

The Servant



*William Henry chants the
Epistle on the Feast of
Pentecost*

The Church of
Saint Mary the Virgin
New York City

#272

Summer 2024

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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.



Palm Sunday at Advent Baltimore: Tobias Stanislas Haller celebrates as James Teets assists, and thurifer Joe Goss tends the smoke!



Clayton DewAndre Johnson puts his heart into the announcements at Saint Luke's Germantown PA.

*See more news
from Province 3 on page 6.*

To everything there is a season



First vows, 1969

I have a book Sister Margaret Mary VHM gave me many years ago: *Story of a Monastery*. Inside the cover she wrote this inscription: “Richard Thomas BSG 1969 from Sister Margaret Mary, VHM.” The year, the name — these mark the point at which the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory was born. That was nearly 55 years ago.

Through the intervening years I have served under many titles: Superior, Superior General, and currently as Minister General. Our late beloved brother Ron Fender wrote a book about his work with unhoused people, *These Things I Have Seen*. I use these same words now, as I have chosen, after prayer and pastoral advice, to retire as Minister General. By whatever name, this is a calling I have followed since 1969. I will take up a new title, *Minister General Emeritus*, and retain the only title that will never be duplicated in this community, “Founder.” For there can only be one “me” — 55 years ago or now.



The Founder, 1970



The Founder, 2023

As I watch some of the older communities disappear, I vow this will not happen to the Brotherhood. So it is time for us to elect the new “me.” We are healthy and strong; by relinquishing this office at this time I am assured of the future, a future emerging while I am alive and continuing when I am gone. I have often said, with no possessiveness in my heart, that there will come a time when newer members will ask, “What was it like, having the Founder present?”

The election will take place at our Convocation in August. All life professed are eligible for election, and all professed will vote. There are no nominations; relying solely on the Holy Spirit, we will cast ballots until there is an election — and then we can arrange for some white smoke!

I end with a paraphrase of a text from that *Story of a Monastery*:

On the candle of time, this flame has burned for 55 years, that one day it might burn eternally as the fire of God’s own love, his Holy Spirit.

Pray for us as we discern our future.

RTB

Here and there with the Brotherhood Community Notes

NÆCC annual meeting

Members of the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NÆCC) met at the Pallottine Center in Florissant MO in early May. Bishop Deon Johnson of Missouri welcomed them to the diocese and Bishop of Northern Indiana Doug Sparks, chair of the House of Bishops Committee on Religious Communities, spent a day with members discussing life in intentionally dispersed communities.



NÆCC presenters and officers (l to r) Hannah Spiers (Chemin Neuf); Treasurer Bill Farra SCC; Secretary Ronald Augustine Fox; President Masud Ibn Syedullah TSSF; Neil Reilly (Community at the Crossing)

Guest presenters included Sister Hannah Spiers, a Church of England member of the ecumenical Chemin Neuf Community, based at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City; and Neil Reilly of the Community at the Crossing, an ecumenical community based at the same place. Sister Hannah explained the origin of Chemin Neuf in France, and the Saint Anselm Community in Canterbury. A Roman Catholic Community with an ecumenical vocation, Chemin Neuf is focused on Christian unity. It helped establish the Community at the Crossing, which has both residential and regional members. The first cohort of Community at the Crossing began last June at Saint John the Divine. They have the support of Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, and Dean Patrick Malloy of Saint John the Divine.

Each morning started with *lectio divina*, followed by breakfast and presentations. There was daily Holy Eucharist and Evensong. This year, 20 members of 14 different Christian Communities were in attendance, along with the presenters and guest musicians.

Spring Council of the Brotherhood

The spring Council meeting was held via Zoom on April 20th, beginning with prayer by the Minister General and Chair, Richard Thomas Biernacki (New Jersey). Council's Secretary, Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago), presented the agenda, followed by reports.

A number of brothers were elected (or reelected) to the following positions: Jason Peter Seta (Pennsylvania) as Treasurer; Mark Andrew Jones (Southeast Florida) Director of Postulants and Novices; Eric Shelley (Southwestern Virginia) as Administrator; James Teets (Maryland) as Director of Public Relations and Assistant Treasurer.

Several brothers were approved to make commitments to the Brotherhood at Annual Convocation in August: Richard Edward Helmer (California) and Tommy Mandri (Southeast Florida) to make life professions of vows; Christopher Robert Werth (Maryland) to renew annual vows; and Clayton DewAndre Johnson (Pennsylvania) to make his first profession. Annual Convocation will be at a new facility this summer: the Roslyn Retreat and Conference Center in Richmond VA.

