



The S. Stephen

CORPUS CHRISTI

2015

Vol. 14, No. 5

From the Rector

My Dear People,

The arrival of summer brings several changes to our life at S. Stephen's. And change is not always a bad thing. As John Henry Newman famously remarked: "to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

During the month of June we welcome Fr. Martin Yost, SSC, to the parish. Fr. Yost will continue in the combined position of Assistant Priest at S. Stephen's and Episcopal Campus Minister at Brown / RISD. He comes to us from the Diocese of Dallas, where he served as Rector of St. Stephen's Church, Sherman, Texas, and his duties included overseeing the Canterbury Club (Episcopal student ministry) at nearby Austin College. Before seminary and ordination, Fr. Yost lived in Boston, graduated from Tufts University, and attended the Church of the Advent. His first Sunday with us will be June 21st. Please join me in making him welcome. We are blessed to have him here.

Deacon Mary Ann Mello's last Sunday assigned to S. Stephen's will be June 28th. She has served here two years as Deacon, and two years before that as an Intern prior to ordination. Her new assignment will be at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Pawtucket. While we would have liked to keep her here longer, and she would have liked to stay, the decision to reassign her was entirely the Bishop's – as is meet and right. An integral component of the vocation to the diaconate is going wherever one is sent, based on the Bishop's assessment of needs in the Diocese. Please plan on joining us on Sunday, June 28th, to show Deacon Mary Ann our appreciation for her time among us.

On Monday, June 22nd, work is scheduled to begin on the floor of the choir and sanctuary (that is, the area behind the rood screen and altar rails). Those who spend any time in that part of the church know that in many places the antique par-

quet tiles are cracked and chipped, and in some places are lifting up to the extent that they pose a tripping hazard to the

clergy and altar servers. During the liturgy, the floor makes loud creaking noises underfoot. We're not exactly sure of the floor's age, but we believe that it dates to the remodeling by Boston architect Henry Vaughn in the early 1880s.

After consultations with LLB Architects of Pawtucket, we determined that the most conservative and cost-effective approach to restoring the floor would be to engage a skilled craftsman to repair and re-secure the existing tiles where possible, and to replace them with new tiles of the same woods (maple, cherry, and oak) where necessary. The floor surface will then be lightly sanded and refinished. We have engaged Mr. Allen Moitoza of Middletown to do the work. Funding for the project has come from a pair of anonymous donors as part of the three-year Capital Campaign that also raised the money to renovate the Great Hall. We are grateful for their generosity.

So, beginning on June 28th, the 10 am Sunday Mass will be held in the Lady Chapel. The work is projected to last a month; we are hoping to be back in the main church sometime in August. As we all know, the timing of the completion of these projects can be a bit unpredictable, but we are confident that the work will be finished in time for the new choir season, currently scheduled to commence on Sunday, September 13th.

Speaking of the Capital Campaign, since 2013 we have had a few outside groups coming in to use the renovated Great Hall for their events.

Continued next page



Continued from previous page

For example, the Shakespearean Society has used the space four times in the past year for dramatic recitations and productions. Other groups include the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, and the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island for its “Community Leaders Cathedral Meeting” on Saturday, June 6th. Regarding the Shakespearean Society’s experience, Richard Noble writes:

“Parishioners and others should know that the hall has excellent acoustics for spoken word and chamber music ... and that the piano is a good instrument in very good shape. It has become one of [the Shakespearean Society’s] absolute favorite places. The adjacency of a good kitchen is another distinct plus, and there is an elevator.”

To attract increased use of the Great Hall, however, we are depending on *members and friends of the parish* to refer to us those who might be interested in renting the space for a social gathering, talk, or cultural event. No one else is going to make this happen. So, if you know of any community groups looking for such a venue, please ask them to be in contact with Parish Administrator Cory MacLean.

Sometimes the difficulty of parking is raised as a concern when planning events at the church. The parking regulations on most of the streets near the church are not in force on Sundays or after 6 pm on weeknights. If you need to park in the vicinity during the week or on Saturdays, however, please be aware that the Brown Parking Garage at Thayer and Power Streets now makes pay-parking spaces available to the public, so that’s always an option. It’s an easy walk: just three blocks south of the church.

Parishioners on the active mailing list: Please look out for a brief survey to be mailed in the next few weeks. We want to add to our database more information on birthdays and significant anniversaries: particularly dates of Baptism, Confirmation and, where applicable, Holy Matrimony, Ordination, or Religious Profession. We have *some* of this information on file already; we want to make our records more complete, com-

prehensive, and accurate. One aim of this effort is to be able to offer prayers for parishioners at our weekday Masses and Offices on their birthdays and anniversaries. So please take the trouble to fill out the survey form when it arrives and return it to the parish office.

As spring yields to summer, I give thanks for another exciting program year at S. Stephen’s. We have accomplished much together. The most important work of the Church remains, however, our weekly and daily worship, which continues year round. So let’s please keep up our attendance at Sunday Mass through the summer months. If we go on vacation, let’s remember the parish in our prayers during our travels.

This letter comes with all best wishes and prayers for a safe, healthy, relaxing, and rewarding summer. I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest,

Fr. John D. Alexander



Like us on Facebook.

