



# 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.

## From the Editor

Greetings in the New Year, and may it bring marvelous and rich gifts. The theme of this issue of AVE carries through on the way Mary's life on earth is interwoven with her Son's death and resurrection. A sermon by our Superior, Fr. John Alexander, given at last year's Annual Mass at St. Clement's, Philadelphia, meditates on Jesus entrusting her to Saint John the Evangelist for the remainder of her earthly life. Another piece examines the question of whether the Virgin traveled with the Beloved Disciple to Ephesus. Certainly both Christians and Muslims in Asia Minor believe that she did. And Fr. Barry Swain contemplates the mystery of Our Lady's Assumption into heaven as it has affected our belief.

From across the pond, Canon Jeremy Haselock has written a fascinating piece about the only known Marian apparition in a London church—Saint Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield—to an Augustinian Canon, Hubert, in the 12th century. We conclude Fr. David Baumann's Science Fiction story, "The Drought in Newton Crater," about a miraculous Marian apparition that saves a future colony on Mars. We also have more encouraging news from our Wards and Cells. Wishing you a healthy and blessed 2022. **AVE**

Yours in Christ and our Lady,  
Phoebe Pettingell, *Editor* of AVE



# Sermon at the Society of Mary Annual Mass

by Fr. John D. Alexander  
Superior, SoM American Region  
Saturday 15 May 2021  
St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia

John 19:26-27

*When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.*

Saint John's description of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the Cross is wonderfully evocative. One of the blessings of hearing this Gospel today is that six weeks after Good Friday we return to the scene of Our Lord's crucifixion, viewing it again from the new perspective of his Resurrection and Ascension.

Some biblical scholars argue that Our Lord's words to his Mother and the Beloved Disciple amount to nothing more than a dying man's last-minute disposition of family affairs, ensuring that his Mother will be provided for after he's gone. And that's indeed part of what's taking place.

(Incidentally, this interpretation still supports the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, for if she and Joseph had had other male offspring after Our Lord's birth, then this responsibility would have passed automatically to them, and no such provision would have been necessary.)

But as any serious student of the New Testament can attest, nothing is ever that simple in John's Gospel. Beyond the literal meaning, Our Lord's words frequently communicate profound and sublime truths at multiple levels of symbolic meaning. There's no reason why this episode in particular should prove any exception to that general rule. And at the outset, I want to acknowledge my debt to the contemporary Catholic apologist Edward Sri in his 2018 book, *Rethinking Mary in the New Testament*, which I highly recommend.

Sri points out that Our Lord's words to his Mother and the Beloved Disciple follow a recurring pattern in Saint John's Gospel.

Character A sees Character B and makes a statement beginning with the word “Behold.” John the Baptist sees Jesus coming towards him, and declares, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Then, after seeing Nathanael under the fig tree, Jesus remarks, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” In both cases, the word “behold” introduces a statement revealing some theological or spiritual truth concerning the person being spoken about.

Our Lord’s words from the Cross follow exactly this pattern. Seeing his Mother and the Beloved Disciple standing by, Jesus says to his Mother, “Woman, behold thy son.” And to the disciple: “Behold thy mother.” The pattern of words signals that the relationship being named and called into being has not only a practical but also a theological and spiritual significance.

To tease out the content of this meaning, we need to look at two more words that John uses. First is Our Lord’s form of address to his Mother: “Woman.” In that cultural and linguistic context the term is not disrespectful as it might be in contemporary English, but it’s nonetheless highly unusual. The second is the word “hour,” in John’s comment, “from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.”

Both words, “woman” and “hour,” have appeared together before, in John’s account of the miracle of water changed into wine at the wedding at Cana in Galilee. There, Our Lord also addressed his mother as “Woman,” remarking enigmatically, “My hour has not yet come.” Throughout John’s Gospel, Jesus has spoken repeatedly of his approaching “hour,” which the reader understands to be the hour when he will be lifted high on the Cross. So now, when John remarks that “from that hour the disciple took her into his own home,” we’re to understand that this hour he’s been speaking about all along now finally has come.

In this context, the form of address, “Woman,” clearly implies that Mary is the New Eve—Eve being of course the original Woman. The name Eve, we recall from Genesis 3:20, means “mother of all living.” We recall also that in Genesis 3:15, God tells the serpent who’s brought about humanity’s downfall, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head; and you shall bruise his heel.” On the Cross, then, the hour has finally come when the woman’s offspring defeats our ancient enemy, the devil.

That symbolism by itself would be rich enough. But there’s more. The words “woman” and “hour” occur together in yet another place in John’s Gospel. In his Farewell Discourse at the Last Supper, Our Lord tells a parable describing how his disciples will suffer when they see him betrayed,

arrested, condemned, and crucified, but then will rejoice when they witness his Resurrection from the dead: *“When a woman is in travail she has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers her anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world.”*

At the foot of the Cross, Mary figuratively fulfills this image of the woman in travail and sorrow because the hour has come. Some patristic writers indeed describe Our Lord’s sufferings on the Cross and his Mother’s concomitant sorrows as the birth pangs of a new creation. A key result is precisely her new maternal relationship with the Beloved Disciple into whose care Our Lord entrusts her.

That reflection brings us to the significance of the Beloved Disciple himself. Traditionally, he’s been identified with the Apostle John, and I see no reason to dispute that identification. But again, nothing is ever that simple in the Fourth Gospel! In addition to being a specific person, the disciple whom Jesus loves is also a representative figure, an ideal disciple, a model of discipleship. So, when Our Lord names the Beloved Disciple as son of Mary, and Mary as Mother of the Beloved Disciple, the unavoidable implication is that he’s establishing a new maternal relationship between his Mother and all Christian disciples in all times and places. Just as the first Eve was mother of all living, so Mary, the second Eve, becomes the Mother of all who live in Christ, and Mother of the Church.

