



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
Society of Mary



American Region Edition

Annunciation 2017

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.

From the American Region Superior

Much is happening in the American Region of the Society of Mary! Our membership now numbers more than 660 individuals and households. Almost every week we receive inquiries from individuals, groups, and parishes interested in joining the Society.

At the end of 2016, there were 23 active Wards and Cells across the United States, from Providence, Rhode Island, to San Diego, California. In the past two years, the American Region Council has approved the formation of new Wards in Dunwoody, Georgia; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Marshall, Virginia; meanwhile, new Cells have formed or are forming in south-central Illinois; northwest Indiana; Raleigh, North Carolina; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and Cypress, Texas.

Members of the Society not affiliated with an active Ward or Cell belong to the “General Ward,” of which the Superior is the American Region Chaplain, Fr. Russell A. Griffin, SSC. In a new initiative designed to reach out especially to the General Ward, Fr. Griffin sent an email newsletter in December to all the members of the Society whose email addresses we have. We plan to send these e-newsletters on a regular basis. Regardless of whether you are a member of a specific Ward or Cell or the General Ward, you are welcome to notify our Membership Administrator, Lynne Walker (membershipadministrator@somamerica.org), of your email address so that we can update our records accordingly and add you to the distribution list.

A word to Ward and Cell Superiors and Secretaries: Please actively encourage all participants in your group to join the Society of Mary if they are not already members, and to keep their membership current if they are. In the past several months, we’ve updated the website (somamerica.org) to make possible online (paperless) joining and payment of dues.

Also, if a report from your Ward or Cell does not appear in this issue of AVE, please be in touch with the new Editor of AVE, Phoebe Pettingell (editorofave@somamerica.org), so that your news can be featured in future issues. One of our goals in the coming year is to begin strengthening communication between the Council and the Wards and Cells where the vital work and witness of the Society of Mary takes place in so many different communities.

As I relate elsewhere in this issue of AVE, in December I traveled to Dallas-Fort Worth for a very enjoyable visit to the Our Lady of Guada-

lupe Ward. If you would find helpful a visit from me, or one of the other Officers or Council Members, please do let us know. My travel schedule (and budget) is limited; but I am eager to visit local Wards and Cells whenever I can.

Last but not least: our 2017 Annual Mass and Meeting takes place at 11 a.m. on Saturday 6 May at All Saints' Church, Ashmont, in Boston, Massachusetts. Please make every effort to attend if at all possible. The Mass will include the Rite of Admission of New Members to the Society; all who have recently joined but have not been formally admitted are encouraged to contact me so that we may include you in this part of the liturgy. Please email me (superior@somamerica.org) if you would like to participate in this way. **AVE**

With all blessings in Christ and Our Lady,
The Rev'd John D. Alexander, SSC, Ph.D.
American Region Superior



Letter from the American Region Chaplain

The Annunciation: Mary's Yes to Life

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to visit Nazareth in Galilee. While there, I was blessed to spend a very short time in prayer at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation. This Church stands over the stream where our Blessed Lady would daily collect water for her family and for the household chores. This site is called "Mary's Well."

Not too far from Mary's Well is the Basilica of the Annunciation, built over the dwelling of Mary's home. In the basilica is the inscription, *Verbum Caro hic Factum est*, "Here the Word became flesh." It is a constant reminder that on this site the angel appeared to Mary and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:27). Mary's response to the angel's announcement would forever change the world. In her "Yes," in her *Fiat*, in her "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38), the author of Life entered into our world.

Unlike Mary, Eve in the book of Genesis grasped at the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In this act of disobedience, Eve

made the claim that she would be the criterion of right and wrong. Her will determined the nature of what is good and just. Every one of our spiritual and moral problems flow from this primordial sin.

Unlike Eve, Mary despite her fears and uncertainty over how this promise from the angel could be fulfilled, nonetheless answered, “Yes.” She never asked the question, “Why?” but instead, “How shall this be?” (Luke 1:34). Mary’s response is an openness to life, to the Author of Life. The Church Fathers saw Mary as the “New Eve,” the new mother of all the living. It has been said that the angel’s “Ave” reversed “Eva.”

Sadly, in our culture today, it is rare to hear the obedient words of our Blessed Lady. Instead, we hear the disobedient cry of Eve. It is not a cry of submission and obedience to God. It is the voice of a culture that cries out not “Let it be done unto me according to your will” but rather decrees, “I am the center of my life, because my life is all about me. My ego sets the course of my life.”

St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) writes, “Today we too find ourselves in the midst of a dramatic conflict between the ‘culture of death’ and the ‘culture of life’. But the glory of the Cross is not overcome by this darkness; rather, it shines forth ever more radiantly and brightly, and is revealed as the centre, meaning and goal of all history and of every human life.” (Chapter 2, 50.)

These are the words of the Church, of the Catholic Faith, which always speaks for life, not death. Mary, in her obedience to God and through her “yes,” chooses life. She yields herself to the will of God. These words of life are also echoed in the words of Jesus at the first Eucharist and by the priest at every Mass, “*Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you.*” “*This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you...*” God, who offered Himself on the Cross for the life of the world, now offers Himself in the Eucharistic Bread and Wine.

Reflecting upon the Annunciation and Mary’s “Yes,” we are called to reflect on our own vocation. When we live out the words of our blessed Lady in our lives, “Let it be done to me according to your will,” we offer ourselves to embrace God’s call, always being open to His will for us.

