



The S. Stephen

Lent 2011

Vol. 10, No. 5

From the Rector

My dear people:

The Season of Lent at S. Stephen's brings us many opportunities for spiritual renewal and recommitment to our Lord, to our faith, and to our Church. Lent is a fasting season; and it will be too soon if I never again hear the tired old canard that Lenten disciplines should not be about giving things up but taking things on. For Lent is plainly a time for both.

Taking up this theme of Lenten self-denial, this issue of *The S. Stephen* contains several perspectives on fasting. In his letter, the Curate shares some of his experiences of keeping the Lenten fast as he was growing up. For an early nineteenth century Anglo-Catholic view of fasting, I have contributed an essay on Edward Bouverie Pusey's *Tract Eighteen* (1833). And for a twenty-first century view, Phoebe Pettingell reviews Scot McKnight's *Fasting* (2009) in the Ancient Practices Series edited by Phyllis Tickle. Comparing notes, we discovered that both Pusey and McKnight have remarkably similar agendas—retrieving and reviving traditional Church practices for contemporary Christians in their respective times and places; and my hope is that the two pieces will complement each other in a helpful way.

We are offering three principal opportunities for spiritual renewal and enrichment this Lenten Season.

First is the Sunday Evening Lenten Supper Series, “150 Years on George Street: Scenes from the Life of S. Stephen's,” which will begin at 5:30 pm on Sunday evenings. More information on this series is included elsewhere in this issue of *The S. Stephen*.

Second is the Parish Retreat which will be held at Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, Massachusetts, from Friday 18 March to Sunday 20 March. I will be giving the retreat addresses on “The Sanctification of Time,” with reflections on how the Church has structured its liturgy and devotion around the cycles of years, weeks, and days, and how we as

Christians incorporate this sanctification of time into our spiritual lives. At the time of writing, several places are still available on the retreat; to register, please speak to me and

write a check for the full cost of \$120 payable to S. Stephen's and marked “Parish Retreat” in the memo line. [Please note that since the Parish Retreat is taking place during an unusually late Lent—in previous years it has been during Easter-tide—we will not be offering a separate Lenten Quiet Day this year.]

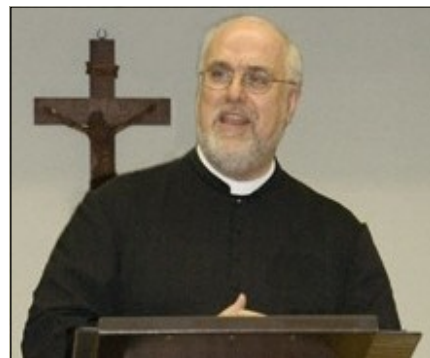
Third is the Friday Evening Stations of the Cross which, as in previous years, will take place at approximately 6 pm following Evening Prayer at 5 pm and Low Mass at 5:30 pm. Please note, however, that Stations will not be offered on Friday 25 March as we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation with Sung Vespers and Sung Mass on that day.

I am personally looking forward to this Lent; and I hope that you will be moved to join in with as many of our parish Lenten activities as possible, in addition to regular attendance at Sunday Mass.

With all good wishes and prayers for a Holy Lent, I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest,

The Rev'd John D. Alexander



Friday Evenings in Lent

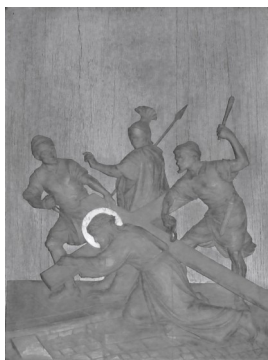
Evening Prayer 5 pm

Low Mass 5:30 pm

Stations of the Cross 6 pm

March 11 & 18,

April 1, 8, & 15



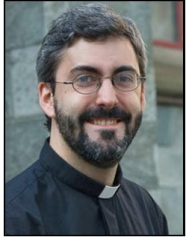
(Please note that Stations will be *omitted* on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation.)

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. – BCP, p. 265

The latest issue of Ave: The Magazine of the Society of Mary, American Regional Edition contains an article about S. Stephen's Parish Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

From the Curate

Dear People of S. Stephen's,



Any comfort that I might have with my Lenten disciplines I owe entirely to my parents. When I was younger, we kept very thorough Lenten rules. Thanks to my

mother's cooking abilities, we abstained from meat on Fridays and Wednesdays. We gave up candy and sweets. And although it seems almost incomprehensible to me now, we gave up watching television for the whole of Lent.

Part of what kept us going was the knowledge that we got Sundays off. In fact, one of the fondest memories of my childhood was Sundays during Lent. My mom would bring a stock pot to the table and tell us it was something really horrible to a

child, something like asparagus and broccoli soup. When she would open it up, it would be full of candy. Lenten soup on Sundays quickly became a tradition.

In addition to Sundays, there was another bright spot in the calendar. As children we looked with great anticipation to the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25th. We were taught that this was the one feast that fell during Lent which actually took precedence over Lent. Perhaps our reasons were more practical, but this inspired great devotion in us. We were encouraged to use our fasting to see its connection with the feast.

