



The S. Stephen

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY

2014 – 2015

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Dear People of S. Stephen's,

From the Rector

This year, the First Sunday of Advent falls on November 30, marking the beginning of a new year in the Church's liturgical calendar. Advent always begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, and lasts between three and four weeks, constituting a period of spiritual preparation for the Feast of the Lord's Nativity.

Two principal Advent events are scheduled in this year's parish program. First, at 5:30 pm on Sunday 7 December, we shall offer our annual Advent Lessons and Carols – a popular service both in the congregation and in the wider community. The order of service brings together a rich juxtaposition of Scripture texts and exciting musical selections.

Second, the Advent Quiet Day follows on Saturday, December 13. We had scheduled the Rev. Dr. Richard Cornish Martin, SSC, as our speaker, but Fr. Martin has become seriously ill and is unable to travel. Some members of S. Stephen's remember Fr. Martin from his several visits to the parish in connection with the Society of Mary. Let us all keep him in our prayers.

Following this sad development, I have invited the Rev. Canon Scott Gunn, Executive Director of Forward Movement Publications in Cincinnati, Ohio, to give the Advent Quiet Day meditations and to preach at the 10 am Sunday Mass the next day. Scott is a good friend from his days in Rhode Island where he served as Assistant at Church of the Epiphany, Rumford, and as Rector of Christ Church, Lincoln. We look forward eagerly to welcoming him back to S. Stephen's.

During Advent, also, we continue to offer our weekly and monthly round of worship and opportunities for spiritual renewal: the Daily Office and Mass; the Holy Rosary on the first Saturday of the month (sponsored by the Society of Mary); a

year's mind Requiem on the first Monday of the month (sponsored by the Guild of All Souls); an hour of Eucharistic Adoration on the third Saturday of the month (sponsored by the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament).

It is ironic that some complain of an alleged secularist conspiracy to suppress the distinctively Christian celebration of "the Christmas season" – which in the secular culture actually occurs during Advent. The Church has traditionally sought to maintain Advent's distinctiveness, and to protect it from the premature celebration of Christmas. Then, when the secular world forgets all about Christmas on December 26, the Church insists on celebrating Christmas for twelve days, until the Epiphany on January 6.

Still, during Advent, it is difficult to avoid being overwhelmed by ubiquitous Christmas carols, decorations, and lights. It may be overly rigid, a sin against charity, to refuse to participate in any and all Christmas activities before Christmas Eve – one must use one's best judgment under the circumstances. Still, the important thing is to make a definite effort to keep Advent intentionally. A good starting point is to come to Lessons and Carols, and then to the Advent Quiet Day. Beyond that, I'm sure we can all find some small Advent discipline by which we remind ourselves daily during this season to "prepare the way of the Lord."

This letter comes with all best wishes and prayers. I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest,
Fr. John D. Alexander



FR. SAWICKY'S LETTER

One of the most famous stories about St. Martin of Tours is that, as a young cavalry officer in the Roman army, he once impulsively cut off half his own cloak to give to a shivering beggar in his path. That night he had a dream in which he saw his gift, wrapped around the shoulders not of the beggar, but of Christ enthroned in glory. After Martin's death and canonization, the half of the cloak that had remained in his possession became one of the chief treasures of the French court. As a royal heirloom, the cloak made many appearances throughout the country: it was carried into battle and accompanied the swearing of oaths, but most often it served as a traveling icon of both French royal authority and the holiness of St. Martin. As the cloak traveled, small churches would be built to house it along the way, and priests were appointed its special guardians. These small churches became known as *cappellae* (from *cappella*, "little cloak"), and the priests who looked after the cloak were known as *cappellani*. It is from these Latin words that the English "chapel" and "chaplain" derive.

Linguistic scholars frequently point out that a word's etymology is not its meaning but rather its history, and that meanings are determined by a whole host of factors. Still, the Legend of St. Martin's Cloak makes a good starting point for reflecting on the purpose of chaplaincies, particularly as another semester draws to a close here at Brown & RISD. The Legend suggests first of all that these proto-chaplaincies served as "homes away from home." Primarily they housed the relic, but they also served as a refuge both for pilgrims journeying to them and for those who stumbled across them on their way elsewhere. Second, these chapels were places of encounter. Here was a material object which had belonged to a saint, which had even played a chief role in one of that saint's most memorable acts. The cloak was a link to St. Martin himself, and through St. Martin, to the Lord who had called Martin to His service. Those who visited the chapels were

brought face-to-face with God's power to transform lives. Third, the Legend makes it clear that the cloak was on a near-constant journey throughout the country. It went wherever the people were, and wherever that was, chapels sprang up with chaplains to tend them.



S. Stephen's has long been the home of the Episcopal chaplaincy to Brown and RISD -- from at least 1867. More than 150 years on, how ought we to continue this ministry? First of all we must continue to take seriously the task of being a refuge to all who visit us. I am grateful for the Vestry's leadership in this: last year's Christmas party at the home of junior warden Sue Brazil, and this fall's student/vestry dinner are two excellent, highly visible instances. Less visible but no less significant are the students we have prepared for baptism, confirmation, reception, marriage, holy orders, and those whom we have buried -- all in the last year and a half. There are countless others who stop by only briefly for specific purposes, whether they be religious inquiries, musical performances, or simple curiosity. Additionally, you might be surprised to learn that on Friday nights we host the campus Presbyterian fellowship in the Great Hall, just as we have also hosted the campus Orthodox group. Even so, there is still more work to do. I ask all of you to be extra sensitive to students in our midst. Say hello to them, take them to coffee hour, invite them to sit with you next week, learn who they are, pray for them regularly. You will be amazed at what the smallest kindness can achieve.

