



Holy Cross Priory

An Anglican Benedictine Community
In Canada

*The Brothers wish
you God's blessings
at this holy festival
of the Nativity of
our Lord*



HCP NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2016



Holy Cross Priory

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Holy Cross Priory is a monastery of the Order of the Holy Cross, a community founded in 1884 by The Reverend James Otis Sargent Huntington to provide a specifically North American expression of monasticism for Anglicans. The Order has had a ministry in Canada since the 1890s. The Priory was founded in 1973.

Above: Br. David Hoopes, Br. Charles McMulkin, Br. Reginald Crenshaw, Br. Christian Swayne and Br. Leonard Abbah. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON.

Advent Hope

IF EACH SEASON of the church year is marked by a dominant mood, then the prevailing tone of Advent is one of hope and expectation. Indeed, to borrow from Dickens, we may say that Advent is a time of Great Expectations. But what exactly is hope? And what is it that we are expecting? And what grounds do we have for such a stance, given the current state of our world and the condition of our own souls?



BR. ROBERT LEO SEVENSKY OHC,
SUPERIOR OF THE ORDER

As Christians, we are called to be people of hope, people who expect great things. Yet the American writer Anne Lamott reminds us that frequently, “an expectation is a resentment waiting to happen.” Is Christian hope simply wishful thinking or worse, a setup for resentment and profound disappointment?

All too often, that has been the case. Our hope and faith in Christ has been presented as a quick fix, an assurance that there is an easy way out of life, out of suffering, out of the rough places. And sometimes there is. But sooner or later we all—and I do mean all of us—come up against the hard wall of a very tough reality. We know the list—physical illness, economic fragility, lost relationships, betrayal, failure, emotional distress, displacement, loneliness and perhaps most distressing of all, the inscrutability of our own hearts. Where do we find hope when there seems to be no easy solution, no apparent answer? Are any expectations safely nurtured?

One approach—perhaps not quite Christian, perhaps post-Christian—comes from an avowed atheist, Vaclav Havel, the late president of the Czech Republic. He writes in 1993 in *Esquire Magazine*:

The kind of hope I often think about... is, I believe, a state of mind, not a state of the world. Either we have hope within us or we don't. Hope is not a prognostication—it's an orientation of the spirit. Each of us must find real, fundamental hope within himself. You can't delegate that to anyone else.

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Community Notes

ON OCTOBER 4 we welcomed the associates of the Community of the Sisters of the Church for their autumn meeting. Our Brs. Adrian and Joseph from the United States joined us for a gala Canadian Thanksgiving Day celebration. And we continue monthly meetings with Suzanne Lawson who facilitates our process of visioning, long range planning and implementation.

We have been hosting a young man from Iran, Payam Razi Nezhad, in Canada as a Refugee sponsored by a neighbourhood Refugee Settlement Committee chaired by our friend Samantha Caravan, Incumbent of St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto. Br. Charles is serving as a mentor to Payam as he learns to live in Toronto. Payam is taking English classes and will move into his new apartment December 10.

Brs. Christian, David and Charles attended the formal "Seating" of the Priory's Deputy Bishop Visitor, Bishop Linda Nicholls, as 7th Bishop of the Diocese of Huron. It was a glorious event with the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada as preacher.

On December 10, Holy Cross Priory with our neighbours St. John's, West Toronto and St. Martin-in-the-Fields will sponsor an Advent Quiet Day. Quiet Days at Advent and Lent are an annual ministry of our three jurisdictions. Dean Andrew Asbil, of St. James Cathedral, Toronto, will lead the Quiet Day this Advent.



NEWS OF THE BROTHERS

BR. CHRISTIAN: Christian is a welcoming presence at the Priory, and serves as spiritual director for four people.

BR. DAVID BRYAN: On September 24 David attended the funeral of Br. Dunstan SSF at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, Long Island, N.Y. While there he visited his former parish of St. Thomas, Farmingdale. David gave an address on Healing Prayer to candidates for Lay Anointers for the Bishop's Committee on Healing. He also addressed a meeting of the Order of St. Luke on Sacramental Prayer. David and Leonard attended a clergy retreat for the York/Credit Valley area of the Diocese of Toronto, held at Mt. Carmel Retreat Centre, Niagara Falls. Reginald, Leonard and David attended the funeral of long-time associate Canon Gerald Loweth. For each of the four Thursday's of Advent David will lead a meditation for St. Michael and All Angels Church, (the Priory's parish church from 1973-1984).