St. John Paul II reminds us: “The one who accepted ‘Life’ in the name of all and for the sake of all was Mary, the Virgin Mother; she is thus most closely and personally associated with the Gospel of life. Mary’s consent at the Annunciation and her motherhood stand at the very beginning of the mystery of life which Christ came to bestow on humanity (cf. Jn 10:10). Through her acceptance and loving care for the life of the Incarnate Word,

human life has been rescued from condemnation to final and eternal death.” (*Evangelium Vitae*, Conclusion, 102.) **AVE**

Fr. Russell A. Griffin, SSC is Rector of the Church of St. Uriel the Archangel, Seagirt, New Jersey



From the Editor

As many of you have heard, Adam Barner has stepped down as editor of *Ave* after many years of excellent and faithful service. Fortunately he remains a valued member of the Society of Mary Council.

Let me introduce myself: I am Phoebe Pettingell, the new editor. I am also the Ward Secretary of Our Lady of Providence at S. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Providence Rhode Island, where I also serve on staff as Sacristan and edit the parish magazine, *The S. Stephen*.

In the previous year, a committee led by Adam discussed how *Ave* might better serve the Society of Mary American Region. Since the English edition of *Ave* is available on the web in full color, it has been decided to devote our edition more to our own Province, with occasional articles of general interest from the English edition. This current edition brings several fascinating articles around the theme of pilgrimage. One is by our Superior, Father John Alexander, who, with his wife Elizabeth, participated last summer in the English Society of Mary’s Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Paul Cooper describes a pilgrimage to an American shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Father Barry Swain has given permission to reprint the text of a sermon he preached at the Church of the Ascension, Rockville Centre Long Island for their Walsingham Festival. As usual, we include reports from some of our Wards engaged in a variety of activities for the glory of Mary. And finally, we reprint a report of Fr. Graeme Rowlands, Chaplain of the English SoM, on the Ecumenical dimension of Mary.

Finally, I hope you will send me pictures of your Lady Shrines or icons in your various parishes. As you will have noticed, our cover is now in color and we would like to use such pictures for future covers of *Ave*. The cover picture of the current issue features a statue of Virgin and Child from All Saints, Ashmont, in Boston: the site of our Annual Mass and

Meeting on 6 May, 2017. I look forward to articles you may submit, as well as reports of Marian activities from your Ward or parish. You may contact me at any time at editorofave@somamerica.org 

Faithfully yours in Christ and our Blessed Lady,

Phoebe Pettingell



Officers of SoM at Lourdes



From left to right: Fr. Simon Morris, Member of the English SoM Council; Fr. Graeme Rowlands, Chaplain General; Bishop Robert Ladds, Superior-General; Fr. John D. Alexander, American Region Superior.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes

Some Reflections on Pilgrimage

Fr. John D. Alexander

A pilgrimage is not a vacation. That is the first point to get clear. Even though some historians have described medieval pilgrimages as the period equivalent of holiday package tours, there was, and is, a real difference.

On the morning of August 1st, in the departure lounge at Stansted Airport in Essex, England, the priests in charge of the Society of Mary pilgrimage to Lourdes—Frs. Graeme Rowlands and Simon Morris—handed out the booklets containing our itinerary and the liturgical texts of all the Masses and devotions we would be undertaking over the next five days. We now had our marching orders. This was going to be a working trip—but the work would be of a spiritual nature.

The schedule was full. Our package included three (rather mediocre) meals each day in our otherwise well-appointed and comfortable hotel, so there was no real opportunity to sample the cuisine in the local restaurants. But eating together allowed us to get to know one another and fostered a sense of community among the eighty or so adults in our group, who had come from parishes all over England. (The nearly forty teenagers in our pilgrimage were staying separately with their chaperones at the Lourdes Youth Village.) My wife Elizabeth and I were the sole representatives of the Society's American Region.

The itinerary allowed little time for sightseeing or shopping on our own. During the course of the five days, Elizabeth and I managed to squeeze in two individual visits to the Grotto where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette. On Thursday morning I went off by myself into the town to visit the parish church, the house of Bernadette, and the shop of the *Artisans des Monasteres de Bethléem*, whose sculptures and carvings I have admired for some years. Other than that, our time was taken up with official pilgrimage activities, including our group's daily concelebrated Mass, participation in shrine devotions such as the Eucharistic procession and torchlight procession of Our Lady, and two half-day excursions to historic churches in nearby towns and villages in the spectacular terrain of the French Pyrenees.

In some ways, a pilgrimage resembles a traveling group retreat. Early in the week, I realized that I needed to make a conscious decision to sur-



Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Lourdes

render to the program and participate in the scheduled activities whether I felt like it or not. Occasionally I did not feel like it, and would rather have slept in, or taken myself off on my own. Countering that individualistic impulse was the sense of obligation I felt to make a good showing on behalf of the Society on our side of the pond. Most of all, however, I realized that going on pilgrimage requires the faith and trust that sacrificing a measure of freedom in this way brings the greatest blessings in the end—and often in completely unexpected ways.

We were in Lourdes just a week after the murder of Père Jacques Hamel in Rouen, and three weeks after the atrocity in Nice where a terrorist drove a truck through the crowds celebrating Bastille Day, killing over eighty people. I approached the pilgrimage with a bit of trepidation; at that moment France seemed a somewhat unsafe place, particularly for priests.

Nonetheless, I wore my clergy shirt and clerical collar for most of the pilgrimage. Some of the English priests, especially the younger ones, wore their cassocks all the time. I felt a bit like a marked man: if terrorists struck we would be obvious targets. But walking about the streets of the town, and in and out of the vast shrine grounds, I experienced an unexpected sense of peace. Here more than anywhere, now more than ever, it seemed we had a special obligation to wear our clericals and identify ourselves visibly as who we were.

