

# The Servant



*The wind blows where it wills, and so it is with all who are borne by the Spirit*

Brothers head to the chapel on the campus of Virginia Theological Seminary

#274

*Epiphany 2025*

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*Founder*, Richard Thomas Biernacki

*Minister General*, Ciarán Anthony DellaFera

*Community Notes Editor*, James Teets

*Editor*, Tobias Stanislas Haller

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Send inquiries, and requests to be added to our e-mailing list, to [servant \[at\] gregorians \[dot\] org](mailto:servant@regorians.org) or by snail mail to the address above.

### *Where there's a will*

You can assist the ministries of the Brotherhood by remembering the community in your will. To do so, the following 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.*



Clayton DewAndre Johnson (l) and Jason Peter Seta (r) enjoyed greeting worshipers after the liturgy at Saint Luke's Germantown Philadelphia on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Don't they look splendid in those beautiful vestments!

## The Wise still seek

I believe most of you know that I have retired as Minister General of the Brotherhood. It has been an epiphany. Indeed it is and has brought changes to my life. Like the Wise Men, I have been searching—possibly for a star of sorts. As this is the Epiphany edition of *The Servant*, I looked back into the Archives and found what I wrote in January 1982. There it was: “Behold, I make all things new.” So here is the tale....

Wise men still search the sky for understanding of the universe. What they seek now, however, is not where a star will appear, but where a star has disappeared, imploding in a burst of incredible brilliance; soon, though, it begins to radiate less energy; it becomes self-centered, turning into and onto itself, pulling in tighter and tighter until it collapses under its own gravity. It becomes a black hole that destroys not only its own light and life, but that of anything that comes near it. It is a darkness so absolute it swallows all light.

Medieval people saw an image of God's order in the heavens; modern people may see an image of their own *disorder* in the skies. In some ways a black hole is an inversion of Bethlehem's star. A black hole results when a star loses balance between inward and outward forces. The star that signaled the birth of Christ may also have been a dying star, but its light was not overcome by darkness, not even the darkness of death. In an outpouring of himself, the “Love that moves the sun and the other stars” comes into our heavy hearts and shadowed spirits to enlighten and enliven. Christ breaks our deadening focus on ourselves and frees us to return to a life-giving balance in which we draw energy from God and pass it on to others. Balanced thus, in peace we become instruments of God's peace. We do not have to turn away, as those Magi did, to take up life apart from God, for we know surely that in him is Life. God set a rainbow of promise in the sky as a sign that he would never again flood the sinful earth; in our hearts God sets a star of hope for the world, illumined by divine radiance: “Behold, I make all things new.” Wise men still adore him. Come, star bright, Son-light, Come.

RTB

## Community Notes

### SPECIAL EVENT



Several brothers assisted William Henry Benefield (West Texas) during the two Requiems he arranged for his late father, W H Benefield Sr, in Texas and Alabama, areas in which the family had strong connections. Minister General Ciarán Anthony DellaFera (Massachusetts) served as bearer of the Paschal Candle on October 26th during the liturgy at Saint Mark's San Antonio, which featured the Duruflé *Requiem* Op 13. On November 16th, the liturgy at Epiphany Guntersville Alabama included the Victoria *Requiem for Four Voices*. Ronald Augustine Fox (Chicago, seen in the photo above) was thurifer and Larry Walter Reich (East Tennessee) was verger at this liturgy (photo below, with William Henry at the lectern).

Ronald Augustine also served as thurifer the day before at a said mass and solemn evensong following the family visitation. Our thanksgiving goes out to all of our brothers who were able to participate in these events, and our prayers lift up William Henry, his mother, and his spouse Christopher.



*Province 1*



Minister General Ciarán Anthony DellaFera (at left in the photo) and then-Minister Provincial Virgilio Fortuna (both in Massachusetts) attended the ordination of Bishop Julia Whitworth.

This provided an opportunity to touch base with members of religious communities in attendance. Ciarán Anthony is seen here in a selfie with Sisters of Saint Margaret.

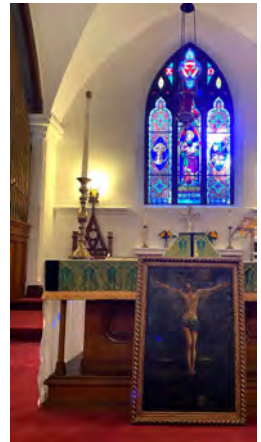


☩ Virgilio has resigned as Minister Provincial and Enoch John Valentine (Rhode Island) has been appointed to complete his term.

*Province 2*



Richard John Lorino bade farewell to Saint John's Monticello NY (photo above) in mid-September, as he prepared for his snowbird journey to Florida. Throughout the summer he served as organist, officiant at Morning Prayer, and preacher, and the congregation gave him a warm send-off. He also left them with a tangible memento, a 19th century copy (by one Ludovic) of the 16th century altarpiece San Lorenzo Lucina Rome (seen in the photo resting against the altar). Richard John found it among his uncle's possessions, unmounted, folded, and cracked, and



had it stretched, restored, and framed. The painting was blessed and dedicated on October 4 and placed in a meditation area at the rear of the church. He hopes it might bring peace and hope to those who pray with it. He is also sorry to say this year's farewell to a wonderful, loving congregation, that he is happy to call his summer home.

