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# THE MAGAZINE OF THE Society of Mary



American Region Edition

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[www.somamerica.org](http://www.somamerica.org)

# THE SOCIETY OF MARY

(Established 1931)

THE SOCIETY OF MARY springs from two similar societies founded in 1880 and 1901 respectively, which united in 1931. It has members all over the world and is not confined to Anglicans alone.

Where there are sufficient members in one place or area, they combine to form a Ward, with a priest as Superior and an elected Secretary. They can organize regular services, meetings and many other activities. Five or more members may form a Cell, and organize joint prayer and fellowship. Isolated members are joined to the Headquarters Ward.

The Society publishes its magazine "AVE" two times each year with details of pilgrimages, retreats, festival services, etc. It is free to all members and is the effective link between the various Regions.

The Society is not affiliated to any single Shrine or Marian institution, and is the only organization endeavoring to promote equally all the different aspects of devotion to Mary.

## THE SOCIETY RULE OF LIFE

The Society is dedicated to the glory of God and in honor of the Holy Incarnation under the invocation of Our Lady, Help of Christians.

1. Members shall keep a Rule of Life, which will include such special devotions as the Angelus, the Rosary, the Litany and Anthems of Our Lady.
2. They will pray for Departed Members of the Society and offer Mass for them.
3. They will take part in the Mass on the principal Feasts of Our Lady.
4. They will engage in apostolic and pastoral work, according to opportunity, under the guidance of the local Ward Officers and the General Council.

## OBJECTS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY

The Society was founded as an Anglican Society with these Objects:

1. To love and honor Mary.
2. To spread devotion to her in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian Unity.
3. To take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family life.

## FORM OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Send to the AMERICAN REGION MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

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DECLARATION

(which must be made by those desiring to be admitted to membership of the Society of Mary)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Revd/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)  
(block letters – Full name) (Delete as appropriate)

Declare that I am a member of the Holy Catholic Church and that I conform to her Discipline and Precepts, and desire to be admitted a MEMBER of the Society of Mary and hereby PROMISE to fulfill the Conditions and Undertake to Promote the Objects and keep the Rules of the Society.

*I enclose herewith my first subscription of \$15 for one year or \$250 for a Life Subscription.  
If I want a Society of Mary medal, I have enclosed an additional \$20 for that purpose.*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (block letters) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION by a Priest (who need not necessarily be a Member)

From my PERSONAL knowledge of \_\_\_\_\_  
(block letters)

I believe that he/she is suitable to be admitted as a member of the Society of Mary.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parish/Appointment \_\_\_\_\_

## From the American Region Superior

Dear Friends,

How often have we heard fellow parishioners or members of other parishes make such statements as the following:


“As Episcopalians we don’t believe in the Assumption or the Immaculate Conception.”

“Of course, in the Episcopal Church, we don’t use the Roman Catholic Rosary. We have the Anglican Rosary instead.”

On various Episcopal discussion groups on Facebook and similar social media, even of an Anglo-Catholic or “High Church” orientation, I encounter such statements more often than I would like. I do my best to correct them, pointing out that while Anglicanism does not require belief in the Assumption or Immaculate Conception, it nonetheless gives us the freedom to assent to these historic expressions of Catholic truth; or indeed that in my parish and many others public recitation of the traditional Rosary is a regular feature of our devotional life.

(I have nothing against the “Anglican Rosary,” by the way, and many people clearly find it a helpful spiritual aid; it just seems needlessly complicated and cumbersome compared with the elegant simplicity of the Dominican Rosary.)

Those expressing the ill-informed opinions quoted above are often sincere and well-meaning people. In many cases, they are clearly seeking a deeper engagement with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Communion of Saints. But they have been misled into believing that they would betray

In this issue we have decided to depart temporarily from our usual practice of printing the letters of the Superior-General and the Chaplain-General in the United Kingdom edition of AVE because they deal with matters specific to the situation of the Catholic Societies in the Church of England and are not likely to be of interest to American readers. Those interested in reading them may find them in the online edition at the English Society’s website at the following address. Many photos and other items, including coverage of the Society of Mary’s pilgrimage to Italy, are available in the full English AVE online. <http://societyofmary.weebly.com062/ave.html> 

their identity as good Episcopalians by assenting to Catholic Marian dogmas or taking up Catholic Marian devotions.

Against this background, I find it astounding that some clergy and others, who really should know better, cling obstinately to the belief that the Anglo-Catholic devotional societies saw their principal goals largely fulfilled in the 1979 Prayer Book and have so become obsolete. This is simply untrue. We have made some progress, to be sure, but much, much, more remains to be done.

Lately, I have been thinking about the mission of the Society of Mary. To grow and thrive as a Society, we need a clear sense of where we are going and what we are trying to achieve. A large part of the answer comes from the “Objects” formally enshrined in our Constitution:

To love and honor Mary.

To spread devotion to her in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian unity.’

To take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family life.

We begin to discern the mission of the Society of Mary by relating these Objects to our current situation in the Church and the world. The Objects are fixed; the mission develops and evolves as we seek to live them out in a constantly changing environment. It follows that any statement of our mission will be provisional, incomplete, and subject to further discernment, discussion, refinement, elaboration, and (ultimately) reformulation.

That said, it seems to me that the primary mission of the American Region of the Society of Mary at this time can best be expressed along something like the following lines:

“To demonstrate by teaching, example, and encouragement, that it is indeed possible to be a member of the Episcopal Church (or other Anglican jurisdiction) and practice a fully Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints.”

This formulation is nothing so formal or fixed as a “mission statement.” But it does supply a useful measuring rod for thinking about priorities in the allocation of our time, energy, and efforts.

We need to be establishing new wards and cells (and re-establishing old ones) as leavening agents of Marian devotion in parishes and dioceses. We need to make a special effort to support the many individual members of our Society who do not currently belong to wards and cells in their continuing efforts to persevere in devotion and witness to Mary’s indispensable role in God’s plan of salvation. We need to avoid an inward

looking “ghetto mentality,” constantly seeking instead to share the blessings of Catholic faith and practice with those around us.

Daily and weekly recitation of the Rosary, participation in our parishes’ celebrations of the Marian feasts, joining together in festivals, outdoor processions, and pilgrimages – all these activities serve to demonstrate that it is indeed possible as Episcopalians and Anglicans to exercise a fully Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. And that is what we need to be about.

Thank you for being members of the Society of Mary. Thank you for taking your part in this great work. I look forward to continuing discussions of how we can advance the mission of the Society in our time. **AVE**

In Christ and Our Lady,  
The Rev’d John D. Alexander, SSC, Ph.D.  
American Region Superior

## Society of Mary American Region Annual Mass and General Meeting

Saturday, April 30, 2016, 11:00 a.m.

