



Eyes on the Future

THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

PRIORY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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ALL of us can make a difference. Not every action has to make an earthshattering change, but together as a team of **Confrères** many smaller acts will make a huge difference in the lives of many.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIOR

Calling one and all! Join me on Saturday May 20th for our first NATIONAL SERVICE DAY.

A day in which each and every one of us—from the youngest to the eldest, from new Members to our longest Serving Knights and Dames, whether working or retired, traveling or house bound—join together to respond to our call to serve our Lords the sick and the poor with our unique gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

Join your fellow Confrères in fellowship and service at various service projects across the country on May 20, 2023. Our sisters and brothers from the Sovereign Order of Malta and Johanniterorden will join us, as will colleagues around the world, honoring the "Pro Utilitate Hominum" part of our commitment, "In the service of humanity."

There is something for us all: pound nails at a Habitat for Humanity home building project; serve our Vets and their families at a VA facility or Fisher House; serve the vulnerable in shelters; pack food boxes at food banks or make cards with the children in your family for young patients waiting for surgery in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza; or write a note to an isolated Veteran who so selflessly served us and our great country. **ALL OF US** can do one or more of the above or some other

form of outreach on this day. Whether you gather as a group or engage individually, you will not be alone. We will be serving together as a team to show our communities that we care and are ready to reach out in support. I look forward to hearing all the stories about your experiences.

Our colleague and Confrère Aaron (**see page 6**), put it this way, "When the opportunity comes to spread a little light in the world, you take it." Aaron is already considering a second trip to Ukraine to save even more lives. As the prophet Isaiah

put it, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said, Here I am. Send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Confrère Scott Lurding is a busy investment banker, parent and husband who shared that he finds it really tough to create time away from the family to visit a VA facility or Habitat for Humanity site, but he really wanted to honor his "Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum" commitment. So as a family, they recently wrote many cards together for kids visiting our Holy Land hospitals and clinics which our St John Service Corps ensures brings brightness and love to many less fortunate than ourselves. ALL of us can make a difference. Not every action has to make an earth-shattering change, but together as a team of Confrères many smaller acts will make a huge difference in the lives of many.

Talking of making a difference, the Cataract Initiative campaign in Gaza that we launched in September 2022 has now saved the sight of 484 additional patients and empowered many lives due to the extraordinary generosity of Members of our Priory. Thank YOU.

Congratulations to our Emeritus General Class Members on the award and recognition of your dedicated commitment to our Priory and Order. I hope to see you at Investiture in Los Angeles later this year and personally thank you.

Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum, Nigel G. Heath, KStJ Prior



Scott Lurding and his family make cards for patients at St John Eye Hospital

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THERAPY DOGS, EH?

Across the border in Canada, the St John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program has been bringing physical, mental and emotional comfort to people in a variety of settings with the unconditional love of dogs.

This program was first introduced in Peterborough, Ontario, in 1992 and built on the Priory of Canada's outstanding tradition of providing expert first aid, health and community services. Through petting, affection, and consistent visitation, many people are able to see health benefits from the Priory of Canada's Therapy Dog Program. These visits help people dealing with physical and cognitive health issues. These canine interactions help lower blood pressure, distract people from physical pain, encourage therapeutic movement and even help with memory recall for those

who have cognitive degeneration diseases. They also help with mental and emotional health problems as these relationships encourage communication and socialization, decrease anxiety, and help children overcome speech and emotional disorders.

The Therapy Dog Program has grown over the last 30 years to become a recognized leader in this animal-assisted area. The Priory of Canada currently has more than 3,600 therapy dog teams across the country spreading joy and comfort. As with so much else, the Therapy Dog Program has had to adapt to changing situations through the COVID-19 pandemic. They are now trying to expand into new areas of community care with teams in mental health facilities, vaccine clinics, shelters, libraries, schools, airports and elsewhere.

OUR NEW ENGLAND REGION

Think lobster rolls, clam chowder, maple syrup, rugged coastlines, soaring mountains, dense forests, long frosty winters, the Revolutionary War and three of the nation's most renowned private universities, namely Harvard, Brown and Dartmouth.

