



The S. Stephen

Lent/Easter 2012

Vol. 11, No. 5

My dear people:

From the Rector

Visitors to S. Stephen's often remark on aspects of our parish's life that we might otherwise be tempted to take for granted. One point often mentioned in this way is the central place that we give to prayer. At our daily services in particular, intercessory prayer—that is, prayer for the needs of others, both living and departed—figures prominently.

Every day, after the Angelus, we offer the intercessions appointed in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, generally for a particular diocese in the Anglican Communion. We cycle through the list of S. Stephen's parishioners, praying for every member of the parish on a fixed day of the month. Then we read the prayer intentions of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, usually related to the day in the liturgical calendar. And finally we read the prayer intentions of the Guild of All Souls, remembering those departed members of the Guild from across the country whose anniversary of death (or "year's mind") falls on that day.

But even then, we are not finished. During the daily Mass, the celebrant reads aloud all the names on the Parish Intercession list, as well as the names of departed parishioners whose year's mind falls during that week. The Sunday 10 am Solemn High Mass is the only Eucharist during the week where these prayer intentions are not read aloud; but they are printed in the "Parish Notes" insert in *The Kalendar* (which I wish more people would take home). Still, every week there are at least seven Masses in the Lady Chapel, one per day, at which these intercessions are offered publicly.

We take this work of intercessory prayer so seriously because we believe that it is central to our identity and mission as part of Christ's Body, the Church. Of course, God does not need us to tell him what he already knows, much less what to do. But, as a proverbial saying has it, God is a gentleman, and "sometimes he waits to be asked." God values our intercessory prayers, and through them gives us the inestimable privilege of participating with him in the redemption of the world and the spread of his kingdom. He responds to our prayers in the way that he knows to be best for those for whom we pray. And by praying for others, we gradually learn to conform our wills to God's will: a necessary step in the process of our own salvation.

Yet we live in a religious culture permeated by misconceptions concerning the nature of prayer, which can lead even well-instructed church members astray. Beginning in the seventeenth century, a movement known as Pietism originated in German Lutheranism and spread to various streams

of Reformation Christianity. Its influence is visible today in certain sectors of the Roman Catholic Church as well. While Pietism is a complex theological phenomenon, it tends to engender certain misguided attitudes in the realm of spirituality, emphasizing "sincere prayer from the heart" in alleged opposition to more "formal" and "canned" prayers, such as found in *The Book of Common Prayer* and traditional Catholic manuals.

A typically Pietistic approach suggests that the efficacy of prayer depends upon the personal sincerity and emotional intensity with which one prays. The stirring up of religious emotion thus becomes the all-important goal—towards which various techniques are employed, some of them quite manipulative. From this starting point, it follows that the more one knows about the needs of those for whom one is praying, the more intensely one will feel compassion for them, and the more "powerful" one's prayers will be on their behalf. This approach naturally engenders a desire for more and more information—which in turn can fuel prurient curiosity and gossip. In one of the parishes I attended as a young adult, a certain lady would immediately approach the Rector every time a new name appeared on the parish intercession list. She would demand to know: "What is the matter with this person?" When the Rector gently tried to explain that this was really none of her business, and that to answer her questions would likely violate confidentiality, she would always protest, "How can I know what to pray for, when I don't know what is wrong?" As time goes on, moreover, those doing the praying want to know whether their prayers are "working." Is a sick person recovering?

If yes, then they are apt to credit their prayers for the healing. If, on the other hand, the person's condition worsens, or indeed if the person dies, it is difficult for those taking this approach to avoid the conclusion that they haven't prayed hard enough or with sufficient fervor.

The Catholic—including the Anglo-Catholic—approach to intercessory prayer is very different. In our tradition, the efficacy or "power" of prayer does not depend on the emotional depth of our feeling, but rather on joining our individual prayers to the corporate Prayer of the whole Body of



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Christ, especially in the context of the Church's Prayer, i.e., the Divine Office and the Mass. Those with a gift for intercessory prayer in the Catholic tradition often find themselves drawn to spend lengthy periods before the Blessed Sacrament. There is no need to know the gory details of the illnesses or other troubles afflicting those for whom our prayers have been asked; God already knows. It is enough simply to name their names and hold them up, asking for them whatever God knows to be for their eternal good. And if someone's condition worsens, or indeed if someone dies, there is no hint of a suggestion that the prayer has been fruitless; on the contrary, it may have helped that person to grow closer to God in ways that will continue to remain hidden from us in this life. Rather than persuading God to do what we want, prayer in the Catholic tradition teaches us to accept the limitations of our own knowledge and desires, better disposing us to accept God's will both for ourselves and for those for whom we pray.

Thus understood, the ministry of intercessory prayer is indeed central to our life and identity as an Anglo-Catholic parish. This Lent, we do well to consider whether we may be called to participate more deeply in this aspect of our life and work together, especially by coming to one or more of our weekday Offices and Masses.

With all best wishes and prayers for a Holy Lent and a joyous Easter, I remain, faithfully

Your pastor and priest,

Fr. John D. Alexander

Fr. John D. Alexander

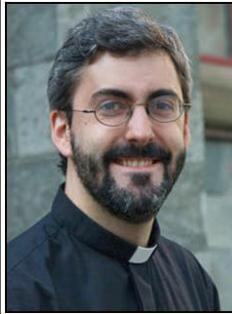
**Final Submission Date for the The S. Stephen:
Pentecost Issue is 30 April 2012**

This is the final date to submit notices or articles for **The S. Stephen** for this program year. If you have something you would like to submit or an idea for something you would like to see in our newsletter, please contact Phoebe Pettingell, Copy Editor, at Phoebe1446@aol.com or (401) 323-1886.

The S. Stephen will be published six times this year, by S. Stephen's Church in Providence, 114 George Street, Providence, Rhode Island, The Rev'd John D. Alexander, Rector; Phone: 401-421-6702, Fax: 401-421-6703, Email: office@sstephens.necoxmail.com; Editor-in-Chief: The Rector; Copy Editor: Phoebe Pettingell, Phoebe1446@aol.com; Layout and Design: Cory MacLean; Photography: Cory MacLean

From the Curate

By Fr. Michael G. Tuck



As part of my own reflection on the ongoing parish development process, I have found myself wondering about how this process can interact with the campus ministry. Many of the insights of Peter Saros could equally apply to how people around the University community find out about us, how we greet newcomers, and how we increase membership. The student leadership and I are putting a plan together for the fall semester that will take advantage of these insights. The parish's process of growth and development could work synergistically with the next phase of the campus ministry. My hope is that the deeper engagement with the campus community will have a positive impact on the parish, while the parish's work will help build up the Episcopal presence on College Hill.