Church of St Michael and All Angels  
1400 South University Boulevard, Denver, Colorado 80210  
303-777-5181  
saintmichaelsdenver@gmail.com  
More information: [somamerica.org/news.php](http://somamerica.org/news.php)



## The Society of Mary May Devotion Sermon

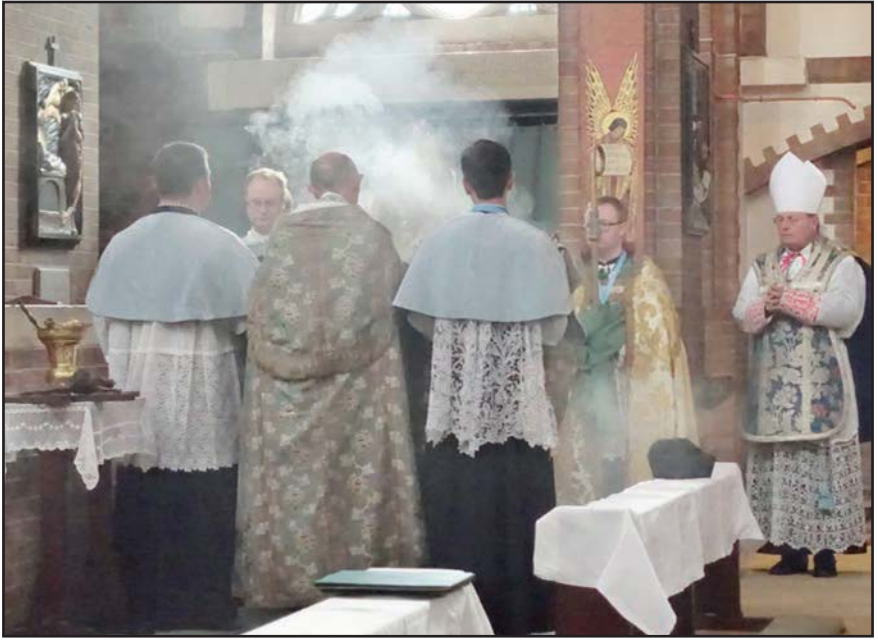
Given by The Rev'd George Westhaver  
St Silas the Martyr, London  
Saturday, May 2, 2015

**W**hy did the Lord first show His resurrection to a woman and not to a man? This is not a question driven by 21st century gender politics, but rather the great Syrian theologian, St Ephrem, contemplating the place of the Mother of God in the mystery of the Incarnation: “A mystery is here revealed to us with regard to the Church and the Lord’s Mother. The Virgin received the first beginning of His advent on earth, and to a woman He himself showed His resurrection from the sepulchre. Both at the beginning and at the end, it is His mother’s name that is there and resounds... It was a Mary that received Him on His coming into life, and a Mary who saw also the angels at the sepulchre.” St Ephrem helps us to see why Eastertide is as much the season of the Mother of God as

**The May Devotion and AGM was held at S. Silas and Holy Trinity, London NW5 on Saturday 2nd May 2015**



*The day commenced at 12 noon with a Solemn Concelebrated Mass in S. Silas, followed by a street procession to Holy Trinity*



Christmas and Epiphany. His praise for the holy God-bearer is full of wonder as he searches for language to describe the beauty and the joy of the Lady Mother of God, most high above all the earth. In the Saviour's first beginning, he says, "Mary is made for us a heaven bearing the divinity, which Christ, without leaving His Father's glory, shut up within the narrow limits of her womb ... She is the temple of the Son of God ... that mystical new heaven, wherein dwelt the King of kings as in His mansion." She is the new Eden, in which the tree of life is planted, the ladder of Jacob, whereby God has descended to us. These titles and forms of praise help us to appreciate Our Lady's unique role in the work of salvation and in the renewal of creation. She only is the Mother of God, "the bride whom the Father betrothed, the bridal chamber of the divine incarnation of the Logos."

In a beautiful sermon E. B. Pusey contemplates her as the New Eve, the one who undoes the knot of Eve's disobedience, and leads us back to Paradise: "She, being the Mother of Him Who is our Life, became the Mother of Life; she was the Gate of Paradise, because she bore Him Who restored to us our lost Paradise; she was 'the gate of Heaven,' because He, born of her, 'opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.'" Again, we hear the unique role of the New Eve proclaimed, but we are also moved to consider her as a model for the Church which she figures – what Christ has done in her, he must also do in us: "the gate of Heaven," because He, born of her, "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers". This door is opened for us, and we are invited to enter in. One of the great Old Testament figures of the Mother of God is the burning bush. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, speaks to Moses from the burning bush; the bush burns but is not consumed. In stained glass and icon this scene is presented as a type or foreshadowing of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary: just as the bush burned and was not consumed, so Mary gave birth while remaining a virgin, neither was she consumed by the divine fire.

On the one hand, this type pictures Our Lady's uniqueness— no other bears the fire of the Godhead in this way. And yet, the fire which burns in Mary, is the fire of the divine life which burns in all who have been co-interred and wrapt round in the life of the Risen Son. This is the fire of the Holy Spirit which does not consume us, and which yet is to burn up all that is mere earth, the stubble in our lives, whatever does not lead us back to God. The life which is born of the God-bearer must also be born and grow in us.

Lancelot Andrewes made this point with a wonderful image, describing the fountain of baptism as corresponding to the Virgin's womb. The





same life and “original” which He took in the womb of the Virgin, the same He placed for us in the womb of the Church, the font of baptism. I will conclude by considering how the Mother of God, His mother and ours in Him, serves as a model for us. Twice in second chapter of Gospel of St Luke, we are told that Mary “kept all these things, and pondered them in



her heart.” Here Mary serves for us an image of the inner life of the Church. Mary pictures for us the attitude of attentive listening which is the stillness or silence of the heart (Luke 2:19, 51). The great teacher of the mystical life, Baron Von Hugel said that “Man is what he does with his silence.”

Well, brothers and sisters, is that not a disturbing thought? What do we do with our silence, if we have any at all? Do we pick up our favourite electronic gadget – text, surf, face time, or, in other words, anything but silence? Or, perhaps we have less electronic forms of distraction and dissipation. But what do we do with our silence? In Our Lady, we see an image of “the one who listens, who listened to the word of God at the Annunciation, who “kept all these sayings, and, pondered them in her heart”, who told the servants at the marriage feast to listen to her Son. Mary is described as “a living heaven” or “wider than heaven” because of the life she bears, in John Donne’s words, “light in dark, and shutt’st in little room, Immensity, cloister’d in thy dear womb.” But this “Immensity” is not simply room in her body for a special baby, it is rather a spiritual landscape, the inner kingdom, the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity, and the place where she keeps and ponders all these things. We are invited not just to know about this kingdom, but to live in it.

The sayings and the things which Mary pondered are given to us especially in the Scriptures – they are placed into our hands that we may keep and ponder them with her. John Keble, one of the fathers of the Catholic revival whose fruits we enjoy and celebrate today, urged his readers to this kind of contemplation: “The words and doings of God cannot but be full-charged with heavenly and mysterious meaning.” The things which Mary contemplated in her heart, and the things and words that we are given to ponder, are full-charged with the heavenly life of Christ, the life and presence which is the life of the Church, His Body. Mary is our joy, wider than heaven, the Mother of life, in part, because she is the model of contemplative union. This is not a message for spiritual superstars, but for each one of us. We may come to discover the inner kingdom if we can make any space for stillness and silence in our lives, to ponder the Word which she kept first in her womb then in her heart: “It is not in heaven ... Neither is it beyond the sea, but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart” (Deuteronomy 30). This is the gift of the Mother of God to us – “Be it unto me according to thy word” and through thy Word.