Council approved Outreach Grants for ministries with which brothers are familiar in their parishes, dioceses, or areas, and in which some are personally serving; this year's recipients include: The Chattanooga Outreach Fund, managed by Saint Paul's Episcopal Church; Christ Episcopal Church Shrewsbury NJ, for repairs after water damage; Rocky Mountain Refuge in Denver, a hospice caring for unhoused persons; The Holy Grill Mobile Feeding Ministry of Saint Nicholas Church Pompano Beach FL; and the RIP Medical Debt program of Saint George's Glenn Dale MD. (See Joseph Basil's article later in this issue for more detail on these grants and ministries.)

At this Council meeting the Minister General made his formal announcement of his intent to retire after over fifty years leading the community. After a lively discussion — given that this is the first time our Chapter will face an election of a Minister General, and our Constitution gives only a bare requirement concerning the time, place, and three-fourths majority required for election — Council voted to establish the shape and form of the election process, mirroring the practice of some Lutheran synods in their episcopal elections, and the College of Cardinals in the election of a pope. Immediately following a celebration of the Holy Eucharist (Votive of the Holy Spirit), the special meeting of Chapter will convene. Rather than having a slate of nominees, all life professed brothers (eligible to be elected according to the Constitution) will appear on the first ballot. Opportunity will be provided for any not wishing to be considered to withdraw their names, and the secret ballot will then be taken from all of the professed brothers (those who are unable to attend in person will be polled by their respective Minister Provincial). After the results are announced, if there is no election the process will be repeated, including the

opportunity to withdraw from consideration. From there, as was said at the meeting, it will be “Lather, rinse, repeat” until the required majority is achieved. God willing, the Institution of the new Minister General will take place later in the week.

In preparation for this event, Director of Education William Henry Benefield (West Texas), who was unable to attend the meeting, has coordinated reflection material for the community. Part of this is a selection of excerpts from Saint Gregory the Great’s *The Rule of Pastoral Care*, and a collect for the community. Both of these appear later in this issue.

Province 3

As a follow-up to participation in Bishop Carrie Schofield-Broadbent’s consecration as Coadjutor of the Diocese of Maryland last September, four brothers attended her Institution as Bishop on April 27, 2024. The photo at right shows (l to r) Tobias Stanislas Haller, James Teets, Minister Provincial Edward Munro (all from Maryland), and Clayton DewAndre Johnson (Pennsylvania) gathered at Baltimore’s Cathedral of the Incarnation.



At the reception following the Institution, the brothers joined up with Dominican Christian Ventura OCS.



Cathedral of the Incarnation



Eric Shelley bore the cross in the Palm Sunday procession at Christ Church Roanoke VA.



James Teets (l) assisted at Canon Kristofer Lindh-Payne OSF’s Palm Sunday visit to Advent Baltimore.

Province 4



On the weekend of March 22 – 24, the brothers gathered for a Quiet Day at Saint Nicholas Episcopal Church Deerfield Beach FL. Richard John Lorino (Central Florida, at left), Gordon John Stanley (Southwest Florida), Rector of Saint Nicholas Mark Andrew Jones (Southeast Florida), Thomas Lawrence Greer (Tennessee), Minister Provincial Bo Alexander Armstrong (East Tennessee) and Tommy Mandri (Southeast Florida) were joined by Brother Barry Kevin of the Anamchara Fellowship for a time of prayer and reflection.

Mark Andrew, Diane Jones, and Doreen Gauthier (Senior Warden) provided warm hospitality, with a lunch including generous helpings of chili prepared by chef Ed Collins of the Holy Grill of Saint Nicholas.



(l to r) Tommy, Thomas Lawrence, Mark Andrew, Richard John, Gordon John, and Bo

In addition to the Daily Office and Holy Eucharist, all were blessed with two



Joined by Brother Barry at the Daily Office



profound reflections for Holy Week, “Why the Cross?” and “The Last Words of Jesus on the Cross,” presented by Richard John, followed by lively discussion. Later the gathering toured the new, fully-equipped food truck and the facilities that anchor the Holy Grill ministry. Mark Andrew provided an outline of the work and plans for expansion. The evening ended with a wonderful dinner and fellowship at the Little Havana Restaurant.