The image of the fast as a preparation for the feast became even clearer when we came to Easter. The celebrations of the Resurrection spilled over into our joy with our Easter baskets and the lamb-shaped cake we baked every year.

The private disciplines, practices, and celebrations were intertwined with the public celebrations in the church.

I learned many lessons from these practices. I began to see my Lenten rule as a kind of school, a method of training, rather than some sort of punishment. The fast was intended to help me appreciate the feast, so it was just as important to remember that Sundays are the Lord's Day as to fast during the week. I learned that it is important to find something I can persevere with, but I also discovered that I am capable of more than I think I am. Over the years, I have kept some good Lents, and some Lents when I had more trouble. But every year, I look forward to the opportunity to recall the things that God has done for me, to give him thanks, and to prepare for the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord.



The Battle Between Carnival and Lent

by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569)

By Karen Vorbeck Williams

NOTE: Looking closely at any of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's paintings is both fascinating and mystifying to us moderns. He painted landscapes and peasant scenes (genre painting) during the Renaissance in Flanders. The timeliest of his paintings for us, at this season, is The Battle between Carnival and Lent painted in 1559 and now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

The first thing to realize is that Bruegel is not painting from his imagination alone. He has recorded what could well be an actual event happening in a square in some unnamed Flemish town. To the left of the scene (in earthy shades of brown under brightly colored figures), stands the tavern and to the right the church. Grouped around these buildings and all around the square, are scenes related to either Carnival or Lent symbolic of revelry and of piety played out by two hundred highly detailed figures. In the middle foreground two figures riding on floats, comically costumed to represent Carnival and Lent are pushed towards one another by their followers, like the opponents in a joust. Coming from the direction of the tavern, we see fat, jovial Prince Carnival astride a huge beer barrel with a pork chop attached to the front end and a pot hanging from the side as an improvised stirrup. Instead of a crown he wears a meat pie on his head, his

clothes are bursting at the seams, and there are butcher knives at his belt. He raises his weapon, a spit piercing a half eaten pig. He's poised to fight with Dame Lent who enters from the right from the direction of the church on a flat platform with wheels (like those used in contemporary Easter plays). She is gaunt, a skeletal figure costumed as a nun with a beehive on her head. She sits in a small straight-backed chair, her weapon raised, a long wooden spatula with two dried up fish as thin and unappetizing as she. It is fun to think that long ago little melodramas like this were acted out in public squares toward the end of Shrove Tuesday, before the solemnity of Lent, in preparation for forty days of fasting. Some commentators think that the two sides of the painting symbolically juxtapose Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday; but it is also possible that the entire scene is taking place on Shrove Tuesday as some villagers celebrate Carnival while others are already making their pre-Lent confessions. Issuing forth from the church come worshipers and nuns distributing alms to the poor—Lenten penance is associated with our sacrifices in solidarity with those in need.

On the tavern side of the scene we see a play in progress, *The Dirty Bride*, a vulgar, popular contemporary play. Masked and costumed revelers play games and gamble with dice. The tavern is filled with drunks spilling out on to a

porch, cripples have come to beg, a woman bakes waffles over a fire, while a bagpiper leads a procession of lepers.

On the church side Dame Lent's followers carry pretzels (a traditional food of the season because it has no leaven and is salty) as well as dried bread. Inside the church the statues are already veiled for Lent. Just below, a priest in surplice hears confessions. In the far right hand corner of the painting a naked man lies on the ground, perhaps starved to death from poverty and privation.

If this masterpiece is a form of "photo" journalism, it is also replete with allegory and symbolism. The beehive on Dame Lent's head is a symbol of the church. The foods of Carnival (whose root, *carne*, means flesh) are meats, pancakes, waffles, signifying the indulgence of the body. Fish and pretzels, the foods of Lent, mean fasting—the preparation for Easter.

Bruegel lived in a time of great religious upheaval and the Reformation. As against the Medieval idea that for everything there is a season, many Protestant reformers vigorously attacked both Carnival—for its pagan origins, theatricality and over indulgence--and the Catholic practices associated with Lent. After the assaults of Luther and Calvin, the Catholic hierarchy lost much of its sense of humor, finding Carnival parodies of church ritual much too subversive.

No one knows what Bruegel thought about the whole subject but some think it significant that he painted the picture from a bird's prospective, looking down on the scene as from a distance. *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent* was one of his earliest paintings, influenced by Hieronymus Bosch. Bruegel, we are told, often disguised himself as a peasant so that he might go among the common folk to observe at weddings and festivals. Because his sons were also painters (Pieter Brueghel the Younger and Jan Brueghel the Elder) he was called "Peasant Bruegel." He spent time in France and Italy and then went to Antwerp where in 1551 he became a master in the painter's guild. He settled in Brussels, marrying the daughter of the master painter to whom he was apprenticed in his youth. His work evolved over the years as he specialized in genre paintings with large landscapes. His paintings, imbued with the details of village life, have become a prime source of pictorial evidence about the customs of his time among the peasant classes. Bruegel chronicled contemporary sixteenth century life as it happened, most likely touched by nostalgia for a world that was vanishing even as he recorded it.