BR. LEONARD: serves as Director of Associates in Canada with deep gratitude for our many Associates who continue to seek us out, pray for us and with us, and help us in diverse ways to maintain our life and work in Canada. We continue to pray for all our associates weekly.



Leonard provides supply ministry in Toronto, most recently at The Ghanaian Anglican Church, St. Hilda, and St. Hugh & St. Edmund where he also Installed Officers of a local Masonic Lodge. The "high point" of his summer was his 70th Birthday, celebrated with a grand barbecue in the Priory back yard with members of the Ghanaian community, many others of our friends, and a D.J. This Fall Leonard was hosted at St. John's Ida, outside Peterborough, Ontario, by former classmates Fr. Peter Mills and Fr. Bill Montgomery. He addressed a Men's Breakfast on our Work and the Associate's Rule of Life, and preached at Sunday services. In mid December Leonard departs for Ghana and Liberia,

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Hope in this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy when things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something to succeed. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It's not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. It is this hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now. In the face of this absurdity, life is too precious a thing to permit its devaluation by living pointlessly, emptily, without meaning, without love, and, finally, without hope.

Hope is first of all of all a matter of meaning, an interior certainty that things make sense, regardless of how they turn out. And for Christians, that certainty is bound up in and with Jesus, who is the ground of hope because he is the Lord of meaning, of sense-making. He is the *Logos* in apparent chaos, significance in the midst absurdity, the loving face of God shining in a dark night.



Advent is a time of hope and expectation, the hope and expectation that your life and mine make sense. It is, as Havel says, an orientation of the spirit. And we might add: it is a gift of the Spirit. It is a conviction, always fragile and needing nurture, but planted deep within our being. It is the active conviction that, perhaps against all odds, Life will have the last word, and that word will be Yes!

Hope, like faith, is rooted in the memory of God's mighty deeds: the One who delivered Israel and who raised Jesus from the dead can be trusted to act again, however mysteriously. Advent tenderly channels that hope by turning our eyes once again toward a star in the heavens, inviting us to listen for a song sung by angels as we seek the face of our God lying in a manger.

Br. Robert Leo Sevensky OHC,
SUPERIOR OF THE ORDER

Above: At Prayer— Br. David Hoopes, Br. Leonard Abbah, Br. Christian Swayne, Br. Charles McMulkin, and Br. Reginald Crenshaw. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON.

Community Notes

carrying ashes of our late Fr. Joseph Parsell to our former mission of Bolahun, Liberia, to be interred as requested by the Church, the Chiefs and the people there. He will inspect projects undertaken by the new Community of the Love of Jesus, modelled on our Order, meet with former students, visit current Associates and receive new ones.



BR. REGINALD-MARTIN: Br. Reginald has compiled a history of St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale, for its 60th anniversary, where he continues his work as Lay Pastoral Associate. This includes implementation of a new program of lay pastoral visitors to parishioners and residents of area care facilities. He assists the Bishops of the Diocese of Toronto by continuing to act as “coach” for parish search committees,

through intervention and encouragement with troubled parishes, and through support of Diocesan volunteers. In September, accompanied by Br. Charles, Reginald led a retreat for new and returning students in the Faculty of Theology at Huron College, London, Ontario. He continues to act as a Spiritual Director. Reginald spent U.S. Thanksgiving Day with family and friends in Los Angeles, California.



BR. CHARLES: In addition to his monastics studies and participation in inter-religious novitiate programs, under the direction of Br. Reginald, Charles continues to serve as Honorary Assistant at Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St., and has most recently been acting as Co-ordinator of the Catechesis program. He is mentored by Br. Richard, via FaceTime conferencing from our mother house in upstate New York, on

the Rule of our founder Fr. Huntington. In May, Brs. Charles and Leonard attended the Tri-Annual Diocese of Toronto Clergy Conference at Brock University, St. Catharines Ontario. British theologian Dr. Paula Gooder was the speaker for the three day event. Charles is friend to several people who seek his counsel and guidance. In November he officiated at the wedding of good friends - one of whom a former co-worker. While in Vancouver for two weeks in September he met with staff members of Christ Church Cathedral to learn about their outreach “to the City”.