The weekend ended with the Palm Sunday liturgy, with gratitude for the chance to come together for the first face-to-face gathering in several years.

Province 5

Francis Jonathan Bullock (Indianapolis), was awarded the Master of Divinity degree on May 11 from Earlham School of Religion in Richmond IN. The process of earning the degree took several years while Francis Jonathan continued working full-time as a social worker. His husband, the Rev Derek Parker, his mother Kristin, and his brother Stephen attended the ceremony, as did his rector, the Rev Andrea Arsene of All Saints Indianapolis, and our brothers David Luke Henton (Rio Grande), Nathanael Deward Rahm (Chicago) and Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago). (See the valedictory letter from the Associate Dean later in this issue.)



*Francis Jonathan with
Earlham President Anne
Houtman*



*David Luke, Ronald Augustine, Francis Jonathan,
the Rev Andrea Arsene, and Nathanael Deward*



Ronald Augustine with Dean Laurie Garrett-Cobbina...

⊕ Ronald Augustine Fox, received a post-graduate Certificate in Trauma and Spiritual Care on May 18 at San Francisco Theological Seminary on the University of Redlands Marin Campus in San



... and Provost Adrienne McCormick and University President Krista L Newkirk

Anselmo CA. His partner, Choy Jimenez, and former Chicagoans now living in Oakland Larry Foster and Norlan Stadtler were present at the commencement ceremony. The guest speaker was human rights activist Michael Steven Wilson of the Tohono O'odham Nation, who received the Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.



Joseph Basil, Ronald Augustine, and Mary Ann

⊕ On June 9, Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago) and Ronald Augustine Fox traveled to Saint Luke's Church Dixon IL with the Church of the Atonement Choir for a Solemn Evensong as part of the Canterbury Music Series at Saint Luke's. Joseph Basil sings with the choir and Ronald Augustine was thurifer for this event. They were able to renew their acquaintance with Sister Mary Ann Rhoades of the Sisters of Saint Gregory, who serves as deacon at Saint Luke's.

Province West

William Henry Benefield (West Texas) spent much of Holy Week at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin in New York City. His husband Christopher joined him for the Triduum. During the week, William Henry helped the altar guild with flowers for the altar of repose and Easter. He chanted the epistle at the Great Vigil, where Thomas Bushnell (New York) read the second lesson.



⊕ Richard Edward Helmer (California) and Angel Gabriel Roque (Rio Grande) took part in the consecration of Bishop Coadjutor of California Austin Keith Rios at Grace Cathedral San



Francisco on May 2. Both Gregorians provided similar service at the recent Diocesan Convention. Angel Gabriel provided Spanish translation and interpretation, and Richard Edward, as diocesan secretary, read the Certification of the Election prior to the consecration.

⊕ On April 19th, James Patrick Hall (Colorado) took part in the 15th Annual Palliative Care Social Work Conference hosted by Metropolitan State University of Denver. As part of his ministry with Rocky Mountain Refuge (RMR), James Patrick goes out into the community and discusses end of life problems encountered by people experiencing homelessness.

A panel discussion entitled “Exploring End-of-Life Gaps and Solutions for Our Unhoused Neighbors” was hosted by Pilar Ingle; panel members included (see photo below, l to r) James Patrick, Van Currell, AK Kopperud, and Brooklynn Booker. Currell is an RMR board member and Kopperud and Booker are part of the Homeless Transition Team of University Hospital in Denver.



The discussion focused on how people experiencing homelessness face more challenges when needing end of life care than the housed population. They are at increased risk of chronic diseases, and these conditions often challenge end of life care after diagnosis of a terminal illness. Moreover, they have an average life expectancy 30 years less than the housed population.

A major point shared at the conference is lack of awareness around the country; RMR is one of the few solutions available. Sharing this information is an important part of our service to the community.

Like many start-up not-for-profits, RMR struggles to achieve and maintain financial stability. However, James Patrick has some good news to share. RMR is finalizing a discharge agreement with UCHealth, which would pay RMR for providing for their patients. This would be a major benefit and help to stabilize their income stream. When that agreement is settled, Boulder Community Health has indicated they would be willing to pay for their patients being received as well, and this agreement will be used as a model for other hospital chains in the area. RMR is very grateful to Denver Rescue Mission for their continued support, and is looking to reopen the first week of July.