The glories of the worship which we enjoy today belong to the reality which we may, with Our Lady, keep and ponder in our heart; they belong



to the inner life of the Church which she embodies. O divine living image in whom God the Creator has rejoiced, possessing a mind which is governed by God and directed to God alone, Earth-born little daughter whose womb contained a living heaven, a path of noetic silence: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit to the infinity of the ages of ages. Amen. **AVE**

*Father Westhaver is Principal of Pusey House, Oxford. In addition to its famed library (that of Dr Pusey), Pusey House has been the point of contact and instruction in living the Catholic Faith within Anglicanism for generations of Oxford undergraduates. While there were several Catholic parishes in Oxford, including St Paul's Walton Street, St Barnabas' Jericho, St Mary Magdalene's in the city's crowded center, and St Thomas' by the railway station (all but the first still open), Pusey House is able to cater specifically to the spiritual needs of undergraduates, both established Anglo-Catholics and neophytes. [www.puseyhouse.org.uk](http://www.puseyhouse.org.uk) –Ed.*

## Help a Teenager Get to Lourdes

The English Society of Mary sponsors regular pilgrimages to Marian shrines in Europe. The next pilgrimage is to Lourdes (in south-west France) in August of 2016. The English Society raises funds to subsidize the participation of teenagers – aged twelve to eighteen – in these pilgrimages. These young people often would not otherwise be able to afford the cost of the pilgrimage. For the Lourdes pilgrimage, they are asked to pay 80 pounds sterling for travel and accommodation; the remaining cost per young person is 379 pounds. So, the Society of Mary in England is asking its membership for contributions of 100 pounds (at the time of writing, around \$150) or more from donors to “help a teenager get to Lourdes.”

Unfortunately, such donations to an overseas charity are not tax-deductible in the United States. If, however, if you would like to contribute, the English Society website ([www.societyofmary.net](http://www.societyofmary.net)) has a page entitled “Lourdes 2016” where you can make a secure donation by credit card. I warmly commend this worthy cause to all Society of Mary members. **AVE**

Father Alexander

# St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town – Patronal Festival

Sermon by the Rev'd Paschal Worton, July 11, 2015

*The Church of St Silas the Martyr in London is a venerable Anglo-Catholic church of long standing. It has been host of the Society of Mary Annual General Meeting and Mass for some years, under the able supervision of Father Graeme Rowlands, parish priest and Chaplain-General of the Society of Mary. It is also the church of writer Charles Williams. Many photos of this splendid church, and more information, are found at [www.saintsilas.org.uk](http://www.saintsilas.org.uk). –Ed.*

Dear friends, it's a great delight and privilege for me to be with you today, as we gather in this beautiful Church to do something wonderful, to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. But we offer it especially in thanksgiving for your Patron, St Silas, who was sent by the Apostles to the Churches of the Gentiles together with Paul and Barnabas, and who by tradition became Bishop of Corinth and was later martyred for the Faith. This Festival actually began last night with Vespers and the Procession and Veneration of the Relic of St Silas, so I think that today it's worth briefly reflecting on the significance of relics. I believe this church has one or two!! The early Church venerated with deep care the bodies of the early saints and martyrs, often celebrating the Eucharist over the tombs of their slain fellow disciples and later, when Christians could build churches and worship freely, we have records of relics being joyfully acclaimed as they were carried triumphantly into a Church.

Yet there is much scope for the mocking and sneering of relics... For both true and false relics produced a brisk trade, with its scope for wealth-creation, within Christendom! One shrine boasted even of the plume of a phoenix, the tip of Lucifer's tail lost in conflict with a Syrian

hermit and the mark Cain had on his forehead! However, I especially like the 15th century Bishop of Durham who discerned that St Wilfrid's Episcopal ring had the power to keep cattle free from pestilence ... so he went about signing cows with the sign of the cross in his spare time. There you go, Bishop Philip ... the herds of Lancashire are waiting!

The Reformers, especially Calvin, Luther and Wycliffe, opposed the use and misuse of relics, often with great wit, as they felt the veneration of the saints might detract from the Scriptures. Perhaps we can understand

the lurking fear within some that relics can be a distraction from Christ's sacramental life within the Church. But, don't be fooled by reformish protests. Even within such circles one can be surprised... I was given a tour of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, where the holy and great evangelical vicar, Charles Simeon, preached and laboured so wonderfully. After seeing the pulpit which he graced for years I was taken to the back of the church where I was shown, with great reverence, Simeon's umbrella in a glass case! I suppose that might be deemed a 2nd Class Relic? It's ironic, however, that within our secular world whilst many dismiss holy things as "superstitious trinkets", there is also a devotion for the things associated with special people, e.g. Princess Diana's dresses, a footballer's boots in a Stadium's trophy case, or Elvis Presley's grave at Graceland.

Relics still hold a strong fascination for us ... we want to be near them, to even, at times, touch and kiss them in veneration. When the tiny bones of St Thérèse were being processed in New York, she managed to stop the traffic in 5th Avenue due to the thousands who turned out to be near them! Deep within the human psyche is this longing to be connected. It all begins within the womb, where the very first of our senses to develop is touch – before we can hear or see or smell or taste – we can touch. So if it is essential to our well-being to reach out to touch ... it is only natural for Christians to reach out too... we long for that which will link us with "the Holy"... we long for the touch of Christ Himself.


And this power of Christ, which is always Gospel for us, overflows from the Scriptures into every age through the lives of the saints. Their Christ-like holiness draws us towards healing and growth. We all know people who make us feel small, insignificant, and sinful ... in their presence we shrivel up, but really holy people don't diminish us, don't make us feel ashamed of our own shortcomings...they give hope. Meeting St Silas must have been like that ... here was someone, along with St Paul, who was able to sing and praise God even in shackles in prison, here was someone who, despite being beaten and flogged, was still able to be generous to his captors ... Silas could resonate with Paul's words to the Corinthians, "We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us".. And what that jailer perceived and what we perceive, in the presence of holiness, is the possibility of humanity being shot through with God's power and so we are strengthened, not diminished by this reality. And with the jailer and his family, we are summoned to a future, not a full-stop! We are reminded also that God participates in human

affairs. Within our Christian tradition we're always invited to see our story within the larger context of the Scriptures and especially the story of Jesus. The Scriptures do not end when we close the book on our Mass readings today; Jesus Christ continues to write His story within your story, our story, as the Church in this place.

Yet the relic of St Silas reminds us that our experience is more about fragments, fragility, and littleness than wholeness, strength or any height of sanctity ... In our taking up of the Cross each day, we're not natural martyrs, instead we mostly only manage to deal with splinters ... rather than carry the whole thing... and that's painful enough. With Paul and Silas we can feel pinned down by circumstances in our lives over which we have no control. Some days, when faced with people's need and the Church's limited resources we can feel a bit defeated. If we're honest few of us need to learn how to be anxious, we do that quite well, but what we do need to learn is how to hope ... Yes, we recognise the failures within any Church community, we know our parishes are not often places where we find Christian gladiators made of steel. But if sin and weakness are part of the reality of a parish so also is Redemption! True, hope does not depend on our changing moods, on being successful or in good shape ... Hope is not anchored in our everyday experience of struggle but in that power Paul talks of ... the power beyond ourselves ... This truth comes to contradict the tired outlook that some people have that nothing significant or fresh will ever happen in their lives ... their lives shackled and trapped, like some perpetual repeat of Coronation Street or worse, The Only Way is Essex!

So when we feel diminished, isolated or desolate we can cross over to Jesus' story and Silas' story and return to our own with a wider awareness that we are not alone. We are not solitary Anglo-Catholics digging frantically among our own ruins, ploughing for clues to discover why we ended up the way we are. As followers of Jesus, our fragility paradoxically but wonderfully, connects us to Him. At the altar, in a few minutes, we are offered fragile elements. A fragment of bread and a sip of wine, which are sufficient to feed us with God Himself. The Mass is both a celebration of the Lord's Presence and a recognition that we wait together for His coming in Glory. We wait, we loiter, within our fragmented Church as faithful Catholic Christians but, in a sense, we can do no other, we have no choice, we can't keep away ... for the magnet of holiness, at the Altar, opens us to God's very life. So, that's why we hang around shrines, Churches and holy places. We take our turn in God's neighbourhood

watch, we light our candles and throng around St Silas' relic, knowing that by its very nature a relic always points us to something bigger, to that from which it came. It creates within us a longing for the whole.