For clergy and laity alike, badges of identity are an ancient aspect of pilgrimage. Virtually all our group's members displayed their Society of Mary medals suspended on the distinctive blue ribbons worn about our necks. Many of the thousands of pilgrims from all over Europe who had come to Lourdes that week were similarly sporting various emblems, such as brightly colored kerchiefs, or polo shirts and baseball caps emblazoned with the name of their groups.

Such markers of Catholic identity were not at all out of place. With streets lined with hundreds of garish shops selling what the British call “religious tat,” Lourdes is, for better or worse, an unmistakably Catholic environment. When I checked into the hotel, the woman behind the counter warmly greeted me: “*Bonjour, mon Père!*” Similar salutations recurred through the week.

It is difficult to convey the sheer numbers of pilgrims thronging the streets of this remote provincial town—thirty miles from the Spanish border—which boasts the highest number of hotel rooms of any city in France after Paris. After we attended Tuesday morning's International Mass in the cavernous underground Basilica of Saint Pius X, I asked Fr.

Rowlands how many he reckoned had been in attendance. “Oh,” he replied, “it was a bit light today: I’d say no more than 15,000.”

Here was a source of great encouragement. Coming to a pilgrimage center like Lourdes, one experiences a temporary reversal of the secularization that characterizes most of our home environments: here we realize that we are not alone after all. Many thousands of the faithful are with us, in this place, now. There is strength in numbers. An escape from reality? Maybe. Or perhaps a foretaste of a more profound reality. Pilgrimages to holy places are, after all, figures of the Church’s journey through this world and this life towards heaven.

My first day or so in Lourdes, I was tempted to be put off by the seemingly stark contrast between the sheer simplicity and poverty of Bernadette’s original encounter with the Virgin at the Grotto of Massabielle and the commercialism of this bustling town, with its bright lights, teeming crowds, and endless rows of shops selling religious merchandise of questionable taste. But I soon realized that this supercilious impulse was utterly wrongheaded. Mary had instructed Bernadette, “*Go, tell the priests to come here in procession and to build a chapel here.*” Whatever else is important or unimportant to Our Lady, shrine churches and liturgical processions are high on her list of priorities. It would be a profound mistake to think of this place’s pilgrimage industry as an ultimately futile attempt to retrieve a young woman’s fundamentally un-retrievable encounter with the supernatural. On the contrary, *this* was the point of *that*. The Virgin had appeared not to give Bernadette a sublime spiritual experience as an end in itself, but rather to make her a messenger. What Lourdes has become is the fulfillment, not the negation, of Bernadette’s mission—a place where people come by the millions to find God, renew their faith, and receive special graces of healing.

Three moments stand out in my recollections. During Mass on the day we arrived, a teenage girl from our group came forward after the homily to read a brief account of the first apparition on February 11, 1858. The English Society of Mary has made it a priority to enable teenagers (who often come from inner-city parishes in deprived areas) to join in its Lourdes pilgrimages. As she read, I realized with a surge of emotion that she was not much older than Bernadette herself had been—fourteen years of age—at the time of the apparitions. Bernadette was among the poor, scorned, and marginalized of her society. She didn’t even speak French; Our Lady conversed with her in her native Gascon Occitan (a *language* and not “the local dialect”). For decades, the French found this provincial linguistic aspect of

the apparitions embarrassing, and tried to downplay it; but today they celebrate it in the inscription carved on the pedestal on which the Statue of Our Lady stands in the Grotto where she appeared, “*Que soy era Immaculada Concepciou*” (I am the Immaculate Conception).

A day or so later, I approached the Grotto itself for the first time. The cloudless August afternoon was hot and still. Just as I came into sight of the Grotto, there came the gust of a cool breeze, funneled along the valley of the River Gave. Immediately I remembered that Bernadette had heard a rustling of wind on a similarly still day—albeit a cold and foggy February day—just before the first apparition. The place’s holiness suddenly became overwhelming. Finding a spot on one of the benches facing the Grotto, I fixed my gaze on the statue of Our Lady in her niche, and set about reciting the Rosary on behalf of all the people back home who had requested my prayers. Hundreds of pilgrims were present, milling about



Young Pilgrims with the Society of Mary Banner at Lourdes, August 2016

and filing in and out of the Grotto, but they all seemed very far away.

Later that afternoon, our pilgrimage group celebrated Mass in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception—the beautiful and very French neo-gothic church that dominates the shrine grounds. The willingness of the Roman Catholic shrine administration to welcome a Society of Anglo-Catholics to worship in its consecrated spaces is a remarkable gesture of ecumenical hospitality. Following the homily, the celebrant invited members of the congregation to come forward to receive the laying-on-of-hands with prayer for healing at the sanctuary steps and, if they wished, the Anointing of the Sick in one of the side chapels. As one of the concelebrating priests, I found myself standing next to Bishop Robert Ladds, Superior-General of the Society, administering the laying-on-of-hands to the dozens of pilgrims who came forward.