☪ Scott Michael Pomerenk and James Patrick joined other Colorado members of religious communities to share the experience of the call to religious life, which included two Franciscans and a member of the Ecumenical Order of Saint Luke. They shared with an in-person group of about 15 and an undetermined number of online folks. Bishop Kym Lucas includes the path to vowed religious life in the diocesan exploration of vocations.

☪ One Friday morning in late spring, David Benedict Hedges went into his church (Saint Michael and All Angels Tucson) to get ready for the Friday morning Holy Eucharist and discovered a Dominican friar taking pictures of the church! He is Father Kevin Goodrich OP (Anglican Order of Preachers). Kevin serves as Rector of Saint John's Church in Dubuque, Iowa, and was in town attending the annual Science of Consciousness Conference offered by the University of Arizona Center for Consciousness Studies.



Kevin, David Benedict, and Robert Joseph Carroll HoSM, a member of the parish



An image from across the pond: William Henry took part in the annual Walsingham Pilgrimage in England this spring. He is seen here with other members of the Society of Catholic Priests: Clive Wylie, Penny Warner, and David Warner.

A reflection on leadership

The Rule of Pastoral Care

by Saint Gregory the Great

These excerpts from Book I are adapted for reflection in preparation for the election of a Minister General.



Though some think the burdens of pastoral care light, I write to express my sense of their weight, so that anyone free of them might not unwarily seek them, and whoever sought them might tremble for having gotten them. People who can't even measure themselves often seek to teach what they haven't learned; they think authority is light in proportion to their ignorance of its vast weight. I will reprove them from the very start; so that, while ignorant and rash to assault the fortress of teaching, I can fend them off at the front gate.

(I.1) No one should presume to teach any art before the hard work of learning it. How rash then for the unskilled to take up pastoral care, since the care of souls is the highest art! Illnesses of the spirit are more challenging than those of the body, yet people with no knowledge of spiritual matters fearlessly profess themselves physicians of the soul. Anyone ignorant of the effects of drugs should blush to administer them as if a physician!

Some church folk are show-offs, ever so distinguished. They want to be seen as teachers, crave superiority, and, as Truth affirms, seek greetings in the marketplace, the best seats in the house.^[Mt 23.6-7] They are unable to administer pastoral care, as they gained the humble office by means of pride.

(I.2) Some study spiritual precepts, but what they store in their minds they waste in their lives: they teach from book-learning, not practice, preaching in words what they deny in works. The prophet complains of such shepherds, saying, *When you drank pure water, you fouled what remained with your feet; and my sheep drank what your feet had fouled*^[Ezek 34.18-19]. Shepherds drink pure water as they taste the truth through study; but they foul the water when they corrupt what they learned by their evil manner of life. None do more harm to the church than those who act wrongly in the pastoral office. They transgress, but no one dares take them to task; and the offense spreads while sinners are honored out of reverence for their rank.

(I.3) We have said how heavy governing is, lest someone unequal to it profane it. Even the Mediator fled from receiving an earthly kingdom: *When Jesus saw that they would come and take him by force, to make him king, he departed again to the mountain by himself*^[Jn 6.15]. Who more blameless to rule over humans than the One who reigns over creation? For the Savior came not only to redeem us by his passion, but to instruct us by his example — so he would not be made a king; but went of his own free will to the cross. So we should learn to love adversity for the truth's sake. For adversity schools us by means of

discipline, while elevation to high office puffs us up. Thus Saul, at first flees the kingship and protests his unworthiness, but no sooner takes it up than he is puffed up ^[1Sam 10.22; 15.17-30]. Similarly David, as soon as his rule is secure, breaks out like an erupting boil ^[2Sam 11.3f]. Having lightly sought the company of a woman, he then cruelly seeks the slaughter of a man. ^[2Sam 11.3-15]

(I.4) The burden of leadership is mentally distracting. You lose focus on the particular, your mind divided among the many. A wise man said, *Do not meddle with many matters* ^[Sirach 11.10]. Distracted by external cares, you lose inner awareness of what you really ought to think about: you become anxious about things outside, and, ignorant of yourself, think about everything else. You become like one so preoccupied on details of a journey that he forgets the destination. Now in writing of all this, I do not find fault with authority itself, but urge against desiring it, lest any who are imperfect should snatch at it, or those who stumble on plain ground should seek to hike on the edge of a cliff.