Secondly, we must continue to take seriously our worship. This is our "St. Martin's Cloak," this is the treasure we are charged with keeping, this is that which transforms our lives and the whole world, because it is the point where

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LEADING THE FAITHFUL ASTRAY

PART 2: MARCIONISM

By Phoebe Pettingell

Around the late 130s AD, a wealthy ship owner named Marcion moved from Pontus in Asia Minor to Rome. His father was the Bishop of Sinope, a city on the Black Sea in what is now Turkey. Marcion made a generous donation to the Church in Rome, but this may have been to gain influence because he soon began to gather followers and teach them his own understanding of Christianity. Since his heresy was one of the more seductive and dangerous ones to face the early Church, defenders of orthodoxy such as Justin Martyr (100-165), Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202), Origen (162-205) and Tertullian (160-220) later claimed he had been excommunicated. Modern scholars find no contemporary evidence that this happened before he had separated himself from a Church that refused to accept his dogmas. When Marcion could not persuade the religious authorities in Rome of his views, he broke with them, returned to Sinope, and continued to instruct his disciples.

What were the beliefs distinguished Church Fathers found so repugnant? After studying the Old Testament, Marcion came to the conclusion that its God could not be the Father of Jesus Christ. Wrathful, capricious, less than omniscient (otherwise why did he have to call for Adam in the Garden of Eden after the latter hid himself?), fond of “adulterers and brigands” like King David, this creator God was clearly inferior to the deity of Love and Light whom Jesus called

Father. The defective nature of the Creator also explained why the world was filled with suffering, and why the enlightened ought to look beyond it. Marcion constructed his own New Testament canon, consisting of the Gospel according to Luke and ten Pauline Epistles, although even here he excised



certain passages not in keeping with his beliefs and added prefaces so that readers would interpret them according to his teachings. For instance, his version of Luke omits the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation in the Temple and Baptism of Jesus, as well as the genealogy, since he believed that Christ did not really assume corrupt human flesh but came to earth as a supernatural being direct from his Father. Marcion also wrote a book entitled *Antitheses*, which does not survive except in quotations from the works of others. It elaborated on the complete separation between the benign Father of Jesus

and the corrupt Creator of an imperfect world described in the Hebrew Scriptures. In short, his version of Christianity represented a complete break with Judaism. Marcion's Christ did not come to change human history but to gather pure souls into a spiritual realm uncorrupted by the material world.

The notion of greater and lesser gods will sound strange to those of us raised in monotheistic religions, but as Christianity moved beyond the world of Judaism Paul himself proselytized polytheists, and many early converts to Christianity

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struggled with the notion of one God. My next piece in this series will deal with Gnosticism, which posits hierarchies of deities. There was a further problem for the intellectual Marcion, who seems to have been steeped in some form of neo-Platonic mysticism: the Jewish God seemed far too “earthly” and “unspiritual” with all the talk of his emotions, and even his hands, feet, and backside: hence the preference for Luke, who translated Palestinian customs into Greco-Roman ones, and Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Marcionism continued to challenge orthodox Christianity until some time after Constantine made the latter the official religion of Rome in 325 AD. The Early Church never doubted that the Hebrew Scriptures were the word of God, fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

Marcion not only repudiated this belief; he further defined what he considered authentic books of teaching about Jesus. This, in turn, prompted his opponents to do the same, so that not long after his death, Origen was proclaiming the 27 books we now know as The New Testament, along with the assurance that the Creator God of Genesis is indeed the Father of the Son of God. The heretic thus pushed Orthodoxy to define the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. It is because of such heresies, also, that the Creeds affirm that Christ is both true God and true Man, born of the Virgin Mary into human history, crucified and risen from the dead to conquer Death.

However, a darker legacy of Marcionism continues to crop up again and again, even today. Every time we hear someone contrast the “legalism and moralism” of the Old Testament with the “grace and freedom” of the New; or the “wrathful and vengeful God” of Hebrew Scripture with the “loving and forgiving Christ;” we are in

the presence of someone who has adopted a Marcionite outlook. The “Arian Christ” of the Nazi Reichskirche revived Marcionism with a vengeance, as have many other Anti-Semitic Christian groups. Any repudiation of the Old Testament, any claim that the deity of one is not the deity of the other is Marcionite heresy. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *is* the God of Jesus Christ, the Apostles and the Church – and our God. The Early Church understood how vital this is to the Christian faith, re-

gardless of how offensive some of the formerly pagan intellectuals of their day might find it. God created the world, and while it may be fallen, it is not evil. At the end of days, we will not dissolve into some vague spiritual state. We shall be resurrected to inhabit a New Heaven and a New Earth, with a God we can see face to face because he created us in his image



Marcion Showing his Canon of Scripture

and saved us from our sins.