The invitation and challenge of today’s Gospel for us, then, is to do as the Beloved Disciple did. From that hour he took Mary into his own home. Here, the English translation fails to capture the richness of the original Greek. In that sentence the verb “take” can also be translated as receive, accept, or welcome personally. More tellingly, the phrase translated *“into his own home”* reads more literally “into the things that were his own.” So an equally accurate translation might be that the Beloved Disciple “welcomed Mary into his life.” In that respect, he stands as a model and example for us all!

To any who may be seeking ways to welcome Our Lord’s Mother more fully into their lives, I heartily commend the Society of Mary as a fellowship of Christians who do our best to support one another in doing precisely that. If you think you might like to join us, then visit our website, [somamerica.org](http://somamerica.org), where you’ll find everything that you need to become a member. We’d love you to join us in our common endeavor to live into our identity as children of Mary, into whose maternal care Jesus, her divine Son, entrusted us in that most solemn moment recounted in today’s Gospel. **AVE**

# CANON HUBERT'S GENTLE REBUKE:

A MARIAN APPARITION IN  
TWELFTH-CENTURY LONDON

by Fr. Jeremy Haselock

The Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great in London's Smithfield has a reputation for doing things in its own distinctive way. An interesting example is that on the second Sunday of October, a liturgical commemoration unique to the place is made. The parish remembers and gives thanks for the miraculous apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Hubert, one of the Austin Canons who staffed the Priory Church and Hospital in the centuries before the Reformation. Whilst there are important medieval pilgrimage shrines to our Lady in the London area - notably at Willesden and in Westminster Abbey – St



Saint Bartholomew's, London, Exterior, Photo by Jeremy Haselock





Saint Bartholomew's, London, Nave, Photo by Jeremy Haselock

Bartholomew's is the only church in Central London where a personal appearance by the Blessed Virgin Mary has been recorded. Regular pilgrimages to the image of the Black Virgin in St Mary's, Willesden, and to Our Lady of Pew in the Abbey have been reinstated in living memory – I was present in 1972 when Bishop Graham Leonard dedicated the newly-carved image of Our Lady of Willesden and, as a curate in Pimlico, I was chaplain to the Society of our Lady of Pew in the Abbey and regularly conducted services at that shrine – yet the significant apparition of our Lady in Smithfield, a great spiritual privilege, is comparatively unknown.

Before the Reformation, England was known as the “Dowry of Mary” owing to the strength of devotion to her. A devotion witnessed to by the huge number of church dedications and places of pilgrimage in the land, notably, of course, that at Walsingham in Norfolk. Exactly when this title “Dowry” was first applied is uncertain, but the first recorded mention was in the reign of Richard II (1377-1399). Preaching before the young King, Archbishop Arundel said, “*The contemplation of the great mystery*



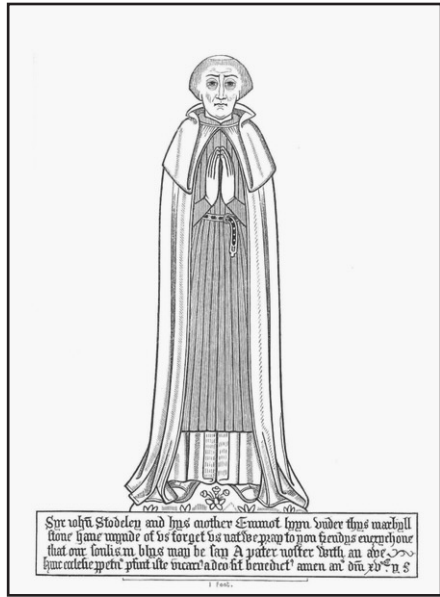
*of the Incarnation has brought all Christian nations to venerate her from whom came the beginnings of redemption. But we, as the humble servants of her inheritance, and liegemen of her especial dower - as we are approved by common parlance - ought to excel all others in the favour of our praises and devotions to her.”* Richard II was a keen devotee of our Lady. He had a particular devotion to Our Lady of Pew, praying regularly at her shrine and making many offerings there. It has also been suggested that the wonderful Wilton Diptych, commissioned by the king near the end of his reign, and which you can see in the National Gallery, shows him in the act of dedicating England to Mary as her Dowry. It is in this context that we should read the account of our Lady’s appearance to Canon Hubert in the *Book of the Foundation of St Bartholomew’s Smithfield*. Though the Latin version of the text seems from internal evidence to date from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, the amplified English text which accompanies it in the surviving manuscript would seem to have been written around 1400 when Marian devotion was at a peak.



Saint Bartholomew’s, London, Lady Chapel,  
Photo by Jeremy Haselock

The *Book of the Foundation* records that Canon Hubert, a saintly old man who became an Augustinian Canon late in life, was much given to prayer in the Lady Chapel of the Priory Church. On one occasion of particularly profound prayer the Mother of Mercy herself appeared to him and addressed him kindly but quite sharply as to the inadequacies of the devotion being offered to her and through her to her Son by the community of canons in general. As she tells him, with the consent of her divine Son, she had left the high portal of the heavens for a brief moment to issue what can only be considered a rebuke to the Priory community over the shortcomings of their devotions to him and to her. She points out that a kind of carelessness has crept over the community with regard to its worshipping life and at the same time charity has cooled – there is a lack of love. She points out that the Eucharist is too infrequently celebrated in the Lady Chapel - Mary calls them the “*holy mysteries of my Son*” which brings us up short. Moreover, the celebrations of praise which should be offered to her by the canons seemed to have become rather too infrequent. Our Lady softens the blow by explaining that her miraculous presence reflects her gratitude for the service of honor which had been paid in the past, but she requires present improvement so that the community may flourish and grow. She departs with a promise: “*Here will I receive your prayers and vows and will grant you mercy and blessing for ever.*”

The Lady Chapel at St Bartholomew’s has had a checkered history. It was reconstructed in 1335 at a time of increasing devotion to our



An Augustinian Canon as depicted in a 1505 Brass in Saint Mary Magdalene Church, Over Winchendon, Buckinghamshire, 1505. Source: Allison D. Fizzard, “Shoes, Boots, Leggings, and Cloaks: The Augustinian Canons and Dress in Later Medieval England.” *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 2 (2007): 249.