Retreat Reflections

AT THE START OF THE FALL TERM, Br. Reginald, accompanied by Br. Charles, facilitated a Retreat for the Huron College Faculty of Theology at Western University in London, Ontario. The retreat was grounded in the Faculty's Rule of Life. The venue was the historic rural church of St. George, Middlesex. Below are personal reflections on the day from two students.

WHAT A DELIGHT to have members of a religious community with us as we talked, prayed, and once again settled into our life as a community of students and faculty at Huron College. Anglican religious are a vital part of our tradition and life as a Church; it is a joyful experience for me when the Church deliberately seeks their wisdom and expertise.



Br. Reginald put some challenging, personal questions to us, which left some in my small group uncomfortable. This discomfort led to a larger discussion in our plenary session about managing boundaries between faculty and students in similar situations. But I think there was wisdom in challenging those boundaries, as even in expressing discomfort with the questions given us for reflection members of the community revealed parts of themselves and we grew to know one another a little better. We were reminded that everyone brings their own experience, attributes, and qualities to our learning community, and each person settles into aspects of community life with greater difficulty or ease. I'm grateful for Br. Reginald's honesty about his own experiences in community life - antagonizing his brothers in discussion from time to time, for example - which helped remind us that life in community is a holy discipline and a process, rather than an accomplishment or a finished product.

After reflecting on our orientation retreat and on my return to community at Huron, this year community formation has two main parts for me. First is a felt gratitude for the incredible resources we already have in seeking to live as a community: friends like OHC, committed staff, faculty, and students who value intentional community. Secondly, as an upper-year student, is a prayerful awareness of all members of our community, a watchfulness for how we are shaping each other, and for how we might draw each other further into the incredible, holy experience that is a diverse, intentional faith community.

Thank you so much to the Order of the Holy Cross for being with us during our community orientation and for your witness in this life.

Andrew Rampton, MDiv, 3rd Yr

Retreat Reflections

MY ORIENTATION WEEK at Huron College was hugely valuable. The key was God inspired human interaction. Right from day one bonds were being established, not just between students but with Faculty, the Dean, and the Principal. In some faculties students don't even know who the Dean is! Our Dean and Principal showed they care for students and for the success of the program!



On day two we went on retreat with no judgement at an off-site location. Brother Reginald OHC, was a charismatic facilitator and instilled the fact that God was among us and leading us. In one of the small group sessions, the Dean was out with us in the graveyard helping us to solve the scavenger hunt clues, which was so great! I felt the love of God surrounding us, which really showed when one of the group fainted. So much care was shown for that person that I felt like I was at a family reunion instead of with a group just getting to know each other.

It was very interesting to find out about the Holy Cross Priory. The two brothers that attended our event were very strong in their faith and were both willing to share their personal stories, which were very interesting to hear about.

Two stories are great examples for me of the bonding that occurred at Orientation. At my night class the next Wednesday I arrived unsure if there would be anyone I knew. I walked in the room and saw David from Orientation Week at the same time he saw me. He immediately cleared a chair so I could sit beside him. It felt like I was going to sit beside a good friend. The professor said, "I have two Theology students in the class" and he named the two of us. Did I ever feel proud at that moment!

Another story is that I drove to the retreat with someone from my neighbourhood and we became instant friends. She invited me to her church and there I found others I had met during Orientation; each one greeted me with a hug like I was family. I am considering switching to this new Anglican Church from a non-denominational church because of this fellowship of love, care and concern for one another which is amazing! It has really personalized the Masters' Program for me.

The bonds that were created during Orientation have helped foster a great learning environment for me. When you are somewhere where you feel wanted, supported and appreciated by your peers and leaders you want to put so much more of yourself into it and subsequently gain more from the program than just attending classes.