To my great surprise, as the last members of the congregation returned to their seats in the nave, Bishop Ladds turned and asked me to lay on hands and pray for him, which I found enormously humbling. Then, on an impulse, I asked him to do the same for me, and he obliged. When this action was completed, I suddenly realized as I returned to the concelebrants’ bench that I had indeed received a healing for which it had never even occurred to me to ask. An anxiety I had been carrying around for many months was gone, for good. Thanking God, I wondering how many others in our pilgrimage group, and indeed among the many thousands of pilgrims present in Lourdes that day, had received similar unexpected blessings. **AVE**



Sermon at the Walsingham Festival Church of the Ascension

Rockville Centre, Long Island, New York, October 15, 2016

The Rev'd Canon Barry E.B. Swain, SSC

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

In some ways, it might seem very odd to you that across the wide Atlantic Ocean, in a country which prides itself on its Independence, and in a “rational” age, people would gather, as they are today in Sheboygan,

Wisconsin; in Cleveland, Ohio; in Rockville Centre, Long Island; at Walsingham itself, and other places, to celebrate an event which took place nearly a thousand years ago.

If you are not a Christian, the story of this event is patently ridiculous, as it seems an emotional story most likely resting on a psychological phenomenon, and the story itself is most likely fabricated. Fair enough. But we are Christians. And to us, the test is different: it is the one Our Lord recommends over and over: by their fruits ye shall know them, in other words,



Walsingham Shrine, Church of the Ascension, Rockville Centre, Long Island

what comes out of something? What comes from someone? It's not the words that matter, it's what happens that tells you if something or someone is of God. Over a thousand years nearly, the fruits of this encounter have been extraordinary. For the unbeliever no explanation is possible; for the believer, no explanation is necessary.

The bare facts are these. In 1061, Our Lady appeared to the Lady Richeldis de Faverches, the Lady of the Manor, in Walsingham, in Norfolk. She asked her to build a replica of the Holy House of Nazareth in which she had grown up and in which the Archangel Gabriel had appeared to her to relay God's message that he invited her to accept the vocation of becoming the Mother of his own Divine Son as a human being. We call this the Incarnation, and it is the central doctrine of Christianity. Without it, everything else we believe in is absurd. With it, everything else we believe must be true. It changed the world, and man's relationship to God, irretrievably. And it is forever because Our Lord is today, in Heaven, a man, and therefore because each of the persons of the Trinity is equal to the other two, God is Human as well as Divine. That earth-shaking truth is the bedrock of our Faith: *Et verbum caro factum est*, The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. That is what happened in the Holy House at Nazareth.

Now why did Our Lady choose Richeldis? Well in one sense, we'll never know exactly. We cannot know the secrets of her heart still less all about God's plans. One reason, I am sure, is that she was a woman, and like herself had a son. Richeldis had a son, Geoffrey, who was a Crusader, and her constant fear for many years is that he would be killed in the service of God. That was a feeling and a situation which Our Lady knew only too well. Also, like the Holy Family, Richeldis was an immigrant. We can tell from her name that she was Norman French, and since we are five years before the Norman Conquest, that means that she had chosen to move to England, most likely with her father or her husband. They lived in a foreign country, and spoke as their mother tongue a foreign language, Norman French, not the Anglo-Saxon spoken by her servants, her neighbors and the townsfolk. Though she was not poor, certainly, she would have been unpopular, disliked and distrusted. Norman French people were streaming into England at that time, and personal, social and commercial connections between England and Norman France were growing all the time. King Edward the Confessor had a mother who was the daughter of the Duke of Normandy, and it was through that connection that William the Conqueror was to claim the English throne upon his death five years later, having defeated and killed his rival, Harold, a relation of the King's on the Anglo-Saxon side of his family. When people

fear another group of people with a different culture, and fear that they threaten their country, their culture and their livelihood, it can be a difficult situation that quickly grows out of control.

But the central reason she chose Richeldis, I believe, was that Richeldis had already made a home for Jesus and Mary in her heart. For a thousand years then, and the thousand years since, that is what all of us Christians are to do: create a home, a sanctuary, for Jesus and Mary in our hearts. Like Richeldis, we have the same means: The Seven Sacraments, God's holy word, the intercession and writings of the Saints, our own personal prayer life, and the community of the faithful which we call the Church. Now, you must never make the mistake that the Church of the Ascension, Rockville Centre, is "the church". The Church is the body of believers throughout the world today, as well as those who have not yet been born, and those in Purgatory being prepared to be with God forever, and those who have reached Heaven and been crowned with a crown of glory by Our Lord. When you see Our Lady of Walsingham's crown, remember that it is not because she was a Queen on earth – far from it, she was a poor teenager expecting a child out of wedlock. It is because she is the Queen of Heaven now, having followed Her Son and his teachings at every moment, and now receiving what we hope, in time, to receive ourselves, the crown of glory from Her Son, the crown that fadeth not away.

Now why would Our Lady wish Richeldis to build a shrine church? There were hundreds and hundreds of Catholic churches in every locale in Europe, why another? Why a shrine there? There would already have been a parish church in Little Walsingham (as there is today), and there would have been many within close walking distance, as there are today, St Peter's Great Walsingham, Houghton St Giles, the Barshams, and St Mary's South Creake, and all the same buildings were there in the Middle Ages. So what was the difference? In a mediaeval church, as everywhere else, the feudal system followed you in the door. The rich sat apart, and after 1066, that meant a cultural divide too – the Norman French rich sat apart, in their own luxurious pews, often in a separate chapel, sometimes even owned by them and with their family's tombs and monuments around them. The more property and status one had, the more deference one received in the parish church. If you were a poor Anglo-Saxon tenant farmer, at the bottom of the ladder, you would have been squeezed in the back, probably without a seat at all. Of course, all the Sacraments would have been available to you, but there is no question that the parish church would have regarded you, and made you feel, like a second-class Christian.


