

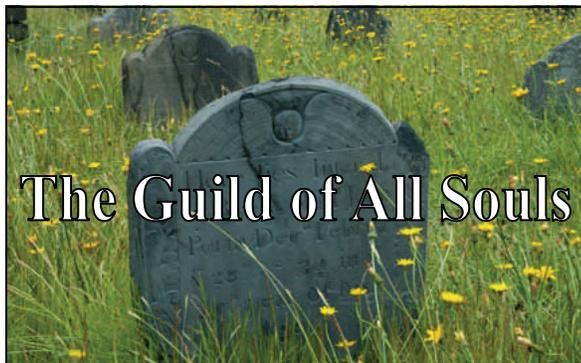


# The S. Stephen

The monthly news at S. Stephen's Church in Providence

October/November, 2009

Vol. 9, No. 2



## The Guild of All Souls

The Guild of All Souls was founded as an Anglican devotional society in England in 1873, and an American branch was established in 1889. It is the oldest of the historic Anglican devotional societies and Fr. Alexander is a member of its national council. Its object is "to promote the Church's teaching in regard to the Faithful Departed through Intercessory prayer for the Dying and the Repose of the Souls of the Departed: encouraging Christian customs at burials, especially the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and promoting the two great doctrines of the Christian Creed: the Communion of Saints and the Resurrection from the Dead."

At the time the Guild of All Souls was founded, prayers for the dead were considered by the majority of Protestants to question God's judgment. Victorian literature is filled with unhappy accounts of people whose sorrow in losing a loved one was compounded by the harsh doctrine that the beloved had already been consigned to heaven or hell and that a good Christian should rejoice in the divine will. Today, we live in a death-avoidant culture in which even many church-goers have only a vague notion of what the Church teaches about the Resurrection. In both these societies, the Guild has performed and continues to perform vital teaching, bringing comfort and enlightenment to the bereaved. But its chief labor is prayer. Members pray regularly for the departed in general, and for those members of the Guild who have gone before. They may enroll their departed family and friends in the Guild, as well. Through such efforts, the Communion of Saints becomes more real to us, and we recognize that the Church consists of all its members in all ages—not just those who are alive now.

In recent months, our daily services in the Lady Chapel remember departed members of the Guild of All Souls in the same way we pray daily for those on our parish prayer list, for the years' mind of departed parish members, for the Anglican Communion, our parish family, and for the work of our parish. Prayer is the chief work of the Church. Fr. Alexander has also instituted a requiem on the second Saturday of every month at the 9:30 a.m. mass. We are now working to form a parish ward of The Guild of All Souls. If you believe you might be interested in this work, or want to know more about it, speak to Fr. Alexander or Phoebe Pettingell. You can also e-mail [Phoebel446@aol.com](mailto:Phoebel446@aol.com).

*Pledge cards have gone out*

## 2009-2010 Stewardship Campaign

On 4 October, Tom and Cathy Bledsoe, S. Stephen's Stewardship Co-Chairs, sent their annual campaign letter to the parish. While pointing to the new commitments we have made toward the Brown-RISD Episcopal campus ministry and the Epiphany Soup Kitchen, now held at S. Stephen's Church, the letter focused on the harsh realities of the economic downturn and how that has effected the parish endowment.

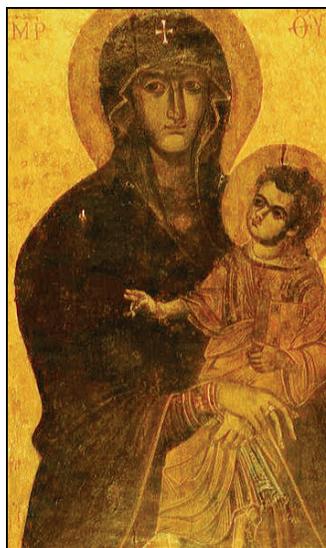
It is more important than ever that we give as generously as possible so that the church can fulfill the promises it has made.

Sunday 25 October has been designated as the day when pledge cards will be brought forward to the altar and blessed. It is hoped that parishioners will have returned their pledges by then so that the Vestry can get on with the difficult business of planning the 2010 budget.

Thanks to all those who continue to support the very important work of our church.

October 18

## Saint Luke the Evangelist



St. Luke is best known as the writer of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Some believe he is among the very best of ancient historical writers.

