



Joy  
AND  
PEACE  
FROM  
THE  
MONKS  
AT  
Holy  
CROSS  
PRIORY

# HOSPITALITY: THE COURTESY OF GOD

Every Friday morning the monks of Holy Cross Priory meet for an hour of “faith sharing”. The topic is usually one or more of the lessons for the coming Sunday, as facilitated by one of the brothers. Not long ago our starting point was the Gospel and alternate Old Testament lesson for the 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. Both had to do with hospitality. The Gospel was the story of Mary and Martha (*Lk. 10:38-42*), and the Old Testament lesson was the visit of the three angels to Abraham (*Gen. 18:1-10a*). This led to a lively discussion of hospitality as an essential part of monastic life.

Both our Order’s Rules emphasize hospitality. Fr. Huntington reminds us that “nothing too much can be done for anyone who comes to us as to the servants of Jesus”, and St. Benedict asks that all guests be received “as Christ”, meaning (apparently) either “the way Jesus would” or, “as though they were Jesus himself”. But both founders were also agreed that a monastic community needs to maintain its own life if it is to be able to share that with others; they thought the best way to do that was to provide for a monastic “enclosure”—a physical space reserved for the monks. For purely physical reasons that is only marginally possible at Holy Cross Priory. It is a situation we hope one day to remedy, but for the moment enclosure for us must be enclosure of the heart.

Naturally, our “faith sharing” covered the positives and the negatives of this situation, but one insight arose out of the lessons themselves. These lessons both have traditional interpretations: Mary and Martha are types of the Active and Contemplative life, while Abraham’s guests are symbols of the Trinity—as in the icon by Rublev shown above. Br. Leonard told us a Ghanaian story about a villager who would not share, which reminded us that the hospitality is about power relationships, and that both our lessons have “power resonances”: in each case the guests were “distinguished”—a Rabbi in one case, and in the other three visitors whom Abraham addresses as “lord”. Elsewhere Jesus puts that in a different context when he tells us our hospitality should include the powerless: “the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind” who are unable to repay (*Lk. 11:12-14*). That sounds better if you’re on the “giving end” and can decide who is “deserving”. But even “recipients” have power. The hospitality envisaged by both Fr. Huntington and St. Benedict was messier, more challenging, and much more rewarding than any pious imagining.

Recently, we at Holy Cross Priory had a chance to experience this. A year and a half ago we were asked to give sanctuary to a family of three fleeing Neo-Nazi violence in their own country. We found they were very respectful of our enclosure, both of the heart and in physical terms, and for seventeen months they became part of our lives as we did

Please help us celebrate  
the feast of  
**THE HOLY CROSS**

on Saturday, September 14, 2013

at 11:00 a.m.

at

**HOLY CROSS PRIORY**  
204 High Park Avenue

**HOLY EUCHARIST**

followed by

**A RECEPTION**

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of theirs. They have since moved on, but it is hard not to miss the sight of a fascinated five year old watching us celebrate the Divine Office.

What is more significant, perhaps, is that, in the almost 30 years Holy Cross Priory has been at its present location, we have done the very same thing many times—sometimes welcoming Jesus in what Mother Teresa used to call his “unlovely disguise”. We can’t claim to have risen to the standard of our Founders, but as one of our Brothers noted: it’s astonishing how many people have come here over the years who said they experienced “Christian hospitality”.

To be sure, they did so in a rather unlikely space and among a rather unlikely group of people, but they definitely said they did. Since it was only marginally done by us, it must be something done by God—a hospitality shown to community and visitor alike. According to the Lady Julian of Norwich one of God’s most characteristic features is “courtesy”. God’s courtesy is an unwillingness to “grasp” at being God; a willingness to give up power and love and judge us in our own proper being and in our own proper place. God’s courtesy is both the Manger and the Cross, and it is what lies behind any hospitality we can offer as well.

RICHARD PAUL VAGGIONE, OHC

## Welcome to a New Deacon!



I was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons on Sunday, May 5 at the cathedral here in Toronto along with three other men. I formally graduated from Wycliffe College on May 13 and began my next adventure as Assistant Curate at St. Hilary’s Anglican Church, Cooksville on May 15. Under the supervision of the Rev. Paul J. Walker, the incumbent, I am helping with liturgy, administration, preaching, teaching, and the various ministries that go into a growing parish. I am enjoying my time with the good folks of St. Hilary’s very much—they are warm, generous, sincere, and gracious people who are especially devoted to outreach to the community and around the world. I hope to be ordained to the priesthood in the late fall. My time at St. Hilary’s ends on January 15. Shortly thereafter I will move back to our monastery in West Park, New York to join the work of that house in various ways. Right now it looks like I will be working in the library and helping with guest retreat leadership. I hope to visit Toronto next May for the diocesan ordination and Wycliffe Convocation. Thank you for your prayers for me, our Order, Wycliffe College, those discerning ordained ministry, and St. Hilary’s Church.