The same was not true of shrines. At this exact moment, throughout Europe, shrine churches began to spring up, and pilgrimages to them. At first, it was because pilgrimages to the Holy Land were no longer possible as it had fallen into Muslim hands and they did not permit Christians to visit. But as time went along, more and more shrines grew up, that of Our Lady at Walsingham, that of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, of St Cuthbert in Durham, and in Continental Europe: that of the Three Kings at Cologne, Notre Dame in Paris, of Our Lady at Loreto in Italy, and of St James Major at Compostela in Spain. But the interesting thing about these shrines is that they did not make the distinctions made in parish churches. When you went on pilgrimage to a shrine, you were all the same. There was no difference in dress because travelling was arduous and dirty, and the minute one arrived at the destination, one went straightaway to the shrine, never stopping at an Inn or hospice first. So there were always dirty, disheveled people at a shrine worshipping – and it was impossible to tell if they were that way because they had just arrived from traveling, or because they were poor. It was also considered bad form to exhibit wealth in one's attire on pilgrimage, that defeated the purpose, one was to conduct one's self in a humble and lowly manner. To add to all this, everyone knew everyone in the parish church, no one knew anyone in a shrine with people from all over Europe there. All of this meant that when you crossed the threshold of the shrine, the feudal system did not follow you. All pilgrims were alike before God.

The other reason is that the parish church was absolutely and completely at the center of the mediaeval world – people visited it not only to pray or for the Sacraments, but to get in out of the rain, to buy things from stalls which were often set up in the vestibule or ambulatory, and to make contracts on side altars, which was the required way to do business with each other. So parish churches were humming with activity, and not only reached out to the world, but had the world inside them. There was nothing wrong with this, indeed it is the ideal. But a shrine is different, there the veil between heaven and earth is particularly thin, they are liminal places, doorstep places, where heaven and earth seem connected in a special and mysterious way. I have very often been a pilgrim to Walsingham since 1977, have been privileged to visit Our Lady's shrines at Notre Dame in Paris and at Chartres, the shrine of the Holy Blood in Bruges, shrines of Our Lady at Montserrat in the Spanish Pyrenees and just last year Our Lady of Marizell in Austria, among others, and at all of these the same quality immediately manifests itself upon entry – the presence of the numinous, the spiritual, the divine. It is not our imagination either – unbelievers who visit them find the same thing, though they do not

understand it, it is nonetheless manifest to them. Walsingham is one of the five most visited places in England today and that is in a country replete with fascinating and edifying places to visit. More people walk the camino, the way of pilgrimage to Compostela today, than at any time in its history, thousands and thousands more than would ever have done so in the Middle Ages. Why? Because even if they are not fully believers, they feel this same thing, and they long to experience and understand it.

So what does this mean to us – sat here as we are, a very short distance from the largest and busiest city in North America, and only second to London, the largest and busiest city in the world? The first, is of course, the importance of this ability to worship God in such a special shrine, not only at Walsingham, but in many places throughout the world. Within a day's drive you could be at the Shrine of St Anne at Beaupré in Quebec, or within a day's flying journey at Our Lady of Guadalupe's shrine in Mexico City, just for example, or indeed connecting for a direct flight to Lourdes from Paris.

But beyond this is the most important reason that you are here. And that is that Our Lady is making the same invitation to you today, the same appeal, that she made to the Lady Richeldis de Faverches nearly a thousand years ago. Make a home for Jesus and Mary. Not in masonry, not so that millions can visit it for a thousand years, not for any of those reasons. But for one reason alone – because it is what your baptism and your confirmation and your many absolutions in confession and receptions of Holy Communion are calling you to do and helping you to do: making a home for Jesus and Mary within yourself.

There is always something at the heart of every person: it can be love of himself or herself, it can be love for others, it can be love of money, love of power, it can be a vice, it can be fear, it can be hatred, it is our choice. What Our Lady of Walsingham invites us to do, and prays that we can accept her invitation to do as Richeldis did, is to make that something at the heart of our existence a home for Jesus and Mary. Build that home for Jesus and Mary here in this parish church. Build that home for Jesus and Mary in your homes. Build that home for Jesus and Mary in your heart. Once you build that home for Jesus and Mary, that shrine of love, it reaches out and touches everyone and everything, and then, like Mary, you become a person who carries Jesus within you. 

The Rev. Canon Barry E.B. Swain, SSC is Rector of the Church of the Resurrection, New York City; Superior-General of the American Branch of the Guild of All Souls; and a member of the Society of Mary Council.

Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Doylestown, Pennsylvania

by Paul Cooper

On Saturday, November 12, 2016, the Society of Mary (SoM) sponsored its 31st ecumenical pilgrimage to the American *Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa* (pronounced Chen-sta-ho-va), north of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. SoM members are mainly Anglican Christians

Right: Icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa (detail)



Below: Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Doylestown, PA, with statue of Pope St. John Paul II



from around the world, but some are Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, etc. They are unified in their devotion to and honor of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is seen as bringing us all together in the worship and service of God in Christ. So, for each of the first 30 years of its existence – from 1980 to 2010, the SoM's Trinity Cathedral ward of *Mary, Queen of All Saints* sponsored an annual pilgrimage to this conveniently located nearby shrine; so, this year's was the 31st pilgrimage. There were half a dozen of us at this revived event, half being Episcopalians and the other half being Roman Catholic friends. We attended Mass and Rosary devotions shortly before noon in the “lower” church with many other pilgrims. After lunch in the nearby cafeteria, we visited the spectacular “upper” church with its replica of the famous icon of Mary traditionally painted by St. Luke and two arrays of stained glass awindows depicting the story of faith in both Polish and