I was especially intrigued by the discussion at the vestry retreat regarding the increased use of our space for musical and cultural programming. This could be a natural fit with the college community. As it happened, a few days afterwards, the University Chaplain referred a producer from Brown TV to us. She was looking to use a church with pews and stained glass windows to film a few scenes for an original movie. After meeting with the producer and reviewing the script, S. Stephen's was happy to be able to offer the space.

This particular partnership is already helping us get our message out. The director, Calvin Main, kindly agreed to help us produce a video of our Sunday morning service, and the video was filmed a few weeks ago on February 12th. It will be part of the Rector's presentation at the Diocesan Convocation on March 10th.

The following week, we were approached by another student looking for possible theater space after they had been bumped from another venue. The director explained that they needed a flexible environment near campus for a musical, and she thought the Great Hall might work wonderfully. She said the pictures there would add to the ambience. As it turned out, they were ultimately able to secure more traditional space that was better for them logistically. However, the name of S. Stephen's is now traveling around the Brown community.

These two encounters illustrate how well the direction Peter Saros has advised could dovetail with the revitalized campus ministry. With proper outreach and promotion, the university community could become both a source of new programming and new audiences with whom we can share the good work of the parish. I look forward to seeing how it will all play out.

“THE WAKING DAYS”

By Phoebe Pettingell

Book Review: John Gunstone, *Lift High the Cross: Anglo-Catholics and the Congress Movement* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010.

When I first became an Anglo-Catholic in the early 1970s, it was common to hear older clergy and laity speak nostalgically of the days of the “Congresses.” These were large gatherings of a primarily educational nature at which papers were presented on various aspects of Catholic witness. They were also significant for enormous celebrations, sometimes outdoors, where thousands of acolytes in lace cottas with torches, crucifers, thurifers, hundreds of vested clergy, and a panoply of bishops celebrated the Eucharist or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in reverence and splendor. The Congresses were instrumental in advancing such causes as Anglo-Catholic Socialism, as well as promoting the Liturgical Renewal Movement that resulted, in the Episcopal Church, in both the 1928 and 1979 Prayer Books. I was madly envious of those who had witnessed such glory, and still regret having come into this part of the Church too late to have participated in them. At least it is now possible to get a sense of what it was like to experience these stirring days by reading John Gunstone’s riveting *Lift High the Cross: Anglo-Catholics and the Congress Movement*.

The original Congresses were held between 1920 and 1933 in London, as well as other major cities in England. As one of the founders expressed it, their aim was “to put before the English-speaking world what English Catholics really hold with regard to such great questions as modern philosophy, modern criticism, the Roman Church, Non-Conformity [i.e., non-Anglican Protestants not part of the State Church], and social and industrial problems.” Gunstone limits his subject to the London gatherings, since they were the first, but also because the Congresses there played a particular role in a rapidly changing culture shaken by the First World War. While one misses accounts of the movement in, say, the United States, South Africa, Australia and the Caribbean, much of the value of *Lift High the Cross* comes from its vivid portrait of

English culture in flux between two world wars, and the conviction of Anglo-Catholics that they could provide Good News to those who felt their world was falling apart.

In 1920, Anglo-Catholicism was still viewed with suspicion by the Church of England, at large. Yet the movement had become more diverse over the years, so that those who so identified themselves were just as apt to be caught up in disputes with other sorts of Anglo-Catholics as with Evangelicals or the Broad Church [which was often termed “the Modernist Church” at this period]. Gunstone uses a spectrum of colors to designate the major parties of priests from the “Reds” at one extreme—Anglo-Papalists who saw themselves as part of “the

Western Church temporarily out of Communion with the Pope through a tragic accident of history”—to the “Violets,” who considered themselves pastors of the Established Church, yet quietly advanced the catholic cause by having a Sunday Eucharist, even if it was not the “principal service,” and reserved the Sacrament in an aumbry for sick communions.

The “Reds” worried about the validity of Anglican orders, used the Roman missal in Latin, although reading the audi-



Street Procession, Anglo-Catholic Congress, 1930s

ble parts in English, and remained celibate. They decorated their parishes in the continental baroque style, while their ultimate aim was to see the Church of England recognized by Rome as a valid branch of the Church Catholic. The “Oranges” might marry, though they were apt to be treated as second-class priests if they did so. They used the BCP, though also said the Latin canon silently. The “Yellows,” however, considered themselves part of the unbroken English tradition from the coming of Saint Augustine to Canterbury down through the present. They abominated baroque as “un-English,” but wanted to restore the glory of old churches and cathedrals with gothic statues, vestments, and corporate devotions to the Blessed Sacrament and Mary. They hoped for an augmented Prayer Book that

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would allow such things, but had no use for the Tridentine Mass, which was insufficiently medieval. Though the “Yellows” fought with the “Reds” and “Oranges,” all three supported devotional societies like The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Guild of All Souls, and the Society of Mary (once its parent organizations merged). The “Greens,” “Blues,” “Indigos” and “Violets” avoided such groups, although the “Greens” tended to teach the principles they upheld, including auricular confession and praying for the souls of the departed. Those on the warmer color end of the spectrum favored disestablishment, while the colder ones felt that the Church’s safety depended on its connection to the State. Yet, as Gunstone observes, all “Catholics believed that the Church was a community sanctified by the Holy Spirit to be the Body of Christ, providing through the sacraments forgiveness and strength for the building up of holy lives among its members.” Already, the culture at large was more and more seeing religion as a kind of personal philosophy, stitched together by the individual like a crazy-quilt. Anglo-Catholics of all colors saw their mission to call both the Church of England and society at large to an emphasis on the sacramental life, and to challenge people to find God in the ancient teachings of Christianity and through corporate worship rather than in private piety.