Many of us would be less than honest if we denied that sections of the Old Testament trouble us. God’s command to kill off the inhabitants of the lands promised to the Children of Israel, the testing of Abraham by ordering him to sacrifice Isaac, the rejection of Saul because of his impulse to have mercy on the defeated Agag; all these, and many similar episodes arouse questions about divine Justice. But a careful reading of The New Testament will also reveal disturbing images: warnings of eternal punishment, parables that turn the principles we live by on their heads, a Christ who promises he will come again to judge the earth, descriptions of everlasting damnation. Conversely, a good number of passages in the Old Testament depict a tender, loving, and forgiving God: “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious; slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” [Exodus 34:6]; “He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he

will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. [Isaiah 40:11]; “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” [Hosea 11:1]. Great kindness or loving kindness in older translations—*hesed* in Hebrew—is one of the primary attributes of God in the Old Testament. We will always go astray if we try to oversimplify Scripture, make it say what we think it ought, or discard those parts that seem unpalatable to the contemporary culture. Nor can we interpret it in a vacuum—hence the importance of Tradition. The Church existed before The New Testament. And as Jacob wrestled with the Angel, the Church wrestles with Scripture, not letting go until it blesses us.

Marcion’s Christ was not all forgiveness and light either. The sect taught that those who apostatized under persecution to save their lives or the lives of their families could never be forgiven, and criticized the Church for being insufficiently ascetic. Marcion illustrates several important aspects of heresy: insisting on the correctness of one’s views while labeling official teachings wrong; a desire for purity to the extent of contempt for things earthly; and the willful separation from the Church when one cannot dictate how it is run or what it teaches.

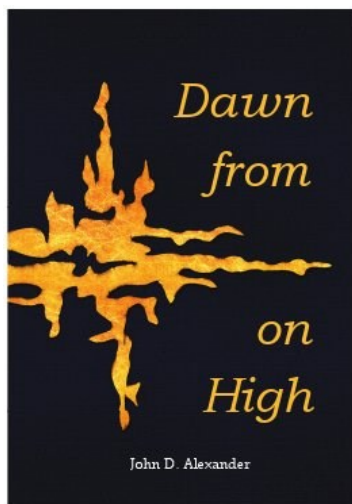


Fr. Alexander’s newly-published book

Dawn from on High

Homilies for the Weekdays of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

Now on sale for \$10.



Get your copy in time to make it a part of your Advent devotions. Call the parish office today at 401-421-6702, ext. 1.

Fr. Alexander will also be selling and signing copies of his book following Advent Lessons & Carols on Sunday 7 December.

2014 DIOCESAN CONVENTION

By Cathy Bledsoe

On November 8, 2014, I attended the 224th Diocesan Convention as a delegate from S. Stephen’s. John Chamberlin also attended, along with Father Sawicky and Deacon Mello. I am guessing that nearly 300 members, lay and clergy, of the RI Diocese gathered at the serene, pastured grounds of St. Mary’s, Portsmouth. The Diocese, by the way, will now continue to hold Convention at larger parish churches to save on cost. It seems to work just fine.

After a morning of reports and votes, I found the highlight of the day to be Bishop Knisely’s address. He spoke of several new initiatives: 1. a downtown “church without walls” at Burnside Park, 2. utilizing St. Matthias, Coventry church building as an autism needs-focused congregation, and 3. making Old Calvary, Pascoag church building a center of fellowship for feeding youth and families. He emphasized that numbers 2 and 3 exemplify the re-use of sacred spaces in constructive ways.

The biggest issue has been what to do about the Cathedral of St. John. A resolution was presented and voted on, to proceed with transforming the cathedral into a “Center for Reconciliation” dedicated to the service of racial equality and justice. Through various programs, it will serve “as a home for academic and public engagement with the history of slavery and racism in Rhode Island.”

All in all, it was a pleasant day. I had the chance to greet lots of our clergy friends, and meet a few new ones.



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STAR MENTORS AND STAR FRIENDS?

Book Review by Fr. John D. Alexander

Thomas F. O'Meara, *Vast Universe: Extraterrestrials and Christian Revelation*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012.

Once largely the preserve of conspiracy theorists and cultists, the question of intelligent extraterrestrial life has slowly been gaining more and more attention among mainstream writers in the fields of both science and religion. In *Vast Universe*, Thomas O'Meara, O.P., Warren Professor Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, provides an accessible and brief (100 page) introduction to the theological dimensions of the conversation.

O'Meara begins with a survey of the scientific state of the question. Planets circling stars other than our sun were first observed in the 1990s. Since 1995, over 600 such planets have been found, orbiting around 380 stars. Scientists have begun to speculate on the conditions necessary in any given solar system for life and civilizations to emerge, positing the existence of “circumstellar habitable zones” – also known as “Goldilocks zones,” being neither too hot nor too cold to sustain life. Since 1992, the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) Institute has been monitoring radio waves from other stars, looking for patterns in their frequencies that might signal deliberate transmissions by intelligent beings.