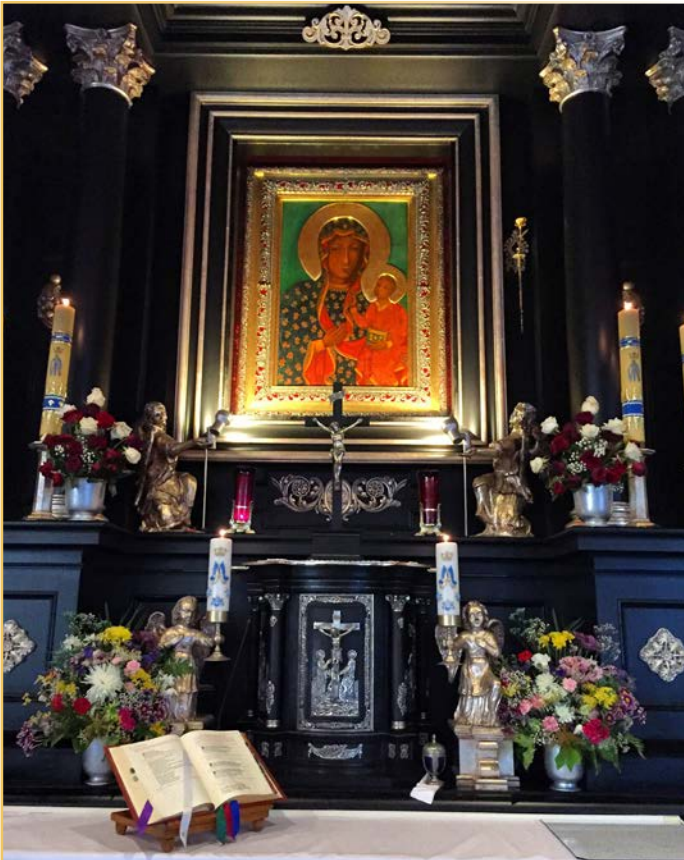


Image of Our Lady of Czestochwa in the Lower Church

American culture, beginning with the 634-year-old shrine at Jasna Gora (“Bright Mountain”) in Czestochowa, Poland. It was in the large “upper” church that our small group completed its pilgrimage by praying together the *Litany of the Blessed Virgin* and singing three Marian hymns from the *English Hymnal*, namely, “Hail O Star that pointest towards the port of heaven,” “Ave Maria! blessed Maid!” and finally “Ye who own the faith of Jesus” with its refrain, “Hail Mary, full of grace.” So ended a calming, worshipful experience – a break from the pace of our busy lives, and a chance to gain spiritual strength to come down from the “Bright Mountain” as did Peter, James and John from the mount of the Transfiguration – with grace gained to resume our various ministries in the service of God and humankind.

Paul Cooper is Secretary of the American Province of The Society of Mary, and a parishioner of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, NJ. This piece previously appeared in their newsletter.



Mary and Christian Unity

A talk given by Fr. Graeme Rowlands to the Society of Mary Ward at St. Silas, Kentish Town, London, in January 2016

For many people, both within and outside the Church, the very title of this paper would seem to be a contradiction in terms. It is a common assumption (please forgive the pun) that Roman Catholics worship the Virgin Mary rather than God, and that Protestants think she is a dead Roman Catholic. I still have people who stroll into S. Silas *en passant* who express utter surprise that there is even a picture or statue of Our Lady, let alone six shrines, votive candles and all the rest. But for those who notice such things, Mary has become acceptable, even in relatively moderate Anglican circles, and in many an Anglican Cathedral there are votive candles and statues of Our Lady even if they are so placed that you can choose to whom or what it is you are lighting a candle.

As Catholics, we are fortunate in that we take devotion to Our Lady for granted, as part of the natural pattern of our worship and our life of prayer. So I think we are ideally placed to teach something to the rest of

the Church, both in terms of showing why we offer this devotion and of encouraging others to do the same; for religion is caught, not taught; theological explanation is demanded because of what is already happening in practice.

I begin, as you would expect me to, with the Bible. The Angel greets Mary as someone in whom God is already at work: "Hail Mary, full of grace." Although she is an individual, uniquely chosen and prepared by God and it is up to her to choose whether to say "Yes," she still represents each of us. She answers, not only for herself, but for the whole of the human race, and what she does will change the course of history, will create for each of us a new relationship with God. We exist only because of God's grace given to us. And if that is true for each of us, it is true also for the Church as a whole. One of the concepts on which all Christians agree completely is the doctrine of Grace, this free gift from God. If the Church were a human institution, just carrying on because we like one another and get nice feelings out of being together, it would have collapsed long ago, because human nature is not like that. So many of the divisions in the Church have been caused by self interest and human argument – just look at our old mate Henry VIII – and once positions have become entrenched they become more extreme. But, as the Abbé Paul Coutourier said, the walls of division do not rise as high as heaven.

Look then at Mary praying with the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. They are full of fear as they do not know what will happen in the future. Now that Jesus has gone back into heaven, is it simply going to peter out? Are they all going to be killed? For Mary, this was the second time she received the Holy Spirit, and by this she became the Mother of the Church, the Mother of each of us. So she gives us the confidence that this Apostolic ministry will continue to support and nourish us. If she is our Mother, she will look after us. The current situation, with women bishops and all the rest, fills us with fear because it creates doubts about the future. We need those successors of the Apostles so that we can be nourished with the Sacraments. But Mary will show us the way forward, Mary will make sure those Sacraments are there, so that our influence as Catholics can grow and flourish.