Lady and was consequently very badly damaged in the Reformation. Secularized at the dissolution of monastic houses in 1539, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had become a printer's workshop where, incidentally, Benjamin Franklin served a turn as a journeyman printer in the early 1720s. Reclaimed and rebuilt in 1894 on its ancient foundations, it once again has the numinous atmosphere of a holy place. Perhaps, true to our Lady's promise, it could become a place of pilgrimage, a place of encounter with the great mystery of the Incarnation, a focus for devotion to the God-Bearer from whom came the beginnings of our redemption, and a place for visiting priests and people to offer the "*holy mysteries of her Son.*" As the compiler of the Book of the Foundation of St Bartholomew's remarked: "*Oh! of what reverence is that most hallowed place worthy, where the noble Queen of Heaven, the Mother of the Everlasting King deigned to show her presence.*"

Our Blessed Lady spoke and, as Hubert beheld her, she vanished from his sight her firm but gentle exhortation delivered. Hubert, we are told, would repeat openly what he heard and saw, and we should do the same today, making more of the inestimable privilege this place received. This is mission – it could be Mission with a capital M – if it renders us and all who come here more ready and fervent in serving the Mother of the Lord. And why? Because such service is nothing more than bearing true witness to the very ground of our faith. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Jeremy Haselock,  
Canon Emeritus of Norwich Cathedral,  
Chaplain to The Queen.

Adapted from a sermon preached at St Bartholomew the Great on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020.



# THE DROUGHT IN NEWTON CRATER

By Fr. David M. Baumann

## Part 3 — Conclusion

*What has happened before:*

*The village of Soledad, located under a dome in Newton Crater in the southern hemisphere of Mars, has experienced a sudden stoppage of its water supply. At the same time, one of Mars' occasional major sandstorms has isolated the village from other settlements. With no possibility of help or relief, the population is verging on panic and despair despite the best efforts of its pastor, Father Gideon Adroa, to encourage the people. To escape the anxiety of the crisis, a ten-year-old girl and her younger brother went out to play on the outskirts of the settlement. While they were playing, the girl experienced a vision. After she recounted what she saw to her parents and later to Father Adroa, the priest took the bold step of describing the vision to the villagers. Responses range from doubt and anger, confused curiosity, and budding hope.*

The following day, Holy Saturday, the people of Soledad awoke to silence. Without giving the slightest warning, the sandstorm had blown itself out during the night. But the relief that the village felt was short-lived, for all the attempts to reach other settlements were unsuccessful.

“Maybe it’s just a temporary lull,” muttered Raymond. “Every other settlement appears to be still covered by the storm. There’s a calm around us, but the storm’s still raging. The calm must be temporary.”

Still, the sun shone brightly through the dome with a light that the people had not seen for weeks. The next day, the great Mass for Easter was celebrated with excitement. People’s Easter dinners were thoroughly enjoyed, and nearly everyone anticipated the third and final appearance that afternoon of the woman who had appeared to Beatrice.

Well before three o’clock, people began to stroll out of their homes and make their way to the northern side of the dome. They milled around, not knowing just where to go. The excitement that had guided conversation over the Easter dinners had given way to an intense silence. If anyone

spoke, it was only in a whisper, and there was no idle conversation. There was a current in the air as though the atmosphere had been charged.

With only minutes to spare, Beatrice appeared. Thomas stayed close to her, and her parents walked behind her, tense looks on their faces. They scanned the crowd but met no one's eyes. The child walked confidently to the place where she had seen the woman twice before, and where people were massed, they gave way as she approached them and passed by. She left the cultivated fields behind and entered the area marked by rugged boulders and narrow defiles. After she had passed through the crowd, the people pushed after her.

When people noticed that Father Adroa was in the gathering, they urged him forward until he was close to Beatrice and her parents. The crowd gave Beatrice room, but jammed thickly behind her. The narrowness of the space made it impossible for everyone to see, and voices at the back asked what was happening. No one answered. Beatrice stopped walking and waited quietly. Her parents stopped a few feet behind her; only Thomas stood by her side. Then Beatrice took two small steps forward, quietly and thoughtfully. Then she paused again.

All at once there was a delicate light, and Beatrice smiled broadly. Her eyes sparkled with joy. "Oooh!" she said.

"She's here!" cried Thomas. "Beatrice sees her!" Beatrice's mother reached out a hand toward her daughter, but could not step any closer to her. The crowd stirred and those in the front moved forward a little more. "What is it?" someone called out from the back.

"No one but you can see me," said the woman, "but many can see you, Beatrice. For them, it will be enough to inspire a deeper faith. This is what God wants for you and for the people of your village."

"Yes, lady," answered Beatrice.

"What did she say? What did she say?" asked a woman in the crowd. No one paid any attention.

"The water will appear at this hour in three days, just above the place where it once flowed abundantly," said the woman. "The water will be plentiful, and it will not fail for many generations. But the people must have faith in the God who loves them and provides for them, and they must pray. Those with faith will find a blessing in the water when it comes, and their lives will be changed for ever."

"Yes, lady," answered Beatrice.

“And you, Beatrice, will encourage them to love God and believe him with all their hearts. And you are to tell them when and where the water will reappear.”

“I will do whatever you say, lady. And... what shall I call you?”

The woman smiled, a lovely smile that shone with an otherworldly peace. “You have already answered that question in your heart, child. You know that I am the Mother of Jesus,” she said. “I have been sent by our God many times to people who have need of faith and of healing. Blessed are those who believe the message that God sends them.”