RANDY GREVE, OHC

## News from Br. Leonard

I returned from Ghana on May 30, 2013 after two semesters of teaching at St. Nicholas Seminary in Cape Coast, Ghana. Three days later I went to West Park, NY to attend our Annual Chapter.

I wish to thank all those who prayed for me and supported my work in Ghana; especially for those who provided theological books for the seminary and school materials for students in elementary and junior secondary and used Paschal Candles for our poorer parishes.

This year some of the school supplies went as far as Klikov in the Volta Region of Ghana and Bolahun in Liberia. The used Paschal candles also went to about four (4) dioceses.

In Toronto I am now filling in for some clergy who are on vacation. If any clergy is leaving for vacation in the months of October and November I have some dates still open!

I shall not be teaching during the fall semester so as to stay behind and taste the winter which I have missed for five years!

God willing, I shall be leaving for Ghana in December 2013 to resume teaching, and am looking forward to receiving more school supplies if you are willing. That includes trophies of all kinds and used paschal candles. THANK YOU ALL!

LEONARD KOFI ABBAH, OHC

## A Bishop Visitor for Canada



Traditionally, the Order of the Holy Cross is connected to the Anglican Communion as a whole through a Bishop Visitor. Our current Visitor is **the Right Revd. Mark Sisk**, Bishop of New York in the US. In recent years, as the Order has grown, it has become customary to ask our Visitor to appoint a deputy to make local visitations. At the moment our general Deputy Bishop Visitor for the Order as a whole is **the Right Revd. Stacy Sauls**. Bishop Sauls is resident in New York, and we in Canada have been thinking for some time that it might be helpful to have a Deputy Visitor in this country as well. We are now pleased to announce that the Superior and Bishop Sisk have agreed and that Bishop Sisk (with her permission) has appointed **the Right Revd. Linda Nicholls**, Area Bishop of Trent-Durham as his Deputy Visitor for Canada. Many thanks to Bishop Sisk and Bishop Nicholls for their kindness in agreeing to help us.

## Learning from Fred

One of the great enrichments of my life since I returned to Canada has been the opportunity to make friends with several persons having what is called euphemistically “Special Needs.” I used to spend about seven or eight hours a week in various activities with either these young men or their families, sharing life together. What I want to share with you are some of the insights I have gained from these talented young men as they seek to play their role in our common society. To respect their privacy and for convenience I am going to refer to an imaginary composite young man I will call Fred. This then is what Fred has taught me about how to be a human being. Unfortunately I am a slow learner so I still have trouble remembering to behave according to these insights, all too often.

The first thing Fred taught me is, “There is more than one correct way to do anything!” You would think I would have long since realized that. For example we know that different cultures have quite different ways of eating food: Chop sticks, knife and fork, fork only, spoon only, fingers, right hand only, and so on. But Fred showed me that there are different ways of getting dressed, walking down the street, sitting in a chair, putting on your clothes after swimming—the list is endless. At first I felt an obligation to *Show Fred the Correct Way*. But gradually I learned better. How much needless tension we generate because someone is behaving, not BADLY but DIFFERENTLY! Is that a valid interpretation of “Not every one who says ‘Lord, Lord’ enters the Kingdom but the one who does the Father’s will”? (Matt. 7:21)

The second thing Fred taught me was that what we all need is not correction but support. Fred has a compulsion to smash things—especially glass things. Unfortunately this is not easily accommodated to other people’s legitimate interests and concerns. Fred likes to break bottles in other people’s recycle bin, to tear up certain kinds of flowers in other people’s gardens—that sort of thing. Berating Fred does no good, for he is always remorseful, and a compulsion is not a compulsion if threats can control it. So I learned a different approach. Before we wander out into the outer world full of its booby traps for compulsive humans, Fred and I would agree that we would not smash anything, pull anything up—just go STRAIGHT TO THE GOAL And it would work. If something dangerously tempting threatened we would link arms and support one another safely past it. And that is what I need too. Not threats and punishment, but support when the danger approaches and an understanding guide to touch my arm and calm me down. STRAIGHT TO THE GOAL.

The third thing I learned is that we all need to participate—at whatever level is comfortable for each of us. This takes time and patience but it really pays off. Fred sometimes can take two or three minutes or even longer before he can summon a verbal response to a question. But if I have the patience to wait, his insights are commonly sound and often very creative. It is not just that it is polite and good manners to give every one a chance to be heard—if we do NOT listen to everyone we may miss out on some important wisdom.

Of course I am still learning. But Fred is very patient. I suppose most people learn patience from raising infants. For this old monk the wisdom of patience has come late—but what an gift it has been.

CHRISTIAN GEORGE SWAYNE, OHC

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