Now, what of the influence? The first time I took pilgrims to Lourdes was in 1977. It was mainly the youth club from S. Mary's Kenton. We stayed in a rather grotty hotel, with the walls made out of compressed cardboard, we were grudgingly allowed to have our daily masses in the Salle Laurence, which was outside the grounds of the Shrine, but we

were able to take part in the processions and to dress as priests within the Domaine. In the first official Anglican pilgrimages in the 1960s, the clergy were not allowed to wear cassocks in the area of the Grotto in case people thought they were the real thing; isn't it interesting how the pendulum swings? In 1979, by the generosity of the Rector and the Bishop, we were allowed a chapel within the grounds, actually part of the crypt which was the first Church, but only because it was a separate place and could be closed to the public during Mass. But because we have kept on going back, we have proved how much we love Mary, we have shown that we believe and practice the Catholic Faith. The Society of Mary is now one of the official pilgrimage groups of the year, recognized by the Shrine, along with English and Continental Diocesan Pilgrimages and religious orders and societies. We were chosen to represent the focus of Christian Unity in the Jubilee year of 2008 and we are now free to offer the mass in almost any of the chapels. Our group is chosen to play an active part in the processions and International Mass; through our influence, the Anglican Shrine at Walsingham is part of the International Marian Network and is invited to the annual conference.

But this has also been the case elsewhere. The Shrine at Nettuno and our involvement with the pilgrimages there, building on the work of Maryamana and groups from Ipswich, have created some useful contacts and growth in understanding. For those of you who do not know the connections, the statue there is the Mediaeval image of Our Lady of Ipswich, rescued from destruction under Henry VIII, and saved by God's providence to arrive safely on the coast of Italy. There is a copy of her in S. Mary Elms in Ipswich. Padre Alberti, the Rector at the Sanctuary there, has, in recent years, organized an Ecumenical dialogue during our Pilgrimage with both Roman Catholic and Anglican speakers which helps others to understand why we love and honor Mary. The friends we have made there, the demonstration that we are united in love of Our Lady, that we believe the same things and are celebrating the same sacraments, will never be wasted.

So it is that we go on in the way that we do; so it is that I continue to organize pilgrimages and, I hope, enable that growth in understanding to continue to develop. That understanding is something which needs to happen not only in the Ecumenical scene but throughout the Church. The work of the Society of Mary is still not over, the battles are still not won. But we are not doing this on our own: I am not here on some glory trip to tell you about what I have achieved over the last few years. All that has happened is through Our Lady's prayers. She is the one who inspires us and leads us on.

She is the one who achieves what we never dreamed would be possible.

Let me finish by quoting Archbishop Rowan Williams when he was speaking at Lourdes in 2008:

What unites us as Christians is the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. Our unity is not a matter of the plans we formulate, the forms of words we can manage to agree about. We need that work – and heaven knows we need it as much in our day as ever, if not more – and yet the unity that matters, the unity that Mary has with Jesus and with Jesus’ friends, depends on the Spirit and is deeper than any human achievement. As we pray and search for unity, we have to do it in the openness of prayer, not in the anxiety of planning alone. If our unity rests in the Spirit and is renewed by the Spirit, there is a certain insecurity (which again we know very well) which means that we have to rely not on what we can do, but on what God alone can achieve in the Spirit. **AWE**

Fr. Graeme Rowlands is the Chaplain-General of the Society of Mary in England and Vicar of St. Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town, London.

**Annual Mass and Meeting
of
The Society of Mary
American Region**

**Will be held on:
Saturday, 6 May, 2017
At 11 am**

**All Saints Episcopal Church, Ashmont
Dorchester, MA**

www.allsaints.net

News from the Wards and Cells

Our Lady of Guadalupe: Dallas/Fort Worth Texas

Note: The following is the text of an email sent by the American Region Superior to the Council on December 4, 2016.

Last night I returned from a two-day visit to the Dallas / Fort Worth area. I stayed with the Ward Superior and my good friend Fr. Terry Jordan -- whose parishioner I was at the Church of the Holy Cross for a year when I lived and worked in Dallas in 1983-1984. He is now retired and lives in Arlington, Texas, where he and his wife June attend St. Mark's Church.

On Friday we visited Bishop Keith Ackerman at St. Timothy's, Fort Worth, and we had a great time together (as always). He is eager to assist the work of Our Lady of Guadalupe Ward in any way he can, including getting his parish involved.

On Saturday morning, we went to the December meeting of Our Lady of Guadalupe Ward at St. Lawrence's Church in South Lake, Texas. Fr. Jordan's son John is the Rector there. Eight people were in attendance for Mass, Holy Rosary, and lunch. At the meeting that followed, I presented our letter of commendation to Pinkie Webb (who is copied here), along with the statue of Our Lady of Solsona. She expressed her heartfelt appreciation most graciously.

I then gave a short presentation on what I see as the contemporary mission of the Catholic Devotional Societies in general and the Society of Mary in particular. A lively conversation ensued about the future of Our Lady of Guadalupe Ward. The final action of the meeting was to elect Mr. Michael Bell (Obl. OSB), the new Ward Secretary (also copied here), effective January 1, 2017.

