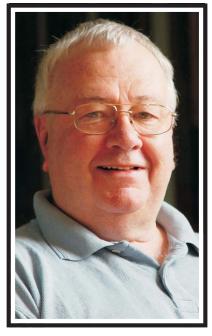
HE SERVANT



Michael Elliott RIP

#223 Lent/Easter 2012

Publications from the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory Publication Description Cost Qtv Total Simplified Anglican Chants: full setting for \$ Music of BSG Noonday including Psalmody with Gregorian \$3.00 tones for every day of the week; Compline, settings of Phos, Magnificat, and Nunc; and music for Communion. 36 page booklet. The First Forty Years of the Brotherhood of In Love and Saint Gregory. 182 pp illustrated history of the \$15.00 Service Bound founding and development of the Brotherhood. By Karekin Madteos Yarian BSG ... in the Episcopal Church and elsewhere, in-The State of the cluding history, possibilities for renewal, and Religious Life challenges. 64 page booklet. Now available on-line for free download! God First: Extensive history of the tithe, answers to fre-A Tithing quent questions. Script for the award winning audio cassette. 24 page booklet. Catechism Now available on-line for free download! A brief overview, with commentary on the can-Free with (Limit 3 What Bishops and ons governing religious communities in the a self-Clergy Should copies) Episcopal Church, 8 panel brochure: updated addressed Know about with changes from 1994 and 1997 General stamped Religious Life Conventions. envelope \$8.00 \$ The Servant Meditations, poetry, and news of the community; published four times a year. per year Total: \$ Name: Address:

> All checks must be drawn on a US bank in US dollars payable to: The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory—Publications Mail all payments to: The Brotherhood of Saint Gregory

State

Saint James' Rectory 2627 Davidson Avenue Bronx NY 10468-4103 USA

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The Servant

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City

COMMUNITY NOTES

Winter Convocation 2012



Karekin Madteos Yarian presenting on chastity



Tobias Stanislas speaking on the Anglican Communion

This year's Epiphanytide gathering took place at Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls, New York in early January as Gregorian Friars traveled from across the USA to participate in this time of retreat which included refreshment, education, self-study, worship and prayer. The Brotherhood's Education Committee again provided a wide selection of retreat sessions covering a variety of topics which included a study of Intercessory Prayer presented by Thomas Bushnell; an exploration and discussion of a facet of the vowed religious life entitled "Sharing the Body: Chastity and the Sexual Self" as offered by Karekin Madteos Yarian; a lecture and interaction on the current state of affairs within the worldwide Anglican Communion as experienced by Tobias Stanislas Haller, who serves the Communion and The Episcopal Church as a member of a number of national and international organizations; and two sessions entitled "BSG Self-understanding and stories" led by Novice Millard Cook, during which the community's 43 year history was retold through the personal experiences of many brothers.

The two daily retreat sessions were provided within each day's round of prayer as formed by the Daily Office and the Holy Eucharist. The masses were celebrated by Tobias Stanislas and Novice Richard Edward Helmer with deacons Edward Munro, Gordon John Stanley and Thomas Mark Liotta, and ably assisted by other members of the community. The Thursday evening provided an opportu-

nity for a service of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament served by Tobias Stanislas, Gordon John, Ronald Augustine Fox and Joseph Basil Gauss. The week's preachers were Thomas, Joseph Basil, Ronald Augustine, Christopher Stephen Jenks and Da-



Millard Cook with Thomas Mark Liotta (and Saint Gregory the Great)



"Mexican Train" domino matches formed a central part of the evening recreation.

vid Luke Henton, each of whom provided valuable and personal insights to the day's scriptural offerings.

As inspiration for these annual gatherings, one need look no further than the Gospels themselves as they recount Jesus' leadership by example in making sure that the

ongoing round of ministry to others as provided by himself and his closest disciples was nourished, restored and supplemented by taking time apart—time for restoring the body, the soul and the mind through rest and refreshment. Common prayer and intercession is the spiritual lifeblood of our religious community, and any gathering of Gregorian Friars will have that element as focus for all else—and Winter Convocation 2012 was certainly no exception as the four-fold Daily Office provided the structure that calls us back again and again to that deep and abiding relationship with God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And supplementing this holy time was always the sound of



Worship is a major element in each day of the Winter Convocation.

conversation and laughter which indicates that we are indeed One Body in Christ. And there was also time for "business" within the community which included a meeting of the Education Committee as they planned future retreats and convocations, and two formation conferences for the benefit of the Brotherhood's postulancy and novitiate.