In 1961, Frank Drake published his famous equation estimating the probability of civilizations on different stars in any galaxy developing the ability to communicate with one another. The Drake equation reads as follows:

$$N = R * f_p * n_c * f_l * f_i * f_c * L$$

Here N is the probable number of civilizations that can communicate with one another in a galaxy; R is the rate at which stars form in that galaxy; f_p is the fraction of stars that have planets orbiting them; n_c is the number of planets per star capable of sustaining life; f_l is the fraction of such planets whose life forms actually evolve; f_i is the fraction of those where life evolves into intelligent forms; f_c is the fraction of those who develop technologies to com-

municate with other stars; and L is the number of planetary civilizations whose histories overlap with one another.

On the basis of the sheer number of stars in the Milky Way alone, O'Meara concludes, even when one assumes the smallest percentage at each stage of the equation, “the likelihood of intelligent life with the ability to communicate across the galaxy is considerable.” Moreover, in a universe comprising around 125 billion galaxies, each containing billions of stars, the likelihood of the existence of intelligent extraterrestrial life forms is high indeed. But two “gaps” make it difficult for us ever to know of their existence. First, the enormous distances between stars even within the same galaxy make the difficulty of travel between stars formidable. The second gap is time. The universe is approximately 13.5 billion years old. The majority of extraterrestrial civilizations are likely not to be contemporaneous with ours, but to belong to the past or the future.

Against this background, O'Meara undertakes what theologian Ted Peters has called “exotheology,” reflection on the theological significance of extraterrestrial life. O'Meara is careful to acknowledge that Christian revelation says nothing about the existence of extraterrestrial life. (The purely spiritual beings known in the Christian tradition as angels don't count as extraterrestrials, which by definition have some sort of material body just as we do.) Still, for the purposes of his theological reflections, O'Meara takes the existence of intelligent extraterrestrial life as a given, a working hypothesis, asking how it impacts Christian self-understanding.

O'Meara observes that in considering the theological significance of extraterrestrials, three topics are basic: the “knowing and free person;” the person's relationship to God; and the person's contacts with sin and evil. He envisages extraterrestrial life forms evolving into knowing and free persons just as human beings have evolved. Moreover, knowing and free persons are capable of a relationship with God in whose image they have been created – God being a community of three Persons.

O'Meara thus envisages a wide diversity of types of relationship between the Creator God and his creatures on countless planets.

O'Meara perhaps could have said more here to clarify what he means by a "knowing and free person." A critical question in contemporary theological reflection on ecology is whether human beings really enjoy a privileged status in God's eyes in relation to other animal life forms on Earth. Is it true or meaningful to assert that human beings are created in God's image in a way that, say, chimpanzees, elephants, or dolphins are not? And if so, by what criteria are "knowing and free persons" marked off from other animal species, whether on Earth or on other worlds?

O'Meara would have strengthened his argument by addressing such questions more explicitly.

With respect to the question of sin and evil, O'Meara argues vigorously against any presumption that extraterrestrials are fallen as we humans are. While sin and evil exist on Earth, there is no reason to think that evil exists anywhere necessarily, for God does not create beings evil by nature. Here O'Meara criticizes science fiction movies, especially since the 1990s, as having perpetuated a needlessly negative stereotype of "aliens" as hostile and violent. By contrast, he favorably mentions C.S. Lewis's *Space Trilogy* of the 1950s, in which the planets of the solar system are inhabited by wise and benign beings, with the exception of the isolated "silent planet" Earth. Here, O'Meara's view seems a bit sanguine. We have no reason to believe that extraterrestrial life forms have *necessarily* fallen into sin, but neither have we reason to believe that they have necessarily *not* so fallen. Moreover, science fiction movies since the 1990s have tended to depict "aliens" not so much as evil as *predatory*, after the pattern of animal predator species on Earth; again, while there is no reason to assume that extraterrestrials are necessarily so, there is no reason to assume that they are not.

The hypothesis of the existence of intelligent extraterrestrial life solves what is for O'Meara an apparent theological problem. Ever since the Copernican Revolution dislodged Earth from the center of the universe, a nagging question for many Christians has been why God created humankind in a remote corner of one galaxy among billions. What is the point of so much seemingly empty space? And how well does our existence in such a tiny spot in such a vast cosmos cohere with the traditional Christian picture of humanity as the goal and summit of God's activity in creation? Here the hypothesis of thousands of extraterrestrial civilizations comes to the

rescue. O'Meara writes that God's overarching goal in fashioning the universe is not "to generate countless but similar fiery suns," but rather to create beings of awareness and activity, and persons of creativity and love. He speculates further that the arrangement of most stars into galaxies and clusters suggests that in reflection of the life of the Holy Trinity, the pattern of community is built into

the structure of the universe itself.

Here I found myself growing a bit uneasy with the thrust of O'Meara's argument. The existence or non-existence of intelligent extraterrestrial life is in principle a question of empirical fact. We may never be able to say with certainty that intelligent extraterrestrial life does not exist; at some point in the future we may certainly be able to say that it does – following actual discovery of or encounter with alien life forms. But it is always an intellectually risky strategy to argue for a particular answer to an as-yet-unanswered empirical question solely on the basis of our theological presuppositions. To maintain its integrity, Christian theology needs to engage constructively

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*SETI Radio Telescope Array:
Listening for Extraterrestrials*

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not only with the question, “What if intelligent extraterrestrial life exists?” but also with its contrary, “What if the rest of the universe is uninhabited, and we really are alone?”