We wait in stubborn hope for the chance that, at this moment, in this place we may reach out and experience holiness. In celebrating St Silas we find God in the fragments, in the earthenware-ness of our lives, as he did, and we remain loyal to a vision of an unseen world which has come closer, faithful to paradise brought nearer and to that power from the Most High, which promises to take over and sanctify us, as it did our Patron. Amen. 

*Father Worton is vicar of St Mary's, Somers Town, an Anglo-Catholic church in London.*

## **Society of Mary, American Region Sermon at the Annual Mass**

Church of St Uriel the Archangel, Sea Girt, NJ

May 16, 2015

Given by the Rev'd J. Connor Haynes, SSC

### **Mary, the Mother and Image of the Church**

**I**n this “in-between” time, after the Ascension and as we await Pentecost, we have before us the picture of the first followers of our Lord gathered in vigil and prayer—the apostles and others, and specifically the Mother of Jesus, with the nascent Church to pray and await the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

The specific mention of Mary's presence reminds us that her vocation as the handmaid of the Lord did not end with the birth of Jesus, as people sometimes think. It did not end with Jesus' adulthood, as we might say that Mary's maternal job was completed; it didn't end with the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, or with his Passion, or even with his Ascension.

Her vocation and ministry is an eternal one: as Mother of Jesus, Mother of Christ, and Mother of his Body, the Church.

Mary could not have known what this vocation would entail—I'm sure most mothers would say that they had no idea what the job would entail!—and certainly Mary could not have known what this calling



would mean, when she gave her assent to the message of Gabriel. The prophetic words of Simeon, at our Lord's presentation in the Temple, taught her that there would be painful aspects to it: "a sword will pierce your own soul also." But she bore her Son, and raised him, and gave him to the world; saw him rejected and arrested and tortured; stood by him at Calvary, and shared in his sacrifice.

What distinguishes Mary's sorrows above those of others? Certainly there have been numberless parents, countless mothers, who have borne the grief of the loss of a child, who have seen their children suffer innocently and die. What makes Mary's sorrow different?

Our Lord's sacrificial death was unique because of who he is: not just a victim, not only an altruistic hero, but God's Son, offering himself for the salvation and redemption of all humanity.

And Mary's sorrows are unique because of who she is. The sword that pierced her soul was not only one of grief for the death of her Son, or one of grief for her own loss, but one of compassion for her people, and for mankind, who rejected the very One who had come to save. And here we should remember that Simeon's words in the Temple are an echo of the words of Jeremiah the prophet: "for the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded." Mary's suffering was a loving sharing in the sacrifice of Christ.

In meditating on the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, it is easy to go too far toward one extreme or the other: either that Mary did not really suffer, knowing how all would turn out, and was stoic throughout; or, that she was utterly devastated. Her suffering was real, her sorrows were genuine, but they were borne in complete trust in God's loving providence. And so, perhaps paradoxically, they were joyful sorrows, because she knew that in all things God was working for good. And, of course, her joy was increased with that of all of Jesus' followers in the glorious recognition of his resurrection.

Mary, the Mother of Christ's Church, is the image of what the Church is called to be and to do.

Like Mary, the Church is to bear Christ, the Son of God, to the world in Word and in Sacrament. We are to proclaim, in word and action, the saving love of God in Christ. We are privileged to share in this ministry, and in this sense Mary's hymn that we know as the "Magnificat" is the hymn of the Church: "he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden," and in this vocation "he that is mighty hath magnified us."

We would be dishonest, though, or blind, if we did not admit that there is pain in that vocation. Perhaps not as visceral as Mary's pain in

giving her Son to his Passion and to the Cross, but nonetheless real: sometimes emotional pain, sometimes spiritual pain, sometimes physical and even mortal, the suffering of martyrdom, as we find that the world to which we proclaim the Savior rejects him, rejects the Gospel, rejects the Faith, rejects the Church, rejects ... us.

As the Church shares in the image and ministry of Mary, she shares in Mary's sorrows as well: "a sword shall pierce your own soul also."

You may be familiar with images of the Mater Dolorosa, the Mother of Sorrows: images of the Blessed Virgin with not one, but seven swords piercing her heart, representing the seven sorrows of Mary: the words of Simeon at the Presentation, the Flight into Egypt, the losing and finding of Jesus in the Temple, the way of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the taking down of Jesus from the Cross, and his entombment. Some of these images of Mary are shockingly graphic, and not to my aesthetic taste; but as Christians, as priests, as Church, we sometimes feel that way too.

In the chapel at Nashotah House, on the reredos behind the high Altar, there are several figures. One of them is St Sebastian in his martyrdom, pierced by multiple arrows. I don't know why St Sebastian was selected for that place a hundred years ago, but it occurred to me later that it was a fairly appropriate image for a House that trains priests. But that isn't the kind of wounds I mean—suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous expectations and demands, and sometimes parishioners. Rather, that we are wounded by the intransigence of the world around us, and even among the faithful: the sinfulness; the animosity toward God, or dismissive lack of interest; the tragic refusal of the world to receive its Saviour.

We will be tempted to respond with personal anger and frustration, with condemning or dismissive attitudes. Or, we may grow callous, "harden our hearts" and deny the pain in self-defense. But if we're true to our vocation as Church, we will accept our sharing in Mary's sorrows, and her image shows us how.

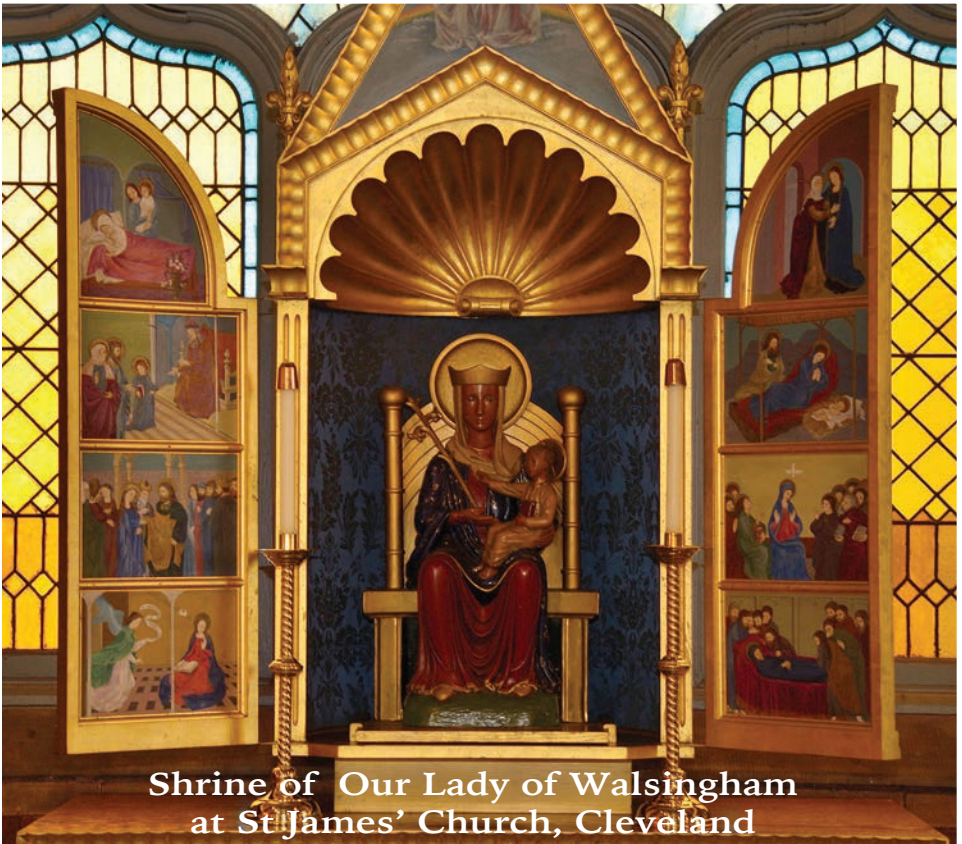
We are to acknowledge, and own, this sharing in the sorrows of Christ, and of his Mother. But we must be careful that this does not degenerate into frustration and anger—for our personal inconvenience or suffering, or for the challenges to the Church—but, like Mary, to accept and live these wounds for the world.