Even the weather cooperated to make this Winter Convocation 2012 a most memorable time for those who attended. Unlike recent years' retreats in January, snow was not seen on the mountaintop and even the cold of winter seemed willing to wait just a little longer before capturing our attention this year—to which we all responded: "Thanks be to God!"

Province 1

We share the joy expressed by our beloved Virgilio Fortuna upon his recent announcement that he has successfully completed the final series of examinations required for ordination to the vocational diaconate! Virgilio's ordination has been set for 10:30 am on Saturday, June 16th at Saint Paul's Cathedral, 138 Tremont Street, in downtown Boston, Massachusetts and we all look forward to making a joyful noise with him there!

Ciarán Anthony DellaFera has shared with us that he has passed the last US Medical Licensing Board examination in medical school "with flying colors!" (Who's surprised at that?!) That examination was the final hurdle toward his receiving permission to accept a matched residency position in March. Each of us is with him in prayer each day—but few of us could be of any assistance to him at test time!

Province 2—Michael Elliott BSG—Rest in Peace

Gregorian Friar, Priest, Prophet, Activist, Missiologist, Educationalist and Friend

Brother Michael died peacefully in Auckland Hospital, New Zealand in the early hours of Wednesday, February 8, 2012 after a short period in hospital, three weeks before his 74th birthday. He had recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the diaconate and the 49th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, and was midway in the third year of his profession of annual vows in the Brotherhood.

Michael lived an extremely full life, ministering and working around the world. He leaves behind him a global network of friends and students and the lasting legacy of his contribution to the development of reflective practice and situation analysis pedagogy in applied theological education.

He instilled in all who met him his deep commitment for social justice, political and theological integration, the power of the Gospel to transform the situations of the poor and marginalized and the renewal of the Anglican Catholic tradition.

In his many ministry postings he lived out the prophetic tradition in his radical writing, teaching built on the foundation of his conviction that those with whom he ministered did not need to be filled up as if they were empty vessels, but needed a tool kit to critically examine their experience.

Michael was born and raised in New Zealand. After schooling he was formed for ordination at the College of Saint John the Evangelist and was awarded his BA from



Michael presenting a workshop at the 2011 Annual Convocation

the University of Auckland and his LTh from the college. He served in the parishes of New Lynn and Thames in the Diocese of Auckland as an assistant priest.

In 1965 he traveled to Massachusetts where he studied for and received the degree of Master of Divinity from the Episcopal Divinity School and served in the parish of Saint John Beverly Farms. His time in America began a close friendship with the Gardiner family which continued throughout his life, who he referred to as his 'American family.'

Michael traveled to London and served as the Warden for the Pembroke House College Mission in Walworth (1966-69) where he worked closely with Bishop John Robinson during the days of the radical Woolwich theological movement, before being invited

by Archbishop George Appleton to direct a team at the Saint Luke's Centre in Haifa, Israel.

In 1973 he returned to the United Kingdom to work for the British Council of Churches in the Community and Race Relations Unit and then returned to serve in his homeland of New Zealand as the Executive Officer of the Ecumenical Secretariat on Development, a ten year appointment that provided the opportunity for him to work across the country raising issues of social justice and development.

In 1987 he was appointed the Sir John Cass Chaplain to London Guildhall University, living in the famous Barbican Towers, and in due course became the Director of Inner City Aid, a charity established by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

Michael's move to Oxford to take up an appointment as the Tutor for Applied and Community Theology at Westminster College commenced a close working relationship in a range of educational partnerships with Dr Bernard C Farr and later David John Battrick BSG which continued until his death and included curriculum development in institutions in the United Kingdom, India, the Americas, Europe and East Africa firstly through Westminster College, then through the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and more recently through the Oxford Educational Trust. During this time he developed a program which enabled many New Zealand clergy to study for an MTh in Applied Theology through the University of Oxford.

Alongside these appointments Michael served as an honorary priest in the Parish of Saint Mary Magdalen, Oxford, a Trustee of the Peanuts Trust, and as the Director of the Institute for Social Research and Education, and then later as one of the founding directors of the Freire Institute, which grew out of many years of collaboration with his close friend Father Ron Mitchinson.

In 2002 Michael was appointed as the Director of Ministry and a Residentiary Canon in the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon in Wales which he recounted as his happiest period in ministry.

When others of his age would have been enjoying retirement, Michael continued to teach as a part-time lecturer in the Centre for Contemporary and Pastoral Theology at the University of Lampeter in Wales until 2009, where he also supervised Masters and Doctoral dissertations. During this period he also became the lead program writer for the newly-founded Newcastle School of Theology for Ministry in New South Wales, Australia and lectured regularly within the school on situation analysis for mission and ministry.