The most far-reaching implications of the existence of extraterrestrial life for Christian theology concern the Incarnation. O’Meara affirms that the second Person of the Trinity, the Word or Son, has become incarnate as a human being, Jesus of Nazareth, on planet Earth. He argues forcefully that the reality of this Incarnation does not preclude the possibility of other incarnations in other forms on other planets. The coming of Jesus Christ as a human being to extraterrestrial beings on another planet would constitute the appearance of a divine messenger, but would not qualify as an incarnation. Here O’Meara is drawing on two traditional strands of theological speculation. First, medieval theologians such as Thomas Aquinas affirmed that even after the Incarnation of the Son of God as Jesus of Nazareth, any one of the three divine Persons could still become incarnate in other times and places. Second, although O’Meara does not give this point the emphasis it needs, a long-running debate among Christian theologians since the Middle Ages concerns whether the Incarnation would have taken place even if humanity had not fallen. Contrary to the view expressed in the *Exsultet* sung at the Easter Vigil – that the “happy fault” (*felix culpa*) of Adam is what precipitates the coming of “so great a Redeemer” – O’Meara maintains that Incarnation is simply the fullest expression of God’s love for and self-communication to his creatures. It is thus to be expected that God the Word will become incarnate among unfallen extraterrestrials. Here he quotes some memorable lines of verse written by the British poet Alice Meynell in 1913, which make essentially the same point:

But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.
O, be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

These lines also imply that the encounter with extraterrestrial life takes place “in the eternities” – that is, not in this life but in the next. Here O’Meara sees the possibility of overcoming the wide gaps of space and time that separate us from other extraterrestrial civilizations. He writes that Resurrection is the entry point into a special future where personal identity remains within matter, while its temporal and physical dimensions are changed and enhanced. The risen Jesus has entered into a new way of being spirit in matter. His Resurrection draws human beings into a new cosmic environment: “Earthlings will be free of gravity to explore [other] worlds, communicating with their artists and mathematicians and mystics.” In this future life, we will learn from the different revelations of God to different civilizations, taught by “star colleagues, star mentors, and star friends.”

O’Meara’s book reads as a thought experiment. He does not argue for the existence of extraterrestrial life on the basis of UFO sightings or stories of alien abduction. Rather, he simply poses the hypothetical question: “What are the implications for Christian thought if intelligent extraterrestrial life exists?” and proceeds to engage in the relevant reflections. The results include a decidedly less anthropocentric view of creation than much Christian theology has traditionally entertained, and a somewhat relativized view of the Incarnation – no longer a once-for-all event but one among many incarnations in many worlds. Yet O’Meara’s outlook and conclusions remain authentically Christian and indeed Catholic throughout. At its best, Christian theology does not shy away from the hard questions raised by new scientific discoveries; O’Meara does a superb job of showing how even the hypothetical existence of extraterrestrial civilizations can be accommodated within an expanded Christian world view.

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REQUIEM ÆTERNAM

By Bill Dilworth

On Saturday 7 November 2014, members of the S. Stephen Proto-martyr Branch of the Guild of All Souls attended the Guild's Annual Requiem, held this year at the beautiful Church of the Advent, Boston. Fr. Alexander, Phoebe Pettingell, Ransom Widmer, Nancy Gingrich, and myself made the trip along with Mark Wuonola, past president of the Society of King Charles the Martyr and a friend of the Rector's. We weren't the only ones with ties to S. Stephen's in attendance, either: the Rev. Michael Tuck, Jr., our former curate and now rector of Trinity Church, Lennox, Massachusetts, and Brian James, who before moving to Boston was a familiar face at S. Stephen's and the Brown-RISD student ministry, were also there.

Not including the choir and altar party, there were about fifty people present for the Solemn Requiem. The celebrant was Advent's rector, the Rev. Allan Bevier Warren III. Advent's choir provided the music, beautifully singing Tomás Luís de Victoria's *Missa pro defunctis cum sex vocibus*. The Rev. Canon Barry Swain, SSC, who is the rector of Church of the Resurrection, New York, as well as the Guild's Superior-General, preached on intercessory prayer for the departed and the selflessness of that prayer; he reminded us that of all the Church's services the Requiem Mass is the only one to which we do not bring our own concerns to the altar, but instead focus exclusively on the needs of the faithful departed. After the sermon, new members of the Guild – including Nancy Gingrich – were admitted and presented with the Guild's medal.

Following the Requiem there was ample opportunity for fellowship at a luncheon served in the Parish Hall. In the afternoon there was an organ recital by David Enlow, the organist at Resurrection, New York, although the Providence contingent had to get on the road to battle the Boston traffic and could not stay.

The Guild of All Souls is one of Anglo-Catholicism's devotional societies, founded in England in 1873 and with an independent American Branch since 1889. It is devoted to promoting the Church's doctrines of the Communion of Saints and the Resurrection of the Dead, Christian customs at funerals, and intercessory prayer for departed Guild members on the anniversary of their deaths. Members also have the opportunity to posthumously enroll their loved ones in the Guild. S. Stephen's long had a branch of the Guild that became dormant over time and was revived several years ago. We currently meet on the first Monday of each month, when the usual daily Mass takes the form of a Parish Requiem (the liturgical calendar permitting). Afterwards we pray the Litany of the Faithful Departed, hear a brief presentation, and adjourn to a nearby restaurant for refreshment and fellowship. If you are interested in knowing more about the Guild or becoming a member, please join us or contact me at wwdilworth@gmail.com.