Follow us on Twitter.



Visit our website:

www.sstephens.org

The S. Stephen is published by S. Stephen’s Church in Providence, 114 George Street, Providence, Rhode Island; Phone: 401-421-6702, Email: office@sstephens.necoxmail.com; Editor-in-Chief: The Rev’d John D. Alexander, Rector; Copy Editor: Phoebe Pettingell, Phoebe1446@aol.com; Layout and Design: Cory MacLean; Photography: Cory MacLean

FR. YOST'S LETTER

First, I want to say what a great joy it is to be called to assist at such a wonderful parish as S. Stephen's. I look forward to getting to know the people here and ministering with and among you. By way of introducing myself, I have been asked to share something of my spiritual development, which is perhaps more interesting, and surely more important, than the details of my curriculum vitae.

I cannot claim a dramatic conversion story, and, indeed, from my earliest memory, I have known that I was a Christian. Baptized on Easter Day at the age of six weeks by my paternal grandfather, a Methodist minister in southern Illinois, I was raised in the warm tradition of the Methodist Church. Growing up, Sunday worship consisted of something very close to Morning Prayer from the Prayer Book, a relic of Methodism's origins in the Church of England. I learned the basic truths of the faith contained in the Apostles' Creed. I learned also, of course, that John and Charles Wesley were priests of the Church of England until the end of their lives, which piqued my interest in the Episcopal Church.

I first found myself attracted to the Episcopal Church when my family made occasional visits to Trinity Church in Boston which, as a young boy, impressed me greatly. It was probably just "high" Morning Prayer at that time for the principal service, but there was a great dignity to the worship that I found attractive. The solemnity impressed upon me the sense of something truly important taking place in church, something I did not ordinarily experience. I later had a good friend in high school whose family was Episcopalian, and I saw how the Book of Common Prayer was a touchstone for prayer and devotion in the home as well as on Sunday morning. Again, there was something there that I found both attractive and absent from my ordinary experience.

At the same time, in my mid teens, I began to ponder theological questions that arose in my mind as I sought to understand more deeply what it was Christians believed. As I said, I learned from the Methodist tradition a basic, creedal faith; but I noticed that it seemed to be expressed sometimes

in terms of what we did *not* believe, specifically anything "catholic." In my thinking I came to realize that the catholic view was, in fact, the historic faith of the church and, more importantly, *true*. I can also remember a few moments of having a strong sense of the numinous, a hint of the *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. I was longing for Truth and searching for something larger than myself.

I suppose if I have to name a moment--not of conversion as such--but something defining in my developing spiritual and religious life, it was stumbling upon the Church of the Advent in Boston while I was in college. Just seeing the church from the outside, I felt an immediate pull. I found it at once mysterious and attractive. It seemed like a holy place. It was not long before I went to Mass and, even though I might not have known quite what I was looking for, I knew found something there. In traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, my theological commitments (which up to that point were in some sense only academic) were given living expression. My desire for beauty and fullness in worship were deeply satisfied. I realized that this was where I belonged. It was not long before I was a regular worshipper and fully committed to the faith and life of the Church.

I remember having some vague idea of ministry when I was younger, but I really did not know what to do with it and in fact did not give it very much thought. But seeing the Mass and later, as a server, participating closely in its celebration gave me a clear focus. I knew I was meant to be a priest. It would be some years before I would take the first steps to offer myself for ordination, but that is another story. Looking back, I can trace the experiences I had and the stages along the way that prepared me for and guided me to this vocation. *Deo gratias!*



LEADING THE FAITHFUL ASTRAY PART 5: HERESIES ABOUT THE CHURCH AND HUMAN NATURE— DONATISM AND PELAGIANISM

By Phoebe Pettingell

The nature of theological preoccupations, as we have seen, developed as the position of Christianity changed within the Roman Empire. Just as disputes about the natures of Christ brought about the early Church Councils, so the development of a state Church caused controversy about the nature of the Church itself.

Donatism

The last great persecution of Christians took place under the Emperor Diocletian (303-305 AD). Church leaders were asked to hand over religious texts to be publically burned, and sometimes to hand over lists of their members, often on pain of death. Anyone who did so later came to be known as an apostate or *traditor* (derived from the Latin verb *traditio*, “to give up” or “to hand over”). Once Christianity became an official religion, it became necessary to decide how to handle the many who, out of fear for themselves or their families, had betrayed the Church. The general attitude became that after an appropriate period of penance, sometimes lasting years, the truly remorseful could be forgiven, even restored to their former positions as clergy. But the Berbers of North Africa, part of the Numidian kingdom centering in what is today modern Algeria and Tunisia, took a harder line. They felt that to forgive apostasy dishonored the martyrs who had died for

their faith, and that the sacraments administered by former *traditor* clergy were invalid. After the death of the bishop of Carthage in 311, the more moderate faction quickly elected their own man, Caecilianus, before the hardliners could arrive. One of his three consecrators was a *traditor*. Some local Christians took exception to this,

as did the Numidian delegation, demanding a new election. They called for Caecilianus to appear before them and defend his consecration. When he prudently refused to do so, they excommunicated him and elected their own leader, Donatus. The Emperor was forced to become involved, and ultimately declared Caecilianus the true bishop of Carthage.