“Yes, Mother,” said Beatrice.

Behind her, Beatrice’s mother burst into tears, for she could hear what her daughter said, but could not see what she was seeing or hear what she was hearing.

“This will be a sign of God’s favor, child,” said the woman, and she handed Beatrice a flower.

“Thank you, Mother,” said the child.

“Ask the men of the village to construct a shrine at this place, to be a remembrance of this visitation to the people of Soledad, and an inspiration to their faith in God.”

“Yes, Mother; I will do that.”

“You are beloved of our Father, child. Your life will be long in this world, and a blessing to many.”

Beatrice bowed her head. And when she looked up again, the woman was gone and the delicate light was fading. After a brief moment, the place looked as it always had. Beatrice turned and looked back at the people as if taking notice of them for the first time. She looked confused and a little uncertain, and Father Adroa stepped forward, lowered himself so that he could look her in the face, and asked, “Do you have something to say to the people, Beatrice?”

She nodded.

“Let us go to the church.” He took her hand and began to walk back toward the village. In minutes, everyone had pushed into the church, and Father Adroa let Beatrice stand at the crossing. When the shuffling had stopped and there was silence, Beatrice recounted what she had seen and what she had been told.

“And then she gave me this flower,” said Beatrice, holding up the blossom.

“It’s a stargazer lily,” said one of the women. “We had planted them in the garden by the main square. But they all died without water.”

The priest led the people in prayer, and then dismissed them with the reminder that Solemn Vespers for Easter would begin at seven o’clock that evening.

For the next three days, the church was populated by people praying quietly. Rarely were there fewer than a dozen inside. The winds remained quiet, and the sunlight came through the dome as usual. And yet there was still no contact with the other settlements.

The Masses on Easter Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were well attended, and Father Adroa’s sermons explained the Biblical lessons on the resurrection of Jesus, and how he had upbraided his disciples for their lack of faith even as he exhorted them to learn and believe the Scriptures and his own words that showed how the Messiah would suffer and die, and then be raised again.

And the stargazer lily showed no sign of browning or withering. The votive lights in the Lady Chapel burned in great numbers, and needed frequent replacement.

On Wednesday, well before the appointed hour, the people gathered around the dry riverbed on the edge of the dome. A fervent hope with an undercurrent of anxiety and uncertainty filled the atmosphere. Raymond Tremain stood at the front of the throng, his face impassive. No one could tell what he was thinking.

The rock face was solid. There was no sign of shifting, no moisture, no sound. It looked as immovable and waterless as it had for the past seven weeks.

At precisely three o’clock, there was a sudden deafening cracking sound, and the side of the cliff burst as if struck from behind by a giant’s fist. The stone exploded into thousands of pieces of gravel among a great cloud of sand, and a gusher of water jetted out in a great arch fifty yards across, sparkling and glinting in the sunlight, and a brilliant rainbow filled the air around it.

An awe-filled moan from dozens of throats filled the air, and many people fell to their knees. Most were weeping and crying out praises to God.

“It’s a miracle!!” exclaimed a chorus of voices. “Praise to God! We’re saved!”



After a few minutes, the great arch of water became smaller and smaller as the energy behind it was softened, and then the water flowed out of the hillside as it had always done, but from a spot about ten feet above the former exit. By the end of the day, the riverbed had filled completely, and the beautiful horsetail falls had been restored.

Two days later, the engineer Raymond came to see Father Adroa.

“The water had to go somewhere. It was only a matter of time before it found a way out.”

“Are you saying that there was no miracle?”

“I’m not saying that. I’m only saying that it could be natural circumstances, that’s all. The new opening is about ten feet above the old one. It’s obvious what happened. A rockfall inside the crater wall blocked the outlet, and the waters backed up and began to fill the passage. And then, when they reached a certain level, they found another way out. They just busted out of a new channel directly above the old one.”

“Well, you’re right, of course. It could be. But Beatrice told us beforehand where and when the water would appear.”

Raymond rubbed his chin. “Yeah, she did. But that could be coincidence. There’s no proof that it was a miracle.”

“God does not give proof, Ray, to those who will not believe; but often he gives evidence to those who would like to believe. Proof would take away all possibility of trust and faith, and trust and faith is what God wants from us. We needed that more than we needed water.”

Ray looked uncomfortable. “I am a reasonable man, Father. I don’t know.”

“God gave us reason, Ray, and faith has a foundation on reason and logic. Reason and logic are not contrary to faith, but there’s more to life and the world than just reason.”

Ray’s nostrils widened and his lips tightened.

“You love your wife Priscilla, Ray. We can all see that.”

Ray’s face relaxed and he smiled broadly.

“Your love for her is both reasonable and heartfelt, isn’t it? It comes from a lot more than reason, doesn’t it?”

Ray’s eyes widened. “It sure does,” he said.

“I believe that we have seen a miracle here in Soledad,” said Father Adroa.

Before a week was out, Ray came to Father Adroa again.

“Beatrice told us that the woman she saw wants us to build a shrine at the site of the vision.” The priest nodded. “I’ve just been to the place. There’s a little pool there. It bubbles out of the rock floor there and just sort of holds its own. It doesn’t flow anywhere; the waters just stay in a little basin.”

The priest nodded again. “I’m not surprised,” he said. “In fact, I rather expected it. You see, in almost all the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, a pool of water appears. It’s a sign of blessing, of baptism, of healing.”

“Well, we’ll build a shrine there, and we’ll design it around the pool.”

Years passed, and then decades. Father Adroa stayed as the priest of St. Ildephonsus’ Church, seeing three bishops come and go. The spiritual life of the faithful in Soledad deepened and remained deep for years, and the story of the appearance of the Virgin Mary to a young girl of the village became widely known and widely believed by many. Soledad became a place of pilgrimage and of prayer, and more than one miraculous healing took place there.