(I.5) Some have many admirable qualities: gifted in instructing others, pure in heart, strong in self-control, sound in teaching, humble in patience, upright in exercising authority, tender in loving-kindness, strict in dealing justice. Such as these, if they refuse election when they are called, deprive themselves and others of the very gifts they have been given, not just for themselves but for others; by considering their own welfare over that of others, they lose the very welfare they want for themselves. As Truth said, *They do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house* ^[Mt 5.15]. Those who hide their light lose the good the light might do them, as much as those from whom they hide it.

Truth says to Peter, *Simon, do you love me?* ^[Jn 15.16-17]; and Peter, when he replied that he loved him, was told, *If you love me, feed my sheep*. Thus, to feed is to prove one's love. So whoever abounds in gifts for feeding the flock, and yet refuses to do so, is guilty of failing to love the chief Shepherd. The Judge will doubtless find such guilty in proportion to the greatness of the gifts they might have used for the public good. How can one who might so obviously profit his neighbors prefer his own private peaceful contentment over the good he might do to others, when the Only-begotten himself came forth from the Father into the midst of all of us, that he might profit many?

(I.6) Some flee election due to true humility, seeking not to be preferred over others they think better qualified. Such humility, joined with other virtues, is true humility in God's eyes, when they do not obstinately reject what they are called to undertake for the general good. For one is not truly humble, who understands God wants him to govern, yet rejects the governance of God. He ought to obey the call against his own will, and in keeping with God's will.

(I.7) Some rightly desire to preach, while others just as rightly are compelled to preach. Consider two prophets: one willingly offered himself to be sent, the

other fearfully refused to go. When the Lord asks Isaiah whom to send, the prophet steps forward, saying, *Here I am; send me* ^[Isa 6.8]. But when God chooses to send Jeremiah he pleads to be excused, saying, *Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak: for I am only a child* ^[Jer 1.6]. Two different voices came from two men, but they flowed from the same fountain of love.

For there are two precepts of love: of God and of neighbor. So Isaiah, eager to benefit his neighbors through an active life, desires to preach; but Jeremiah, longing to hold fast to his love of God through contemplative life, protests being sent. What the one rightly desired the other rightly shrunk from; the latter, lest by speaking he should lose the gains of contemplation; the former, lest by keeping silence he should suffer the loss of productive work. But note this: the one who refused did not persist in refusal, and the one who stepped up first was cleansed by a coal from the altar. This is a double warning that one who has not been cleansed should not dare to approach the sacred ministry, nor any whom God has chosen should refuse.

So then, let all who are rash to be promoted understand their guilt, if they are so bold as to put themselves forward over others, when holy men, even when commanded by God, feared to take up leadership. Alas how often do we see some who can't bear their own loads without falling, gladly putting their shoulders under others' burdens: their own deeds are too heavy to carry, and yet they add more weight.

(I.8) Often those who seek pre-eminence seize on the Apostle's words to serve their ambition: *If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work* ^[1Tim 3.1]. But while he praises the desire, he adds a note of fear at once, *But a bishop must be blameless* ^[1Tim 3.2]. He goes on to list the virtues needed for this office, and so describes what he means by "blameless." In addition, this was written when anyone called as bishop was likely to be the first to suffer martyrdom. So it was laudable to seek the office, because there was no doubt one would come to suffer because of it.

The office of bishop is a good work in itself, as it is said, *He desires a good work* ^[1Tim 3.1]. Whoever seeks, not the work, but the distinction that comes with it, testifies against himself that it is not the office itself he desires; not only does he not truly love the office, but doesn't even know what it is he grasps at, puffed up in his own mind by the thought of ruling others, rejoicing in praise, proud to be honored, and relishing the perks of the position.

(I.9) Often those who want to exercise pastoral authority imagine themselves doing good works once they are elected, proudly desiring the office, and proudly dreaming about how they will do great things once they attain it. While seeking it, they are anxious they might not be chosen; but on being elected, think it to be perfectly just and fitting. Before ambition runs away with itself, one should contemplate what one has already completed as a sub-

ordinate. For one can not learn humility in a high place who has been proud in a low one: one who does not know how to flee from praise, who has hungered for it when it was lacking; one who can not overcome greed, and who, when elected to an office responsible for providing for many, realizes he could not formerly be satisfied with his own resources just for himself. So from his life experience let every one know what he is, lest craving for authority in his imagination lead him astray.

