



CARITAS CHRISTI

A Newsletter from the COMPANIONS OF ST. LUKE / ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT

VALUE NOTHING WHATEVER ABOVE CHRIST HIMSELF.

EPIPHANY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Abbot - P. 1

Acknowledgements - P. 2

Lenten Reading- P. 2

Bishop Bill's Farewell- P. 3

Convocation Glimpses
Spring 2019 - P. 4

Convocation Glimpses
Fall 2019 - P. 4

Creative Tribute - P. 5

Convocation Note

Upcoming Convocation Dates at Conception Abbey:

- May 25 – May 30, 2020
- October t/c, 2020

Detailed information
will be sent to all by
Sr. Martha.

GREETINGS FROM THE ABBOT

WE have now passed through the preparation period of Advent as we waited for the arrival of Christ child into the world. Then we celebrated the birth of Jesus at Christmas tide. We are now in what is called Ordinary Time or the season of Epiphany. But the church calendar may call this period “ordinary”; but it isn’t ordinary at all. It’s the time when Jesus is presented to the Gentiles; a momentous event. So I offer a portion of an article from the Episcopal News Service about a way to celebrate Epiphany simply and meaningfully.

For an Epiphany blessing - Chalk the door with ‘holy graffiti’

From the Epiphany and continuing for days to come, more and more Episcopalians are joining other Christians around the world in writing this ancient yet ever-changing formula on their doors:

20+C+M+B+20.

The numbers, letters and symbols have been called “holy graffiti,” and some people suggest the combination looks like the start of an algebraic equation. The letters C, M, B come from the traditional names for the wise men: Caspar, Melchior, and Baltazar, whose arrival at Mary and Joseph’s home is celebrated on the Epiphany. (Tradition also says that three men visited the infant Jesus because the gospel writer Matthew, the only one who describes such a visit but does not number them, says they brought three gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. Their names appear in a Greek manuscript from 500 AD translated into Latin, which many biblical scholars consider the source of the names.) The letters are also an abbreviation for “Christus Mansionem Benedicat,” which means “May Christ bless this dwelling.” The first and last numbers refer to the current year, and the plus signs in between represent the cross.



Chalking the door,” as it is known, is seen as invoking Christ’s blessing not only on the physical house but on the people who live there and those who visit. There is a long tradition of blessing homes, especially on the Feast of the Epiphany, and the weeks that follow. Europeans have chalked their doors as part of Epiphany house blessings for centuries. The practice

(continued on next page)



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For more information visit: www.csl-osb.org

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Sr. Susanna Margaret, OSB

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Br. Thomas Anthony Goddard, OSB

Br. David Gerns, OSB, Abbot

HELP WANTED

Have you ever dreamed of a career in journalism or photography?

The editors of **Caritas Christi** are looking for help with future newsletters. You can help chase down articles (or write them), proofread copy or take pictures at Convocations in October and May.

Interested? Contact Sr. Susanna Margaret at df.fronzuto@comcast.net for further information.

(GREETINGS FROM THE ABBOT, *continued*)

can be done simply with a short prayer or with songs, prayers, processions, incense and holy water. Clergy or laypeople can do the chalking.—From The Episcopal News Service (January 6, 2020).

By the time you read this, we will be well into the Epiphany season; but consider blessing your home with holy graffiti anyway. A service is published in the latest edition of Occasional services, but any prayers for blessing a home would be appropriate, also.

God Bless You All,
Abbot David

Lenten Book Reading

Described as a “must read for anyone with new or re-discovered faith” **Pilgrim Road** has been selected for our communal reading. Group discussions via Zoom will take place during Lent with a variety of days and times offered to include as many of our brothers and sisters as possible.

The following book review is courtesy of Goodreads.

“In the view of St. Benedict of Nursia, the Lenten journey is an inner pilgrimage with Christ into the deeper parts of ourselves, to be marked not so much by external observances such as fasting and self-denial as by a deepening of our relationship with God.

Benedictine monk, Albert Holtz, develops that journey theme through meditations written during a fifteen-country pilgrimage during a sabbatical year. At the heart of each reflection is the lesson it teaches about our inner spiritual journey. By applying Benedict’s monastic wisdom to the everyday concerns of modern Christians, **Pilgrim Road** helps contemporary spiritual seekers keep Lent as a positive, meaningful and fruitful experience”.



A FAREWELL FROM OUR EPISCOPAL VISITOR

IT IS WITH SADNESS that I have asked Abbot David to let you know that after much prayerful discernment and consideration with others, as I come to the end of my five-year terms as your Episcopal Visitor, I have decided that I cannot accept appointment to a second term because of my new responsibilities in retirement as the Assisting Bishop of The Diocese of Long Island, a member of the faculty at the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary, and my roles in the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church.