Detail from *The Battle between Carnival and Lent 1559*
Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Lenten Series 2011

150 Years on George Street:
Scenes from the life of S. Stephen's

A Lenten Supper Series
Sunday Evenings beginning at 5:30 pm

March 13

The New England Tractarian Parish:
Writing the History of S. Stephen's
in 1962-63

The Rev. Norman J. Catir, Jr.

March 20

The Bishop Seabury Society:
Episcopal Identity at Brown in the
Nineteenth Century

The Rev. Michael G. Tuck

March 27

Defenders of the Faith –
Upbuilders of the Kingdom:
S. Stephen's in the Political Excitement
of some Twentieth Century
Diocesan Elections

The Rev. Lawrence H. Bradner

April 3

Bethlehem in Providence:
The Sisters of the Holy Nativity
at S. Stephen's

Ms. Phoebe Pettingell

April 10

Rendering unto Caesar:
A Civil War Sermon of
Dr. Henry Waterman in S. Stephen's

The Rev. John D. Alexander

Talks begin at approximately 6:30 pm
following supper. Compline follows in
the Lady Chapel, concluding by 8 pm.

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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 by Karen Vorbeck Williams & Cory MacLean

BOOK REVIEW

FASTING FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By Phoebe Pettingell

[Scot McKnight, *Fasting*. Thomas Nelson, 2009. From *The Ancient Spiritual Practices Series* edited by Phyllis Tickle]

Phyllis Tickle observes in a forward to her *Ancient Spiritual Practices* series that many modern Christians find fasting “awkward, even a bit beyond the pale.” Dieting or giving up an unnecessary indulgence like chocolates or alcohol for Lent—these things easily fit into our notions of self-improvement. But such sacrifices are abstinence—the voluntary self-deprivation of something for a season. Abstinence too is an important spiritual discipline, and the Church has historically commended abstinence from certain kinds of food or drink (usually meat, but among the Orthodox also dairy products and fats) on special days. But it is not fasting, which entails significantly reducing one’s intake or going without food altogether for a set number of hours, or for days. The Old Testament contains many proclamations of fast periods, while Christ himself went without eating for forty days in the wilderness before beginning his ministry.

In his new book on the subject, Scot McKnight defines fasting as “the natural and inevitable response of a person to a grievous sacred moment in life.” He adds: “Choosing not to eat or drink is how a person naturally responds” to such a moment: certain illnesses, the death of someone close to us, a crisis in our lives, a sudden sense of profound guilt, some external disaster that moves us deeply. Or we may suddenly feel called to a work that will change and consume our lives and feel the need for God to help us discern more fully. A fast is the outward and visible sign of our inward hunger for God and our need for him. We do not punish ourselves in order to pressure God into answering our prayers, but we mourn out of love and contrition for our separation from him, or through our awareness of a sinful world where injustice and inequity oppress many. We do not fast to procure immediate results. But if we take it on as a spiritual discipline, with heartfelt prayer and ever deeper concern and understanding for others (especially the poor, the sick, and all those who cannot eat or who have no food), we will find ourselves moving closer to God as a natural result.

McKnight, a pastor of the Covenant Church and professor of Religious Studies at North Park University in Chicago, has created a compulsively readable and beautifully written account of fasting as understood in Scripture and Tradition, as well as a manual that explains why it is as vital for the twenty-first century as ever, and how to do it safely and with sufficient motivation to carry through one’s intention. In recent years, the Covenant Church has committed

itself to Christian unity, praying that Churches may agree in essentials and witness together so that the world may believe. He is equally conversant with the Church Fathers, Western and Eastern, and with the Protestant Reformers from Luther and Calvin through Wesley and Zinzendorf, and the first part of the book is an authoritative summary of fasting from the Old Testament throughout Christian history. Yet he also assumes that some of his readers will be recent Christians who know little of the past and may be worshipping in communities that have no formal structure, much less tradition. Therefore, his object is both to ground his audience in the fundamental Judeo-Christian understandings of fasting, and to make the discipline relevant to the way we live now.

McKnight acknowledges that while the tradition remains strong in the Byzantine traditions (as well as among Jews and Muslims), “Western DNA and fasting are connected by the slenderest of threads. The urge to fast will not return... until we understand the connection between the body and soul.” Dualism runs deep, so much thinking tries to make distinctions between our flesh and our “spirit” or “mind” or “will” or whatever we think of as the incorporeal part of our being. But body and soul are inextricably linked, and part of our Christian maturity consists in living in our bodies while caring for our souls.

The author has come up with four types of body image to illustrate why our culture tends to widen the notion of separation between body and soul. The first notion is of the body as a monster to be conquered. The desire here is to tame and conquer the corporal. Some people who fall into this group have become great ascetic saints, dedicated to “purity, holiness or service,” and focused on the coming of God’s Kingdom rather than the present. But this path can be dangerous, because it has also fostered zealots and sufferers of anorexia nervosa. McKnight discourages severe asceticism unless one comes from a tradition where strict fasting is understood or is living in some kind of community where this tradition is honored.