The habit of doing good, maintained in subordination, can be lost in promotion. For a midshipman can keep a ship on course in a calm sea; but in a tempest even a skilled sailor may be at a loss. In the midst of such dangers, one abounding in virtues should accept election under compulsion, and one who lacks virtues should not approach it even if compelled. Let the former beware lest he be like one who buried the money he received, and was condemned ^[Mt 25,18]. And let the latter take care lest, by acting badly, he create an obstacle to those on their way to the door of the kingdom; like the Pharisees, who, according to the Master ^[Mt 23,13], neither enter themselves nor allow others in. Consider as well how a superior functions as a physician to the sick. How presumptuous to try to heal others, while his brow betrays a raging fever!

(I.10) Therefore, anyone called to an office on the evidence of a good manner of life must devote himself to that life completely. He will subdue his passions; disregard worldly prosperity; fear no adversity and desire only inward wealth; muster his physical abilities to support the will to work, neither prevented by frailness, nor yet discouraged when bodily limitations constrain his work. He will not covet others' goods, but give freely of his own; in compassion he quickly forgives, yet is never drawn from doing what is just by pardoning more than is right to pardon. He does nothing unlawful yet deplors wrong done by others as though it were his own doing; in his affection of spirit he sympathizes with another's ills, and rejoices in the good that befalls a neighbor as if it had befallen him. He sets himself as an example to others in all he does, so that among them he does nothing of which he need be embarrassed. He studies how to live in such a way that he might water even dry hearts with the streams of wise teaching. He has learned by the use and experience of prayer that he can obtain what he has asked from God, having heard, as it were, in his own experience, the voice of God in response to his prayer, *While you are yet speaking, I will say, Here am I* ^[Isa 58,9].

A Prayer for the Brotherhood in discernment

Almighty God, source of all wisdom and understanding: Be present with us as we discern your will in the election of a Minister General for The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; help us to choose a faithful servant, a humble pastor to this flock; teach us in all things and above all things to seek only your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The road is long



When I thought of your journey here at Earlham, a song came to mind:

The road is long
With many a winding turn
That leads us to who knows where
Who knows where

You've not been here quite since this song came out in 1969, but it has been a long road to travel since your first class nearly seven years ago. Even though your journey has been protracted, and which I think you wondered if you would complete, I believed you would finish even in the midst of the turns and challenges you have faced these last years. Because like the song's next lyric — "But I'm strong" — you have a deep strength about you: determination and conviction enough to keep going on and even offer care for others along the way. Thus, this song also fits your compassion as well as your vowed-religious title. This song is "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." The title is the motto of Father Flanagan's Boys Town. This seems very fitting for you, who have been caring for and supporting those who are similarly marginalized, people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, even before you came here.

In your first paper, you shared part of your rites of profession, which embodies why you have committed to The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory.

To be a brother is to become a witness to the love of God in your every living moment; to live humbly, with patience and in service; to meet Christ your brother in every man, woman, and child, no matter who they be; and to greet that Christ with the open arms of love.

You have imparted this way of life and your deep convictions to this community, often teaching us how your Episcopal theology is a valuable perspective on issues of justice.

As a result, not everyone has understood you here at ESR. To reference another famous path, you have often followed the road less traveled. Quakers didn't always know what to do with your wish to be called Brother or your sacramental theology. I appreciate that you stayed faithful to your conviction and persevered in your witness.



As a result, I hope that you have greater confidence in your gifts and calling, since they have inspired and challenged me along the way.

It has been a delight and privilege to accompany you on your journey here at ESR. I pray that your road ahead is filled with Light and Love.

Dr. Jim Higginbotham (Associate Dean Professor of Pastoral Care & Counseling), Earlham School of Religion

Supporting ministries far afield

The fruits of poverty

When new brothers in The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory complete their formation, they make the following vow as witnessed by the community:

I make the vow of poverty, in dedicating of the fruit of my labor to the church and the Brotherhood, knowing that it is only through Christ, who inspires both the will and the deed, that I am able to do any good at all.

Our Rule states the following about this vow:

A brother makes the vow of poverty by dedicating a major portion of the fruit of his labor to the Church and to the Brotherhood.

In 2001, the Brotherhood's Council adopted this policy:

As a witness to Poverty and service to the church, at its first meeting in a calendar year, Council shall distribute one-half of income over expenses from the previous year to eligible not-for-profit programs or entities, in amounts that it shall determine.