When Beatrice was seventeen years old, she entered the community of sisters at Bethesda, a convent not far from Eagle City, the largest settlement on Mars. Thomas apprenticed to his father, and eventually became a master brickmaker and mason.

Within Father Adroa’s lifetime, the appearance of the Virgin in Soledad was confirmed as “worthy of belief”, and became known officially as Our Lady of Newton Crater, but popularly as Our Lady of Mars. And the waters of the river have not failed to this day. **AVE**

*Father David Baumann—Administrator of the Guild of the Living Rosary—is author of the ten-volume Starman Saga, a science fiction chronicle set in the middle years of the twenty-second century and undergirded with firm Christian theology. “The Drought in Newton Crater” is a short story set in the world of the Starmen but is not a central part of that tale. It was first published in 2019 in NovaSF, a periodical dedicated to science fiction stories that include the life of faith. The story has been reproduced here with the permission of Wesley Kawato, the publisher of NovaSF.*

## THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN EPHEBUS

By Phoebe Pettingell

The ancient ruined city of Ephesus, once an important seaport, is located in Turkey near the present-day town of Selçuk near the Aegean coast. Throughout ancient history, the Alexandrian and Roman Empires, early Christianity, and the Byzantine era, Ephesus played a significant role until the river that connected it to the sea silted up, so it lost its commercial value and was largely abandoned. When I visited Ephesus in the late 1960s, we saw camels pulling wooden plows in the surrounding fields, tended by men and women wearing clothes that would not have been out of place in early centuries, while storks followed behind, snapping up insects turned up in the furrows. Yet pilgrims continue to flock to the ruins. St. Paul ministered in Ephesus, as referenced in The Acts of the Apostles (Chapter 19), and may have written his First Letter to the Corinthians there. Eusebius of Caesarea records that Timothy was its first bishop and both Paul and Ignatius of Antioch wrote letters to its church. In 431, the 3rd-century Church of Saint Mary in Ephesus—the first church ever dedicated to her—hosted the Third Ecumenical Council which condemned the Patriarch Nestorius and reaffirmed Mary’s title as *Theotokos* or Mother of God. Before the Christian era, the city was famous for one of the Seven Wonders of the World: the Temple of Artemis—the Diana of the Ephesians mentioned in Acts 19:28.

St. John names Ephesus as one of the Seven Churches in Asia Minor in the Book of Revelation, and many believe that he wrote his Gospel there. In the 4th century, Epiphanius of Salamis referred to a tradition that since Jesus asked John to take care of his mother from the Cross, he accompanied him to Ephesus. He was somewhat skeptical, because the accepted place of her Dormition/Assumption was Jerusalem. Nonetheless, the Ephesus tradition persisted into the 12th century, although the Jerusalem tradition became dominant in both East and West. Then, in the 19th century, the visions of Blessed Catherine Emmerich described Mary’s home in Asia Minor. The seer (1774-1824) had never been outside her province in Germany, but her



Tomb of Saint John, Ephesus



Ruins of Church of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus

visions were transcribed by the Romantic poet, Clemens Brentano. The vision records:

Mary did not live in Ephesus itself, but in the countryside. ...Mary's dwelling was on a hill to the left of the road from Jerusalem.... This hill slopes steeply towards Ephesus.

The Abbé Julian Gouyet, who had met Emmerich, went to search for the site and, on October 18, 1881, discovered such a house on a mountain above the Aegean, overlooking the ruined city. His discovery was at first discounted. In 1891, however, urged by Sister Marie de Mandat-Grancey of the Sisters of Charity, two French Lazarist missionaries from nearby Smyrna (Izmir) rediscovered the house, then a ruin inhabited by shepherds. They also learned that Orthodox inhabitants of the village of Sirince some 17 kilometers away—descendants of the ancient Christian population of Ephesus—called it *Panaya Kapula*—"Doorway to the Virgin," and made pilgrimages to it every year on August 15 in the belief that it was the site of Mary's Dormition and Assumption. Sister Marie promptly purchased the surrounding land and devoted her life to restoring the ruined house and making it a wider pilgrimage destination. In 1896, Pope Leo XIII blessed a pilgrimage to it, as did Pius X in 1914. Two world wars interrupted travels, while the Turkish government disputed the land's ownership. After the rights were finally settled in the 1950s, Pope Pius XII declared it a Holy Place, an official title reaffirmed by Pope John XXIII. Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI have all visited. The house is also venerated by Muslims who have a deep devotion to "Meryem," as I witnessed in Turkey. She is mentioned seventy times in the Quran and is celebrated as "above all women of creation."

The House of the Virgin Mary or *Meryem Ana Evi*, "Mother Mary's House" as it is called in Turkish, is a small, two-room building on *Bulbul Dagi*, "Mount Nightingale," overlooking Ephesus. The larger room is now a chapel with a statue. The smaller is believed to be where Mary slept. The original foundations consist of stones dating from Apostolic times. Outside, an ancient keyhole-shaped pool is believed to have been used for baptism in Roman times when Christianity was still illegal. Adjacent to the shrine is a "wishing wall" where pilgrims tie prayers of request or thanksgiving written on paper or cloth. The waters of a nearby well are believed by many pilgrims to have miraculous powers of healing and fertility.





House of the Virgin Mary outside Ephesus

So how reliable is the linking of this shrine to the life of Mary? Saint John's presence in Ephesus is widely agreed upon. The Syriac version of the 2nd-century *Acts of John* says that the Apostle lived in a little house looking down on Ephesus, and Saint Jerome mentions a similar belief. John's grave—enclosed in the now-ruined Basilica of St. John—was a pilgrimage site from possibly as early as the 2nd century, and certainly no later than the 4th.