The second type considers the body a celebrity to be glorified. Some people are entirely caught up in their personal appearance, self-conscious about how they are perceived. Such people are narcissists and their fasting is entirely to shape and mold their bodies to some ideal of perfection. This can take a number of forms, from those who wish to look like models to the sports fanatic who desires sculpted abs and pecs to the believers in colonic irrigation and similar forms of “purifying from toxins.” The author acknowledges that even among this type there have been saints, but many more make idols of their flesh, remaining prisoners of themselves.

We do not fast to procure immediate results. But if we take it on as a spiritual discipline, with heartfelt prayer and ever deeper concern and understanding for others (especially the poor, the sick, and all those who cannot eat or who have no food), we will find ourselves moving closer to God as a natural result.

Members of the third type think of their bodies as a cornucopia to be filled. These are the hedonists who have no use for fasting. They pamper their flesh. Their hearts are in their bellies. Once again, McKnight acknowledges that it is possible even for this type to achieve sanctity—Thomas Aquinas was a notorious trencherman. But it is also possible to kill ourselves with overeating, trying to sate a hunger that no earthly food can satisfy.

The fourth type sees its body as a wallflower “that can be ignored because it doesn’t matter.” McKnight considers such people to be in the greatest danger because they are neo-agnostics. By pretending that the corporal is merely a shell containing the spirit they deny the reality of their own flesh and the fact that Christ took flesh to become fully human. McKnight warns that to believe this misses “the intensity of a full-bodied commitment to following Jesus.”

Elsewhere in this issue, the Rector discusses a nineteenth century understanding of fasting.

McKnight, too, covers many of the same reasons for doing so, and, like Pusey, emphasizes that the fast is not to be understood as a private act of devotion, but as a corporate act of obedience and love on the part of Christians. In a culture that has produced anorexia nervosa as a response to stress, especially though not exclusively in teenage girls and among the elderly, it is essential to make certain that novices do not undertake a practice which could be twisted into a form of self-destruction.

Likewise, today many of us are on medications that must be taken with food to work properly. Here at S. Stephen’s we are familiar, to varying degrees, with traditions of fasting before Communion or on certain days in the Calendar. McKnight, however, also considers those Christians who do not have a concept of “the Church” and for whom spiritual direction is a foreign idea. He insists that fasting should never be taken on as a new practice without spiritual guidance from a competent person. In addition, he offers additional directions and advice about the sensible duration of fasts, the medical effects of going without food, and the precautions to be taken. Above all, he emphasizes that the results of fasting must be an increase in charity toward others. If going without bodily nourishment makes us irritable or fills us with a sense of superiority towards others, we are approaching it from the wrong direction and must reorient ourselves to its true meaning.

In addition to the familiar reasons for fasting, McKnight proposes one fascinating impetus for our own age: a concern for injustice and poverty. So many of us feel overwhelmed with the needs of the poor and oppressed, both here in the United States and throughout the world. We feel a nagging sense that we ought to be doing something to help alleviate their needs. Isaiah defines the ultimate purpose of fasting as a longing for “the day of the Lord,” when justice will flow down like mighty waters and God’s Kingdom will be established on earth. The prophet emphasizes that fasting involves four vital components: undoing injustice; releasing the oppressed; feeding the hungry; providing shelter and sanctuary for the homeless and the alien [Isaiah 58:3-9]. By fasting, we put aside the money we would have spent feeding

ourselves and give it to those who cannot afford to buy food. We voluntarily identify ourselves with the poor and outcast, what Dostoyevsky called “the insulted and injured.” We stop ignoring the plight of those who have less than we do, or, worse, sitting in judgment on them. We enlarge our compassion for the condition of all who have lost their freedom, who suffer injustice, who are driven from their homes and have no place to lay their heads.

I remember that in the 1980s, in Wisconsin, the Roman Catholic dioceses distributed a pamphlet of recipes that represented the diets of the poor across much of the Third World and exhorted members of Churches to try to live on these diets for a week or so, contributing the money saved to world relief. Prayers and stories helped give readers of this pamphlet a sense of the lives of others, while they experienced what it feels like to have only a tiny portion of rice and beans or some similar stuff once every other day.

The fact that the Wisconsin parishioners who committed themselves to try this did not have to walk several miles on this low caloric intake to get water with which to cook these things, nor limit their own liquid intake because drinkable fluids were so precious and hard to get, only fostered our gratitude, as well as a greater sense of the reality in which many of our brothers and sisters must live. It certainly made our prayers for our fellow humans more heartfelt and real.

McKnight quotes the Catholic historian, Eamon Duffy, who comments “There is a world of difference between a private devotional gesture, the action of the specially pious, and the prophetic witness of the whole community—the matter-of-fact witness, repeated week by week, that to be a Christian is to stand among the needy.” Christ came among us not to erase human suffering in the here and now, but to live and die through it so that we might be transformed into a new creation—to do his work in this world, and to join him at the heavenly banquet in the next. When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus why they and the Pharisees fasted but his own did not [Matthew 9:14-15], Our Lord responded, “The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” McKnight’s book reminds us that sin and sorrow and death are part of our bodily experience, and that both body and soul should respond to them with fasting—for ourselves and for others—so that when Christ comes again we will be in full love and charity with our neighbors, prepared for justice for all people, and ready to keep his feast in eternity.