That's a snapshot of the New England Region, consisting of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

"Our story really began around 2012, when Lewis Allen, OStJ, a dedicated Confrère who died several years ago, gathered five or six people in Boston, along with several Members with summer homes in New England, to meet at social events he hosted," says Ben Faucett, Regional Chair.

"Over time, friendships, based upon shared values and our Order's commitment to service, emerged from those events," he continues.

In 2018, Kay Cox, DStJ, previously the Regional Chair of the Connecticut Region who moved to Charleston after her husband, Tom Cox, CStJ, passed away, and Vic Brandt, KStJ, then the Regional chair of the Charleston Region, recognized the group's potential and encouraged us to recruit new Confrères and solidify our membership into a Region."

Those efforts paid off. Today, the New England Region boasts 87 Members, half of whom joined in the past four years.

"When Richard Batchelder, OStJ, and I were asked to serve as co-chairs by Palmer Hamilton, KStJ, our first priority was to reach out to Confrères throughout the Region who were, essentially, 'Members at large'," he says.

"Western Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island cover a lot of territory, but we built on what Lewis Allen had done. Our task was made so much easier because everyone recognized how much more we could accomplish as a Region.

"That was really the catalyst for growth," he notes. "When you think about it, it's pretty remarkable that we became a Region in 2018, and then, just a year later, we began planning to host the 2020 Investiture!"

Those plans, of course, were waylaid by the pandemic. But the delay gave the Region breathing room to focus on their top priorities, namely, a campaign to raise money, recruit more prospective members, and develop a logistical plan to make sure the event went off without a glitch.

"Gary Kearney (CStJ), David Burnham (OStJ), Richard and I led the development effort," he says. "We formed a host committee of members who agreed to underwrite various aspects of the weekend. Little did we realize that our campaign, ultimately, would generate more than \$500,000."

How did they accomplish that?

"It was really about reconnecting," Ben explains. "We were coming out of COVID, and I think our Confrères felt the need to bond together in a common purpose. Investiture was an opportunity for generosity."

"In terms of membership recruitment, it had long been customary to host an event in January for current Confrères and prospects they considered a good fit for a life dedicated to service. In the past the New England Region had invited honored speakers, including two past priors, Marshall Acuff, GCStJ, and Palmer Hamilton, KStJ, along with The Rev'd Canon Nicholas Porter, KStJ, David Verity, KStJ and Vic Brandt, KStJ, to illuminate our guests on the Order of St John. But, like everything else,

"We were coming out of COVID, and I think our Confrères felt the need to bond together in a common purpose. Investiture was an opportunity for generosity."

COVID changed those plans. During the first year of the term of the current Prior, Nigel Heath, KStJ, the event was turned from an in-person event to a virtual one, and Nigel spoke to the group via Zoom.

"Even during COVID, we managed to increase our membership. In 2020, we added 11 Members, and we did the same for 2021," Faucett reported.

Event logistics have often been a challenge for a host Region, given all of the moving parts involved. "That's why we turned to Michele Blair and her staff of professional event planners to help guide us," he notes. "It was great to have a team of people to turn to in Washington. Their experience and know how proved indispensable."

So what's happened since then?

"We've set three primary goals, which include building on our success of recruiting new Confrères by hosting more events, strengthening our commitment to serve *our Lords*, *the sick and the poor* by developing service programs and raising money for the Hospital," he says.

"For example, in November we hosted a reception for Confrères and prospective Members at the home of Peter Abbott, the British Consul General, in Boston. We're also developing a plan to launch a community service program for our Members based on the Priory's recently established guidelines. And, we're exploring ways to extend our financial support of the Hospital's nurse staffing to a program of sustained giving.

"The key is to keep our Members engaged and focused on these three goals. If we can do that, and I think we will, we'll not only enrich our own lives of service and dedication, but change the lives of people whose needs are far greater than our own."

MOHAMMAD'S STORY

Mohammad is a 12-year-old boy with autism. He and his family live in Bethlehem. When he was just a few months old, his mother noticed something was wrong with his eyes. They were watery, and the color wasn't normal. When they took him to St. John Eye Hospital as a baby, he was diagnosed with glaucoma. The glaucoma caused an increased intraocular pressure and damage to his optic nerves.