Pope Benedict XVI visiting Saint Mary's House outside Ephesus

But did Mary accompany John to Ephesus? The little house on Mount Nightingale could conceivably have belonged to the Beloved Disciple, whose Gospel says that after Jesus entrusted his mother to him, he took her into his home. That would initially have been Jerusalem, but she could have traveled with him later—possibly during the scattering of disciples in the persecution following the stoning of Stephen (Acts 11:9). The Council of Ephesus declares “the city of the Ephesians, where John the Theologian and the Virgin Mother of God, the Holy Mary” although the verb following this phrase is missing. Advocates of the Ephesus tradition also cite as evidence the existence of both the Basilica of Saint John and the Church of Saint Mary in the city itself, pointing out that churches in the ancient Christian world were typically dedicated to the saints who had lived or died in the places where they were built. The tradition of Mary in Asia Minor has continued to be important to the Christians in that part of the world for centuries.

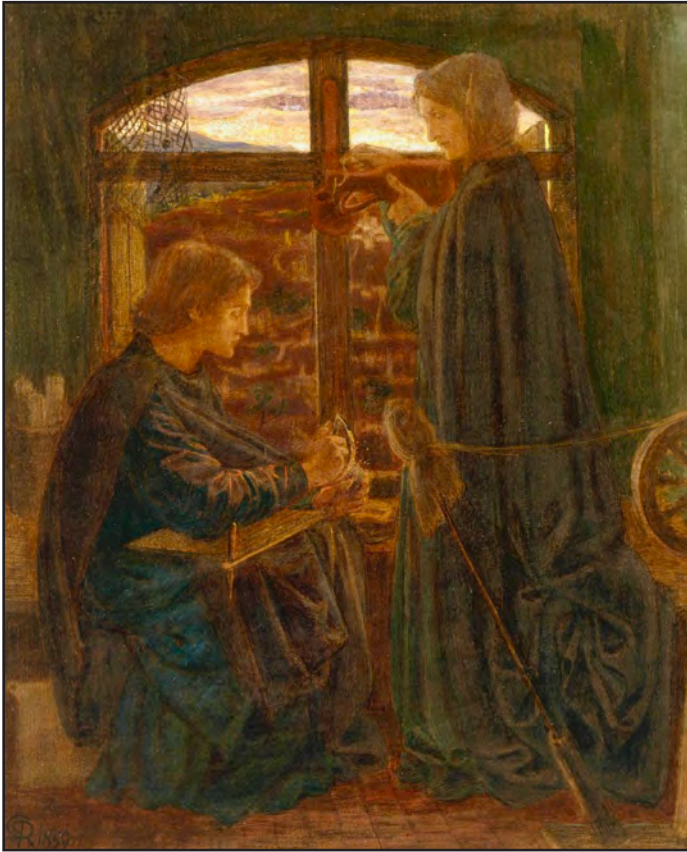
As for Brentano’s transcriptions of the visions of Catherine Emmerich, when her beatification process first began in 1892, his library was examined. It was found to contain atlases and apocryphal material, suggesting that he might have fleshed out her words by adding context, so the process was suspended in 1928. In 1973, the process was allowed to resume, providing Brentano’s transcriptions were disregarded to focus solely on Emmerich’s life. A miracle was attested in 2003, and Pope John Paul II beatified her in 2004. Nonetheless, the description of the House of the Virgin by Emmerich/Brentano is pretty accurate, despite neither of them ever having been to Turkey.

Obviously, the authenticity of the House of the Virgin is impossible to prove, and the tradition of Mary’s Assumption in Jerusalem is older. But this doesn’t necessarily mean she didn’t live for a time outside Ephesus with the Beloved Disciple.

One of my favorite Pre-Raphaelite paintings, a watercolor sketch entitled “Mary in the House of St. John,” by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, shows the Apostle seated working on a lap desk, probably on his Gospel. Mary stands lighting a lamp, having risen from her spinning wheel (a Medieval anachronism since in the hills of Greece and Turkey one sees women still using spindles). Rossetti’s depiction is not meant to be historically accurate, but rather an imaginative rendering of the relationship between the two in the years following the Resurrection



and the Ascension. The same may be said of the House of the Virgin outside Ephesus. It is a place where, in T. S. Eliot's expression, "prayer has been valid" for Christians and Muslims, and a visit to the area transports one back to a world contemporaneous with the events of the New Testament. **AVE**



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Mary in the House of John* (1859)  
Tate Britain, London

## SEEING WONDERFUL THINGS

By The Rev. Canon Barry E. B. Swain

*SERMON given on the Feast of the Assumption, 15 August 2020, in the Church of the Resurrection, New York, the first High Mass since closure for the public health crisis.*

On 26 November 1922, Howard Carter, with the Earl of Carnarvon, his employer, Lord Carnarvon's daughter Lady Evelyn Herbert, and assistants in attendance, made a "tiny breach in the top left-hand corner" of the doorway of a structure they had excavated in Egypt. Carter was able to peer in by the light of a candle and see that many of the gold and ebony treasures were still in place. He did not yet know whether it was "a tomb or merely an old cache," but he did see a promising sealed doorway between two sentinel statues. Lord Carnarvon asked, "Can you see anything?" Carter replied with the famous words: "Yes, wonderful things!" Carter had, in fact, discovered King Tutankhamun's tomb and his bones.

This event became a sensation in its day, and the discoveries of the tomb, its accoutrements, and the mummy itself, were shown in newsreels, written up in newspapers and magazines, and even used in advertising. A similar "King Tut" hysteria also came about in the 1970s when the blockbuster exhibit came to the Metropolitan Museum.

There's something primitive and atavistic about the human remains of a person. We know the soul has left them, and it is our belief that it is only the soul that matters, though only for the time being, as when Our Lord comes again to judge the quick and the dead and the world by fire, as we know from the Creeds and from his own mouth, bodies and souls will be united.