EPIPHANY SOUP KITCHEN

Our parish’s 2011 volunteer Saturdays are:

**April 23, June 18, July 30,
August 20, October 15, December 3**

Isaiah defines the ultimate purpose of fasting as a longing for “the day of the Lord,” when Justice will flow down like mighty waters and God’s Kingdom will be established on earth.

PUSEY'S TRACT EIGHTEEN: AN EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY ANGLO-CATHOLIC VIEW OF FASTING

By Father Alexander

Number Eighteen of *Tracts for the Times* was published in London at the beginning of 1834. Two features that attracted immediate attention were its subject matter and its author. Previous Tracts, beginning on September 9, 1833, with numbers One through Three, had all been published anonymously. Occasioned by the perceived threat of British government interference in the life of the Church of England, these early Tracts were theological in content but political in tone, asserting the spiritual independence of the Church vis-à-vis the state. The new departure of Tract Eighteen lay in addressing a topic that seemed wholly spiritual, as reflected in its title, "Thoughts on the Benefits of the System of Fasting Enjoined by our Church." With its publication, Tractarianism began to transcend its political origins to become an all-encompassing movement for the Catholic renewal of Anglicanism.

Tract Eighteen was also the first of the Tracts to identify its author. It was signed on its final page with the initials: "E.B.P."—which were clearly those of Oxford's Regius Professor of Hebrew, Edward Bouverie Pusey. Still in his early thirties, Pusey had already made a name for himself as an outstanding scholar and theologian. His public association with the *Tracts for the Times* lent prestige to this new movement of young Oxford dons. Many years later, John Henry Newman wrote in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*: "He at once gave to us a position and a name."

Historian Marvin O'Connell writes that "Tract Eighteen was a singularly eloquent statement of the ascetic side of Anglo-Catholicism." But O'Connell immediately adds that its eloquence was not literary: "it was much too wordy for that." Anyone who has struggled through Pusey's sermons and essays understands the problem. Despite occasional flashes of rhetorical brilliance, Pusey's prose is often turgid: full of run-on sentences with multiple dependent clauses piled high. At the same time, however, his writings not only on fasting but also on such topics as Baptism, Confession, and the Holy Eucharist, are much too important to be disregarded or ignored. They amply repay the time and effort put into careful reading. And Tract Eighteen is particularly worth study as the earliest Tractarian statement on the benefits of fasting for Christians.

It is important to understand from the outset that in

Tract Eighteen Pusey is advocating not so much fasting *per se* as *the Church's system of fasting*. He assumes that his readers, as members of the Church of England, will share his premise that Scripture teaches fasting as a Christian duty. The question, he writes, is not whether fasting itself is beneficial—God has already answered that question—but rather whether the Church's regulations are helpful in facilitating the practice. The regulations in question are presumably those found in "A Table of the Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Abstinence, to be observed in the Year," which takes up less than half a page immediately following the Calendar in the Church of England's 1662 Prayer Book. It becomes clear in the Tract that Pusey considers these rules to have fallen

largely into disuse in his own day, and his aim is to promote their revival.

Pusey first approaches the question by imagining the reactions of someone with little experience in fasting to the Church's official directions on the subject. On one hand, Pusey suggests, such a person will be struck by "the practical character and thoughtfulness of some of the regulations." Here Pusey takes the opportunity to sketch out for his readers some of the main outlines of the system: fasting on Fridays throughout the year except on Christmas Day; and fasting on the Eves or Vigils of major Feasts, except when the feast falls on a Monday, in which case the fast is transferred to Saturday instead of Sunday.

At the same time, Pusey admits, such an inexperienced inquirer might be put off by the number of days and variety of occasions that the Church has appointed for fasting.

One not accustomed to "outward restraint" might find the whole system burdensome in its minute detail. Many people, Pusey suggests, would now regard such a system as "mere formalism." Although he does not say so, Pusey may have in mind the Evangelicals of his era, who, seeking an informal relationship with God marked by personal warmth, would likely find systems of rules and regulations designed to govern *any* aspect of that relationship arid and stifling. More broadly, Pusey may also be engaging with the Romantic temper of the age, which was marked by a desire for spontaneity in thought and emotion, and hence tended to distrust formal systems of any kind. But, Pusey argues, in our just fear of a



Edward Bouverie Pusey
1800—1882

lifeless formalism, we have forgotten that forms are necessary to regularity. The existence of forms does not constitute formalism. Every Christian feeling must have its appropriate vehicle of expression; and “where the Spirit of Christ is, there the existence of forms serves only to give regularity to the expression ...” Pusey’s aim, then, is to show that traditional systems of ascetic discipline are not incompatible with the Romantic emphasis on religious feeling, but rather serve to facilitate and sustain its expression through ordered channels. This aim reflects in turn the concern of the Tractarians to distinguish themselves from earlier generations of the High Church Party, whom they labeled “high and dry.”