Heather Martin, MTS 1st Year



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

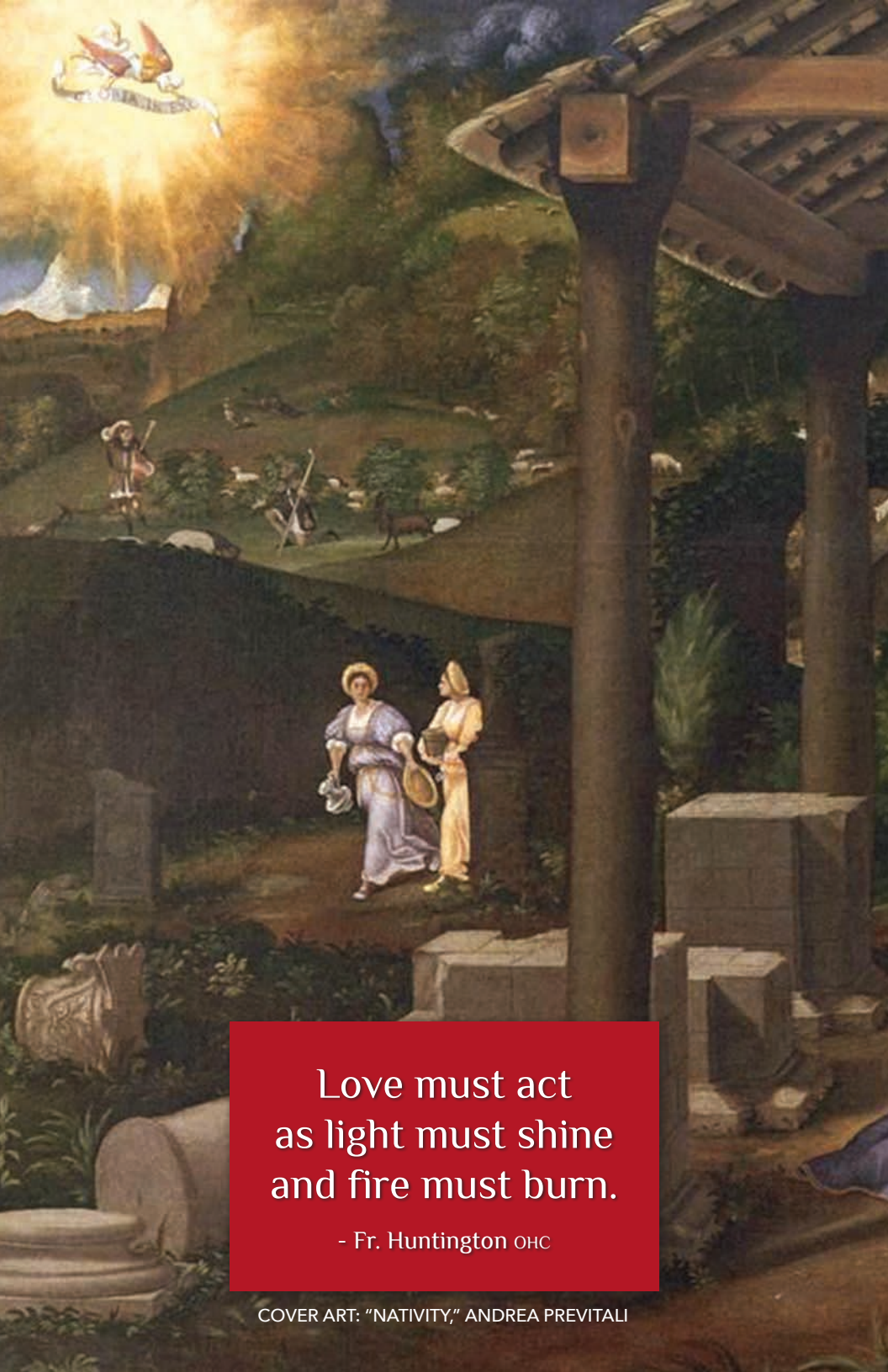
THE SHEPHERDS SING;

and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for Thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is Thy word: the streams,
Thy grace
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing,
and all my powers
Ousting the daylight hours.
Then will we chide the sun for letting night
Take up his place and right:
We sing one common Lord;
wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I find a sun
Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly,
As frost-nipped suns look sadly.
Then will we sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay:
His beams shall cheer my breast,
and both so twine,
Till ev'n His beams sing,
and my music shine.

- GEORGE HERBERT, "CHRISTMAS (II)"

Worship Times

7:00am	Matins
8:00am	Eucharist (MONDAY-FRIDAY, SATURDAY AT 5:00PM)
11:30am	Diurnum (Midday Prayer)
5:00pm	Vespers
7:30pm	Compline



Love must act
as light must shine
and fire must burn.

- Fr. Huntington OHC

COVER ART: "NATIVITY," ANDREA PREVITALI