I am not writing so much about the interior spiritual fruits of the "sacrifice" of poverty, though that is important. Rather I share this brief note about the funds which we have been able to provide. Through our collective discipline under the vow of poverty, the Brotherhood provides outreach grants to support ministries in which our brothers serve.

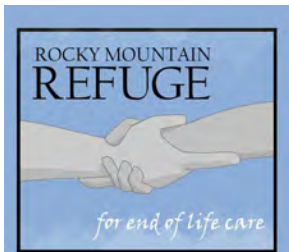
This year the Brotherhood made grants to the following:

Ⓣ Saint Paul's Chattanooga: Emergency Assistance to those in the Chattanooga downtown area. Fifteen percent of Chattanooga's population lives below the poverty line (compared to eleven percent nationally). This is one of Bo Alexander Armstrong's ministries, and he notes, "These resources provide opportunities to bear witness to the love of God in tangible, practical ways, and to recognize Christ in others and welcome him with open arms of love. It is also an expression of our baptismal vows — seeking to serve Christ in all persons and showing respect for the dignity of all human beings."

⊕ Christ Episcopal Church Shrewsbury NJ: Tables, chairs, and floor mats. Our Founder Richard Thomas Biernacki, serving at the parish, notes, “Christ Episcopal Church seeks to enable those we serve in their various ministries. In my own ministry of music, the space will be used by the children’s choir for rehearsals. The space will also be used for classes, bible study, and outreach.



Richard Thomas with young members of the Saint Mary's Choir



⊕ Rocky Mountain Refuge for End of Life Care in Colorado: This is James Patrick Hall’s primary ministry; he was instrumental in its creation, and serves as Executive Director. He writes, “We as a nation are rightly concerned about where people experiencing homelessness are going to live; but are we asking, where do they die? Rocky Mountain Refuge is one of a handful of shelters nationwide that provides a place for people experiencing homelessness to receive end of life care.”



⊕ Holy Grill Mobile Feeding Ministry of Saint Nicholas Episcopal Church Pompano Beach FL. This is a ministry of the church at which Mark Andrew Jones is rector. He notes, “We’ve now taken delivery of our custom-equipped food truck. It replaces the original food trailer and doubles our

cooking capacity. The Holy Grill Mobile Feeding Ministry has now served over 62,500 hot, spirit-lifting meals to the homeless and food-insecure.”

⊕ RIP Medical Debt / Outreach Committee of Saint George’s Church Glenn Dale MD. This is a ministry of Edward Munro. He reports, “The Brotherhood grant will be added to the funds we are raising in order to start a local RIP Medical Debt campaign in Prince George’s County, MD. This money will help relieve the burden of medical debt for local people unable to pay it down on their own. The not-for-profit RIP Medical Debt buys up millions of this debt for pennies on the dollar and forgives the debt for people who can’t afford to pay it.



These are our grants for 2024. They join the many grants helping brothers in their ministries over the years. This collective ministry of sharing speaks to the goals outlined in this prayer from the liturgical “trial use” era of The Episcopal Church:

O God of righteousness, we thank you for the faith we inherit. It gives us the vision of a world where children of God are not ground down in oppression but lifted up in freedom. We thank you for the gift of your love. It demands that the human person must not be bound in misery but liberated in joy. We thank you for the abundance of the earth. It makes possible a society of persons not equal in poverty but diverse in wealth. We thank you for the pricking of conscience. It makes us lay the foundations for such a world, not tomorrow but today. We thank you in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* — *Prayers, Thanksgivings, and Litanies, 1973, p 85*

Joseph Basil

A note from the fringes

People who live outside face terrible conditions, with no access to running water, a bathroom, or basic protection from heat, rain, rats, and insects. Many people are living in the bushes and parking garages and holes in our city. I have encountered several “Greyhound Cowboys,” people who travel from town to town, essentially living on buses, picking up assistance or money as they are able to buy the next ticket. These are the nomads who travel America. Their numbers are growing. According to our documentation, twelve homeless people in Chattanooga have died thus far this year [2008]. Ten of them died as a direct result of their lack of housing. People living on the streets are seen as a problem for business owners, police, hospitals, and even public transportation. Attitudes range from compassion to frustration to a punitive system of treatment. There are revolving doors at our jails and prisons, our emergency rooms, and our service agencies. And for many, the doors simply return them to the streets of Chattanooga. — *an excerpt from “Notes from the Underground” by our late Brother in Christ Ron Fender.*



Richard John offers a reflection to the gathering in Province 4.