*High Altar, Church of the Advent
Boston*

Yours in the Holy Souls,
Bill Dilworth
Branch Secretary
S. Stephen Proto-martyr Branch of the Guild of All Souls

A SERMON

By Deacon Mary Ann Mello

Some of the most violent words ever spoken to me were on a hot summer's day at a traffic intersection. I was making a left turn and a woman with her babies in the back seat with her car window rolled down, yelled out at me. She said "if you try to turn in front of me I will stop my car and yank you out by your hair" and then sped off in front of me. Wow, I thought, and I was hurt and angry. I recalled the story to a friend who said "you'd better toughen up". Every now and then I ponder this. Yes, it was a first world problem and not earth shattering, but it was violent, and was the solution for me to toughen up? If I toughened up, would I become immune to the violent language that is spoken around me all day long, on tv, the web, on the radio, or in my daily life or even spoken by me?

Jesus tells us in the summary of the law we are supposed to love the Lord God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind, and then to love our neighbor as ourselves.

These words are part of the Shema, a prayer that was recited twice daily by the Jewish people as a central confession of faith. Here the heart indicates intellect or will and the soul refers to life or vitality. The Old Testament version of this text uses the word "might" instead of "mind" indicating full commitment to God with everything one possesses. Equally important is the command to love neighbor as self. Taken together, love of God and neighbor summarize "all the law and the prophets" and provide a foundation for the observation of the laws. Love here has the strength of covenant loyalty and positive action toward God and neighbor. Joining treatment of neighbors with relationship to God is integral to faith since God's

love is worked out through our dealings with others.

These are both very hard things to attain at times. The word *agape* was used by the early Christians to refer to the self sacrificing love of God for humanity which they were committed to reciprocating and practicing towards God and among one another.

Agape has been expounded by many Christian writers such as C.S. Lewis in his book "The Four Loves." He uses Charity to describe what he believed was the highest love known to humanity—a selfless love, a love passionately committed to the well being of the other. It is easy to love those who love us. It is easy to be gracious and make allowances for those are compliant, who never challenge us:

think of your best friend, and how little slip ups are more than often easily fixed. Where we learn about true charity is through the seemingly unlovable. On a micro level, it is the person at work who always makes our life the most difficult, especially when we are trying to leave at 5 o'clock, it is the person in our lives who never seems to have it together and has one crisis after another. It is the person in the grocery store, who is late and lets you know and is rude to everyone. And it is the person who is a natu-

ral irritant to you and you just don't know why. They are the people who show us how to love by teaching us to be patient and kind, who make us reach beyond ourselves. Sometimes it is these very people who can turn a mirror on us so that we can see the weaknesses we have, the prejudices we have, so we can grow and overcome them and forgive them and ourselves. When we slow down and are in our compassionate place, we can have empathy for the other person.

Then there are also other people, the liars and thieves, the selfish, the cruel, people who have



Shema Israel

taken away something from us, people who have hurt us.

On a macro level, there are the worldwide groups of people who attack other people because of ethnicity, gender, orientation, and religious beliefs and make wars and misery and bring the world to the lowest levels for others to suffer through.

Such hard things in the world make hearing the second part of the summary seem impossible. But then we look to God and the love that is so great for us, so great that he came among us and suffered to show us the way, and if God shows such great and merciful love for us we should be able to do no less for our neighbors.

To embrace the summary of the law, I think we have to start with the people we encounter in our daily lives. Now I am going to warn you, this exercise in *agape* is going to sound flat out corny at first and maybe naïve and idealistic, but what if with everyone we talked to or greeted or complained about or wanted to yell at, what if we ended their name with “Child of God”.

What if we addressed that person as “Rufus, Child of God” or “bad driver, Child of God, move over to the other lane quickly” or “friend, Child of God, I am sorry I hurt you.” I know it sounds a bit like *Chronicles of Narnia*, where the idea sprung from, but do you see how it changes the way we think about the person we are interacting with?

When we see our neighbor in relationship with God just as we hope to see ourselves, it changes everything.

Mother Teresa said “Holiness is not a luxury for the few; it is not for some people. It is meant for you and me. It is a simple duty because if we learn to love, we learn to be holy.”

The words we speak can be used as violent weapons just as that woman did on that hot summer’s day or they can be used as healing balm, calm, soothing sweet words to show Jesus’ peace and God’s love through us. Which will we choose today?



EUCHARIST ADORATION

Third Saturday of the month

An hour of silent prayer and meditation in the Lady Chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, beginning shortly after the end of the 9:30 am Mass, and concluding by 11 am. All are welcome and invited to participate.

ADVENT QUIET DAY

Saturday, December 13
9 am to 2:30 pm



Addresses by
The Rev'd Canon Scott Gunn

Executive Director of Forward Movement
Publications in Cincinnati, Ohio

Morning Prayer: 9 am; Mass: 9:30 am; followed by Breakfast, Retreat Addresses, silent times. There will be a luncheon, and the day will conclude with tea and conversation.