The problem was that both sides appealed to the writings of Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, himself a martyr during the Valerian persecution in 258. Saint Cyprian had declared that schism was an absolute sin

and there was no salvation outside the Church. No sacramental act performed by a schismatic bishop or priest was valid, so that those whom they baptized or ordained needed to be re-baptized or re-ordained. Constantine took the position that the Berbers were schismatic. For their part, they believed that the official Church had become tainted by allowing apostates to become bishops, and therefore their bishops constituted the true Church.



Donatus (355 AD)

This situation was complicated by ethnic and political tensions in North Africa, where supporters of Caecilianus were primarily Roman colonists, while the Donatist party consisted of native North Africans of Punic and Berber ancestry. This is not to defend Donatism, whose serious problems will become apparent, but to explain it why it persisted as a rival. In Carthage, despite threats of persecution, Donatists refused to hand over their churches. The historical record is unclear, but some may have been killed, others exiled. But in the end, Constantine granted them toleration, and asked the Church to be tolerant and keep trying to resolve the breach.

Nearly a century later, when Augustine was consecrated Bishop of Hippo in 396, Catholic and Donatist churches continued to compete all over his part of North Africa. An upper-class son of a pagan Roman citizen of Phoenician origin, and a Christian Berber mother in North Africa, he was born in what is now Algeria and sent to Carthage to be educated, before moving to Rome to teach. He first became a Manichean—a religion combining elements of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity and other faiths, including Gnosticism—then a skeptic, before his conversion, and baptism by Saint Ambrose of Milan. A series of devastating personal losses turned the brilliant but pleasure-loving young man into a serious theologian and preacher. In Hippo, he began to take on the problems of Donatist thinking.

Against the Donatist contention that Christian leaders must never backslide, Augustine argued that the Church is not a pure body, but a mixed body of saints and sinners, and that we are

all inherently sinful but for the Grace of Christ. Using the parable of the sower who sows both wheat and weeds (Matt. 13:24-31), then reaps them all, before sorting out the grain from the refuse, Augustine explained this as a model of how the Church works. God alone will sort us out at Judgment Day when the

secrets of every heart shall be revealed. Till then, the Church forgives the penitent because God alone knows who is saved and who is damned. The Donatist position makes grace a matter of our will power rather than a gift from Christ, and the worthiness of the priest insures the validity of the sacrament he dispenses.



Saint Augustine arguing with the Donatists

This presumes a degree of self-knowledge and human goodness, not to mention strength of character, that is at best naïve and at worst arrogant in the extreme—leaving little room for Christ to be more than a moral example to follow rather than a Redeemer. Fallen human beings, said Augustine, cannot determine who is righteous and who unrighteous, nor does the efficacy of the sacraments depend in any way on our merits, but solely on Christ's merits. Thus, the Church is more like a hospital for sinners than a society of saints. Those of us who find Christ may be convalescing, but we shall not be fully healed until we see Him face to face in heaven.

Although the majority of the Church already opposed Donatism, Augustine's arguments helped strengthen the imperial position against them, resulting in such harsh persecution that even Augustine protested. Nonetheless, this schism among North African Churches persisted long enough to have aided the Muslim conquest of the area in the seventh century.

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

The sixteenth century reformer and English Bible translator John Wycliffe adopted the Donatist position that morally corrupt clergy invalidate any sacraments they dispense. This view was repudiated by Luther and Calvin, and Article XXVI of *The Book of Common Prayer's* Thirty-Nine Articles: "Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments," summarizes the position outlined by Augustine. Nevertheless, as the history of the Church records over and over, each new movement of Donatists invariably argue that they remain faithful to the true Church, while what appears to be the main branch of the Church has invalidated itself.

Pelagianism

For Christians in the West, Augustine is one of the defining thinkers of all time. No book of his is more readable than his *Confessions*, the autobiography of his conversion, and arguably the model for all future examples of the genre. I first read it as a sophomore in high school, and despite the rather clunky translation (there are many fresher ones available now), he leapt off the page and I felt I knew him more intimately than I knew my best friends. Although he describes his innately sinful nature, he comes across as a sensitive young man, easy to identify with, whose sins are the kind any passionate and intelligent person in his position might well be tempted to commit. This is precisely Augustine's point. Sin is not a "weakness of character" a stronger nature might avoid, nor yet is it a form of over-scrupulosity that makes moun-

tains out of molehills. It is ingrained in our fallen nature. As St. Paul puts it, "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me" (Romans 7:19-20).