I returned to Providence very hopeful about the future of Our Lady of Guadalupe Ward. Thanks to Pinkie's work for 24 years as Ward Secretary, they have incredibly solid foundations on which to build. There is a great deal of energy and enthusiasm among the current members. I look forward to working with Fr. Jordan, Michael Bell and the other members of the Ward in the coming years. Pinkie continues on Council, of course, and maybe we shall see her either in person or in videoconference in the coming months!

All blessings in Christ and Our Lady,
Fr. John D. Alexander

Our Lady of the Mountain, St. Columba's Church, Big Bear Lake, California

We meet once a month after mass and we say the Rosary as well as conduct a business meeting.

In May of 2016, we celebrated the crowning of Our Lady of the Mountain, followed by the Angelus at our outdoor shrine. Then in August of 2016, we celebrated the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary which included a procession of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Recently, several of our SOM members attended the final "Gifts for Kids and Holiday Giving" meeting. In attendance were volunteer representatives from many of the non-profit spiritual, educational and community service organizations from throughout Big Bear Valley, who formed a "collaborative" with the goals of providing about 600 Valley families "in need," with food and/or toys for the holidays.



Specifically, St Columba's and SOM members donated for Thanksgiving 2016, a total of **53 turkey dinner food boxes feeding a total of**

176 individuals (100 adults and 76 children). At Christmas 2016, we donated **57 ham dinner food boxes which fed 230 individuals (112 adults and 118 children).** For Easter 2017, we plan to provide **15 families with ham dinner food boxes.**

As Spring of 2017 arrives, our SOM members plan on implementing a new ministry which we know will help save lives in our community. We call it our Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Ministry. Soon, we will purchase CPR manikins as well as an AED. Then we will train and certify our church members in CPR and AED. Our new AED will be stored in our parish hall, next to our fire extinguisher, for anybody to use in a medical emergency. Later this year, we plan to offer CPR and AED training to others living in our community.

In the name of our Lady,
George Piccardi, Secretary
Lawrence Roberts, Assistant Secretary

Our Lady of Providence, S. Stephen's, Rhode Island

We continue to meet on the first Saturday of every month for Morning Prayer, Mass, and Rosary, followed by breakfast in the S. Stephen Guild Hall, and a program. The Ward hosted the candlelight reception following S. Stephen's annual Festival of Advent Lessons and Carols—a service that draws many visitors—with tables decorated with statues and icons of Mary surrounded by votive candles. We look forward to the Society's Annual Mass and Meeting at All Saints, Ashmont this May.

Phoebe Pettingell, Ward Secretary

Our Lady of the Holy Faith and Consolation, Church of the Holy Faith, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Our ward meets each Monday at 9:30 A.M. in the Chapel of the Church of the Holy Faith in Santa Fe, NM.

Recently, an increase in participants encourages us to look forward to others joining our ranks.

Our new rector is with us each Monday following the celebration of Morning Prayer, and his presence is an encouragement for all of us.

The summer of 2016 found us celebrating our 20th year of praying the Rosary each Monday at Holy Faith. This service comes from Our Lord and is surely inspired by Our Blessed Lady.

In February 2017 we plan to join others in our parish to work and provide food at the Homeless Shelter in Santa Fe. We try to do this each

year as part of our outreach to the community.

As always, we continue to pray the Rosary in silence, remembering John Donne's words, "Prayer is our whole service to God."

Visitors to Santa Fe are always welcome to join us on Monday mornings.

In Christ,

Mary Dare Ellis

Our Lady of Clemency: St. Clement's Philadelphia

Our Lady of Clemency Ward, under the direction of Dr. Anne Bower, hosted the luncheon after the Annual Mass and Meeting of The Society of King Charles the Martyr on Saturday, January 28, 2017. The foods were dishes that might have been served at the court of the Blessed Martyr, and added a charming and delicious historical touch to the day.

Immaculate Heart of Mary: Chicago/Centralia Illinois

Our meetings begin by praying the Most Holy Rosary followed by Morning Prayer. A coffee hour and meeting are next. The meeting ends by praying the Angelus.

Prayer from Mary Day by Day: O Mary you are our Mother in faith. Let us model our faith after your own. Increase our faith from day to day, so that upon our deaths, that faith may be changed into vision in heaven.

Treasurer / Secretary Linda Chase Brissey

The English edition of

AVE

**The Magazine
of the Society of Mary**

may be viewed and downloaded at

SocietyofMary.weebly.com

**(Click on "Ave" for current
and previous editions.)**



The statue of Our Lady from St John's Anglican Church, Henry IL

The Annual Requiem of the
Guild of All Souls

will take place on
Saturday, 11 November 2017
11.00 a.m.

Church of the Resurrection
119 East 74th Street, New York, NY

**In Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the
Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in America**

The Annual Mass and Meeting will be held on June 24, 2017

**At St. Paul's Cathedral, The Diocese of Fond Lac
Mass at 10:30 am**

**Preacher: The Rt. Rev. Dorsey Henderson, Superior of CBS
Followed by the Bishop's Picnic
Afternoon Speaker: Richard Mammana**

Adoremus in Aeternum Sanctissimum Sacramentum

**The Society of King Charles the Martyr
2018 Annual Mass and Meeting
will be held at
St. Timothy's Church, Fort Worth
On January 27
The Right Reverend Keith Ackerman, Vicar**

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Send to the AMERICAN REGION MEMBERSHIP ADMINSTRATOR

Lynne Walker

Society of Mary, P.O. Box 930

Lorton, VA 22079-2930

membershipadminstrator@somamerica.org

DECLARATION

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

I, _____ (Revvd/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 _____



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Cover photo: Our Lady of Dorchester,
All Saints Church, Ashmont, MA