By mutual agreement with Abbot David Gerns, we have both agreed that my term as Episcopal Visitor will end on January 31, 2020. Abbot David has begun the process of finding a new Episcopal Visitor, with the assistance of the CSL Council. I am also in conversation with Abbot David about who might be an excellent bishop to follow me as your Visitor.

I want to thank Abbot David, and before him Abbot Basil, the CSL Council, and all of you for the friendship, support, and love I have received from all of you.

Part of my job was to work with you and the abbots to support your life from behind the scenes throughout the year. But my greatest joy in this ministry was to join you for the May Convocations at Conception Abbey in Missouri for four years. The beauty and peace of the monastery and the surroundings, our prayer together, the great silence, the fun and refreshments at the end of the day, and the opportunity to listen to you in private conversations, all of this meant so much to me, and more.

But I particularly valued the honor to preach to you about monastic values, to a congregation that is living those values. I want to close summing up what I sought to teach and reflect on in those sermons:

Benedict's Rule is teaching the Community of St. Luke of the Order of St. Benedict NOW—the love

of a good and Godly world that can be reshaped through dedicated prayer. A contemporary Christian woman has written that still today Benedict's "Rule is telling me that ultimately praying is living, working, loving, accepting, the refusal to take anything or anyone for granted but rather to try to find Christ in and through them all."

What I have wanted to stress in my homilies preached to you at Convocation is that our work, our human work, tempered by the rhythm of constant liturgical prayer and nourished by the living

water of the liturgy becomes an homage offered to God associated with the redemptive work of Jesus.

I believe that each member of the Community of St. Luke is a partner with God in bringing creation to perfection. The whole life of the Community of St. Luke brings you, but also me, along with you, a step closer to realize the Kingdom of God on this earth, within a dispersed monastic community.

The whole goal of our work together, and now your work and prayer without me as part of your spiritual life, is to become better men and women, and thus to give all glory to God.

God bless you in this worship and work together in the months and years that lie ahead.

Yours in Christ,
The Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin
*Episcopal Visitor of the Community of St. Luke
of the Order of St. Benedict*



Bishop Franklin with the newly elected Abbot David Gerns, OSB at the Spring 2019 convocation.

In addition to thanking the Abbots Basil and David, I also want to thank Fr. Sid Breese for being such a wonderful and present colleague to me and to the community during the years we have served together.

—Sr. Susanna Margaret

From the 2019 Spring Convocation



Above, Bp. Bill blessing Abbot David after taking the oath of office.

Abbot David
with Sr. Susanna
Margaret and
Br. Thomas
Anthony prior to
making their
Solemn Life
Profession.



A large and happy group at the Spring Convocation!

From the 2019 Fall Convocation

Right, Sr. Julian and
postulant Derin Kyle setting
up for daily office in our joint
meeting/worship space
during Fall Convocation.



Left, Br. Florian
recording offices
via zoom so others
could participate
long-distance.



Front row: Prioress Sr. Martha, Sr. Judith, Sr. Anna Grace; *second row:* Sr. Julian, Rebekah Taylor, Sr. Joanna; *third row:* Sr. Karen Elizabeth, Sr. Mary Magdalene; *fourth row:* Br. James Rafael, Derin Kyle, Br. Florian. A small but mighty group!

COMFORTING WORDS TO ARTISTS OR WOULD-BE ARTISTS

Not long ago while doing a bit of studio house cleaning I stumbled on the following piece which I recently included in my home parish's monthly newsletter, and which I now share with you my Benedictine followers in humble but genuine gratitude for one of life's most creative artists, *Leonardo da Vinci. It was pinned to my bulletin board and almost lost among clippings and photos waiting to be removed or filed elsewhere. The word "artist" can be applied to anyone who desires to be creative in one way or another, either with a camera, a brush, a pencil, a pen, a kitchen utensil, a carpenter's tool and yes, even a computer.

Thank you for understanding,

— Br. Thomas Anthony

"Becoming an artist is a lifetime process. It begins with the way you see things, the way you feel about things. Then you find you want to express what you see and feel. You try something, explore it, change it, rework it, destroy it, and start again. Each time you discover something new about yourself.

Becoming an artist doesn't stop with time or circumstance or job or age. It may earn you a lot of money, or none at all. It's real value is to yourself. . . a way of life. But it's not a life for everyone. Those who choose it find the highs can be very high, just as the lows, very low. But one thing is certain—life is never boring.

The best part about being creative is that you whole life is spent in 'becoming.' So you can always look forward to change."

— David J. Rhodes

*Copied with edits from a catalog of
The School of Visual Arts, New York*

* Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519