From such passages as well as from examin-

ing his own life, Augustine developed the doctrine of Original Sin. Without Christ's Redemption, the scales are weighted against us. We may "know what is right," but often we cannot do it, and find ourselves doing what we know at the time, or later, is wrong. Many of Augustine's contemporaries felt that the world was a good place. But one of



Conversion de Saint Augustine
Fra Angelico c. 1395—1455

the aspects that delayed his conversion was his feeling that if God was good, why was there such suffering and misery in this life for so many? Something had gone terribly wrong. Manicheanism provided the old Gnostic answer that Light warred against Darkness and Spirit against Flesh, but the more he delved into it, the less satisfactory he found this dualism. In Milan he met Ambrose, who became a father figure to him. Sitting in a garden, agonizing over his difficulties in overcoming his lusts, he heard a child singing what sounded like *Tolle, Lege* ("Take up and Read"—scholars love to speculate what the child could actually have been singing, probably in the street Latin with which Augustine would have been unfamiliar). He ran into the house, and picked up "Paul's Epistle to the Romans" where his eye fell on the verse, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (13:14). He felt not that he had found God, but that God had found him. As he wrote in *The Confessions*, "Give what you command, and com-

mand what you will.” He felt he had found peace. “You have made us for yourself,” he declared lyrically, “and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

Not everyone resonated to this understanding of God. Among the detractors of Augustine’s *Confessions* was a British monk called Pelagius (355-c. 435) who took particular offense at the dictum “Give what you command, and command what you will.” Pelagius felt that people possess a God-given power for self-improvement. Not all ideas associated with the heresy of Pelagianism can be attributed to him. Many come from his contemporaries, the lawyer Caelestius and a Syrian, Rufinus, both of whom elaborated on Pelagius’s doctrines. Caelestius, in particular, argued that children at the time of birth are as sinless as Adam before the Fall, that Adam’s sin harmed only himself, not humanity, and that the Law of Moses is just as capable of leading us to heaven as the Gospel. Pelagius seems to have been more interested in exhorting reformation of behavior than theological speculation. However, his disciples, especially Julian of Eclanum (c. 386-c. 455) produced what might be considered the ancestors of self-help books, highly popular in Roman culture. These had the effect of making Augustine seem a provincial outsider among the sophisticated denizens of the Italian peninsula for a time. Certain theologians accused him of not having entirely shaken off his Manichean beginnings.

The Pelagians’ strongest argument against Augustine was his belief in Predestination. If salvation is entirely based on God’s grace, they argued, then doesn’t it follow that the damned are those whom God has predestined not to be saved? Augustine acknowledged this was so. The mass of humanity is doomed to perdition, but God has elected some to be saved. Those who are not have no just cause to complain because all we like sheep have gone astray and it is only the grace of God that can save some. The Pelagians found this ut-

terly repugnant, and argued that none of the early Church Fathers had denied Free Will. However, the Church ultimately sided against the Pelagians. The Council of Carthage in 418 and the Council of Orange in 529 condemned both Pelagianism and what came to be known as Semipelagianism, an attempted compromise between the two positions. The Council of Orange addressed in particular the question of Predestination versus Free Will, affirming that all *does* depend on God’s Grace, as Augustine taught, so that we have no power to help ourselves, but at the same time, that God desires all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). The Council did not attempt to say how these two seemingly contrary positions could simultaneously be true, but only that any orthodox account of salvation had to affirm them both and hold them in tension. The Eastern Churches remain wary of Augustine’s teachings

(although they have no use for Pelagianism either), and continue to follow the theological explanations of earlier Church Fathers on matters of Free Will and sin.

As with Donatism, Pelagianism takes a somewhat naïve position on human nature, assuming that our own will is enough to make us the people

God intended us to be. Pelagius, like Donatus, was a rigorist who thought that temptations could be easily avoided with enough moral power. Augustine, more sensitive to weakness and the strength of self-deceit, understood how cruel such thinking becomes to those who realize they cannot always help themselves. Addicts know this, of course, but so do most introspective people who are honest with themselves. Sigmund Freud’s theory of the Unconscious revived a secular understanding of Original Sin by combatting the eighteenth-century Enlightenment view that our conscious mind represents all that we are. To a great extent, this perspective had infected much Protestant theology, as well.

Augustine did not deny us any choice, but held that sin weakened our capacity for it. Agree or

Augustine developed the doctrine of Original Sin. Without Christ’s Redemption, the scales are weighted against us.

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

disagree, often we have less choice than we think. Consider how conditioned we are by our upbringing, our culture, our psychology, those values we think we have chosen but are really a product of all these influences along with what we have read, heard and remembered, and it becomes easier to understand his perspective that our “decisions” are often predetermined.

Two novels in particular illustrate the point at which Free Will and Predestination meet. In C. S. Lewis’s *Perelandra*, when Ransom realizes he has been sent to Venus to kill Weston whose body is possessed by the devil, he recalls that during the Great War, it was only possible to face battles with the thought that they had already happened. In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Harry faces the realization that regardless of whether or not the prophecy was about him, since Voldemort had killed his parents, he would want to fight him. Predestination only becomes malign when humans decide they can predict what is determined, which Augustine never claimed: who are God’s elect. Certain sects of Calvinism, especially in Scotland and North America, succumbed to this (see James Hogg’s satirical novel, *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, and Robert Burns scathing poem, “Holy Willy’s Prayer”). The issue of to what extent we are free agents versus how much our behavior is conditioned by factors including health, hormones, education, social environment, not to mention divine will, remains an open question.