The family was given prescription medicines and started treatment right away, but his father, Issa, is a day laborer with a limited income. "Mohammad began his treatment 12 years ago, and continued it periodically, but in 2016 I ran into financial difficulties and we stopped his treatment," Issa said.

Mohammad returned to St. John Eye Hospital in 2022, after his vision had deteriorated dramatically. Our glaucoma specialist explained that Mohammad needed surgery on both of his eyes. "It was a disappointment for me," Issa said. "I was very sad that my son's vision had gotten so bad, but I was not able to do anything about it. My salary only covers our daily expenses."

While most families pay minimal fees for surgeries and other treatments at St John Eye Hospital, Mohammad's family simply couldn't afford it. So the St. John Eye Hospital Group was pleased to cover the cost of Mohammad's surgery through a generous donation from The Christian Broadcasting Network.

Mohammad recently underwent two successful glaucoma surgeries, and now has clear vision in both eyes.



PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

2023 Service of Investiture and Rededication Weekend October 6-8, 2023 Los Angeles, California

Mark your calendars now!

Rehearsals for those involved in the Service of Investiture will take place Thursday, October 5th, meetings and tours will take place Friday, October 6th and the Investiture Service will take place Saturday, October 7th at 10:00 am.

Watch for additional information, including a link for making hotel reservations, in coming weeks.

We look forward to seeing you in October!



WHO WILL GO FOR US?

The world today is full of stories that cause heartache. Whenever a war starts, a famine begins or a natural disaster strikes, we wonder how best to live out our mission to serve humanity—*Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum*. Almost a year ago, when Russia invaded Ukraine, many Americans considered how they could move beyond sending thoughts and prayers to those impacted by the conflict. Many of our partners in Europe, including the Johanniterorden and the Order of Malta were able to organize drives of humanitarian aid for civilian refugees and internally displaced populations. In September, one of our Members was given the opportunity to do something more substantive and took it.



Aaron Byrd demonstrating trauma care for students (photo by Caitlin Barkus)

Most days, Dr. Aaron Byrd, OStJ, works as a simulation education specialist for the WakeMed hospital system in North Carolina. But with more than 20 years of experience as a paramedic, he was given the chance to provide trauma care and management education to people in Dnipro, Ukraine. In collaboration with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and the International Medical Corps, Aaron traveled almost 5,000 miles to provide this training. He arrived with a group of flight paramedics from Alaska and Colorado; nurses from Oregon and British Columbia; and physicians from Massachusetts, DC and California. The group spent about two weeks with Ukrainians representing a range of skill sets from doctors, nurses, and medics—both military and civilian—to common citizens who have found themselves on the front lines. They taught them the first aid and trauma care skills they needed to keep their fellow citizens alive after traumatic injuries.



Captured Russian tank outside St Michaels Golden-Domed Monastery in Kyiv

Aaron was first told about the opportunity three weeks before departure and was reluctant to go. It was difficult to justify leaving a comfortable life in the United States to travel to an active war zone. He knew that the group would be traveling through Kyiv and working about 90 miles from the front lines. Every day would likely be punctuated by air raid sirens and the uncertainty involved in conflict. After making his decision, it was humbling to be included in such an amazing group of educators and clinicians as well as dedicated students.

The Ukrainians Aaron and the group trained were so happy to have them there and so thankful for the life-saving knowledge that they were receiving. It was a unique experience, even for someone who has trained countless people. The classes were packed with engaged and appreciative students. The instructors were given hugs and sincere thanks. The students knew what it took to get them to Ukraine. It was a difficult trip and the conditions were stressful, but as Aaron said, "If the actions of our team save a single life, then the trip was worthwhile. I feel confident in saying that it will likely save far more than that." Living in the service of humanity, as we are called to do, has given him an experience he wouldn't trade for anything. Aaron put it this way: "When the opportunity comes to spread a little light in the world, you take it." Aaron is already considering a second trip to the country to save even more lives.