One of the great works of the Congresses was to introduce the wider Anglican world to the fiery Bishop of Zanzibar—Frank Weston—who galvanized the 1923 congress at

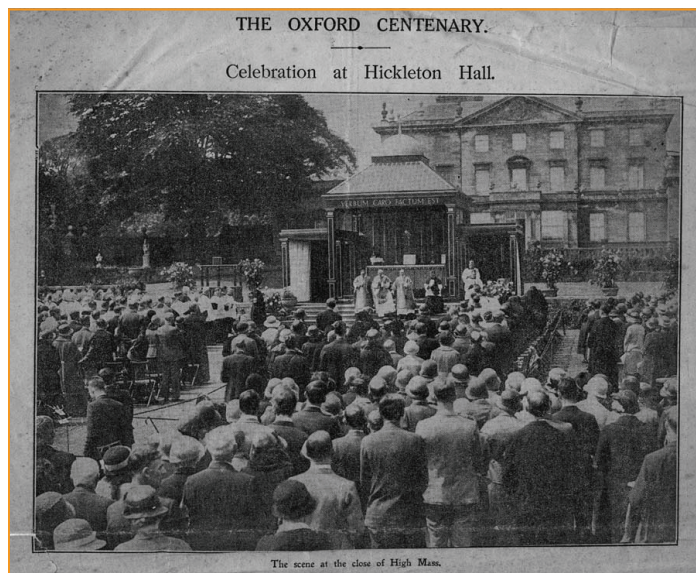


*Bishop Frank Weston
of Zanzibar*

the Albert Hall in London with his concluding address, entitled “Our Present Duty.” From his South African perspective, Weston realized that the English Anglo-Catholics had fought so hard just to be allowed “full Catholic privileges” in their parishes that they were in danger of forgetting the other half of being

Catholic. He told them: “You have got your Mass, you have got your Altar, you have begun to get your Tabernacle. Now go out into the highways and hedges where not even the Bishops will try to hinder you. Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, in the oppressed and sweated, in those who have lost hope, in those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus. And when you see him, gird yourselves with his towel and try to wash their feet.” Wes-

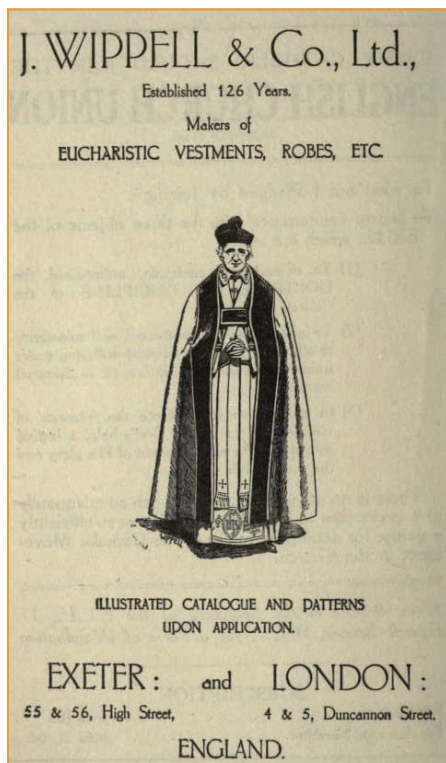
ton’s call was answered by the burgeoning Anglo-Catholic Socialist movement, which recognized that in a society that made the poor poorer, the Church’s efforts to ameliorate their sufferings in piecemeal ways were insufficient. The marriage of Catholic worship and teaching with an identification with the underclass’s struggle for justice was perhaps the most significant fruit of the Congresses.



Outdoor Mass, 1933

Almost equally significant was the rallying of artists, architects, writers and musicians to the movement, and the insight that their work could raise the awareness of the Anglo-Catholic vision among the populace at large. From the beginning of the Congresses, well-known authors like G. K. Chesterton (before his conversion to Rome) and Dorothy Sayers were brought in. Gunstone points out that “Many Anglo-Catholics were theater buffs [who] happily accepted invitations to become voluntary chaplains of local drama companies ... alongside their parochial responsibilities.” The Congresses inspired the Canterbury festival at which T. S. Eliot’s chancel play, “Murder in the Cathedral,” was first presented. The following year, Charles Williams produced his powerful “Cranmer,” and two years later Dorothy Sayers began her career as a playwright. This, in turn, made converts of some of the leading actors of the age. Meanwhile, the priest-poet and liturgical scholar Percy Dearmer published *The English Hymnal* with new tunes by the leading British composers of the day like Ralph Vaughan Williams. Martin Travers designed line-art posters and built baroque altars for the congresses, profoundly affecting the tastes of the time. From its inception, the Anglo-Catholic ethos had been rooted in the arts. With the congresses, Anglo-Catholics began to realize that bringing their works to the public at large could win hearts and minds. Stunning children’s pageants became features of the later Congresses, swelling the thousands who attended them. Anglo-

Catholicism has always flourished when it has employed its aesthetic vision to reach out to society at large.



*Advertisement in the
Report of the First
Anglo-Catholic Conference,
1920*

The Congresses helped make Anglo-Catholicism seem less of a fringe movement to the rest of the C of E. In the beginning, most English bishops would have no part of them, and the major episcopal presences came from places like South Africa, the Caribbean, and the “Biretta Belt” of the United States. By the later congresses, the Archbishop of Canterbury was present, while all but the most extreme Protes-

tant wing of the Church recognized that Anglo-Catholics were witnessing to the role the Church might play in a century in which the population had been losing faith in institutional religion. Years later, poet-laureate John Betjeman looked back and evoked the spirit of the time:

*Yet, under the Travers baroque, in a limewashed whiteness,
The fiddle-back vestments a-glitter with morning rays,
Our Lady's image in multiple-candled brightness,
The bells, the banners—those were the waking days
When the Faith was taught and fanned in a golden blaze.*

These were indeed “the waking days” for Anglo-Catholics. The fruits of the Congresses kept ripening well into the latter half of the 20th century. There is no reason that golden blaze cannot be reignited.



THE TREASURER'S CORNER

By Ransom Widmer

We are on our way! S. Stephen's has begun a comprehensive Parish Development Program designed to increase our membership, refurbish and repair our buildings and grounds and make us financially stronger.

A parish development consultant, Peter Saros, has been retained for three years. Peter is leading us in a series of parish dinner meetings during which we have surveyed the attributes of S. Stephen's which attracted our current members, identified what might attract new members, organized all parishioners into one of three committees, and completed a successful stewardship campaign in a difficult economic environment. Recently the vestry and Peter participated in an overnight retreat to develop a broad-brush Parish Development Plan that was discussed at our most parish dinner. What follows is a brief summary of this plan.