Alluding to another effect of the influence of Romanticism, Pusey observes that many Christians are now finding something lacking in the present state of religious observance, and are thus drawn to the piety of former ages. Some are even being led to experiment with practices remarkably similar to what the Church had previously provided for them. So, Pusey asks, even if at first glance the Church’s system of fasting seems excessive, should we not try it out to see if it brings unexpected benefits? In practical matters, the great test is experience. Only those who have tried the method are entitled to speak with certainty as to its results. And since the framers of the system were themselves basing these regulations on their own experience and those of other holy people, we ignore their advice at our peril.

Pusey proceeds next to delineate what from his own experience he sees as four chief benefits of the Church’s system of fasting.

First is “a more uniform and regular practice.” Fasting is a duty incumbent upon all Christians; but a duty that can be performed at any time is likely not to be performed at all. Christians are subject to constant distractions, and apart from a specific system are likely to fail in this duty. Fasting is a command of God, but God has delegated to the Church authority to regulate such practices by means of specific directions. For many people a discipline of regular fasting and self-denial is impossible to sustain on their own initiative without the authority and guidance of the Church.

A second benefit is prayer. According to Pusey, fasting is not an end in itself, but has prayer as its principal end. Just as one great evil of the age is self-indulgence, so another is “being careful about many things.” He continues: “Our age is in general too busy, too active, for deep and continued self-observation, or for thoughtful communion with God. Fasting, retirement, and prayer tend to wean us from ourselves and cast us upon God.”

A third benefit is charity. Here Pusey deftly cites one of the Apostolic Fathers on the close relationship between fasting and almsgiving: “A true Fast is not merely to [subdue] the body, but to give to the widow, or to the poor, the amount which thou wouldest have expended upon thy-

self, so that he who received it may pray to God for thee.”

A fourth benefit is what Pusey describes as “public recognition of things spiritual.” Here his writing takes an interesting turn anticipating themes characteristic of much late-twentieth and early twenty-first century theological reflection on the problem of Christian identity in a post-Christian age. In a country that is becoming more and more nominally

According to Pusey, fasting is not an end in itself, but has prayer as its principal end. Just as one great evil of the age is self-indulgence, so another is “being careful about many things.”

Christian, Pusey writes, practicing Christians need some way of distinguishing themselves. “The Church and the world are too much amalgamated.” The revival of specific practices—the Daily Office, Saints’ Days, more frequent Communion, and more regular fasting—will show who truly belongs to the Church. By enjoining its discipline of fasting, the Church can hold up the beacon of a higher standard, rather than conforming itself to the world. Moreover, fasting witnesses to the reality of things eternal; one who suffers hardship for an unseen reward gives evidence

at least of the sincerity and depth of his convictions.

The Church, Pusey continues, has always understood fasting itself to have two principal objects: recollection of the Savior’s sufferings; and sorrow for sins. In this context, Pusey turns to discuss the Friday fast, which the Church devised as a weekly memorial of Christ’s death. Each week thus became a “representation of that great Week, in which man’s redemption was completed.” This practice impressed the doctrine of the Atonement on people’s hearts by incorporating it into their ordinary lives and actions. Just as every Sunday became a kind of little Easter, so the weekly Friday fast led also to a fuller commemoration of Good Friday, which otherwise would have remained insulated from the rest of the Christian Year.

But, Pusey laments, we have allowed our fasts to become rare, and many never fast at all, just as we have neglected the holy days, the daily service, and frequent Communion. In the early Church, such matters were not left to individual private judgment, but were taught by those who had authority and experience. Today, if we fast, we do so when it seems convenient to us: “we have become in all things the judges of the Church instead of reverently obeying what has been commanded of us; we judge beforehand what will be useful to us, instead of ascertaining by experience whether the system recommended to us by elder Christians be not so.”

Approaching the end of the Tract, Pusey exhorts his readers to investigate the canons and rubrics to discover for themselves the real mind of the Church. Another imaginary objector—presumably also an Evangelical—may scruple whether something as trivial and petty as a Friday fast dishonors the doctrine of the Cross by being associated with it. But, Pusey counters, he who blesses a cup of cold water given to a disciple in his name will also bless any act of sincere self-denial done in his memory. In the Church of England, the

Continued next page

A TABLE OF THE VIGILS, FASTS, AND DAYS OF ABSTINENCE, TO BE OBSERVED IN THE YEAR.

The Evens or Vigils before	{	The Nativity of our Lord.		The Evens or Vigils before	{	St. John Baptist.
		The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.				St. Peter.—St. James.
		The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.				St. Bartholomew.
		Easter-day.—Ascension-day. Pentecost.—St. Matthias.				St. Matthew. St. Simon and St. Jude. St. Andrew.—St. Thomas. All Saints.

Note, That if any of these Feast-days fall upon a Monday, then the Vigil or Fast-day shall be kept upon the Saturday, and not upon the Sunday next before it.

Days of Fasting, or Abstinence.

- I. The Forty Days of Lent.
- II. The Ember-days at the Four Seasons, being the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after { The First Sunday in Lent.
The Feast of Pentecost.
September 14, and December 13.
- III. The Three Rogation-days, being the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Holy Thursday, or the Ascension of our Lord.
- IV. All the Fridays in the Year, except Christmas-day.

