous hours in a growing ministry to feed and care for all she could, bury the dead, proclaim and teach the Gospel and baptize — fishing for people, while often walking past starved bodies in the streets each day to get to the church where her ministry was centered. When word of this heroic witness reached Bishop of Hong Kong Ronald Hall, he threw all caution to the winds, wrote Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple of his discernment, and determined to empower Florence with ordination to the priesthood so she could nurture those in her charge with holy communion.



Bo Alexander blesses symbols of devotion and commitment — the cross and cincture — before they are presented to Carlos Roberto at his first profession.

When the War ended, the Anglican Communion was thrown into uproar over the irregular ordination. Florence — with characteristic humility and to help preserve Bishop Hall's episcopate — willingly relinquished her license to celebrate, but persisted in ministering to the people she was called to serve with every other capacity the church would permit. Hall, moved by Florence's witness, insisted she

still be regarded by those in her pastoral charge as a priest, and appointed her rector of St Barnabas Church, Hepu in 1947.

It was difficult enough to have her license as a priest revoked, but it must have been harder still to be virtually erased by her own society, the people she was called to serve. Communism was on the rise. Florence went to study in Beijing and then returned to Guangzhou to serve at the cathedral. But in the late 1950's, the state closed all churches and would ultimately declare Florence a counter-

revolutionary, carting her off to re-education camps and then forcing her into hard labor on a farm and later in a factory in an interminable ordeal that would span decades. In this great spiritual and vocational desert, she was tempted at times to give up completely. What kept her going was her recognition that Christ's call abided with her: "Yet if you say so."

It is no small irony that 1974 — the year Florence retired from the factory— was the same year the Philadelphia Eleven sought to break the barrier to women's priestly ordination in the Communion. But Florence would not return to public ministry until churches were permitted to reopen in China in 1979, and her license to serve as a priest would only be restored when she was at last permitted to visit family in Montreal two years later.

Florence Li Tim-Oi, the first woman ordained as priest in the Anglican Communion, had waited thirty-six years for the church fully to authorize her calling. That was a high price to pay for being first. But Florence, then in her 74th year, embraced her new nets with joy and would serve out her remaining days living into her vocation in Montreal and Toronto. "Yet if you say so."

It is enough, I suppose, like Florence, like Simon Peter — to fish with the net we have, tattered as it might be, tired as we might be, uncertain as we most certainly are in an often wayward, reluctant church and a capricious and often ungrateful world. Persistence is measured in our obedience: to the imperfect church of which we are a part; to the needs of those around us wherever we find God has led us; and above all to our beloved Christ, who stands on the shores of our brief lives just as he did for Simon, Andrew, James, and John and, of course, for Florence.

When we are called by Christ, we must follow. Because Christ says so. Because Christ was first. The "first fruit" of that new world that God is birthing in our midst — our first and truest responsibility. And therein lies a gift that sustained Florence through an unimaginably arduous life and ministry.

As she put it so clearly: "No one can take away the peace that comes from completing one's responsibilities to history and fulfilling God's will."

Richard Edward Helmer



The community gathered in the refectory during Convocation