Having long felt a deep call to some form of the religious life, Michael entered the postulancy of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory in 2005 and made his First Profession of Vows on July 26, 2008 as a Gregorian Friar.



Tobias Stanislas (r) presented Michael as he prepared to make his first vows of profession.

Amongst his many books and articles, his most widely acclaimed is *Freedom*, *Justice and Christian Counter-culture* published in 1990 by SCM Press in London in which he set out his manifesto for Christian anarchism.

Michael returned to New Zealand in 2009 to be closer to his sister and to continue his work with the Newcastle School of Theology for Ministry. He commenced treatment for cancer in 2010 but continued to teach, write and travel until a few months before his death, including a final trip to attend the Annual Convocation of the Brotherhood in Upstate New York and a visit to friends and former colleagues in the United Kingdom in the Northern Summer of 2011.

He is survived by his sister Rosemary, her husband John, and their children and grandchildren who cared lovingly for him throughout his illness.

As he promised Michael he would do, David John prepared to travel back to New Zealand from his home in Australia in order to participate in the funeral arrangements and to represent all Gregorian Friars at these solemn events. He shared the following note with the community just before he began this final journey: "I will be flying back to New Zealand tomorrow. Early on Saturday morning I will clothe Michael's body in his habit tunic and scapular and tie his cincture around his waist. His Profession Cross will be placed on the top of his coffin so that it can be returned to the Brotherhood, as is our tradition. This will take place at the funeral home, where I will pray the vigil prayers before celebrating a quiet requiem mass next to the coffin. The coffin will then be sealed and taken to Saint Leonard's Anglican Church, Matakana. Later in the morning Bishop John Bluck, the retired Bishop of Waiapu, and I will officiate at his funeral, which will be followed by private cremation."

A requiem mass was also celebrated by Tobias Stanislas at Saint James' Fordham in the Bronx on Saturday afternoon, February 11th, and assisted by James Teets. Tobias Stanislas gently remembered Michael in his homily, recalling the years when he had been Michael's mentor throughout Michael's postulancy and novitiate formation within the Brotherhood. May he rest in peace and rise in the nearer presence of God! Soli Deo Gloria: To God Alone the Glory.

This article is based in large part on a report from David John Battrick

Province 5

Chicago brothers were part of or attended "Aus tiefer Not/From Deepest Night," a new work for World AIDS Day by Saint Peter's Artist-in-Residence John Addison Dally. It brought together choral music, piano improvisation, speech choir, narration and monologue in a kind of sonic collage on World AIDS Day, which was on December 1, 2011. The whole program was united by the poignant piano improvisations by Nathanael Deward Rahm, Saint Peter's organist and choirmaster.



(l to r) Will Harpest, Joseph Basil Gauss, Sarah Fisher, Rector of St. Peter's; John Dally, Nathanael Deward Rahm and Ronald Augustine Fox

Province 8

In early February Harold L Slatore requested release from the Brotherhood's postulancy. It has been our pleasure to get to know him over the past year and we thank him for sharing this time of discernment with our community. We wish him God speed as he continues his ministry throughout the years ahead.

A lenten meditation from a brother medical student

FATHER FORGIVE THEM...

My good friend Daphne is an Episcopal deacon, and one of the chaplains at Mass General Hospital. Back in February she approached me to ask if I would be willing to offer a medical student reflection as part of the Good Friday observance at the chapel.

For several years in a row, I've declined because of school commitments. This year, I felt that my schedule finally had some breathing room, so I agreed.

For those who are unfamiliar with this service, it's helpful to know that it is part of the Christian observance of Passiontide, which ends with the celebration of Easter, and coincides with the Jewish observance of Passover; the two are theologically and historically linked. The "Three Holy Hours," as the service is referred to, focuses on seven themes drawn from the last three hours of Christ's life: forgiveness, salvation, relationship, abandonment, suffering, culmination, and release/reunion. The service content, format, and participants tend to vary greatly. I've always been a big fan of the Mass General Hospital service because the reflections are given by clinicians, and are always drawn from their personal experiences with patients.

Because of a moment of ultimate forgiveness that I experienced during my pediatric clerkship, I chose to take the reflection on forgiveness. That particular reflection springs from the scriptural passage: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) What follows is the core story around which I wove my reflection.