S. Stephen's is an Anglo-Catholic Parish located in historic buildings on the Brown University campus. We provide an excellent liturgy and music program which attracts people throughout the area. Therefore, the main thrust of our outreach to the community should involve the arts. Concerts, plays, readings, art shows and related activities could be hosted by our parishioners and outside groups. Such programs will attract audiences from the entire Providence region with some of those attending also joining us in worship. Both the Promotion and the Events committees will be involved in helping these programs be successful. Members of the Greeters Committee will ensure that our visitors and prospective members are made welcome and are provided information about parish life at S. Stephen's.

In order to accommodate these new programs and keep our buildings in good repair, there will be a Capital Budget Campaign conducted this Spring. Parishioners and friends of S. Stephen's will be canvassed for a pledge to our capital budget with the goal of raising \$300,000 over three years. The larger part of these funds will be utilized to refurbish the Guild House, to make it more welcoming and allow a greater variety of activities. This project would be accomplished in two phases: the first would be to refurbish the Sunday school classrooms, with the hope this project would be completed prior to the next academic year. The second, refurbishing of the Great Hall, would be done at a later date. Approximately \$50,000 would be dedicated to the initiation of new programs including a part-time administrator to schedule events and build bridges with the arts community in the area. A smaller amount would be utilized for repairs to the church itself. To cover the cost of continuing parish development activities a budget line equal to 1% of our endowment will be established. Our Buildings and Grounds Committee is planning these projects and looking for funding outside the parish.

Your vestry feels strongly that this plan and the required use of funds will produce a growing membership, more attractive and useable buildings and grounds, and increased financial security in the future.

THE STRANGE WORLD OF SAINT PATRICK

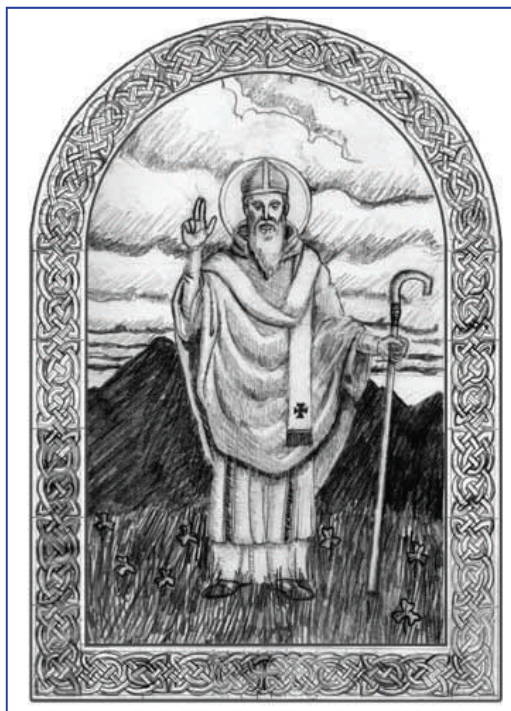
Fr. John D. Alexander

Book Review: Thomas O'Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick*. Paulist, 2005.

A great deal of romantic nonsense is written these days about "Celtic spirituality." Numerous popular writers have tried to appropriate the Christian bishops, abbots, missionaries, monastics, and scholars of ancient Ireland and Scotland as prototypes of fashionable contemporary trends – egalitarianism, anti-hierarchicalism, ecological sensitivity, feminism, nature-mysticism. But such writers are largely looking into the proverbial well and seeing their own reflections. The world of such figures as Patrick, Brigid, Columba, and Aidan often exhibits raw beauty and power, but it can also be a strange, harsh, and even brutal place. It rewards serious study; but to begin to understand it we must take it very much on its own terms, with as few of our own preconceptions and presuppositions as possible. The writings of careful and sober-minded historians are an indispensable guide. I had the good fortune to meet Thomas O'Loughlin, Lecturer in Theology at the University of Lampeter in Wales, when he was teaching at the summer session at Nashotah House in 1997. His *Discovering Saint Patrick* (2005) provides the non-specialist reader (and I emphatically include myself in this category) with an accessible introduction to the most famous saint of the period. This relatively short book (229 pages) is divided into two parts: the first consists of O'Loughlin's commentary on Patrick's life and work in fifth-century Ireland; and the second contains English translations of the key primary sources, including Patrick's two extant writings – the *Confessio* and the *Letter to Coroticus* – and the earliest life of Patrick, Muirchú's *Vita Sancti Patricii*, written about 700, approximately two centuries after the saint's death. O'Loughlin has supplied these texts with a critical apparatus of informative footnotes. For those with any interest in the period, this book is a must-read in its entirety.

Setting the scene, O'Loughlin refutes two popular but mistaken beliefs: that there were no Christians in Ireland before Patrick; and that Patrick was the first bishop in Ireland. Even though outside the borders of the Roman Empire, Ireland was well-known to the classical world centuries before Patrick's time. In his geographical writings, Ptolemy (c. 90-168) accurately described Ireland's coastline, giving the

names of 15 river mouths and seven inland towns. Such knowledge most likely came through trade between Ireland and the Roman Empire, the existence of which is in turn corroborated by archeological finds of Roman artifacts in Irish sites. In the *Confessio*, Patrick himself implicitly attests to such trade by his escape on a ship leaving an Irish port for a destination in either Britain or Gaul. O'Loughlin surmises that traders from Britain and other parts of the Roman Empire established settlements in Ireland; an archeological find in County Limerick of silver ingots bearing the Chi-Rho monogram suggests that some of these traders may have been Christian. Patrick also implies the existence of a significant population of Christian slaves like himself in Ireland; he writes in the *Confessio* that he was among "thousands" brought there in this way.