As the prophet Isaiah put it, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

FIVE RECOGNIZED ORDERS WORK TOGETHER IN UKRAINE

The unimaginable day to day stress of life in a conflict zone, coupled with ongoing uncertainty about the future, is leaving countless people in Ukraine suffering from trauma. Children and young people are amongst the worst affected. The five modern branches of the medieval Hospitaller Order have joined forces to help at least some of these youngsters come to terms with their experiences.

Since mid-November 2022, three mobile teams have been working in and around Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Beregova in western Ukraine, providing psychosocial support to displaced children and young people. The project is run by Malteser International and Johanniter International Assistance—the international aid services of the Order of Malta and of the Johanniter Order in Germany. The teams are staffed by the Ukraine Relief Service of the Order of Malta. For their work, six vehicles were purchased and filled with materials for group games, creative activities, as well as therapeutic games and toys for young children to create the right environment for providing mental health support.

"This project is important because it will help heal the invisible wounds that this war has left on hundreds of thousands of children and young people," said Fra' Alessandro de Franciscis, Grand Hospitaller of the Sovereign Order of Malta. "I am very pleased to see all of us joining forces to fulfil our mission to help people in need. It is a sign of unity, which is needed now more than ever. When the world is divided by conflict and uncertainty, it is all the more important that we Christians stand firmly as one family behind the cross, and shoulder to shoulder with those who need our support."

The six vehicles purchased by the mutually recognized Orders are stocked with therapeutic toys and materials for group games and activities, all geared toward creating the right environment for providing mental health support to children in war torn Ukraine.





Children engage in group play and activities that allow them to open up about their struggles during the war.

The six vehicles are on the road with the emblems of the five organizations, all bearing the white eight-pointed cross.

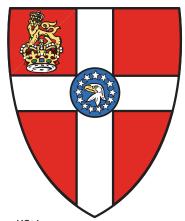
"This symbol is widely known as a sign of hope and safety for people in need. It stands for a vision of human dignity, especially in times and places of suffering," said Christian Meyer-Landrut, a member of the Federal Board of Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V. The project, which will run until mid-2023, is funded by the German Association of the Sovereign Order of Malta, as well as the Order of Malta Austrian Relief Service; the Johanniter Orders in Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, as well as the Swiss Johanniter Relief Service; and the Commonwealth Order of St John.

Together, these orders represent all legitimate successors to the original Hospitaller Order dedicated to St. John, founded to serve the poor and sick in Jerusalem before the First Crusade. The relief services of the orders are active throughout the world, where they help millions of people in need each year, regardless of their origin, religion, politics or nationality.

OUR EMERITUS GENERAL CLASS MEMBERS

During last year's Annual General Meeting, the Priory membership approved an amendment of the U.S. Priory Bylaws establishing the "Emeritus General Class Member" as a way of honoring our loyal and longstanding Members.

A list of Members eligible for this new status—any General Class Member whose combined age and years of membership equals or exceeds 90—was reviewed and approved by the Priory Honors and Awards Committee, and letters of invitation were sent by the Prior in November. We have received—and continue to receive—many acceptance of the Prior's invitation, and the current class of "Emeritus General Class Members" are celebrated below*:



Ms. Ann Mary Appleman, OStJ Mr. Victor Kennicott Atkins, Jr., KStJ Mr. Christopher Harden Babcock, KStJ

Mrs. Fred Bialek, DStJ Stephen Billick, M.D., KStJ

The Rev'd Sharon Calloway Bledsoe, CStJ Mr. John Garland Pollard Boatwright, CStJ

Mrs. Philip E. Bowles, DStJ Mr. Theodore Wayne Brown, CStJ Edward William Callahan, CStJ Mrs. Paul Douglas Camp III, CStJ

CAPT Winston G. Churchill, USCG (Ret), KStJ

Ms. Lillian Clagett, CStJ Mr. Burton C. Clemmer, OStJ Mr. Stewart Clifford, MStJ

The Rev'd Timothy B. Cogan, D.D., OStJ Ekron Cheslun Crow III, FSA Scot, KStJ Mrs. Mortimer Leslie Curran, CStJ Mr. Patrick S. DeMoon, KStJ