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

i am a little church
e e cummings

i am a little church(no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of hurrying cities
--i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april



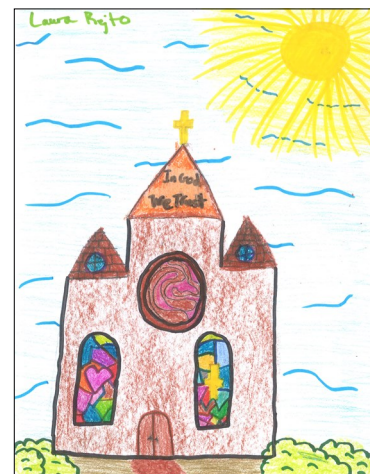
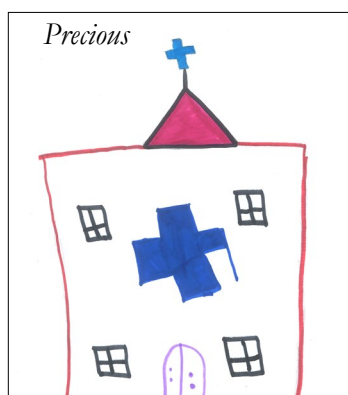
my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsily striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying)children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness

around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection:
over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope,and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains

i am a little church(far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish)at peace with nature
--i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing



winter by spring,i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)



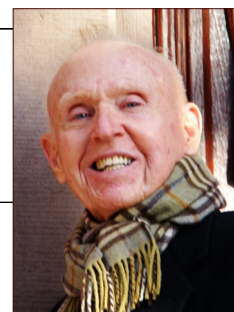
"I am a little church (no great cathedral)" © 1958,
1986, 1991 by the Trustees for the E. E. Cummings
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E. Cummings, edited by George J. Firmage. Used by
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Quodlibet

by James Busby

quodlibet (kwäd'lä 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*



I thought it might be fun in this issue to highlight some of the forthcoming music of the season, but before I do, the response to the mass ordinary on Sunday after All Saints on 2nd November bears some mention, as many have thought well of and asked about it.

The *Windhaagermesse*, WAB25 of Anton Bruckner (1824 - 1896) was composed when he was the age of eighteen and had just started duties as assistant school teacher in Windhaag, Germany. The Mass was originally written for the particularly skillful alto soloist at the Windhaag church, plus two horns and organ and in 1927 Joseph Messner arranged it for mixed chorus and horns and fixed *Gloria in Excelsis* to contain all the prescribed text, which Bruckner hadn't managed initially.

After some difficulty I was able to get my hands on Messner's publication from a small "Frau und Herr" publishing house in Mannheim. (Our indefatigable treasurer Ransom Widmer, ever a game guy, now knows more about international bank transfers than perhaps he wished but I am grateful!) I had always thought of the possibility of this sounding sterling in our Hillary Nicholson's voice, so I edited some of Bruckner's original alto solos back into Messner's edition and engaged the two brilliant horn players, recent graduate students from New England Conservatory and Yale. Hillary and the horn players did not fail and I think this work of a youthful master is a keeper and should be heard regularly in spite of the difficulties of edition, inaccuracies and procurement. It was wonderful hearing Hillary's unbridled, luxuriant instru-

ment instead of the more contained vocal production which most of our repertoire and ensemble singing demand. Thank you, dearest Hillary.

The next musical hurdle at parish church is our annual Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent on 7th December at 5:30 pm. We will be joined at that time by our friend baritone Robert Honeysucker as guest soloist. Bob and I grew up



Robert Honeysucker

musically together and his biography is too extensive to totally recount here, though mention should be made of numerous performances with major American orchestras and opera houses, frequent concerts and opera all over Europe, the Persian Gulf, New Zealand and in recent years bi-annual tours of Japan for concerts and master classes. He was heard in Beethoven Ninth for Seiji Ozawa's Boston Symphony Orchestra twenty-fifth anniversary and so many saw his PBS broadcast with Keith Lockhart, Boston Pops and The Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Last season he sang in what I considered

an unforgettable BSO production of Richard Strauss's *Salome*. under the new music director Andris Nelsons.

Bob will be featured singing a solo spiritual commenting on Genesis and the creation of Adam from the pen of the great African-American singer Roland Hayes (1887 – 1977 - see wonderful photo of Mr. Hayes by Carl van Vechten). Hayes pioneered the way for many others including Marian Anderson toward at least a vague semblance of equality in the performing arts and he was elegance personified on the concert platform judging from

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

the recordings. After insurmountable difficulties in the USA his career really took off in Europe and Hayes was the toast of crowned heads of state, including command performances for King George V and Queen Mary in Buckingham Palace before his return to the USA and success. As a youth I had the privilege of meeting the charming Mr. Hayes, a resident of Brookline, Massachusetts, on some occasions while doing my apprenticeship at Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston, where Hayes' daughter Afrika was a main-stay of the professional choir. His Wikipedia entry bears reading for that extraordinary life and his perseverance for art.

Other composers featured at "carols" include Palestrina, Richard Lloyd, Juan Esquivel, Orlando Gibbons, Alan Hovhaness, and the ubiquitous Mr. Anon. What a treasure-trove of riches in store this season. Make note of that date now, please.

All best, James



Roland Hayes
1887—1977

TREASURER'S CORNER

By Ransom Widmer

With the completion of the Great Hall refurbishment, we now move on to the next objective of our Capital Campaign: the restoration of the sanctuary floor.