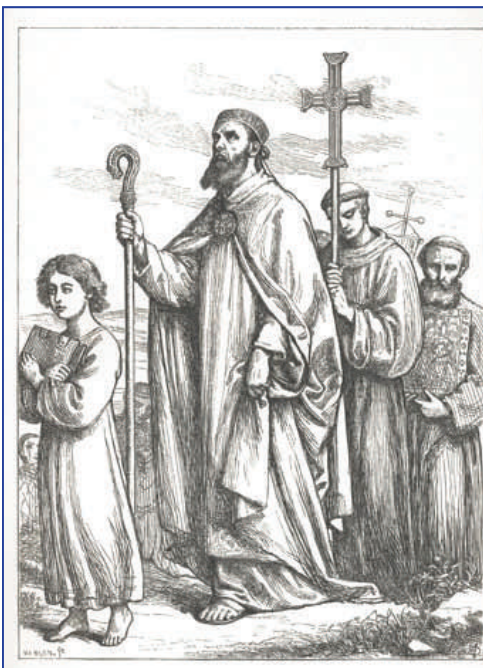
Modern drawing of Saint Patrick

So, even though Ireland was a pagan land outside the Christian Roman Empire, by the early fifth century its population almost certainly included communities of Christians comprising traders, slaves, and some Irish converts. As these communities grew, their needs for pastoral oversight would have come to the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities in Britain and on the Continent. In response to this need, however, the first bishop in Ireland was not Patrick but Palladius, mentioned by Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390 – c. 455) as having been sent in 431 by Pope Celestine I. Writing over 250 years later, Patrick's biographer Muirchú writes that Palladius gave up and left after only one year. Yet it is likely that Muirchú exaggerated Palladius's alleged failure in order to highlight Patrick's subsequent success and posthumous status as the original "Apostle of Ireland." O'Loughlin takes

the position that there is no reason to suppose that Palladius's mission was either short-lived or a failure. In any case, Prosper's exact words, that Palladius was sent "to those Irish who are believers in Christ" (*ad Scottos in Christo credentes*) reinforces the likelihood that significant numbers of Christians were in Ireland before either Palladius or Patrick arrived there as bishops.

O'Loughlin provides a brilliant analysis of what we can know of Patrick's life, personality, and worldview from his two extant writings. While Muirchú gives the date of Patrick's arrival in Ireland as 432 – hot on the heels of Palladius's supposed departure – O'Loughlin favors dating his

ministry to later in the fifth century. Patrick almost certainly died on March 17, possibly in the year 493. He was born and grew up somewhere in Roman Britain at a place he calls



Saint Patrick at the Hill of Tara

Bannavern Tiburniae, which he expects his readers to know, but whose location is a mystery. Patrick belonged to at least the third generation of Christians in his family; his father Calpornius occupied the rank of minor Roman official known as Decurion, as well as being a deacon in the Church. His grandfather Potitus had been a priest. The fam-

ily owned an estate with slaves and thus fit into the middle ranks of Roman society as something like “gentlemen farmers.” Despite his many protestations of ignorance, Patrick was relatively well educated for a youth of his class; although his Latin is not polished or elegant by classical standards, his writing does reflect some training in rhetoric.

At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken into slavery in Ireland, where he remained for six years. He identifies the place of his captivity as “the Wood of Foclut by the Western Sea.” When he escaped he journeyed 200 miles to a port where he could board a ship for Britain. We have no way of knowing the location of his place of captivity; Muirchú later identified it as *Sliab Mís* – Slemish Mountain in County Antrim. In his youth, Patrick understood his enslavement in Ireland as God’s punishment for his sins, but he later came to see it as a providential preparation for his mission to the Irish. O’Loughlin points out that in Britain Patrick would have grown up speaking both Latin and the local language that was the ancestor of modern Welsh, but that the language spoken in Ireland – the ancestor of modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic – would have been incomprehensible to him. (It was not until the seventeenth century that the budding science of linguistics discovered that Irish and Welsh belong to the same broad family of Celtic languages.) During his captivity Patrick would likely have acquired a working knowledge of the Irish language, which would in turn have prepared him for his subsequent ministry. Although Patrick remained many years in Britain after his escape and before his return to Ireland, he skips over this period as an insignificant time in his life. We do not know where he stud-

ied, or by whom he was consecrated bishop.

O’Loughlin further teases out a fascinating picture of Patrick’s “mental map” from his writings – how he sees his location in time and space. Writing as one advanced in years, Patrick describes himself as living and working among strangers in a strange land. Like the apostles of the New Testament, he has left home, possessions, lands, family, and friends to suffer rejection and persecution for the sake of the Gospel. Moreover, the foreign land to which he has been called is “at the uttermost parts of the world.” This point has enormous significance because of its relation in Patrick’s mind to the imminence of the End. Patrick is clearly influenced by the scheme in Luke-Acts, where the Gospel is preached first in Jerusalem to the Jews, then beginning with Paul to “the nations,” and finally beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire to “the ends of the earth.” Once the Gospel has been preached to all nations, the Second Coming of Christ will take place. Although there were Christians in Ireland before his arrival, Patrick has preached to the Irish who have not known Christ. He has taken the Gospel to the fringes of the known world at the edge of the Western Sea. Thus, by his ministry he has fulfilled the necessary conditions for the End to come. O’Loughlin speculates on the basis of some passages in the *Confessio* that Patrick also devised a special “sacrament,” perhaps a form of final blessing or absolution, to prepare his converts for the imminent return of Christ. For this reason, as well as on account of the itinerant nature of his ministry, O’Loughlin surmises that Patrick fell under suspicion among his brother bishops – whether in Ireland, Britain, or elsewhere – and wrote the *Confessio* to vindicate himself against his critics.

The cult of an early Christian or medieval saint typically begins with three elements: a name, an anniversary of death, and a place of burial. In Patrick’s case there was a name (Patrick), a date (March 17), and some possible place-



*Saint Patrick’s Grave,
Churchyard of Downpatrick Cathedral,
County Down*

associations—particularly the town of Armagh, which claimed to be Patrick’s base of operations or “See City.” After his death around the end of the fifth century, Patrick was most likely remembered only in the communities where he had ministered; the principal historical sources for the following two centuries are largely silent concerning his life. He is

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not mentioned by the famous British and Irish historians of the sixth and seventh centuries, such as Gildas, Columbanus, Adamnan, or Bede. Only towards the end of the seventh century do certain Irish sources begin to document an emerging cult of Saint Patrick.