Donatism and Pelagianism Today

In the centuries following the Reformation, Catholic theologians closely studied Augustine’s reading

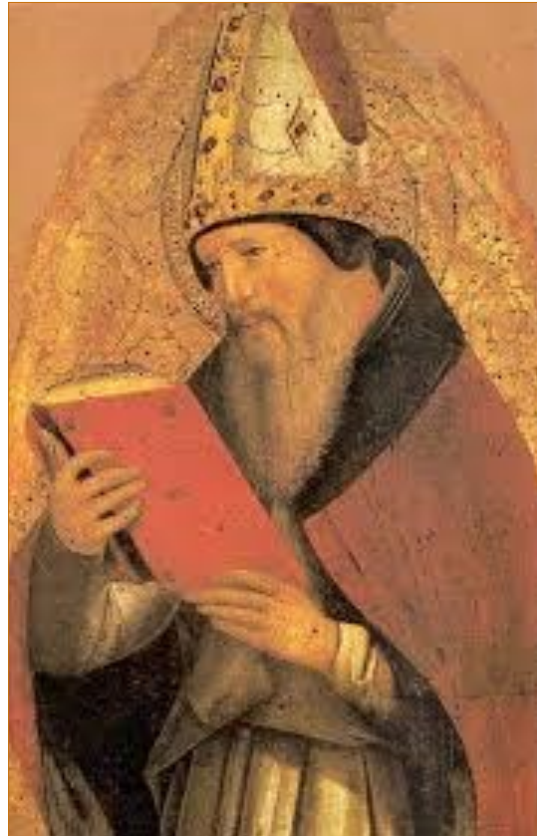
of Cyprian on Donatism, at the same time Protestants were inwardly digesting what he had written about Grace in respect to Pelagianism. The latter point was acknowledged in *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, the ecumenical

agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation signed in 1999. Earlier ecumenical dialogues, such as the World Council of Churches Lima Document, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (1982) agree that more consideration needs to be given to the scandal of disunity among ecclesial bodies and the problems of breaking away, even in the name of reform.

Donatism is alive and well every time some group breaks away from the Church while claiming that *it* remains the true faith because of some perceived defect in the parent body. Without getting into all the various Anglican breakaway groups (starting in this country with the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1873), one might mention the Society of Pius X. Its founder, Cardinal Marcel Lefebvre, rejected many of the reforms of Vati-

can II, including, but not limited to, the new Mass. He was excommunicated after he illicitly consecrated four bishops without Vatican approval in 1988, and by 2013 the Society was finally declared in full schism, after attempts at reconciliation on the part of the Vatican were formally rejected.

Pelagianism remains a problem, especially since the Enlightenment, which made an ideal of being in control of one’s destiny. Back in my days as a Sunday School superintendent, I was shown a pilot curriculum designed by one of our seminaries in which students were asked to list all the good things they could remember doing during the week in one column, then the bad ones in another, then



Saint Augustine of Hippo
354—430 AD

total each side up. But that's "Works Righteousness!" exclaimed one of my teachers, who had grown up in another denomination that emphasizes Salvation by Grace. She was correct in this case, and it seemed to our group this curriculum came perilously close to encouraging a Pelagian attitude toward sin and righteousness, since the lesson went on to suggest that each week the children should try to add more good deeds and eliminate bad ones. Nothing was said about prayer, examination of conscience, or asking for Christ's help. This was strictly a carrot-and-stick approach to good behavior based on strengthening will power and the awarding of stars for the accumulation of a certain number of good deeds, culminating in "the golden halo" when the child reached 100 merits. I am not in the least opposed to glittery rewards for small children, having loved such things myself at a certain age, but the lesson was bad theology. Pelagianism is particularly dangerous because, like all heresies, when the going gets tough it doesn't work. If salvation is dependent on our moral character, who shall be saved? When we are most vulnerable, thrown back on how flawed and broken each of us really is, if we must rely on self we have no one to blame but ourselves. If you have been in this position, you know how wretched it can be. Idols fail you in the end, but how much worse if the idol is yourself.

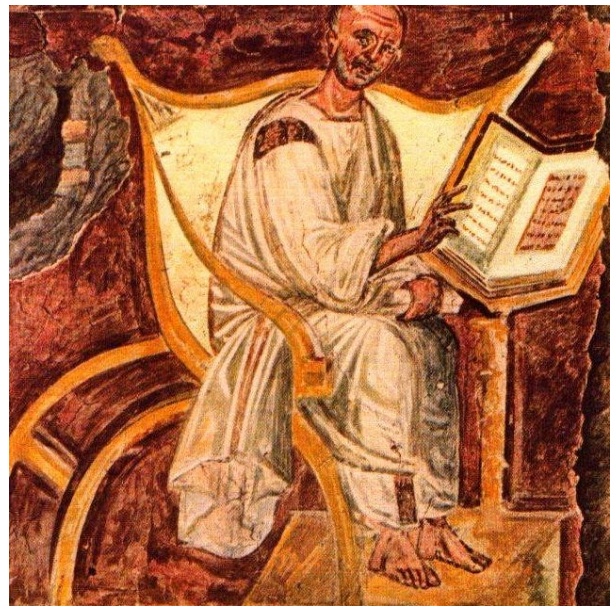
In an age that scorns authority, heresy can be made to sound like the underdog. As this series has shown, heresies have, in fact, stretched the theologians of the Church to develop doctrines that think through their inherent problems. The real heroes are thinkers like Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Augustine of Hippo, whose writings remain the bulwark of Christianity in the West, and whose thinking makes us the people we are.