We are to weep, at least figuratively speaking, for a world that needs, but too often rejects, the Savior; but in humility and trust we must recall that it is not our mission to the world, but God's; and that ultimately, in ways that we cannot see or understand, in the hands of our loving God all will be well.

And—perhaps paradoxically—in the light of Christ’s resurrection and glorification, we are to live joyfully, even with the sorrows that will assail and pierce us; and so we will add our sorrows, with Mary’s, to the loving and saving sacrifice of Christ our Lord.

Finally, we know that we are not alone in this. In this in-between time, between Christ’s resurrection and the final establishment of God’s Kingdom in a renewed creation, Mary, the Queen of Heaven at the head of all the saints, is with us to pray with us and to intercede for us, for the grace of the Holy Spirit; so that the Church may live faithfully, as she did, as bearers of the Son of God to the world. **AVE**

*Father Haynes is Rector of St Mary’s Church, Burlington, NJ and a member of the Society of Mary American Region Council*



**Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham  
at St James’ Church, Cleveland**

**52nd Annual Pilgrimage  
to the Shrine of  
Our Lady of Walsingham  
at St James' Church,  
Cleveland**

**Saturday, June 4, 2016**

11:00 a.m. Solemn Pontifical Mass

12:15 p.m. Luncheon in St James' Hall

Guest speaker to be announced

2:00 p.m. Shrine devotions, sprinkling with water  
from the Holy Well and Benediction of the Blessed  
Sacrament

**T**he shrine was established in 1964 by the Rev'd Canon Vivan Albertus Peterson, MA, DD, as part of the celebration of his 45th and final year as Rector of St James'. He was also an Honorary Guardian of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England; and so the Cleveland shrine was dedicated in October of that year by Fr Colin Stephenson, who was then the Administrator of the original (A.D. 1061) Shrine. The first annual pilgrimage to this Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Cleveland took place in June 1965 and has continued without interruption since that time. Society of Mary American Region Council member Frederick T. McGuire organizes this pilgrimage under the auspices of the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham Regina Pacis Cell at St James'. For more information contact St James' or Mr McGuire at (216) 751-0706

## News from the Wards and Cells

### **Our Lady of Providence Ward, St Stephen's Church, Providence, RI**

Our Lady of Providence Ward continues to combine educational talks, pilgrimages, and outreach with our devotional activities, and to support the other devotional societies, both in our parish and elsewhere. Within our ward, we have a cell of the Living Rosary of Our Lady and St Dominic. In November, a number of us were able to attend the Annual Requiem of the Guild of All Souls at the Church of the Resurrection in New York City, and had a chance to converse with the Right Reverend Norman Banks, SSC, Lord Bishop of Richborough, the preacher for the occasion, who is the President of the English Guild of All Souls. Our pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Therese of Lisieux in Hinton, RI, was such a success we plan to advertise a second one for the whole parish in late Spring. And we had the opportunity to host coffee hour for the visit of the Right Reverend Daniel Martins, Bishop of Springfield, who gave St Stephen's Advent Quiet Day, and preached on Sunday. We look forward to hosting the Right Reverend Russell E. Jacobus, retired bishop of Fond du Lac when he comes to give our Lenten Quiet Day. It is a joy to see devotion to Our Lady growing throughout the area. Our Candlemas service, given in conjunction with our sister parish, St John's, Newport, drew people from many churches across the diocese and outside it. ~~AVE~~

Phoebe Pettingell, Ward Secretary

### **Our Lady of the Mountain Ward, St Columba's Church, Big Bear Lake, CA**

Our Society of Mary ward at St Columba's Episcopal Church in the beautiful mountains of Big Bear Lake in Southern California continues to meet once a month after Mass to pray the Rosary followed by a business meeting.

As we have for many years now, we continue to provide regular food to the many needy families in our community. This past Thanksgiving and Christmas 2015, as a part of Big Bear Valley's "Gifts for Kids and Holiday Giving Collaborative;" our Ward helped provide over 600 complete holiday meals and gifts for needy families here in Big Bear. This Easter 2016, our Ward will provide complete Easter dinner meals to 15 needy families.

Our Ward is very excited as our church will soon be breaking ground on a new building to accommodate our church's growing membership.



Another event that our ward members are anxious to do (for the first time) will be Big Bear Valley's Annual Polar Plunge. We plan to form a team and each ward member plunging will donate a \$50 plunge fee. All of the proceeds will be given to the Special Olympics. Last year, our community raised over \$90,000 on plunge day. May God bless all of our fellow Society of Mary American Region members. The accompanying photos are of a few of our SOM members (including Gracie, our newest...and youngest member) doing the work that we are called to do.

Lawrence Roberts, Ward Secretary

### **Mary, Ark of the Covenant Ward, St Mark's Church, Philadelphia, PA**

Our ward acknowledged our 15th anniversary this past September 8th, Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and we will soon be welcoming several new members. We continue to faithfully pray the Rosary each Saturday morning following Mass. The ward placed an arrangement of flowers at our Marian shrine for the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Candlemas), which is at the entrance of St Mark's Lady Chapel.

Daniel Devlin, Ward Secretary

### **Our Lady of San Damiano Ward, St Paul's Church, Pomona, CA**

Service and education remain a continuing focus of our ward's ministry. Two of our members travelled to France. While in Paris, they toured the Chapel where St Catherine Labouré witnessed the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She requested the miraculous medal be struck from the model revealed to St Catherine. We were privileged to see a video, photos, and keepsakes from the Rue du Bac Chapel. One member presented a lesson on the origin of the Rosary and its history of devotions over time, featuring a collection of old rosaries.

Mary's May Crowning in 2015 was enhanced by the new crowns crafted by two of our members. A new rosary also graced the church's Marian statues. The celebration continued with a ward-sponsored coffee hour. The feasts of the Assumption and Nativity of Our Lady were observed and concluded with festive coffee hours.

On the last Sunday of each month, the Society of Mary ward leads a labyrinth walk and Rosary with the parish invited to participate. Our ward prays the Rosary for anyone in need, sends cards to parish members, hosts a monthly coffee hour, and assists in any way our parish requests.

Carol Golden, Ward Secretary

## **Our Lady of the Holy Faith and Consolation Ward, Church of the Holy Faith, Santa Fe, NM**

Our ward meets every Monday at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at the Church of the Holy Faith in Santa Fe.