Key to the development of any saint's cult is the production of a biography or *vita*; in Patrick's case this was supplied by Muirchú in his *Life of Saint Patrick* (c. 700). Modern historians associate the emergence of the Patrick cult with two other developments: the growing importance of Armagh as a cultural and ecclesiastical center; and the rising political power of the Uí Néill dynasty in whose lands Armagh was located. Without discounting these factors, O'Loughlin focuses instead on the symbolic power of the Saint Patrick story to express the self-understanding and identity of Irish Christians at the end of the seventh century. A basic principle for O'Loughlin is that an early medieval saint's written *vita* tells us *primarily* about how Christians viewed the saint's life in relation to their own lives in their own time. For Muirchú's generation, Patrick was significant as the only saint to have left writings describing the conversion of the Irish from paganism to Christianity more than two centuries before. Reading the Lord's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)

literally as referring to entire nations and not just to individuals, Muirchú casts Patrick as the original Apostle of Ireland, the one who baptized the entire nation. (Muirchú is, incidentally, the first writer in history to describe all the inhabitants of Ireland as a single *gens* or nation.) His narrative focuses on the contest at the Hill of Tara between Patrick and the High King Loíguire with his Druids – Muirchú always uses the biblical term "sages" or "wise men" – as precipitating the conversion of the whole people. In this way, the Irish *gens* enters the historical trajectory by which all the nations are being gathered into God's Kingdom by the preaching of the Gospel. In the *Life of Saint Patrick*, then, Muirchú supplies his contemporaries with a compelling account of their own origins and identity as Irish Christians, as well as their place alongside all the other nations in the wider Christian world.

Along the way, O'Loughlin offers some particularly illuminating reflections on history and hagiography. He notes that contemporary Christians often look to modern saints such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr. as models of discipleship and examples of the Christian life.

For this reason, written biographies of such saints ask and try to answer the same sorts of questions as do modern historians about "what really happened." In late antiquity and the early medieval period, however, hagiographers typically aimed instead to demonstrate the continuity between the saints and their biblical precursors, as well as their continuing patronage over their communities in the present. For example, a well with waters having healing properties might be associated with an episode in the life of a particular saint to demonstrate that saint's continuing presence with and intercession for the people coming to that well. A saint now in heaven interceding for the people under his patronage provides a model of what those people are called to become in the life of the world to come. A typical saint's *vita* in this genre thus links together the biblical past, the saint's life, the present life of the Church, and the eschatological future. In this vein, O'Loughlin shows how Muirchú models the story of the contest at Tara on passages from the Book of Daniel read each year at the Easter Vigil. The contest begins when Patrick lights the Paschal fire on Easter Eve within sight of the High King and his court on a night in the pagan calendar when all fires are forbidden. Muirchú's original readers would thus immediately have been able to locate this story within the framework of their own annual participation in

the rites of Holy Week. Patrick's story would thus become part of *their* story, caught up in turn into the great drama of death and resurrection, redemption and salvation.

In the centuries since, Muirchú's goal of establishing Patrick's reputation as the foremost saint of Ireland has been achieved beyond his wildest dreams. In a particularly memorable passage, O'Loughlin writes of Saint Patrick as both icon (in the contemporary sense of the word) and commodity:

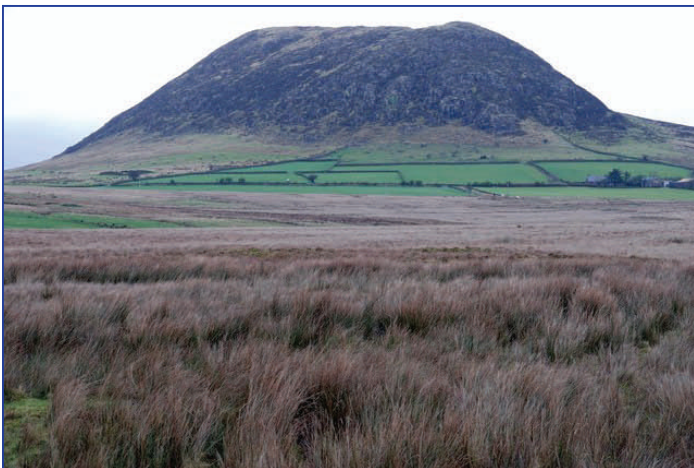
Patrick now belongs to a small group of Christian saints – along with Saint James in Spain and Saint Nicholas of Myra (Santa Claus) – whose cults have grown far beyond the boundaries of liturgical memory and intercession to become icons of identity and indeed commodities within our most general cultural memories. He is now a cultural marker who has become linked to "craic" and friendliness. (P. 133. *Craic* = "lively conversation.")

The danger is that we make such icons into whatever we want, projections of our own search for identity. Particularly in this country, Irish Americans have made Patrick into a



Saint Patrick's Anglican Cathedral, Armagh

symbol of Irish Catholicism. Members of the Church of Ireland claim Patrick as the first Archbishop of Armagh, of whom the current Anglican Primate of All Ireland is the suc-



Slemish Mountain, County Antrim

cessor. Evangelical Protestants in Northern Ireland claim Patrick as a model of pure primitive Christianity before it was corrupted by Roman error and superstition. O'Loughlin relates the amusing story of a recent attempt to cast Patrick as a patron saint of environmentalism because of his association with the color green; in fact, this association is only about two centuries old and was originally intended to link Patrick with Irish nationalism.

With respect to Patrick's significance for contemporary Christians, O'Loughlin does not conclude that "the saints of God are just folk like me" (Hymn 291) – quite the opposite. To encounter Patrick both in his own writings and in the early hagiographies is to confront a figure who is in many respects strange and alien to us; here O'Loughlin aptly quotes L.P. Hartley's aphorism, "The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there." The Patrick of the *Confessio* holds beliefs about the imminence of the End which O'Loughlin likens to those of American millenarian TV preachers. And while Patrick is sometimes held up as a model for Christian mission and evangelism, O'Loughlin notes that Muirchú's Patrick gains converts by such demonstrations of divine power as causing a pagan priest to levitate high in the air and then fall to his death on rocks below. Nevertheless, O'Loughlin concludes, it is precisely in the encounter with the *otherness* of such figures that we learn the most about ourselves. Reading the writings and lives of the early medieval saints occasions a sort of ecumenical dialogue with the Christian past, in which coming to terms with the differences is the necessary and inescapable prerequisite to discovering the commonalities and continuities—the chief being Christ himself.