FROM 'CONFESSIONS' SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would not have been at all. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.

Confessions X, 27, 38



Saint Augustine, Lateran Fresco,
by an unknown artist, late 6th cent. CE

THE RECTOR'S MAY TRAVELS

Note: In addition to the Rector's Letter, I have been asked to supply an account of my travels during the month of May. This seems appropriate, as they were "working trips." The following adapts material I wrote for the American edition of AVE, the magazine of the Society of Mary. — Fr. Alexander

The main purpose of my trip to the United Kingdom was to participate in the 2015 Society of Mary May Devotion in my capacity as Superior of the Society's American Region. Of course, I took advantage of the opportunity to do a number of other things while I was there, some of which I will recount here.

Having spent a couple of days with relatives in Northern Ireland getting over my jet lag, I arrived in London on the eve of the May Devotion. The next morning I took the Underground to Chalk Farm station in north London and walked to the Church of Saint Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town. St. Silas is an Anglo-Catholic "shrine church" — well known for its association with the novelist Charles Williams (1886-1945). Its vicar is Fr. Graeme Rowlands. For many years, it has been the location of the annual May Devotion, usually held on the first Saturday of the month.

The day had the flavor of a pilgrimage. As I arrived, groups of Society of Mary members, lay and clerical, were converging on the church from all over the South of England. The day's activities began with Solemn Concelebrated Mass at which the Superior-General, Bishop Robert Ladds, presided. I was one of about twenty concelebrating

priests. The Mass setting was Mozart's *Spatzenmesse* (Sparrow Mass), ably rendered by a small orchestra and choir. The interior of the church is lovely: lavishly adorned with numerous baroque shrines and statues of the sort rarely seen in Episcopal churches in the United States.

As soon as Mass ended, everyone in the church filed out into the street for a liturgical procession of Our Lady comprising about two hundred people to the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, half a mile away.

The route took us along some major thoroughfares, past shops, restaurants, and pubs from which numerous onlookers watched us with varying degrees of puzzlement. The stewards of the procession handed out leaflets explaining what it was all about and inviting people to attend services at one of the two churches. (Before the procession, Fr. Rowlands exhorted us to try to look as though we were *enjoying ourselves*.)



Solemn Concelebrated Mass of the Society of Mary

The route took us along some major thoroughfares, past shops, restaurants, and pubs from which numerous onlookers watched us with varying degrees of puzzlement. The stewards of the procession handed out leaflets explaining what it was all about and inviting people to attend services at one of the two churches. (Before the procession, Fr. Rowlands exhorted us to try to look as though we were *enjoying ourselves*.)



Marian Procession through Kentish Town

Arriving at Holy Trinity, we had lunch in the church hall. It was a convivial affair at which I made the acquaintances of a number of the UK Society of Mary officers and Council members. The Annual General Meeting followed in the church; it was the model of an efficiently run and informative meeting. The preacher at Sung Vespers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was Fr. George Westhaver, the Canadian Principal of Pusey House at Oxford University, who gave an excellent sermon – and who invited me to attend a lecture at Pusey House the following Wednesday when I told him of my plans to visit Oxford. At the end of Benediction, I thought that the day's activities were over; but, no, this being England, and it being about 4 pm, we retired once again to the church hall for tea, cakes, and biscuits before departing!

The next day, Sunday May 3rd, I preached at St. Augustine's Church, Kilburn, in northwest London. This was the parish I had attended when I lived in London in the 1980s, and where Elizabeth and I were married. Designed by architect John Loughborough Pearson (1817-1897), it is one of the finest nineteenth century gothic revival churches anywhere, and has earned the nickname "the cathedral of north London." The congregation is a vibrant multi-racial and multi-ethnic community fully reflecting the diversity of the area. It was good to be back among many old friends. One more recent member of the congregation is Mia Iwama Hastings, whom I first met in the early 2000s when she was a Brown student who attended S. Stephen's! I've several times had this experience of meeting Brown alumni attending Anglo-Catholic churches in far-flung parts of the world whose first exposure to the tradition was with us. It is always gratifying.



Bishops Norman Banks (left) and Robert Ladds (right) in procession

The next day, a Bank Holiday Monday, I was a guest at the home of Bishop and Mrs. Ladds for lunch, along with Fr. Rowlands. It was a splendid time, with excellent food and conversation. We discussed the current activities of the Society of Mary in England and the United States, as well as possibilities for increased transatlantic cooperation. I gained some valuable insights into the thinking of the English Society's leadership, and a number of useful ideas for the future.

On Wednesday, I took the train to Oxford for the day. In the morning I had a brief visit with theologian (and prolific author) Alister McGrath, whom I had first met many years ago when we were students in the same boarding school in Belfast, Northern Ireland. We reminisced a little, and spent some time talking about C.S. Lewis, another Belfast man

who spent most of his life in Oxford, and also the subject of one of McGrath's most recent books.