Douglas Warren Densmore, Esq., CStJ

Mrs. Patricia H. Dresser, DStJ

The Right Rev'd Philip Menzie Duncan II, DMin, OStJ

George H. Eatman, Esq., CStJ Mrs. James N. Finklea, CStJ Mr. Charles James Frankel III, OStJ

Irma Gigli, M.D., OStJ Mr. Peter Seipp Goltra, KStJ Mrs. Peter Gough, OStJ Mr. Robert H. Gutheil, OStJ Edward S. Hand, Esq., KStJ Mr. Stanley C. Harazim, KStJ

Col (Ret) Myron C. Harrington Jr., CStJ

Hugh Glen Hart Jr., JD, KStJ

Jack Robert Hutcheson Jr., MD, CStJ

Mr. John Peters Irelan, KStJ

Hardwick Smith Johnson Jr., EdD, KStJ

Gary Paul Kearney, MD, CStJ Mr. R. Frank Leftwich, OStJ Richard Dana Lester, MD, OStJ Mr. Charles Hoggard Maddrey, MStJ Mr. William Carr McCaskill, CStJ

Mr. Paul McKee, KStJ

Mr. Corbin Russell Miller, KStJ Mrs. Corbin R. Miller, DStJ Ms. Adele Petigru Moore, CStJ Warren Roger Muir, PhD, CStJ Mr. James Murphy, KStJ Mrs. John Napier, CStJ Mrs. Natalie Thomas Pray, CStJ

Mr. Howard Pyle, CStJ Arthur Julian Rawl, MBE, CStJ James S. Reibel, MD. CStJ

The Rev'd John W.S. Rick III, OStJ

Mrs. Mark L. Rippel, CStJ

James Michael Rockett, Esq., CStJ Dr. John Anderson Romeri, CStJ Mrs. Walter L. Ross II, DStJ

COL (Ret) Howell C. Sasser, Sr., KStJ

Karl Curtis Saunders, CStJ Ms. Jean Edwina Savage, CStJ Mrs. Elizabeth F. H. Scott, DStJ The Right Rev'd Mark S. Sisk, DD, KStJ

AA AA L C C' L CC' L

Mrs. Mark S. Sisk, CStJ

The Honorable Carl Jennings Frazier Smith, OStJ

Mr. Scott Andrew Smith, CStJ Mrs. Scott A. Smith, CStJ Mr. Phillip Rex Smith, OStJ Penlope Smith, M.D., DStJ Mr. Nelson Hunter Spencer, OStJ Bruce E. Spivey, MD, KStJ Patti Amanda Spivey, DStJ

The Rev'd Canon Anne Broad Stevenson, CStJ Chaplain (BG/Va) Richard Lyon Stinson, Dmin, OStJ

Mr. Michael Scott Swisher, OStJ Br. James E. Teets, BSG, Canon, OStJ Mr. Ronald Lee Thomas, KStJ Mr. Scott Gallatin Thompson, CStJ Mrs. Carol Jackson Upshaw, CStJ Mr. William R. van Luven, CStJ Mrs. William R. Van Luven, CStJ

Mr. Herbert Alexander Vance Jr., CStJ Robert J. Vergnani, MD, CStJ

Mrs. Nancy Marie Ranney Wolcott, OStJ

Mrs. John William Yago Jr., DStJ

^{*}as of January 31, 2023

PRO FIDE



"I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word...," 1

I don't know about you, but every now and then when I was a kid, and I

had gotten out of line, my father, or grandmother or teacher or coach would say something like, "I want you to go sit down and think about what you did," (or did not do, or said, etc.—you get the picture!). The hope, of course was that in that little moment, I would "come to my senses," and see the error of my ways and then set a course to put things right. And you know what—most of the time, it worked!

I suspect you have heard something like this a lot lately "this is a time like no other." For many—after two very difficult—very challenging years of isolation and coming out of isolation—of things not-normal, returning to some form of normalcy—this may be the first honest to goodness season of Lent that many of us have had since Lent of 2020.