*Province 3*



On November 22-24 Minister Provincial Eric Shelley (South-western Virginia) convened a retreat for members of the Province, at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria VA. Minister General Ciarán Anthony

DellaFera (Massachusetts) joined eight of the ten members of the province for the event (photo above). The provincial retreat included the Daily Office, the Holy Eucharist, a retreat program and social time among the brothers and some VTS seminarians joined in with fellow seminarian our own Jason Peter Seta (Pennsylvania) who is completing his first year of study there.

The VTS campus is extensive and it took some of the visiting brothers a while to locate the recently renamed buildings for housing, meals, meeting space, and socializing, as well as the main chapel complex. But once accomplished, all was well. Jason Peter was an excellent guide, and very helpful in doing groundwork for this retreat with the seminary staff.



*Brothers enjoyed conversation by the fireplace in Scott Lounge.*

The brothers had a full schedule of events, beginning with Evening Prayer on Friday, joined in the oratory chapel by a few seminarians; this provided an opportunity to meet and pray with them, and extend and introduction to the Brotherhood beyond their acquaintance with Jason Peter. Saturday began with Morning Prayer, and then the first part of the retreat, conducted by Clayton DewAndre Johnson (Pennsylvania). As a newly professed brother, he made use of the closing chapter of the community's novitiate program, "The Religious Life: Its Future and Your Future," as a way to focus on what may be

happening in community and church life through the coming years. He led two groups of brothers through reflection questions intended both to draw on past experience and evoke hopes and concerns for the future.



*On Sunday morning, several of the brothers attended worship at Saint Paul's K Street in DC.*

The recent realignment of the Brotherhood's provinces brought Thomas Bushnell (New York) into Province 3, and this retreat took full advantage of his presence, including a fine sermon at the Holy Eucharist on the commemoration of Clement of Rome, with Tobias Stanislas Haller as celebrant, Edward Munro as deacon and James Teets as lector and acolyte (all three from Maryland). Clayton DewAndre set up a Facebook simulcast, which is viewable in the Brotherhood facebook account (@gregorianway).

*Province 5*



Ronald Augustine Fox and Joseph Basil Gauss (Chicago) represented the Brotherhood at Atonement's Ministry Fair in October. Ronald



Augustine is shown (above left) with assisting priest the Rev Kate Guistolise, a longtime friend of the community. He and Joseph Basil talk about the community with Atonement parishioner Eddie Schwartz in the photo at right.



⊕ The choir of Ascension Chicago sang Minister Provincial Nathanael Deward Rahm's choral composition, "Adam lay ybounden," as part of their Lessons and Carols in December. The screenshot

from YouTube shows the choir singing. Nathanael Deward also served as a reader at the liturgy.



⊕ Francis Jonathan Bullock (Indianapolis) preached on the feast of Christ the King at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Eldorado Ohio. (Photo at left)

*Province West*

For the second year in a row, All Saints El Paso celebrated its patronal feast with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist and luncheon for El Paso Episcopalians and friends. This year's celebration drew a large congregation from all five Episcopal congregations in El Paso.



The photo above shows participating clergy: (l to r) Celebrant, the Rev Ben Newland (Captain, US Army, chaplain at Fort Bliss), the Rev Kristin Kopren (Rector of Saint Francis on the Hill), the Rev Canon Kathy McNellis (Holy Spirit), Deacon Sondra Jones (Saint Christopher's), and All Saints' (and our own!) David Luke Henton. (Photo by Carlisle Navidomskis)]

⊕ On All Saints Sunday an “Easter-sized” crowd of folks from All Saints celebrated the baptism of two new teenage members of the parish. Both this and the worship on Saturday featured special music by All Saints' Singer Saints, under the direction of Dr Susan Beehler.

⊕ The next day, Monday, November 4th, eight parishioners joined David Luke for Morning Prayer remembering our departed Gregorian brothers and episcopal visitors. The Brotherhood instituted the tradition of observing “All Souls Gregorian” in the week following All Saints' Day.



☩ While on vacation in El Paso, Francis Jonathan (at right in the photo) and his husband Rev Derek Parker joined in worship at David Luke's All Saints; Derek was guest preacher for the celebration.



☩ Bishop of the Rio Grande Michael Hunn has appointed David Luke Dean of the Borderlands Deanery, which includes membership on the Diocesan Council — as well as lots of new opportunities to serve! Having been a priest for only two years, he was initially floored by this invitation. However, he had been active in that Deanery for almost a decade as a Gregorian brother, and as a sustaining supporter and advisory board member of the Rio Grande Borderland Ministries.

David Luke wrote this about the area he will serve:

The Borderlands Deanery comprises roughly the southern third of the diocese including all six hundred miles of the diocesan share of the US–Mexico border from the Arizona state line to the Pecos River in south-central Texas. It includes nineteen congregations, most of which are missions, served by eleven priests and four deacons. The area covers the ground from Good Shepherd Silver City New Mexico to Santa Ynez Terlingua Texas, 457 miles to the southeast. The only urban area is El Paso/Juarez with a metro population of one million on the US side (El Paso/Las Cruces), and 2.5 million in Juarez (where the Anglican Diocese of Northern Mexico has three congregations, also engaged in ministry with asylum-seekers, refugees and immigrants.)

We send our Very Reverend Brother heartfelt congratulations!