



Priestly People

SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

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Restorer of Ruined Houses

ISAIAH 58

Father Liam Hoare sP wrote the article, Restorer of Ruined Houses, for *Priestly People* as a General Chapter approached for the Servants of the Paraclete. The article is pertinent today as a General Chapter will occur for the congregation in June 2020.

Religious Institutes hold General Chapters to discuss the ministry and business of the congregation.

Please keep the Servants of the Paraclete priests and religious brothers in prayer as the General Chapter undertakes the challenges and celebrates the blessings of their ministry worldwide.

Piece by Piece...

RESTORING, REBUILDING, REHABILITATING

Maybe I was feeling particularly “weary in my bones” that day. Or, maybe it was the oppression of the record-breaking drought we were experiencing in the southwest. Or, perhaps it was just the longing in my heart for God’s guidance as we, the Servants of the Paraclete, prepared to gather as a group for prayerful deliberation concerning the evolution and future direction of our ministries. Probably the correct answer would be “all of the above”.

The question... Why did this passage from my Jerusalem Bible seem to *leap off the page, landing squarely in my lap?* The passage: Isaiah 58:6-12. Among other words, this message:

Yahweh will always guide you, giving you relief in desert places.

He will give strength to your bones... You shall be like a watered garden...

I know God’s Word is a “living word”, but that’s putting it mildly as I try to describe the experience of reading this passage anew. How freeing to know that in faith I can always expect ongoing healing and renewal from the hand and heart of God... No matter the circumstances!

Looking back a few previous verses, I found the context of this promise. It brought me straight back to the theme of compassion.

This new life, “strength to the bones” and grace “like a spring that never runs dry” is related not so much to extraordinary religious practices and spiritual exercises on our part, but to simple compassion toward our neighbor.

Again, we are reminded:

It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks, ... to share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, ... to clothe the man, you see to be naked and not turn from you own kin?

Repeatedly I find that in Christianity the search for God leads to compassion and the discovery of the neighbor. What a ball is to a game, what the musical note is to the symphony, what a book is to a library... A neighbor is to Christianity. When that realization sinks in, I am convinced it will revolutionize our whole perspective regarding our practice of Gospel values, inner peace, community and world peace.

If we can but live with integrity in this regard, so much else falls into place. Jesus made this plain and clear. “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me” (Matthew 25; 40). The truth of this is rooted deeply in the Old Testament.

Your integrity will go before you and the glory of Yahweh behind you, Cry and Yahweh will answer; call and he will say “I am Here.”



Not only does the search for God lead us to our neighbor; compassion for the neighbor brings us back to God.

A word of caution, though: compassion can jar us from the cozy and the comfortable, shake us at our very roots. It can force us into aspects of ourselves and of the world we either ignored or were ignorant of.

If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, If you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed.

Rightly so, compassion prompts us to look toward the poor, the hungry and the oppressed who are oceans away, on the other side of the world, and to find ways to help. However, doing away with the “clenched fist” might just as well apply to my attitude toward the person I sit across from at dinner, day after day. Perhaps it is our partners, children, sisters or brothers in blood or in religious community who are “the hungry”.

Hunger can be a condition of the heart and not just the stomach. Reaching out with a kind affirming word can feed and bring relief to the oppressed just as much as a mouthful of grain. Perhaps we can, at least momentarily, lift the yoke of our prejudgments and controlling expectations, and grant new freedom and love to those we rub elbows with every day.

Even if we hope to “help” and perhaps influence others for the better, compassion is essential. Others will not care how much we know until they how much we care. As the song goes, “Love can build a bridge”. Jesus knew this and lived and died this kind of love.

And bridge builders we must be! The Church, the body

of Christ suffers from the wounds, the separation and alienation in our present world. Compassion is the first step.

***You will rebuild the ancient ruins,
Build up on the old foundations.***

Across from Via Coeli Monastery in New Mexico, one can see the ruins of an ancient pueblo. The thick adobe walls of the now roofless monastery, built in 1620, stand high as one looks over the site. It was important to Fr. Gerald, our founder, that the congregation's first house be across from such a sacred place. Ruins... to remind us of the charism and ministry of restoring the life of a priest.

You will be called "Breach-Mender", "Restorer of ruined houses!"

Fr. Gerald's compassion was truly that of a "restorer of ruined houses". His was a legendary mind and heart that yearned to serve the Church by reaching out to its lost and

wounded clergy and to assist in restoration of the temple of their hearts and minds. He was always ready to "mend the breach", to build the bridge, to heal the wounds of Christ's body which is the Church.

Times have changed since our first foundation in Jemez Springs. The world, the church and the Servants of the Paraclete continue to have their challenges. Fr. Gerald's legacy of compassion continues to guide us as much as it continues to shake us at our very roots. Not surprising, since compassion is at our roots.

With God's grace we will continue to serve the Church in her priests and Brothers who turn to us for help by doing whatever compassionate works are needed to build upon the foundation of compassion, this legacy of Fr. Gerald.

LIAM HOARE sP
Priestly People, July 1996

Update: COVID-19

Thank you for your continued support of our ministry to serve priests and religious men in need of our services. We send our prayers and well wishes to all who have been impacted by the coronavirus across the United States and beyond.

We want you to know that our priest and brother members serving and studying across the world are OK as of today. Our community in northern Italy continues to work to stay safe. The sP members in both Vietnam and the Philippines report that they are doing as best as they are able in these challenging times. Our site in Ghana continues to be vigilant.

Via Coeli Monastery in New Mexico is temporarily closed to those wanting to use it for retreats and conferences. At the offices in Missouri, we have staff continuing to work at our Center with the residents and other staff are working from home (when we are able to do so).

Donations are being processed one time each week and thank you letters will be sent at the end of the month. The Servants of the Paraclete General Chapter, scheduled for June 2020, has been cancelled. Please continue to keep the ministry of the Servants of the Paraclete in your daily prayers.

Let us pray together each day as Pope Francis asked us to do:

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain,

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



Servants of the Paraclete
 PO Box 9
 Cedar Hill, MO 63016

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We appreciate the many mass stipends that we receive. We thank you for supporting that part of our ministry. The Servants of the Paraclete receive mass stipends from our donors and they look forward to celebrating liturgy with those who offer masses for loved ones, friends and family members.

Thank you for supporting our Mass Stipend Ministry!

Name of the person to be remembered in a mass celebrated by a Servant of the Paraclete

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Please send an acknowledgement card on my behalf to:

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You will receive acknowledgement of the mass stipend donation in your donor thank you letter. No need to send an acknowledgement card to yourself if you are the donor.

Please complete the mass stipend form and return to the Servants of the Paraclete Development Office.

Servants of the Paraclete • PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016

**DEVELOPMENT
 OFFICE**

**Marian Wolaver • 636-274-5226 x303 • mwolaver@theservants.org
 PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016**