It was late on a cold, dark, winter evening, and I was exhausted; mornings on the pediatric service start early. I had been on the floor since well before dawn pre-rounding on my patients, I had a stack of notes and orders to write, and now I was stuck waiting for someone from neurosurgery to come down and perform a ventriculoperitoneal shunt tap on "Andrew," a young boy with cerebral palsy who was suffering from "fevers of unknown origin." His case had been vexing us for nearly a week, and we were all frustrated, especially Andrew. He couldn't really verbalize what he was feeling, but I could tell from the frowns, grimaces, and occasional unhappy cries, that he was frustrated and uncomfortable. I decided that the best approach to making everyone less grumpy was to put on one of Andrew's Barney DVDs, and start working on summarizing some of my patient notes while sitting in Andrew's room. I have no idea what it is about purple dinosaurs, but Barney was better than any drugs at making Andrew feel better.

About 50 minutes later, the neurosurgery team arrived and apologized for the delay caused by a critical case that had run long—about what I had expected. We quickly went to work setting up for the procedure, laying out the required instruments and supplies. Unfortunately this also meant two very unpleasant things were about to happen: shutting off Barney, and causing Andrew pain. Neither of these were things that had gone well in the past. Eventually the moment came; I turned off the DVD player and pushed it aside. I tried to give Andrew a bit of a warning, as best I could, that we were going to have to hold him still for the procedure. He just looked at me with big unhappy puppy eyes that communicated loud and clear, "What's going on? Why did you turn off Barney? Who are all these weird people in gowns and masks?" It's truly remarkable how communicative people can be without speaking a word. To make matters worse, since the surgical team had their hands full, the task of holding Andrew down for the procedure was going to fall to me. This wouldn't be the first time that I had to do something unpleasant to Andrew. Like always, I prayed that somehow it wouldn't ruin our friendship, such as it was; somehow miraculously it never did.

As the surgeons began the procedure, I held on tight to Andrew, and the prayer that came to me in that moment was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The words were from my heart, but I hoped they were in Andrew's as well. My moment of prayer was shattered as Andrew started wailing in that plaintive way that is unique to people who are non-verbal. My heart was breaking for him; I didn't know if he understood what was going on, or had any idea that this was all in hope of helping him heal. Within my arms was another person who's suffering was partly my own doing. Did he understand why? Was he fully aware, but just unable to communicate? What was all of this like from his perspective? How could we possibly know what was going on in his mind? It's in moments such as these that I truly wish our medical school training included the ability to read minds.

The procedure only took about ten minutes, but it seemed like an eternity to me, and I'm sure to Andrew as well. We weren't able to get much diagnostic fluid in the tap, but perhaps it would be barely enough. I thanked the surgeons, and started the automatic work of labeling specimens and cleaning up. I got Andrew comfortable in bed, turned Barney back on, and slowly he began to settle down. When I was finished I tentatively squeezed his hand. He looked up at me with his brow still furrowed, skeptical at first, and then his face changed into something that was almost a smile, but not quite. In that moment I had an overwhelming sense of forgiveness. There was a look of grace about him that clearly said "It's OK. I forgive you."

Ciarán Anthony DellaFera the article originally appeared in the UMass Medical School "Memo"

SEEKING 'PASTURE'

This is a portion of the first work that Michael Elliott wrote as part of the mentoring relationship I shared with him over the three years of his postulancy and novitiate. It was an honor to serve as a fellow pilgrim during that time. — Tobias Stanislas Haller

The word *pasture* conjures up three very strong images for me. Coming as I do from farming, *pasture* firstly has strong childhood associations. It transports me back to extremely happy and carefree days, during the long, hazy New Zealand summers when we had to get the winter hay in. Back then there were no tractors but teams of sturdy draught horses to draw the mowers and rakes. All the men and boys would be out in the fields with even the youngest having their assigned tasks. The womenfolk trekked back and forth from the homestead with buckets of hot tea and cold lemonade and mountains of sandwiches and cakes to sustain us. Talk of pasture today is thus for me a romanticised recollection of an idyllic childhood before the realities of life in the wider world confronted me. It is a harking back to an age of innocence which can rarely, and often never be recaptured.

A second image was prompted by a visit many years ago to the Lee Abbey Community in coastal Devon to be interviewed for one of the posts as chaplain there. The community is set amidst some of the most beautiful coastal countryside in Britain with spectacular views over the sea. We found ourselves singing the hymn 'Father

hear the prayer we offer' at evensong one day including those familiar words: "Not forever in green pastures do we ask our way to be" and "Not forever by still waters would we idly rest and stay." Yet for the vast majority of members of that community, this is precisely where they preferred to remain, and if possible for eternity! The tendency towards staying put is a very natural human trait, and as I heard that hymn being sung I was praying, "Please God shake these good folk up and drive them out of their safe pasture into an engagement with the world."

