



Dear Friends and Associates,

You are, of course, very aware that vowed religious life exists in The Episcopal Church. But sadly, you are in the minority. It is a joke among us – which really is no joke at all – that we are the best kept secret in The Episcopal Church. It is a secret we want to share **widely** and with joyous enthusiasm. Talking up the presence of the vowed religious life in monastic orders and dispersed communities in our dimension of the Jesus Movement is what we might call good gossip.

The third Sunday in Epiphany, January 22, 2023, will be the first official Religious Life Sunday – an observance approved by the General Convention this past summer. Resources for the observance are available on this website: religiouslifesunday.org, including our first video, a list of vowed religious who are willing to make presentations about religious life, written resources, a hymn, and information about the religious orders and communities in the Episcopal Church. There will be links to further resources and more added in the future.

Religious Life Sunday is about providing resources for spiritual life and growth to your congregation. It is about letting people know that feeling a call from God might be about ordination and/or can also be about living monastic vows in a religious community. It is about opening up conversations about living lives of service and commitment in ways many people have not yet had the opportunity to consider. As essential companions of the Order of Saint Helena and as an advocate for religious life, you can play a vital role in introducing monastic life to your friends and clergy!

Please give prayerful consideration about how you can help us to spread the good gossip on Religious Life Sunday and beyond. We would be pleased to discuss this with you further.

Every Blessing,

Ellen Francis, OSH

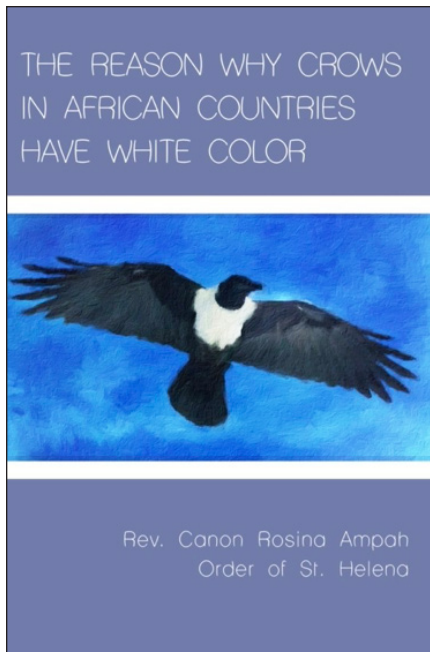


Religious
Life
Sunday

Jan. 22,
2023

CONVENT OF SAINT HELENA

414 Savannah Barony Drive, North Augusta SC 29841 osh.org sisters@osh.org
Office: Phone 803-426-1616 Fax 803-426-1208 office_manager@osh.org
We will notify you in advance when we know the guesthouse is reopening!



\$22.00 Available through the convent office, online booksellers and Barnes and Noble.

For almost 20 years, I have been finding opportunities for Rosina Ampah to tell her stories to children and adults in a wide variety of school, church, and community settings. These events have produced a universally enthusiastic response from hosts and guests alike. The leaders with whom I coordinate her visits usually beg me to alert them whenever Rosina is due back to their area. I have met people, especially children, who remember her stories, in detail, a year afterward. There is great power in the oral tradition that Rosina articulates so effectively!

—The Rev David Mesenbring
Episcopal Priest

Thanks to Sister Rosina, this marvelous collection of traditional Ghanaian stories and proverbs will intrigue you, make you smile, and prod you to think more deeply about your own life. Here is a deep well from which God's timeless wisdom can be drawn for us in our time.

—The Most Rev Michael B Curry
Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church

Sister Rosina's New Book of Stories and Proverbs from Ghana, West Africa

A Sample Story "The Reason Why God Moved So Far Away From The Earth"

An exceptionally long time ago, the earth and the sky were remarkably close together. The Almighty God lived close to us in the sky. On earth, there lived a toothless old woman who could not chew her food, so she decided to pound her plantain and cassava into fufu so that she could swallow them in small lumps.

Every evening she would take her mortar and pestle and pound her fufu, but in the process, she would hit the Almighty God with her pestle since the sky and the earth were so close together.

God started to complain to her about the situation, but the old woman did not pay any attention to the complaints. So finally, God decided to move further away from the earth rather than stay and take the punishment every evening. So, off went God into the distance, where the pestle never reached again. So, God was happy, and the old woman was happy, too, to be able to eat her fufu in peace. That is why God is so far away from the earth today.

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Children, a story like this one will tell us not to hurt one another because if we do, our friends or the people we are hurting may move away, and we may never see them again. Additional wisdom in this story would be how to solve a problem amicably, so each one involved would be happy and content, just like God and the old lady solved theirs.

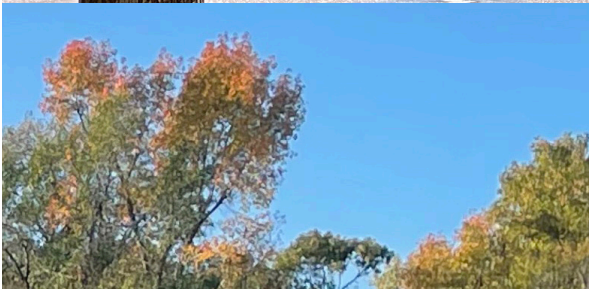
Sympathy is the key to adjustment for another person.

Honesty and trust create harmony.

Understanding brings peace!



Sr. Faith's
Fall Photos



Saying Yes

December 2022

"The Word became flesh and lived among us..." (John 1:14). Amid inflatable holiday characters dotting front yards, trees sparkling with ornaments, bells ringing for donations and plastic nativity scenes in church yards, there is flesh. Specifically, God in the flesh, born among us. Jesus was born of a woman in the way that all humans are born, accompanied by pain, body fluids and perhaps a lusty cry from tiny lungs. As with the birth of any child, it was a miracle, perhaps even a miracle of miracles.

As much as I love Jesus, my thoughts this time of year often turn to Mary, who before the pregnancy and the birth was visited by the angel Gabriel. While many have reflected on the message that Gabriel delivered, John of the Cross (1542-1591), mystic, priest and Carmelite friar, spoke to a different purpose for Gabriel's visit – not to deliver a message, but to receive the message of Mary's consent. Speaking of the great mystery of God becoming human in the Incarnation, John in his "Romances" wrote:

"God called the archangel Gabriel and sent him to the virgin Mary, at whose consent the mystery was wrought."

John's words suggest that it was not a simple case of God needing Mary's permission to act, but that it was her consent which was the very cause of the Incarnation. The mystery of the Word made flesh, of the divine born human, of the child Jesus born

to save the world, was wrought "at her consent." Mary's consent was and is an essential piece of the mystery that continues to unfold today. Her consent was the means by which God became human.

All of which leaves me wondering. What have I consented to which then bore God into the world in a tangible and living way? Where can my "Yes!" make a difference today?

–Sr. Miriam Elizabeth, OSH

How might you be called to bear God into the world in a small or large way? What are you pondering right now that might mean more love and life in the world?

Icon of The Annunciation by Sr. Ellen Francis, OSH