It may have been noticed that we have a certain interest in the bones of saints here. This interest goes back to the very beginning of the Church, when Christians were almost always martyred, and their bloody bodies were dragged off crosses, out of circus arenas, and away from wild beasts, and taken to be buried in secret. Many were buried in the catacombs under Rome, and at the burial sites of many of the most well-known and significant, people like S. Clement, the third pope after St Peter, the patron of my last church, and women like St Cecilia, altars were erected over their tombs. This practice continues to this day. Once

a person is beatified, he or she can be exhumed and displayed in this way. I myself have seen this change twice in St Peter's in Rome – on one visit, and I hadn't even thought of it, I was suddenly face to face with the mortal remains, dressed and in a crystal case, under an altar, of Pope St John XXIII, who had just been beatified. A few years later I had the same experience with Pope St John Paul II, who on my previous visit was buried in a sealed sarcophagus under the high altar with other popes. I saw him there because I always visit Pope Pius XII, but he was now to be seen in the same way. All the major basilicas and churches of Rome have this as a significant feature.

For twenty centuries, Christians have looked for the bodies of saints, recovered them, and venerated them. Smaller pieces have been given as marks of respect or honor to local churches, and many churches or cathedrals have established great fame as a result: perhaps the prime example for us would be Canterbury Cathedral and the relics of St Thomas Becket, to which it seemed the whole world came on pilgrimage, until Henry VIII destroyed them.

From time to time there was a curiosity about the bones of Our Lady. Did they exist? Was she buried somewhere? Could they be found? No one ever found any – not even a charlatan or trickster claimed to have done. There was a long tradition that she had been taken into heaven by the angels on her deathbed with all the Apostles miraculously present and gathered by angels. That might be true – I suppose, but it was certainly true that there was never any place in Palestine or in Asia Minor that claimed to have her bones. This led to great discussion for centuries. Where was she? How did she die? Did she die? Eventually a consensus developed of which there was ample negative evidence and positive theological evidence, and that was that her mortal remains were not on earth buried anywhere, because, freed from all original sin from the moment of her birth in what we call the Immaculate Conception, she was freed from the end of us all: death and the decomposition of our bodies. The long-held traditions East and West were the same: she had been assumed body and soul into heaven. By 1950, the faithful around the world had been pressing for some time for this question to be answered, finally. Pope Pius XII exercised his infallible judgment, put an end to unseemly wrangling, and declared on All Saints Day 1950 that at the end of the course of her earthly life, Our Lady was assumed body and soul into heaven by the angels, where she now reigns as Queen of Heaven.

There was an enormous outcry from non-Roman Catholics, though it is difficult to understand why. If we believe that she was preserved

from original sin and chose never to commit actual sin, which is the universal belief (how could you think otherwise?), then this could not be her lot. But beyond that, she had been the first to touch God Incarnate, she held him within her as the first tabernacle, their hearts beat together, all his humanity came from her, she had been chosen to be his mother and having consented, had conceived him of the Holy Ghost. She had brought him up, taught him, loved him, and when he started his ministry, she was the first to follow and believe. We call St Andrew the first disciple, and so he was, but he was not the first to believe, the first to follow Our Lord. That was Our Lady. She was the first Christian, and to this day, the only one who has got it completely right. She was with him at every important moment in his life from the Annunciation to his Passion, Death and Resurrection. We know of his Resurrection appearances to St Mary Magdalen, the apostles and St Thomas later, but I find it hard to believe that he did not appear to her first. She had held his dead body from the cross, she now beheld his risen body. And after his Ascension, when the time came for the end of her life, why would he not want her in heaven with him? Would not this crown, this reward of glory, be hers? Of course it would.

The further point is that she, as the first Christian, is the prototype – everything that happened to her is supposed to happen to us if we be found faithful. She was conceived without original sin, a singular privilege, it is true, but was it not exactly what happened to us in Baptism, when original sin was remitted to us? It was. She received his body in her after the Annunciation, an unheard-of honor. But do we not receive the same honor at every reception of the Host? She watched him as he lived here on Earth and knew exactly who he was, a great privilege. But are we not given the same privilege at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and when the Celebrant shows him to us with the words of St John Baptist: Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world!

But we can hardly expect to be assumed body and soul into Heaven at the end of our lives. But go forward to the end of the world to which all things are leading at some point. Then, Our Lord makes clear, our bodies and souls are to be united, and those who have been found more faithful than not, will be united with him forever in heaven, body and soul. Is that not the same as the Assumption? She was given great honor above all the Saints and above every human being other than her Son, I am one of the last people on earth who would ever deny this. But she is also the example

of *what our future ought to be*.

France had largely refused to accept the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It was a Catholic country certainly but for various reasons the doctrine did not catch on. In 1854, Pope Pius IX made it part of the faith. The French hierarchy reacted with indifference. The Archbishop of Lyons didn't even bother to have his clergy read the papal bull as he was supposed to. Four years later, in a tiny town high up in the Pyrenees near the Spanish border, a young girl, the daughter of the keeper of the town dump, who lived in abject poverty, even for that region in that time, went to the country to gather firewood. A lady appeared to her in a grotto, and asked her to pray, and to bring others there to pray to Jesus. No one believed her, not even the local clergy. Why would the Virgin Mary choose this girl, almost illiterate, of the humblest family, to hold converse with? Of course, they missed the most important point, that was WHY she had chosen her. Her heart was pure and full of love and faith. She was, in fact, very like Our Lady herself had been. Of course she had chosen a girl very like herself. No one believed her, though many came to mock. Finally she was made to ask the lady what her name was – Bernadette did not know, she simply spoke with her about Jesus and the faith. She asked the Lady her name. The response came back, one which Bernadette could not understand, and repeated many times to get it straight. She went directly to the Dean of Lourdes and told him what she said, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” Within a year, all France made its way to this tiny village and to the spring which the Lady directed Bernadette to dig in the ground to release, and countless miracles, unexplained by doctors or science, began to take place – they still do. Today the whole world makes its way there. When Bernadette herself had become a nun, it was found that she was suffering terribly from tuberculosis of the bone. The other nuns suggested that she of all people should go to Lourdes and pray for a cure. No, she said, it is not for me, the Lady told me, “I cannot promise you happiness in this world, only in the next.” Our Lady knew what she was talking about. She had had little happiness in this world, but supreme happiness in the next, and still does. All over the world, hundreds of millions of people today believe, KNOW, that she reigns in heaven, body and soul, as its Queen, and are celebrating with us.