In 2016 our group will have met for twenty (20) years! To celebrate, several of us plan to journey to Denver for the Annual Mass and Meeting of the Society of Mary. This marks the first time in memory that the meeting is close enough for some of us to attend. And because this is the year we celebrate our 20th year of praying the Rosary at Church of the Holy Faith, we feel particularly blessed that some of us can attend the Denver meeting.

In September we honored our deceased members on the Sunday closest to the 8th. Each Monday we begin our service with the taking of intentions for loved ones, strangers, world crises, and parish needs. Each one of us writes down names and events to pray for all week during our daily devotions. A further celebration of our Ward will be held on Sunday, August 14th in celebration of the Church's honoring of Our Lady on her Feast Day, August 15th. On that Sunday a special reception will be held for the Blessed Virgin Mary and all of us who honored her the past twenty years. We humbly look forward to this glorious celebration.

We give thanks for growing devotion to Our Lady in our parish. Any visitors to Santa Fe are welcome to join us at 9:30 at the Church of the Holy Faith.

Mary Dare Ellis, Ward Secretary

## **Immaculate Heart of Mary Ward, Northeastern Illinois**

We continue to meet the first Saturday of the month. Each meeting begins by praying the Most Holy Rosary followed by Morning Prayer or a Mass. We had our July Picnic in August this year. August was a bit chilly with a forecast of rain. We had a wonderful sunny day for the picnic in Northern Illinois while Chicago had a downpour causing some of our friends to stay home.

Some of the members attended the Assumption Festival in Brussels, WI at the Church of the Precious Blood. Traditional Anglo-Catholic worship from the English Missal takes place. If you happen to be in Wisconsin in August, try to attend. After the Mass there is a buffet luncheon with traditional Belgian food, a raffle and bake sale. A wonderful time was had by all. To learn more about the festival go to: [www.episcopalfonddulac.org/church.asp?page=Gardner](http://www.episcopalfonddulac.org/church.asp?page=Gardner)




In October some of the members attended the Festival of our Lady of Walsingham (in Sheboygan). It is so wonderful to see so many Society wards in attendance. Grace Church was gifted with a new audio visual system. By next year, if you are not able to attend the feast, Grace hopes to have a podcast of the day's events. If you love traditional Evensong, Grace Church has podcasts to listen to at [www.gracesheboygan.com/index.php/gec-media/podcasts/sounds-of-grace](http://www.gracesheboygan.com/index.php/gec-media/podcasts/sounds-of-grace).

Our December meeting this year was very busy. We assembled ordo calendars as part of an outreach of the Ward. If you would like one, send an email to [sommaryil@aol.com](mailto:sommaryil@aol.com). I will add you to next year's list. Any extras may be sent on a first come basis. In the afternoon there was an Advent Quiet Day. A variety of meditations, scripture readings, questions to ponder, and prayer activities were offered. If you have extra rosaries you are not using, consider sending them to us for another of our outreach programs. They will be most cherished. Please see our website for further information at [www.societyofmary-ne-il.org/links.html](http://www.societyofmary-ne-il.org/links.html).

Linda Chase Brissey, Ward Secretary

### **Our Lady of Guadalupe Ward, Dioceses of Dallas and Fort Worth**

"We are evangelists, not vendors!" Thus spake Pinkie Webb, Our Lady of Guadalupe Ward Secretary at recent diocesan conventions at which members of the ward distributed rosaries and information. This is a traditional outreach activity for one of our largest and most active wards. This year, the rosaries were handmade by Brother Michael Bell. Our Lady of Guadalupe meets monthly at churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for confessions, Mass, and Rosary, followed by lunch and a program. 



## The Assumption of Our Lady

*A sermon preached by The Rev'd Canon Barry Swain, SSC, on the Feast of the Assumption at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England.*

In mid-Victorian days, there was a lady called Mrs Mortimer, who lived in Oswestry, in Shropshire, and for reasons best known to herself, she decided to write two large books detailing the customs and ways of all the peoples of the earth (in what would be considered to-day a very politically incorrect way!). One wonders how she knew all this, as she had never even been the few miles to the Welsh border! Extracts were recently published as a small volume entitled *The Clumsiest People in Europe*. Among them is this gem (given in Q and A format as in the Catechism):

- Q. What is the religion of the Italians?
- A. The Religion of the Italians is Roman Catholicism.
- Q. What do Roman Catholics worship?
- A. Idols and a piece of bread.
- Q. Would not God be very angry if he knew this?
- A. God is angry.

This came to my mind as I have just finished a lovely cruise through the Mediterranean on the QE2, and it is a journey which has, in a sense, ended here in Walsingham. Before I start sounding like Hyacinth Bucket, let me tell you what I mean. I conceived of this as a summer holiday, and so it has been. But along the way something different happened. I found that I encountered Our Lady everywhere I went. In the Jeronimos Monastery in Lisbon, begun in 1450, and dedicated to her, she peered out at me from the late Middle Ages as seen through the Portuguese eye. Vasco da Gama and other explorers spent all-night vigils there before her Shrine before they left for very uncertain waters. They saw in her a refuge, the Star of the Sea, who could guide them in unknown territory. Only over a few miles away, at Fatima, she appeared to three young children in 1917 in a very different world, the dawn of our modern world: a world of conflict, of terror, of the birth of violent class struggle and atheistic Communism. There the children first, with their pure hearts of love, and then thousands of the Portuguese people saw in her their hope for a future of love and mercy and forgiveness, rather than violence and avarice and conflict. At our next stop in Barcelona, we spent the morning at the great cathedral. Here the 13th century Catalan people lived in a frightening world, a world of darkness, plague, death, a world which was capricious and cruel, and life brief and unhappy. They took solace in offering their prayers to God,

# Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham



wrapped in Our Lady's tears for them, the love of a loving Mother. In the afternoon, we venerated Our Lady in her chosen sanctuary at Montserrat. Here, again, shepherd children were chosen to receive her – perhaps they were the only ones with hearts pure enough to receive her, ears open enough to hear her, and hearts large enough to love her. As long ago as the 9th century, they saw and heard her, and told the older shepherds of their experience. They brought the parish priest to the hills who also heard and saw. When they searched the caves of the serrated mountain high in the Pyrenees, they found the image of Montserrat, La Moreneta, the Black Madonna. Like the shepherds of Bethlehem, they heard angelic song and followed it to the Holy Virgin. They found a Mother of great power, crowned, and displaying her Son. How had the image come to be there in that cave? No one knows.

In the memorable phrase of the Acts of the Apostles, at last we came to Rome. There, at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the first church dedicated in her honour, Our Lady was waiting too. Here men had envisioned her in so many ways over the years. When the church was first built, perhaps they thought of her as an Empress, playing Helena to Our Lord's Constantine. She was stern, upright, virtuous. By the Middle Ages, she was a beautiful young woman, who inspired the courtly love of the Cavaliere. In Rome's great baroque period, she appears alone, exalted, crowned and wafted on high by angels' wings. There in the greatest Marian church in the world, in which the Holy Father every year to-day (at this moment) sings the High Mass, she haunts every corner. At Cagliari in Sardinia, I saw an altar dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. In the seventeenth century, a plague ravaged Sardinia, and the populace decided to have daily processions to Our Lady of the Rosary begging for respite. After 30 days of processions, the plague ceased. Finally, at Gibraltar, the shrine of Our Lady of Europe stands with Europe behind her and Africa before her, at the place where Christianity and Islam meet. Nothing could be of more concern to us today than this conjunction. And finally, at Walsingham, where nearly a thousand years ago, a lady of great means but more importantly a lady of great faith, entertained the holy Virgin.