The final image is summed up by the proverb, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence," which suggests that there is always a better pasture to be found. I suffered from this for some time in my ministry, always imagining that a much better situation awaited me just around the next corner. This was particularly the case when working in the highly dangerous, stressful and demanding situation in Palestine. Bereft of friends and sometimes too bereft of God, I couldn't wait for my three-year contract to be completed and to head for home. Then some sisters from the Madonna House community came to establish a presence a few doors away from me. "How long are you here for?" I asked them one day. "Forever," was the response. Of course in reality their community could move them to new work at any moment, but it was that strong sense of being committed for ever in that situation to which God was at that moment calling them which moved me. From that experience onwards I've tried to cultivate that sense of permanence and timelessness in both the ministerial situations to which I've felt called and in my personal relationships. Commitments in both cases are for ever. And this has been for me not simply a change of perception but a point of real spiritual growth.

The question, "What pasture are you seeking?" is therefore uncomfortably framed for me. It suggests that the search for pasture, like the search for a new job, is predominantly my initiative. But looking back on my working life, only one of the ten or eleven posts I've held were jobs that I have sought and applied for. For the rest, God has sought me out, generally through the agency of other people, and faced me with a challenge, frequently one I was reluctant to take up. My experience then is not so much of seeking a pasture, but of the very strong sense of being sought by God, held for a moment tenderly in the palm of his hand, and then hurled into situations I had never anticipated.

The same feelings apply to the process of becoming part of the Brotherhood. I've felt drawn to religious life ever since I was in my twenties when I was attracted to the Society of Saint Francis. But I have this strong sense that I was found by the Brotherhood, rather than I through my own efforts discovering *it*. And when in the application process I was invited to describe my ministry, I said that my experience had taught me the value of understanding my ministry today in terms of availability, and that God will use me in places that he wants me to be rather than me planning a career path for myself (which would be a ridiculous process to embark upon in one's retirement anyway!)

Perhaps this is age-related and reflective of the fact that I have lived an extraordinarily rich, varied and exhilarating ministry, but am now possessed by a strong sense of coming home, and of becoming focused and centered and available...

Michael Elliott

INTERCESSIONS

For the Brotherhood
Episcopal Visitor Sun
Rodney R Michel
•
Episcopal Visitors Emeriti
Horace WB Donegan d 11.11.91
Paul Moore, jr d 5.1.03
Walter D Dennis d 3.30.03
Professed
Richard Thomas Biernacki
John Nidecker d 6.20.88
James Teets
Luke Anthony Nowicki
John Peter Clark d 2.25.94
William Francis Jones Mon
Stephen Storen
Thomas Joseph Ross d 12.18.01
Tobias Stanislas Haller
William Bunting d 10.12.88
Edward Munro
Charles Kramer d 10.23.06
Bernard Fessenden d 8.10.93
Donovan Aidan Bowley Tue
Edward Riley d 9.15.05
Christopher Stephen Jenks
Ciarán Anthony DellaFera
Damian-Curtis Kellum d 10.9.07
Richard John Lorino
Ronald Augustine Fox
Maurice John Grove
Charles Edward LeClerc
Virgilio Fortuna Wed
Gordon John Stanley
Karekin Madteos Yarian William David Everett
Thomas Bushnell
Thomas Mark Liotta
James Mahoney
Patrick Ignatius Dickson d 7.20.05
Robert James McLaughlin Thu
Peter Budde
John Henry Ernestine
Francis Sebastian Medina
Ælred Bernard Dean
Joseph Basil Gauss

Bo Alexander Armstrong Sat Francis Jonathan Bullock Blane Frederik van Pletzen-Rands James Patrick Hall

Novices
Millard Cook
Richard Edward Helmer
Postulants
Eric Lee Shelley
Larry W Reich

Postulants-Prospective David Kasievich Andrew Kellner

For Religious Communities Sacramentine & Visitandine Nuns Society of the Atonement Order of Friars Minor Community of the Paraclete Companions of Saint Luke~ Benedictine Community of Celebration Little Sisters of Saint Clare Anamchara Fellowship Anglican Order of Preachers Rivendell Community Sisters of Saint Gregory Third Order SSF Worker Sisters & Brothers of the Holy Spirit Camaldolese Benedictines Society of Saint John the Evangelist Anglican Oblates of Saint Benedict Community of the Transfiguration Order of Julian of Norwich Order of the Holy Cross Order of Saint Helena

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Baltimore Int'l Seafarers' Center
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Antonio
Aldersgate UMC Dobbs Ferry
Saint Christopher's, Kileen TX
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Cathedral of St John, Providence

Community of Saint John Baptist Society of Saint Francis

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Georgina Sekvi

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