Table of Fasts from the 1662 Prayer Book of the Church of England

Continued from previous page

Prayer Book regulations leave the exact form of fasting to each person's conscience, subject to such factors as health and climate. But whatever form it takes, Pusey exhorts, let it be real self-denial that expresses real sorrow for sin. Finally, Pusey points out that fasting has a corporate as well as an individual dimension: beyond the voluntary disciplines of individuals, the Church's system of fasting unites the Church before God, humbling itself for its sins.

In a short Postscript, Pusey makes clear that while he has sought to demonstrate the benefits of fasting by appealing to the wisdom and experience of holy people, this does not mean that he considers the Church's rules on the practice to be lacking in authority. It cannot be argued, he maintains, that long disuse has abrogated these rules. Here, interestingly, he cites the example of the Episcopal Church in the United States, which retained most of the traditional fasts in its own first Prayer Book of 1789, just over forty years earlier: "they omitted only the Vigils, while they retained the weekly Friday Fast, those of Lent, the Ember and Rogation Days ..." His point is that the framers of the American Prayer Book would not have retained fasts that they or their contemporaries in the Church of England believed to be obsolete.

Pusey concludes the Postscript with a reflection on the difficulty of fasting. By its very hardship, fasting is a remedy for sin. It trained the martyrs to endure so that they ultimately were able to "resist to the blood". Shall we, Pusey asks, pronounce needless for ourselves what "the Glorious Company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of prophets, the noble Army of Martyrs, the holy Church throughout the world, found needful?" Fasting will entail struggle; otherwise, it would not be a discipline. Only let us persevere: "Men, aided by GOD, have done the like; and for us also, His grace will be sufficient."

Reading Tract Eighteen some 177 years after its first publication, I find myself intrigued as much by what it does not say as by what it does say. Pusey is careful to restrict himself to endorsing the fasting rules contained in the 1662

Prayer Book, so he says nothing about, say, the distinction between fasting and abstinence, or different degrees of fasting for different days. He says little about the Lenten fast, emphasizing instead the Friday fast as a year-round discipline. And he does not mention the fast before Communion—a practice that would be made central by subsequent generations of Anglo-Catholics through such organizations as the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.

What I find fresh and exciting about Pusey's approach in Tract Eighteen is his emphasis

on the ecclesial and communal dimension of fasting. Much contemporary writing tends to treat fasting as one more spiritual practice undertaken by individuals for their own personal edification. By his emphasis on the Church's system, however, Pusey highlights the corporate significance of fasting as an activity that Christians undertake *together*—an action not as much of individuals as of the Church as a whole. The Church fasts during certain seasons and on certain days; the question for us is whether we are going to join with the Church in keeping these fasts. When we do so, we contribute not only to our own spiritual formation but also to the Church's unity; as Pusey says, the Church is united before God, humbling itself for its sins. By participating in the Church's fasts, then, we encourage and support one another, and help strengthen the whole Body of Christ.



SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY—APRIL 17

7:30 am Morning Prayer
8 am Low Mass
10 am Liturgy of the Palms & Solemn Mass of the Passion

MAUNDY THURSDAY—APRIL 21

7:30 pm Maundy Thursday Liturgy
& Vigil at the Altar of Repose

GOOD FRIDAY—APRIL 22

12 noon Good Friday Liturgy
5:30 pm Maria Desolata

HOLY SATURDAY—APRIL 23

7:30 pm The Great Vigil of Easter

EASTER DAY—APRIL 24

7:30 am Morning Prayer
8 am Low Mass
10 am Solemn Mass of the Resurrection



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

As we enter this season of Lent, it seems appropriate to comment on a few musical selections, and the omission of a few others as well as some very old traditions. After Epiphany the Last in keeping with the "giving o'er" of Alleluias, the closing voluntary is omitted—that's just our parochial custom which I've found an effective practice. *Gloria in Excelsis* during the Mass is not sung during Lent: an exception is Maundy Thursday, at which times bells are rung and fanfares played on the organ. The silencing of the organ and bells from that time until the *Gloria* at the first Mass of Easter only heightens the drama and solemnity of the season. Masses during Lent are sung to the ancient Plainsong or Gregorian melodies; many consider this the perfect adornment of the mass.

A bit on Signor Allegri's noted Miserere...

On Ash Wednesday during or immediately after the imposition of the ashes prayer book instructs us to say or sing a setting of Psalm 51, *Miserere mei, Deus*: "Have mercy on me O God, after Thy great goodness....wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin". It was for centuries sung in the Sistine Chapel to a musical setting by Gregorio Allegri (composed around 1638 during the reign of Pope Urban VIII). This setting, composed for two choirs of four and five voices respectively, contained verses of the psalm chanted by the lower voices to traditional psalm tone, alternating with *abellimenti* or ornaments which the *castrati* of the Schola Cantorum considered their own private territory. This group of men, at that time the rock stars of church and opera, are an interesting socio-musical study in itself. Each pair of psalm verses contains a section where the head man would interpolate an ornament climaxing on a high C. It was so highly prized, and the choir so territorial, it was punishable by excommunication to perform this setting away from the Chapel! Although news, good and otherwise, does travel, it remained the special provenance of that institution for centuries.