My only quibble with this book is that O'Loughlin is just a bit too dismissive of the potential reliability of later hagiographical writings for reconstructing aspects of the saint's historical life. In all likelihood, Muirchú did not simply

make up the narrative of Patrick's life as if he were writing fiction, but rather drew on the many oral traditions available to him. Oral cultures tend to be conservative, transmitting stories from one generation to the next with great accuracy. So, for example, when Muirchú identifies the location of Patrick's captivity as Slemish Mountain (*Sliab Mís*), we cannot rule out the possibility that this identification goes back to Patrick's actual life. If Muirchú had simply invented the location, he would have chosen a place presenting less of an apparent contradiction with "the Wood of Foclut by the Western Sea." Obviously, we are dealing here in questions where absolute certainty is impossible. Slemish may have become identified in oral tradition with the site of Patrick's captivity for many other reasons, including the reworking of pre-Christian myths about the mountain. So, while O'Loughlin does a masterful job of showing how Muirchú's hagiography reflects the world view of Irish Christianity two hundred years after Patrick's death, I want to hold on to the possibility that it may also preserve some reliable traditions of Patrick's historical life as well. In any case, I heartily recommend *Discovering Saint Patrick* as a highly readable and intelligent introduction to Patrick and the strange world of ancient Irish Christianity.



LENTEN DEVOTIONS

Stations of the Cross

Fridays in Lent

(March 16, 23, & 30)

6 pm in the Lady Chapel

Lenten Series

Sundays in Lent

(March 11, 18, & 25)

6:30 pm in the Great Hall

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THE RECTOR'S ANNUAL MEETING ADDRESS

Sunday 30 January 2012

Reflecting on the classic purpose of “the Rector’s Report” to give an account of one’s activities over the past year, it occurred to me that during 2011 I have undertaken an increasing amount of work outside the parish. I don’t think it has been excessive – and I count on my Wardens to tell me if it becomes so – but it has been substantial. These activities have fallen into two categories.

First: diocesan work. I have continued to serve on the Commission on Ministry, the diocesan board that helps the bishop oversee the selection and formation of those aspiring to ordination to the diaconate and priesthood. And, in the early summer, I was asked to serve on the Search and Nomination Committee tasked with preparing a slate of candidates for election as the next Bishop of Rhode Island. A week ago today I was in another city visiting the home parish of one of the candidates, conducting interviews with parishioners and staff, and attending Sunday worship.

Second: the wider Anglo-Catholic world. I serve on the national councils of the Society of Mary and the Guild of All Souls; and I have traveled to various cities to attend meetings of both societies as well as the Society of the Holy Cross (SSC). Yesterday I was in Appleton, Wisconsin, attending the annual Mass of the Society of King Charles the Martyr; and in August I gave the annual Grafton lecture at the Cathedral of Saint Paul in Fond du Lac. I believe that such networking is valuable both because it raises the profile of S. Stephen’s outside Rhode Island, and also because it keeps us in touch with like-minded Anglo-Catholics with whom we can exchange ideas and mutual encouragement.

In my work outside the parish, I have encountered two fundamentally opposed approaches to organizing and conducting church life. One is what we might call “Confessional.” In this approach, becoming a full member of the parish and gaining acceptance into the life of the congregation requires signing on to a detailed list of doctrinal propositions – such as we find in, say, the Augsburg Confession or the Westminster Confession. One “belongs” to the extent that one believes and professes each and every point of the congregation’s doctrine and teaching. The congregation derives its sense of identity from its cohesiveness in the purity of its belief.

The opposite approach – which seems to be prevalent in much of the Episcopal Church today – is summed up in such slogans as, “Wherever you are in your faith journey, you are welcome here, just as you are, with all your questions and doubts ...”

Now, before we dismiss that second approach as so

much wishy-washiness, I will say that to an extent it does describe what I want S. Stephen’s to be: a place where everyone is welcome and can feel at home, regardless of what they believe or “where they are in their faith journey.” But I also want us to hold up clear standards of teaching and practice *in relation to which* individual members of the congregation can find plenty of room to be in these different places. It saddens me, for example, when occasionally someone tells me that he feels that he cannot remain a member of the parish because he has difficulty believing in, say, the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection. Really, that is to take oneself far too seriously! Even if individual members of the congregation have problems understanding or assenting to every point of the Church’s teaching, nonetheless the rest of us can believe it for them; every Sunday it is the Church’s corporate faith, and not our own individual opinions, that we proclaim together in the Nicene Creed. The parish needs to hold up clear standards of orthodox belief and practice,

while simultaneously giving its members room to freely engage and work through their questions and doubts, a process that sometimes requires a lifetime.

The specifically Anglo-Catholic vocation is to bear witness to two principles in particular. First is the continuity of the faith over time. That is, we are called to believe, teach, profess, and practice the same faith as that of the first Christians in the Acts of the Apostles, or of the fourth century Church Fathers, or of the Medieval Scholastics, and so forth, down to the present day. This one

faith has taken many forms; and while it has undergone extensive development down through the centuries it has not fundamentally changed. For this reason, incidentally, Anglo-Catholics were in the forefront of the revival of gothic church architecture and ancient ritual in the nineteenth century. For the same reason, during the liturgy we wear medieval-style vestments and the choir sings Renaissance polyphonic Mass settings. These are visible signs not simply of our superior aesthetic taste, but rather of the historical continuity of the Catholic faith over time.

The second Anglo-Catholic principle is what we might call the continuity of the faith across space, namely with the other branches of the Church; and this brings in the ecumenical dimension. The Anglican Communion is a branch of something vastly larger, the Universal Church, which comprises all those who have maintained Catholic faith and order, the apostolic succession of bishops, the liturgy and the Sacraments – especially the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. We may not agree with them in all details; but they are our Sister Churches and the areas

We are moving past a period of bitter ideological division into a period of more constructive engagement of different viewpoints. But challenges still lie ahead.

of our agreement with them vastly outweigh the areas of our disagreement. We do well to remember that in today's world there are many more Roman Catholics, many more Eastern Orthodox, than there are Anglicans. In response to the new questions that the contemporary world poses to Christian faith, Anglo-Catholicism insists that as Anglicans we are not in this alone, and points to Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox teaching as standards that we have to take into account and give due weight in our deliberations. For this reason, Anglo-Catholicism was a driving force in the Ecumenical Movement which taught Anglicans to regard Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox not as rivals and competitors but as partners together with whom we are obligated to work towards the realization of our Lord's prayer "that they all may be one."

The past decade has been a time of turmoil in the Anglican Communion – certainly since the time of the 2003 General Convention and the election of Bishop Gene Robinson. Individuals, parishes, and even whole dioceses have left the Episcopal Church, for such destinations as the Anglican Church in North America and, more recently, for the Roman Catholic Ordinariate. However, I am cautiously hopeful that we are past the worst of it and things are beginning to settle down. Those who were going to leave have mostly now left; and those of us who remain are here for the long haul.