There are no bones for us to find because they are in heaven with her body and have been since the moment of her death. There can be no relics, no shrines containing her body or any of her bones, because there are none.... on earth.

Like Howard Carter with that tomb, but figuratively, we can peer

inside this mystery, focus our eyes, and see. Look inside this idea of the Assumption. Look. Let me ask you, like Lord Carnarvon, “Can you see anything?” We can answer with all confidence, like Howard Carter, “I see wonderful things” because what you see is what is promised to us, if like her, we are found faithful. But the wonderful thing we see is not a mummy, or desiccated bones, and the treasure not the gold and ebony of Egypt, but the treasure of a woman appearing in heaven, a great wonder, clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. She is the Virgin Mother of God, Heaven’s Queen. Is she there because she is divine? No. Is she there because she is separate from humanity? No. She is there because she IS human, and because with God, she made God human too. None of us can do this as she did, but we can follow her Son as she did, and because he has opened the door, and she followed through first, we can too. Why? Because unlike Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon coming upon the tomb of Tutankhamen full of glorious things, the most important tomb anyone ever inhabited, that of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Mary, was found to be empty.

For those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who will not believe, no explanation is possible. **AVE**



## Ward and Cell Reports

### **Ambridge, Pennsylvania—Joy of All Who Sorrow Cell**

The host congregation for this cell-in-formation is St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, and we have between five and eight members. We had our inaugural meeting on October 30 with five in attendance and our November meeting will be on the Eve of the Entrance of the Mother of God, November 20. Our membership is ecumenical and we seek to particularly emphasize the second Object of the Society: “To spread devotion to [Mary] ... in the cause of Christian unity.” We will be alternating Eastern and Western devotions each time we gather and learning together about diverse traditions and customs surrounding the Mother of God. If there are other members in the greater Pittsburgh area, we warmly welcome them to join us! — Fr. Geoffrey Mackey



### Brooklyn, New York—Saint Paul's Episcopal Church

St. Paul's Carroll Street in the Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn is in hope of forming a Cell (and eventually a Ward) of the Society of Mary. St. Paul's has a long-standing history of devotion to the Blessed Mother and we invite current SOM members in New York City to join St. Paul's parishioners and friends in promoting the SOM's Rule of Life and stated objectives. We plan to meet regularly starting with a monthly Saturday meeting to pray the rosary, ring the Angelus, and share in brief fellowship. Though the Cell will be centered at St. Paul's, our hope is that others within the Cell would take turns hosting at other Churches from time to time. All are welcome. To express support and interest, for questions, and/or for more information about getting involved, please email Jonathan Vantassel at [info@stpaulscarrollst.org](mailto:info@stpaulscarrollst.org).

### Marshall, Virginia—Our Lady of the Wayside Ward

Our Lady of the Wayside meets the First Saturday of every month at St. John the Baptist Anglican Church to pray the Rosary, varying the mysteries with the season of the liturgical kalendar. We have faithful attendance by the current membership of our ward, and are actively seeking to expand the ward membership. Of note, on 14 June 2020, we installed an outdoor shrine to Our Lady of Walsingham. Employing the talents of a local stone mason, a grotto was devised and placed in our outside columbarium, housing the statue. This shrine is the focal point of the columbarium and has enhanced the church grounds considerably.

— Fr. Jonathan J. D. Ostman



Walsingham Shrine, Anglican Church of St John the Baptist, Marshall, Virginia





**THE SOCIETY OF MARY, AMERICAN REGION**

**Treasurer's Report**

**INVESTMENT ACCOUNT:** \$184,651.26 as of 3/31/20  
\$214,152.22 as of 4/30/21

**OPERATING ACCOUNT:**  
Balance as of 4/2/20.....\$11,241.82  
+ Deposits/Credits/Transfers.\$9,167.81  
GRAND TOTAL .....\$20,409.63  
- Less expenditures below\*...\$10,852.06  
Balance as of 5/4/21.....\$9,557.57

<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	<u>'20-'21</u> Budget	<u>'20-'21</u> Actual	<u>'21-'22</u> Budget
AVE of 10/20 (Printing & Postage)	5,470.	3,102.98	5,470.
Website hosting	180.	325.00	180.
Living Church	1,200.	1,200.00	1,200.
England (Annual Offering)	100.	100.00	100.
Operating Expenses (^)	5,000.	6,124.08	5,000.
<b>TOTALS</b>	<hr/> 11,950.	*10,852.06	<hr/> 11,950.

(^) Examples: medals from England, printing and postage other than AVE (e.g. manuals, dues renewal), P.O. Box rental, Superior's expenses, legal fees administrative expenses, technology upgrades, Constant Contact (e-blasts), website security, special offerings, and office supplies.

Respectfully submitted,

David B.J.Chase, Ph.D.,  
Treasurer, American Region  
A.D. 31 May 2021

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP  
Send to the AMERICAN REGION MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR  
Lynne Walker  
Society of Mary, P.O. Box 930  
Lorton, VA 22079-2930  
membershipadministrator@somamerica.org

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 \_\_\_\_\_



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Cover illustration:

Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion with the  
Virgin and Saint John* (1460), Philadelphia  
Museum of Art

For information on the Society of Mary  
in the Church of England, including  
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<http://societyofmary.weebly.com>

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