The story—perhaps apocryphal and promulgated by Marcia Davenport in a highly fictional and rather gadfly biography—has the fourteen year old Mozart in Rome on one of his infant genius tours, visiting the Chapel on a Wednesday, then going home and writing the whole thing down from memory. Truth be told, the famous ornament is repeated **five** times during the course of the Psalm and isn't such a Sisyphean task at all for a decent musical ear to memorize, much less for a Mozart. These many repetitions do however add to the terror for the soprano executing them!

Well, by whatever means, a copy finally found its way to England and into the hands of the noted 18th cen-

tury historian Dr. Charles Burney, who published it in 1771. The Papal ban was lifted, further transcriptions made by Mendelssohn and Liszt, and it has now become one of the most noted choral selections of the late Renaissance. A wonderful recording was made, using the Coverdale translation of the psalm by Kings College Chapel choir (under the direction of David Willcocks) in 1963. It remains available on CD to-day. At present, we've adopted the performing edition of George Guest who was Master of Music at St John's College—down the street from Kings College in Cambridge—and it has become our tradition as well. In addition to various musicological virtues, Dr. Guest's addition restores the Vulgate Latin text of the psalm.

And a Mass for Easter...

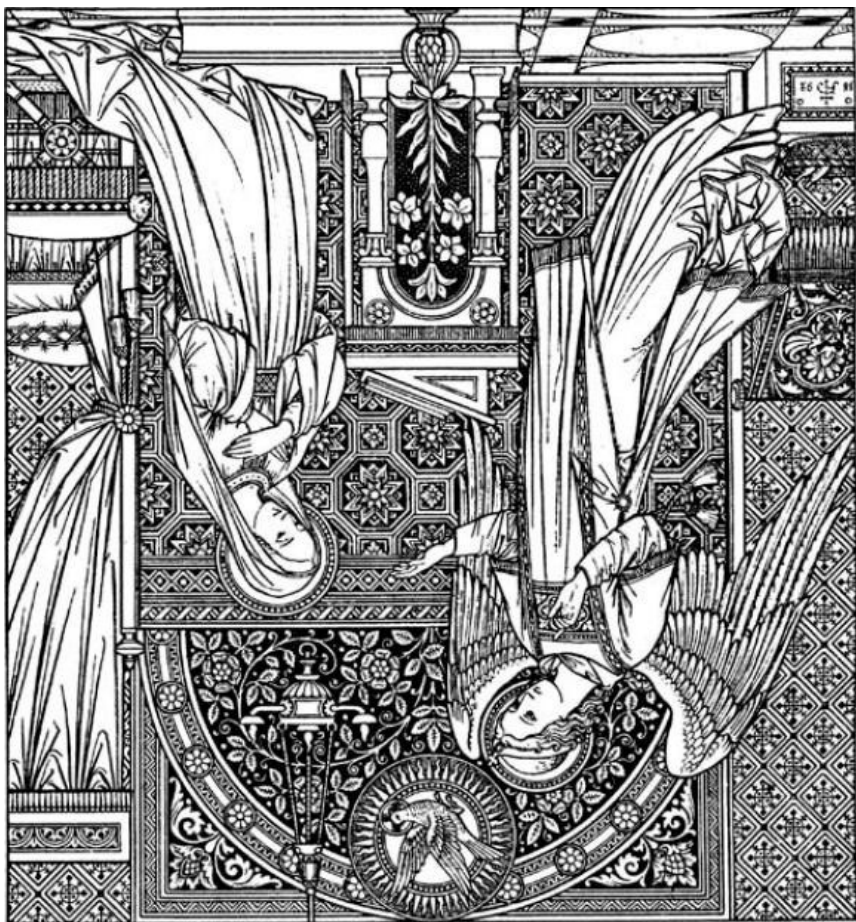
After the eloquent but more austere beauties of our Lenten music I really look forward to conducting the Louis Vierne Mass again on Easter morning. It's been some years since I've chosen it as I thought I'd nothing much fresh to do with it. Our new arrangement by Tobias Andrews, with brass quintet and tympani added to the organ part, should provide just the lift the occasion demands.

It was originally composed for Notre-Dame de Paris where Vierne was organist, and is scored for full choir in the front of the church in French tradition, with its own organ providing accompaniment, and grand organ in the rear gallery playing antiphonal commentary. This provides a wonderful symphony of sound. For a most interesting five minutes, one should go to YouTube.com and find the video by JAV Recordings, documenting the 2007 recording sessions of this mass at the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris—with their splendid two organs and the Gregorian propers for Easter sung as well.

Imagine this with the sonic addition of the brass and remember spring is not far behind! - JCB



A Chorus of Singers (1732)
By William Hogarth



Sung
Vespers & Mass
The Annunciation
of our Lord
Friday
25 March 2011
5 & 5:30 pm
In the Lady Chapel



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

Address Correction Requested