Continued next page



Recessional at St. Augustine's, Kilburn

Continued from previous page

I spent the rest of the morning browsing and having a coffee in Blackwell's bookshop. Then I headed to St. Stephen's House – the Anglo-Catholic theological college in Oxford – where I had lunch with the Principal, Fr. Robin Ward. We discussed some aspects of the thought of Archbishop Michael Ramsey, about whom I was preparing a lecture to give at Nashotah House two weeks later. After lunch, I took a taxi to Pusey House, the other center of Anglo-Catholic studies in Oxford, where I attended an interesting and well-crafted lecture by Professor Diarmaid MacCullough on the life of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

During the rest of my week in London, I spent two afternoons in the Lambeth Palace Library doing a little research to follow up on the topic of my doctoral dissertation. Social engagements included dinner at a fabulous French restaurant in Chelsea with Fr. Andrew Sloane, former Rector at St. Paul's, K Street, Washington D.C., who in his retirement is assisting at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, in the heart of London. For my money, no visit to London is complete without dinner in Chinatown, and I have my brother-in-law John Morgan to thank for that on this trip.

Back in Northern Ireland for several days before my return flight to Boston, I read the Gospel at the principal Sunday Eucharist at Saint Anne's Anglican Cathedral in Belfast. My uncle David serves on the Cathedral Board, and was the crucifer for the liturgy. The preacher was the retired Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev'd Alan Harper. At coffee hour following the service, I learned about the Cathedral's various ministries,

including a choral scholars program that brings together students from local Protestant and Roman Catholic high schools to sing in the several Cathedral choirs: apart from its intrinsic merits a significant work of reconciliation in a section of the city where historic religious and political divisions run deep and are often bitter. The cathedral staff is ecumenically engaged, to say the least. They are now planning for the opening of a new campus of the University of Ulster in the immediate area, and the opportunities this will bring for student ministry, a topic I was eager to discuss with them.

Other activities in Northern Ireland included a visit to a Saturday afternoon traditional music session at a country pub – which was brilliant – and a trip to the newly opened Bel-



St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, Northern Ireland

fast Titanic Exhibition in the Harland and Wolff Shipyards near the site where the doomed ocean liner was built. I found it all a bit Disneyesque, but worth the price of admission nonetheless. The most interesting part came at the very beginning, where an intelligently designed exhibit chronicled the social history of industrialization in Belfast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Barely had I returned to the United States when it was time to travel to Sea Girt, New Jersey, for the Society of Mary American Region's Annual Mass and Meeting at the Church of St. Uriel the Archangel. At the kind invitation of Fr. Russell Griffin, Rector, I celebrated the Mass before presiding at the Annual General Meeting. St. Uriel's is a beautiful church – well appointed with Tiffany windows and lovely devotional shrines, statues, and paintings – all a block away from the beach! It is well worth a visit if one is in the vicinity of the north Jersey Shore.

The following week, I was traveling by air once again: this time to Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin. For its Commencement exercises, the seminary had instituted an award, named for Arthur Michael Ramsey (the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury, from 1964 to 1971), to be given annually to a priest whose life and ministry exemplify Ramsey's scholarly, theological, pastoral, and ecumenical ideals. The recipient of the first award was the Rev'd Dr. Richard Cornish Martin, SSC. No more fitting choice could have been made. Since Fr. Martin was unable to travel to Nashotah, the seminary administration asked me to receive the award in his place, and then deliver the first annual Archbishop Arthur Michael Ramsey lecture. I was humbled to receive



Giving the Archbishop
Arthur Michael Ramsey Lecture at
Nashotah House

the award on behalf of my old friend and mentor, and I spoke on Ramsey's theology of priestly spirituality. At the time of writing, Fr. Martin continues in hospice care in North Carolina, and is much in need of our prayers.

All in all, my travels during the month of May were enjoyable, rewarding and, I hope, productive. But it's always great to return to Providence and S. Stephen's. As summer comes on, I look forward to staying put in the parish for a while.



SUMMER FEASTS SAVE THE DATES

TRANSFIGURATION
THURSDAY
6 AUGUST
MASS - 6:30 PM
ST. JOHN'S NEWPORT



THE ASSUMPTION
SATURDAY
15 AUGUST
MASS - TIME TBD
S. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

CONFIRMATIONS

On Tuesday 2 June at 6 pm in our beautiful Lady Chapel, Bishop Knisely confirmed four of our young people. Congratulations to (left to right) Valexja Johnson, Rose Callanan, and Katherine and Laura Rejto.

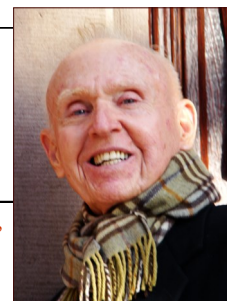




Quodlibet

by James Busby

quodlibet (kwäd'lə bet') *n* [ME fr. ML. quodlibetum, fr. L. quodlibet, fr. *qui* who, what + *libet* it pleases, fr. *libere* to please] 1. a piece of music combining several different melodies, usually popular tunes, in counterpoint and often a light-hearted, humorous manner - *Merriam Webster*



As the choral and academic season has come to a close it seems right to mention two changes in choir, both in the soprano section.