From what I observe in the wider Church, it seems that we are moving past a period of bitter ideological division into a period of more constructive engagement of different viewpoints. But challenges still lie ahead. For example, this summer the General Convention in Indianapolis is almost certain to approve a trial rite for the blessing of same-sex unions. Last year, I was part of a small group called together by Bishop Wolf to advise her on this; and I read a draft of the rite that the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) had come up with, and I must say that I was pleasantly surprised by what I saw – for reasons I can probably best explain at another time. How and where it will be used, and subject to what guidelines, remain to be worked out. An issue certain to become more contentious as time goes on is that of so-called "Open Communion" – more accurately, Communion before Baptism. Clergy in some parishes have been issuing invitations to all present at the liturgy to come forward to receive Holy Communion, whether they are baptized or not, if they feel moved to do so. They see this as an imperative of hospitality and evangelism. Our calling as Anglo-Catholics is to draw on the resources of our tradition to engage constructively with the proponents of such innovations, to try to understand their aims and motives, and then to offer our own reasoned arguments as to why these innovations will have harmful effects very different from those intended.

In any case, leaving is not the answer. Contrary to what its proponents claim, the Roman Catholic Ordinariate is not

the fulfillment of the historic Anglo-Catholic vocation of working for reunion with the Holy See. That ecumenical work must continue precisely within the Churches of the Anglican Communion; it cannot be done anywhere else. In every generation, some Anglo-Catholics do leave to go else-

where; and, although they really should know better, they are usually surprised when the Anglo-Catholic witness continues without them in the churches they've left behind.

One hopeful sign that I have encountered in the past year or so is that more people in the wider Diocese and beyond are beginning to want to hear what I have to say in discussions about Church issues – and not because it's me talking, but because I represent S. Stephen's, and S. Stephen's in turn represents a tradition that has essential

insights to contribute to the Church's common life. Our vocation as Anglo-Catholics is not to retreat defensively into our own little enclaves to maintain our doctrinal, liturgical, and sacramental purity, but rather to reach out and engage constructively with the wider Church, offering the unique gifts that we receive from our tradition. That is my vision for S. Stephen's role in Rhode Island and beyond in the years to come; and I invite you all to join me as we move forward seeking to put that vision into practice.



Evensong & Sung Mass The Feast of The Annunciation (Transferred)

Monday 26 March 2012

5:30 & 6 pm

In the Lady Chapel



Holy Week and Easter Services

Palm Sunday

1 April

Morning Prayer 7:30 am

Low Mass 8 am

Liturgy of the Palms &

Solemn Mass of the Passion **10 am**

Monday in Holy Week

2 April

Morning Prayer 8 am

Low Mass 8:30 am

Tuesday in Holy Week

3 April

Morning Prayer 8 am

Low Mass 8:30 am

Wednesday in Holy Week

4 April

Evening Prayer 5:30 pm

Low Mass 6 pm

Maundy Thursday

5 April

Maundy Thursday Liturgy

7:30 pm

Good Friday

6 April

Good Friday Liturgy

12 noon

Holy Saturday

7 April

The Great Vigil of Easter

7:30 pm

Easter Day

8 April

Morning Prayer 7:30 am

Low Mass 8 am

Solemn Mass of the Resurrection

10 am



Quodlibet

by James Busby

quodlibet (kwăd'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 Quodlibet is penned, I'm busily studying the full score for the Solemn Mass at Easter, which will be *Mass, Op. 130* of Joseph Jongen (1873 – 1953). To the best of my knowledge, our essaying this noble work will be the first time this piece has enhanced a Mass by a church in “our crowd.” It's an ambitious undertaking for any parish, in that it is scored for full choir, soloists, an ensemble of ten brass (including four French horns!!!), and organ. Soloists **Hillary Nicholson, Jason Connell,** and **John Brakatselos** will be joined by soprano **Barbara Kilduff**, who is at present residing in the Boston area. Barbara has had a splendid career singing leading roles in many of the premiere opera houses of the world, including Vienna, Munich, La Scala, Milan, and the Met under noted conductors including Sawallisch, Rostropovich and James Levine.

Guest organist will be **Jonathan Ortloff**, a brilliant young player who holds degrees in organ performance and interdisciplinary engineering from Eastman School of Music and The University of Rochester. In addition to being a fine classical organist, Jonathan has also given simply the best performance I've ever heard or imagined at the ivory behemoth mighty Wurlitzer at PPAC. A man of most diverse skills, our Jonathan is also one of the curators of the Robert Hale Ives Goddard Memorial organ here at S. Stephen's.

Composed late in Jongen's life (1948), the Mass is written in an extremely conservative style, harkening back to an earlier era, with moments of impressionistic color in addition to great sonic splendor, and a mighty fine choral fugue to boot. It owes some debt of gratitude to Jongen's Belgian compatriot, César Franck. I so look forward to this.

For want of something to do over break, **John Brakatselos, bass, Brown '15**, competed in the prestigious National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts—Young Arts in Miami, Florida, and secured first place. Congratulations, John, we're so pleased.

For now, James.



HOW DOES OUR GARDEN GROW?

By Karen Vorbeck Williams

Spring is coming and, just outside the Guild Hall, S. Stephen's parishioners will soon enjoy a garden full of tulips and daffodils. In June, on our way into church on Sunday mornings, we will be dazzled by a riot of roses and early summer perennials. Throughout the summer we may look forward to both flowers and the cool shade of trees.

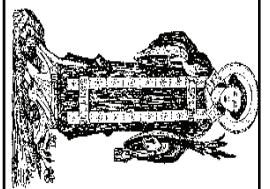
Our parish garden was lovingly planted by former co-sexton Cory MacLean during the years she and her family lived in one of the apartments upstairs in the Guild House. This spring and summer, however, the garden will need the loving hands of S. Stephen's volunteers. It will require once-a-week maintenance in late spring and early summer. In March, the roses need pruning. An hour or so with two or three gardeners should do it. In summer, there will be somewhat less work to be done—mostly deadheading and weeding. By late October, the garden will need to be put to bed for the winter.

If you are interested in volunteering—a good opportunity for beginners to learn gardening—please let me know. You may call me at 401-383-8953 or email me at k.vorbeck.williams@gmail.com.



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The S. Stephen

Lent/Easter 2012



*Modern Orthodox Icon of
Saint Patrick*