What is the purpose of this reminiscing? You might be told that every culture, every age, every walk of life in Christian culture has seen in Our Lady who they wish to see. Critics have suggested that there is so little of her in the New Testament that you can see in her what you wish. And that, of course, is precisely true. There is so little of her in her that you can see whatever you wish in her, which is always Jesus. In her case, this was both physically and spiritually true: she was full of Jesus. When we turn from the self, from our selfish desires, thoughts, wishes, hopes and dreams and think for a moment, just for a moment, about God, we shall find that he is there waiting, waiting to be born in us. He is waiting to be born in us spiritually more and more

each day by allowing the Holy Spirit to move in us, as she did. He is waiting to be born in us physically each day by our allowing the Blessed Sacrament to come into our lives, as he was a physical presence in her life at the moment of the Annunciation. What happens to us as we receive the Blessed Sacrament at this Mass? He comes to dwell in our very hearts, our very centre, just as he came to dwell in her in the Holy House at Nazareth. She opened herself body and soul to him at the moment of the Annunciation, and if we open ourselves body and soul to him at the moment of our Communion, we shall find that he resides in us as he did in her. Never forget that after all, the purpose of the Christian life is to allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with Our Lord Jesus Christ as he did to Mary, and that receiving the Blessed Sacrament is how we do that in this life.

We see in Our Lady something different in every time and place: protection, solace, guardianship, virtue, tenderness, a mother's love, a Queen, a young girl bowing to an angel, a mother in a stable, a younger cousin rushing to help her relation in childbirth, the mother of a loving family looking after her husband and son, an exalted woman crowned with the stars who had never known sin's dominion. She is of course all of these, and each generation, each culture, has seen in her the woman they needed to see. They have seen this because she constantly points away from herself to her Son, and he is the same always and everywhere, yesterday, today and forever. Our Lady is infinitely fascinating, not because we have imagined it so, not because of what she is all about, but because of what she shows us, and that is always her Son. The experience of mankind with the world's most fascinating woman is that her love always renews itself, the renewed love she has for her Son, and the renewed love she has for us as the children he entrusted to her from the Cross. We all have sterling features of character, heart and soul, but with each one of us there are times that it is tarnished by sin. Her sterling virtues are never tainted, because sin never touched her. The shining young woman whose face mirrored the Archangel's radiance, was the mother whose face shone when the angels sang over her newborn child, was the protectress who snatched her child from Herod's reach like a lioness protecting her cub, was the woman whose heart was pierced by a keen sword of sorrow on Mount Calvary, was the woman whose smile and tears greeted her Risen Son. Does it surprise you that we find her irresistible? Her Son found her irresistible and there is no better judge of the heart of man.

At every stage of his life, she was near. When he was conceived in her womb, his heart beat with hers, and the Precious Blood he was to shed came from her blood. At his birth, the first human face he saw was hers. The first food he received was hers. The first human love he knew was hers. When he took his first steps, the hand that guided him was hers. As he carried his cross, he looked into her face for strength and support. Even as he hangs upon the

Cross, he is mindful of his Mother, and tells us to be mindful of her as our Mother. Finally, when he is risen from the dead, his glorified body surely took her in his embrace. And what reward is given to those who identify themselves so closely with Him? It is the reward of being in his presence forever. Such is her reward. At her Assumption, the heart that has so loved her, brings her to him. At her Assumption, she who saw his face first, sees it again and forever. At her Assumption, he takes in his hand the hand that guided him as a child and guides her to Heaven. The face to which he looked for strength and support in his ordeal, now looks on him on his throne in love. Her Immaculate Heart, which suffered with him, is now drawn close to his Sacred Heart. And at her Assumption, her own risen body draws near to him in Heaven, as once his Risen body drew near to her on Earth.

Birth and death are so similar. Birth is the introduction into this world after the life of the womb. Death is the introduction into the next world, after the life of this world. The circle of Life is always new in Christ Jesus and it is always new in Mary.

The Assumption is the mirror image of the Nativity of Christ at the first Christmas. In the stable, the Christ Child stretches out his arms to his mother, having just seen her for the first time. He looks up in love towards her, and she looks down in love towards him. There is no created being who is closer to him than she is at his birth, neither angel nor man, and he is physically entirely united to her. In her flesh and by her faith, with all the intelligence of her mind and all the love in her heart, she has brought the Redeemer into the world, mediated the Mediator to men. In the Assumption, at the end of her life, Our Lady stretches out her arms to her Son, having seen his Risen Body before his Ascension. She looks up in love towards him, and he looks down in love towards her. There is no one closer to her than he is at her death, neither angel nor man, and she is spiritually entirely united to him. And so, in his flesh and in his faith, with all the intelligence of the mind of God and all the love in His Sacred Heart, he brings his Mother physically into Heaven, mediating the Mediatrix to Heaven.

No matter how you picture Our Lady, no matter what role you see her in, or what part of her life you consider, the Assumption means that she is there in heaven...for you. She has finished her course, she has kept the faith, and a crown of righteousness was in fact laid up for her. She says to us to-day, "Look what God did for me. He that is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. He can do great things for you – let me help you!" **AVE**

*Father Swain is Rector of the Church of the Resurrection in New York, and a member of the Society of Mary American Region Council, and Superior-General of the Guild of All Souls in America.*



## Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament

Founded in 1862 to honor the presence of Our Lord  
in the Blessed Sacrament and to promote appropriate  
preparation and devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

### **Annual Mass and Meeting**

St. Timothy's Church  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
May 28, 2016

<http://home.sandiego.edu/~babar/CBS>

## Guild of All Souls



2016

## Annual Requiem Mass

Saturday November 12, 2016

11:00 am

All Saints' Church  
209 Ashmont St  
Dorchester, Boston,  
Massachusetts





**THE SOCIETY'S THIRD PILGRIMAGE TO SHRINES OF ITALY**

This took place on the third week of September 2015

**LORETO**

The first Mass of the Pilgrimage was at Loreto was held in the Sanctuary of the Holy House (Casa Santa) of S. Benedict's Abbey built around the cave.

*Statue of Pope Sixtus V, who was responsible for building the Church.*



*The Holy House in the Basilica of Loreto.*



*St. Benedict in the Cave*



S. Benedict lived for three years as a hermit in Subiaco and was ministered to by a fellow monk, Romanus, by letting down food by means of a long rope.

When his three years as a hermit came to an end he established monasteries at Subiaco before moving to Monte Cassino where he built another monastery and became its Abbot.





Top: St Peter's Basilica,  
Rome

Middle: Lanciano

Bottom: Manoppello



# A Little Pilgrimage to The Little Flower

By Phoebe Pettingel

Members of Our Lady of Providence Ward made a mini pilgrimage in late November to the shrine of St Thérèse of the Child of Jesus and of the Holy Face in Nasonville, Rhode Island. This little country shrine, connected to a small parish, is actually the oldest officially recognized shrine to Thérèse, since it was founded the year of her beatification in 1923. Initially, there was no thought of it becoming a shrine. Shortly afterwards, however, the parish priest told a terminally ill woman of the parish to place herself in the hands of the Blessed Thérèse. The following day, she was able to speak for the first time in weeks, and receive a fragment of the host. That afternoon, she rose from her bed, unaided, walked into the kitchen, and asked for food, which she had not been able to eat for some days. The doctors proclaimed her cure a miracle, the first of many recorded here.