Alison Anderson has seen fit to step down - her first child is due on or around 15th August and this will be a wonderful period of adjustment for her and them, though she'll be missed here. Jill Malin, because of changes in her teaching schedule will be stepping aside also.

Before coming to us, Jill was soprano soloist at King's Chapel in Boston and a member of both Handel and Haydn Society and Boston Baroque. Both women were lovely additions during their tenure, always prepared, cheery and on time, whether coming from Boston (Alison) or out in the country in Rhode Island (Jill). They've both asked to be put on the sub list and I'm so happy to do thusly. Thank you Alison and Jill.

The last choral mass of the season was Corpus Christi (transferred) on Sunday, 7th of this month and what better way to "fold up choral tents" than with a splendid, new for us, Monteverdi Mass and the delightful motet by Peter Warlock, Corpus Christi - indeed a transcendently beautiful setting of the English 17th century carol text. Jason Connell and Sr. Kristina Frances, SSM, dispatched the dicey-to-deliver text with extraordinary grace and beauty and finesse of diction. What's the use of singing in the vernacular if you can't understand it? As accustomed, Schola's tuning was exemplary. In-

cidentally, Schola recorded that motet on our first CD, Stephen Full of Grace.

I have a special fondness for this Mass as it was my audition Mass in 1993 and I dearly love the procession and invariably think back of dear departed friends from that time.

At Corpus Christi we were graced with the presence of a goodly contingency from the Sisters of Saint Margaret, Duxbury Massachusetts; it's



The Sisters of the Society of Saint Margaret
Duxbury, Massachusetts

always lovely to see them here. The altar flowers were given in memory of Blessed John Mason Neale, their founder (in 1855), and it seems appropriate to say a few words about him here as he is truly one of the most amazingly brilliant of the Oxford Movement divines.

From an online biography: "John Mason Neale was born in London in 1818, studied at Cambridge, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1842. He was offered a parish, but chronic ill health, which was to continue throughout his life, prevented him from taking it. In 1846 he was made warden of Sackville College, a position he held for the rest of his life. Sackville College was not an educational institution, but an almshouse, a charitable residence for the poor.

"In 1854 Neale co-founded the Sisterhood of St. Margaret, an order of women in the Anglican Church dedicated to nursing the sick. Many Anglicans in his day, however, were very suspicious of anything suggestive of Roman Catholi-

cism. Only nine years earlier, John H. Newman had encouraged Romish practices in the Anglican Church, and had ended up joining the Romanists himself. This encouraged the suspicion that anyone like Neale was an agent of the Vatican, assigned to destroy the Anglican Church by subverting it from within. Once Neale was attacked and mauled at a funeral of one of the Sisters. From time to time unruly crowds threatened to stone him or to burn his house. He received no honor or preferment in England, and his doctorate was bestowed by an American college (Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut). However, his basic goodness eventually won the confidence of many who had fiercely opposed him, and the Sisterhood of St. Margaret survived and prospered.

“Neale translated the Eastern liturgies into English, and wrote a mystical and devotional commentary on the Psalms. However, he is best known as a hymn writer and translator, having enriched English

hymnody with many such ancient and mediaeval hymns translated from Latin and Greek,” such as

*All glory, laud and honor, Christ is made the sure foundation, Come, ye faithful, raise the strain, Creator of the stars of night, O what their joy and their glory must be, Of the Father's love begotten, and Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle, among numerous others, many of which first appeared in Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan William's monumental *The English Hymnal* of 1906.”*

The refurbishing of the floor in choir and sanctuary is something to which I really look forward. The work ought to give our choral sound a nice, refreshing “ping” as the old wood is presently so porous and absorbs higher frequencies with relish. This will be so attractive as well and is timely in the extreme.

For now, I look forward to seeing you at Mass when in the vicinity and I trust you'll have a refreshing holiday. —Best, James



John Mason Neale
1818 — 1866

TREASURER'S CORNER

By Ransom Widmer

With our three-year Capital Campaign ending this year, I thought it would useful to update you on our progress. We initially received pledges of \$111,940, of which \$89,142 or 80% has been received as of May 31, 2015. This leaves \$22,798 to be collected by year-end. 83% of the three-year campaign period has past, so having received 80% of the pledged amount puts us just a little behind schedule.

Now that the renovation of the Great Hall is well behind us, we begin work on the sanctuary floor on June 22nd. Mr. Allen Moitoza will be doing all the refurbishment himself. Allen is a local craftsman with many years experience renewing

the wooden parts of older public buildings and churches. He brings with him the specialized equipment needed to minimize dust; this is especially important in protecting the organ.

Since Allen is working alone, the project will last through July and could extend into August. During this time, all services will be conducted in the Lady Chapel.

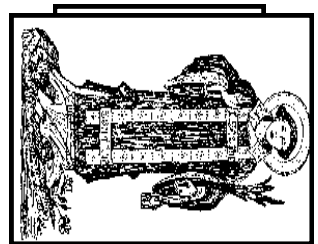
We are thankful to two anonymous Capital Campaign contributors who provided funding for this project!

See you in the Lady Chapel!



S. Stephen's Church in Providence
114 George Street
Providence, RI 02906

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PROVIDENCE RI
PERMIT NO. 1122



The S. Stephen
CORPUS CHRISTI 2015