During the summer, we worked with our architects, LLB, who assisted us with the Great Hall project, to find a vendor to accomplish the restoration. Several companies were invited to make bids and, as you probably noticed, the carpets on the sanctuary floor were removed for cleaning and repair so that the wooden floor underneath could be examined. In consultation with LLB, we chose Moitoza Floor Surfacing of Middletown, RI. Allen Moitoza, who is licensed and insured, will do the work himself. Allen has completed several restoration projects for local churches and owns the required specialized equipment needed for these restoration projects. Allen proposes to restore our sanctuary floor by:

Restorative repair of tongue and groove flooring squares of cherry and maple, repair broken flooring, replace missing cherry and maple pieces, and where necessary refasten loose squares with finish nails. Machine sanding will be aided by a commercial dust collection system with Hepa filters, and 1mil plastic coverings where needed. Flooring will be sanded and hand scraped to a bare wood surface and prepared for the application of two coats of Hard Sealer. There will not be any petroleum distillates used in any coatings, a citrus aroma can be expected. Following a light hand sanding between the Hard Sealer coatings, four coats of Murdoch's Uralkyd 500 floor finish will be applied. Each coat will be allowed the proper time to dry, followed by a hand sanding. The final coat will have a satin finish.

Since Allen is doing all the work himself, and a great deal of it by hand, it will require four to six weeks for him to complete the restoration. Therefore, we have scheduled the job for next summer immediately after the close of the choir season. During the time of restoration, all services will be held in the Lady Chapel. Our newly repaired and cleaned oriental carpets have been reinstalled in the sanctuary, and will be removed and stored when the restoration is set to begin.

The cost of this restoration project is being covered by a generous gift from an anonymous donor.

FR. SAWICKY'S LETTER*Continued from page two*

heaven and earth meet: where we encounter Christ crucified and risen, where we are made partakers of his mystical Body, and are incorporated into the household of God.

Third, we must continue to take seriously the charge to be where people are. We are fortunate to be surrounded by campus, and we are fortunate to have so many students and faculty wander into the church day by day, week by week. And yet there is much more for us to do. Every day, every evening, countless public events happen all across both campuses, most of them free of charge. From lectures to concerts to sporting events to museums, our neighborhood is a constant hum of activity. I have made it a point to "adopt" the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, the RISD Museum, the Brown sailing team, and the Brown Madrigals -- by which I mean I am especially intentional about attending as many of their events as I can. But there are others besides, from Religious Life functions to class presentations to gallery openings to medieval history symposia to play readings to the occasional lunch in the dining halls. I find that these events are incredibly fruitful opportunities for connecting with people, and they are a vital component of the chaplaincy. What if all of us at S. Stephen's decided to attend one campus event each month, and committed to talking with one other person there? The ministry of the chaplaincy would grow exponentially, both from the practical perspective of exposure (that coveted prize of marketing specialists) and more importantly from the theological perspective of communion.

Communion, after all, is what we are about. The penultimate sentence we have from S. Stephen, which he said even as stones were being thrown at him, is, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." For him as for Martin, there was an essential unity of spiritual vision among that which is seen by sight and that which is hoped by faith. To pray is to see, and to see is to love; and vice versa. Any step outside of our comfort zone

to be near to those in our charge - even if it means cutting our own cloak or accepting the stones of execution - is a step toward love. It is also therefore a step towards the final consummation of our faith, which we believe to consist in the unity of all the redeemed before the full unmediated vision of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I am extremely grateful for these last three semesters here at S. Stephen's and on the Brown & RISD campuses. I am likewise extremely excited about the potential for fruitful ministry in the next three semesters and beyond. I thank you for all you have done so far, and I encourage you to join me in continuing the work of the chaplaincy -- a home away from home, a place of encounter with God, an accessible point of communion and fellowship wherever people might be -- so that lives in our midst might continue to be transformed by grace. So may all of us finally see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.

ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS



Lorenzetti Ambrogio, 1344

SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER

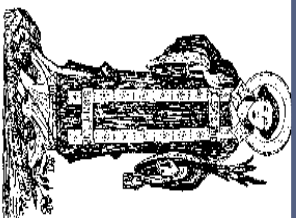
5:30 PM

Reception Following



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

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The S. Stephen

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany

2014 — 2015

A Christmas Hymn

A stable lamp is lighted
Whose glow shall wake the sky;
The stars shall bend their voices,
And every stone shall cry,
And every stone shall cry,
And straw like gold shall shine,
A barn shall harbor heaven,
A stall become a shrine.
This child through David's city
Shall ride in triumph by;
The palm shall strew its branches,
And every stone shall cry,
And every stone shall cry,
Though heavy, dull, and dumb,
And lie within the roadway
To pave his kingdom come.



Yet he shall be forsaken,
And yielded up to die;
The sky shall groan and darken,
And every stone shall cry,
And every stone shall cry,
For stony hearts of men:
God's blood upon the spearhead,
God's love refused again.
But now, as at the ending,
The low is lifted high;
The stars shall bend their voices,
And every stone shall cry,
And every stone shall cry,
In praises of the Child
By whose descent among us
The worlds are reconciled.

Richard Wilbur (b. 1921)