So it might be safe to say we are about to have a "lent" like no other. Included in the words of the first service of Lent, 2023—Ash Wednesday—are these—... "I invite you to a holy Lent, by self-examination..." In other words, lent gives us a time to "sit down and think about what you did, or said, or did not do, or did not say...," Lent, my fellow Confrères gives you a chance to examine our lives, and for we Christians—more specifically, our Christian lives.

Now my hunch is, you may be quick to say, "More time to myself! I've had enough for a lifetime!" And it would be hard to disagree with that well-founded retort! But being the first—perhaps "full on" post-Covid Lent—it gives us another reason to consider what the days ahead offer us.

So, to go back to the invitation, perhaps this is a time to examine what we may have already examined in the last few years. What have you learned about yourself? Have you found layers of your life that you did not know exist? Have you dealt a blow to your temptations or given into them more? Have you used the excess "free time" many of us had to strengthen your soul, to serve your fellow man and woman, to hone God's gifts to you? Or, have you squandered this long season of opportunity?

Well, here is the good news—and **we do call the Gospel Good News** (!)—it is never, never too late to examine your life, to come to terms with things you might have done and left undone, said or left unsaid.

When Paul wrote the Church in Corinth, where a lot of Christ's followers were, frankly, not acting like Christ's followers, he offered these words, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves...," (II Corinthians 13:5).

Take particular notice of Lent's invitations—"... repentance (which you can only do on your own)... prayer... (which you often do with others, but can also do own your own)... fasting and self-denial (again...things to do on your own) and ... reading and meditating on God's holy word, (which can be done with others, or on your own)...,"

All of these "invites" are an opportunity to sit down, and think and examine; and then, as my elders were hopeful that I would do—consider those areas of your life that need to be strengthened with a deeper groove, or need to be released altogether. Here's another bit of Good News—when you discover that need for a course correction, you do not have to do it alone. "Surely I am with you always," (Matthew 19:20), was Jesus' final word to His followers. What does that mean? That means once you have examined your life, when you find yourself wanting—you have One to Whom you can turn to help you become the person God created you to be.

I think of all the revelations that lent may provide us, coming to know our need of Jesus, in every way, may be the most important. My hope during lent is not that you learn that you liked chocolate or bread too much; or even that you may need to up your commitment to prayer, Bible study and worship. My prayer would be that you (and I as well!) would come to see even more how vital it is that we each have a living, breathing, organic relationship with Jesus Christ.

In these post "Covid-Times," I have often heard someone say that they are "spent" or that they are at their "wit's end." That's not really a bad place to be when it comes to knowing what you need most.

Richard Rohr is a Christian therapist who writes extensively on the human saga. He gives us some wisdom to guide us in those "spent" moments....

"You cannot know it just by going to church, reading Scriptures, or listening to someone else talk about it... until

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¹ From The Ash Wednesday Liturgy, Book of Common Prayer, p. 265.

PRO FIDE continued from page 9

you bottom out, and come to the limits of your own fuel supply, there is no reason for you to switch to a higher octane of fuel... Why would you?

- "...You will not learn to actively draw upon a Larger Source until your usual resources are depleted and revealed as wanting. In fact, you will not even know there is a Larger Source until your own sources and resources fail you....
- "... Until and unless there is a person, situation, event, idea, conflict, or relationship that you cannot 'manage,' you will never find the True manager²..."

My friends—really, in the end, that's what lent is all about – finding the True Manager. Taking the time to examine our lives—really sitting still, getting out the proverbial backhoe and digging deep into that person in the mirror—gives us a chance to see our deepest needs and wants, and then taking the opportunity to turn our lives over to the One Who can meet them all—Jesus.

So—do not miss this opportunity—this lent to "examine...," it may be one of the best gifts of a "lent like no other."

Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum, The Reverend Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr., OStJ Sub-Prelate

 $^{^2\,}Richard\,Rohr, \textit{Breathing Under Water}\,(Cincinnatti:\,St.\,Anthony\,Messenger\,Press,\,2011),\,p.\,3.$