Thérèse (1873-1897) is the most beloved of modern saints. Her *Story of a Soul* has been translated into almost every known language, while her “little way” of coming to Christ with the simplicity and humility of a child has appealed to both ordinary folk and philosophers alike. Canonized only 28 years after her death in 1925, she was declared the youngest Doctor of the Church in 1997 by Pope John-Paul II. The Carmel in Lisieux, France, where she lived from age 15 until her death at age 24, is the second greatest place of pilgrimage in that country after Lourdes, and one of the major shrines in the world. The conventional statue of Thérèse, holding a bouquet of roses, may seem rather saccharine, but in the photographs taken of her as a girl, and by her sister, Celine (Sr. Genevieve of the Holy Face), in the convent, her strong personality stands out. To read her writings, which include hundreds of letters in addition to her *Story*, some striking poetry (especially if read in French), and eight plays,



in addition to the accounts of her last conversations recorded on her deathbed by her sisters, is to be brought into her presence. She can be, by turns, down-to-earth, whimsical, passionate, thoughtful, light-hearted, serious, and profound, but always without a shade of pretense. Having lost her own mother to breast-cancer when she was 4, Thérèse always considered Mary her second mother. Her final poem, written when she was dying, refers to an incident from her childhood when she was very sick and the statue of the Virgin by her bedside seemed to smile at her, upon which she recovered.

*You who came to smile on me in the morning of my life,  
Come smile on me once more, Mother, the shadows fall.  
I no longer fear your radiance in heaven.  
I have suffered with you on earth; my only wish from now  
On is to sing, curled in your lap, of why I love you, Mary  
And say, again and again that I am your baby...*

### Little Therese

We first entered the church, a small red brick building, probably holding no more than 150 people at a time. At one time, the property also housed a convent and a school. The former is now a home for unwed mothers, while the latter has a gift shop and museum, neither of which was open, despite a banner saying, “Welcome.” In the church, we were immediately drawn to the shrine of the saint to the left of the main altar. Along with the familiar statue of the young Carmelite holding her bouquet of roses, a wooden case contains a reliquary with a primary relic of Thérèse, a tinted daguerreotype of her at age 3, and a French artist’s depiction of Veronica’s veil, a picture she kept beneath her habit, and from which she derived part of her name in religion, “of the Holy Face.” Nearby are photos of her recently canonized parents, Louis and Zélie Martin (October 15, 2015). An overflowing wicker basket contains petitions to the saint written by visitors. Elsewhere, the Virgin is represented by a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The walls of the church have been decorated by hand painted murals, somewhat crude but colorful and expressive. On one side, the ark of the Covenant; on the other, Moses receiving the tablets of the Law; on the rear walls, Noah’s ark landed on Ararat with the animals scattered on the hillside, and Jesus giving the sermon on the mount.

We next walked outside on to the grounds. We were immediately drawn to a life-sized replica of Scala Sancta (the Holy Stairs in Rome) in fieldstone, limestone and granite. Atop it is a plaster copy of the Limpias Crucifix from the church of San Pedro in Spain, where the figure of Christ is said to open and close His eyes. His Blessed Mother and St John stand on either side. Beyond this runs a path where one can walk the Stations of the Cross in

stone bas-relief tablets set in pillars of fieldstone and concrete, carved by a famous Boston stonemason. In the crypt under the Scala Sancta, there has recently been added a replica of the Holy Sepulchre and a chapel of the Mater Dolorosa. The presence of another statue of St Thérèse reminds her readers of her own dark night of the spirit she suffered during the last 18 months of her life. She had glimpsed a foretaste of it the night before her Life Profession, as she wrote to one of her sisters:

And our Lord took me by the hand and made me enter a subterranean way where it is neither cold nor warm, where the sun does not shine and where rain and wind may not enter; a tunnel where I see nothing but a half-veiled glow from the downcast eyes of my spouse. I gladly consent to spend my entire life in this underground darkness to which he has led me; my only wish is that my gloom will bring light to sinners.

Thérèse saw her primary mission as twofold: to pray and make sacrifices for the work of priests (about whom she had few illusions), and to pray for the salvation of sinners—she, who could not bear to see small animals killed, or even bushes uprooted because they were sickly.

Coming out of the “subterranean” darkness, we entered the garden of the Resurrection. Surrounding the Scala Sancta are life-sized statues of saints, many of them either significant to Thérèse—like St John of the Cross, St Francis, and the Archangels, or else ones for whom she has been particularly significant: Padre Pio, Mother Theresa (who chose her name in religion not from Teresa of Avila but from the Little Flower), and John-Paul II.

A little further on, we came to an outdoor amphitheater with an altar, much larger than the little church. Behind it, in the woods, parishioners have constructed a large twenty-decade outdoor rosary, which can be walked, much like the Stations. Each wooden bead is almost the size of a soccer ball, and strung on chains, suspended from the tops of stone pillars, which stand about six feet high, so that the chain, at its lowest point, hangs about three feet from the ground. A person of ordinary size can touch each bead while walking the rosary. Each decade is about twenty-five feet long, and each new mystery is marked with a wooden plaque with its title and a picture. The Luminous Mysteries, clearly added later, are curled inside the circle of the original fifteen decades.

A common aspect of most American Roman Catholic shrines seems to be the miniature replicas of at least several of the world’s great shrines. In an adjacent field, on a small hillock, we found Our Lady of Fatima with the three children in white plaster. Beyond that, on a second mound, stood Our Lady of Guadalupe with Juan Diego kneeling at its foot, both painted in brilliant shiny colors that brought a touch of Central America to the subdued New England landscape. From across the field, we could hear a rooster crowing from a nearby chicken farm. Thérèse would appreciate the way a small country parish has built

and lovingly tends this shrine where prayers have been answered and ordinary and extraordinary miracles have been performed by a young woman who died at 24. She has been called the most democratic of saints because her appeal transcends cultures and education. A mystic who did not see visions (excepting the Virgin's smile), she continues to instruct us in her "little way" to Jesus Christ, and to remind us that we are all Mary's children. **AVE**

More information: [www.sainttheresashrine.com](http://www.sainttheresashrine.com)

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## Holy Trinity and St. Silas School Pilgrimage to Walsingham

Grateful thanks from all Year 6 children at Holy Trinity and St Silas School. In June this year, I took our Year 6 class to Walsingham on pilgrimage and we stayed overnight at the Shrine. That in itself a remarkable statement, but I was absolutely amazed at the effect it had on every child, a transformation which they will never forget. Hitherto, we had only attempted a pilgrimage there and back in the course of one day. It was, appropriately, Corpus Christi, so we were able to have a Sung Mass of the Feast that evening and Exposition and Benediction the following morning.

We are so grateful to the Society of Mary for their financial support with this venture without which it would not have been possible. These are a few of the reflections the children wrote after the pilgrimage:

'My favourite memory of our pilgrimage is when we lit the candles because it was nice to know our prayers would last for the whole day. Also, I enjoyed going to the beach because we could do whatever we wanted...'

'The accommodation was outstanding. The Holy House was really cool because back when Mary was around houses were so small.'

'Going to the farm was really fun because we saw lots of animals...The food was lovely and very clean; there was also a wide selection.'

'My favourite memories of our pilgrimage are the Abbey ruins, because you could imagine how it was...'

'When we were praying to Our Lady of Walsingham, I knew my dad was being prayed for and it made me really happy.'

'I enjoyed going to Mass in the evening, but it was very hard to sing without the organ. I loved going to other people's rooms but it kind of got out of control' (It did not.....! Fr Rowlands.) **AVE**