The saint is also believed to have been a painter. Both the St. Thomas Christians of India and the church of St. Mary Major in Rome claim to have icons painted by St. Luke. The icon of the Virgin Mary in the Pauline Chapel of the Basilica in Rome is known as *Salus*

*Populi Romani*, or *Health of the Roman People*, for a miracle in which it kept the plague from the city. Tradition says that it was painted from life by St. Luke. The Basilica claims that radio carbon dating has established its age at approximately 2,000 years, which reinforces the traditional belief.

As a key Mariological symbol, the *Salus Populi Romani* has been a favorite of the Popes. Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli) celebrated his first Holy Mass in its presence in 1899. Pope Pius XII crowned the icon in 1954 as he introduced a new Marian feast, the Queenship of Mary. Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI, all honored the *Salus Populi Romani* with personal visits and liturgical celebrations.

*Father Alexander's letter to the parish*

My dear people:

The 2009-2010 program year at S. Stephen's is off to a running start. The choir returned from summer break on Sunday 20

September and this year they sound better than ever.

On Sunday 11 October a team of dedicated volunteers from S. Stephen's undertook the herculean effort of cleaning the kitchen to prepare for the arrival of the **Epiphany Soup Kitchen** the next day. The ESK has now moved its appliances and supplies into the premises, and at the time of writing we are looking forward to the beginning of its Saturday operations here on October 17.

The **Episcopal Campus Ministry** led by Deacon Michael Tuck is meeting on Sunday evenings for Evening Prayer at 5pm in the Lady Chapel followed by supper in the Great Hall. So far, Deacon Tuck has gathered a small but committed group of students, some of whom are also coming to the 10 am Mass on Sunday mornings.

On Sunday 27 September, we hosted a panel discussion entitled "**Goodbye, Columbus,**" on Brown University's decision to rename the Columbus Day weekend "Fall Weekend." The speakers were Reiko Koyama, representing the student group that petitioned for the change, and Valentino Lombardi of the Providence Branch of the Sons of Italy, who spoke against the change. Deacon Tuck writes more about this event in this issue of *The S. Stephen*, so I will content myself with the observation that while both speakers made heartfelt and eloquent presentations on behalf of their respective positions, I found the contributions to the discussion from the S. Stephen's parishioners particularly thoughtful and enlightening, and I came away from the evening as grateful as ever to be associated with this parish.

Speaking of Deacon Tuck, I am now able to announce that his **Ordination to the Priesthood** has been tentatively scheduled for the morning of **Saturday 23 January 2010** at S. Stephen's, pending completion of the usual canonical requirements.

Please make a note of the date and mark it in your calendars so that you will be able to attend this joyous and moving event. More detailed information will be forthcoming closer to the time.

Several people have asked me about **flu precautions**. We note that the Church of England has directed that the chalice be withheld from communicants and that the exchange of the Peace cease for the time being in view of the threat of a swine flu epidemic. We have not received directions from the Diocese to take any such drastic steps; but the Diocese has issued some helpful guidelines for parishes that can be viewed on its website.

Taking my cue from the diocesan advice, I offer the following guidelines:

(1) Anyone who has flu symptoms should stay at home until at least 24 hours after the symptoms have passed. Also, everyone should observe the usual guidelines concerning washing hands, etc.

(2) If there is any risk of spreading communicable diseases by means of the common chalice, the current advice of epidemiologists is that the practice of intinction simply does not reduce such risk. On the contrary, it may increase it by bringing the host into contact with the communicant's hands before it is dipped into the chalice. Hands are more prone to carry bacteria and viruses than lips.

(3) Anyone who is concerned about spreading or contracting communicable diseases by the chalice is encouraged to receive in one kind only, i.e. just the host. It is a basic doctrine of the Church Catholic that one receives the Sacrament in all its fullness just as much in one kind as in both kinds.

(4) While we will continue the liturgical exchange of the Peace, anyone who is concerned about spreading or contracting communicable diseases should avoid shaking hands or other forms of physical contact at this point in the service. Likewise, if others don't want to shake your hand at the Peace, be respectful of their wishes. There are other ways to signify greeting, such as a smile and a wave.

In short, we will not be changing any of our liturgical practices for the time being. The Peace will continue to be exchanged and the Holy Communion will still be offered in both kinds. I have taken to squirting some antibacterial gel on my hands immediately before Mass. Other than that, my hope is that the guidelines above will be helpful in reducing the risk of contagion during the current flu season.

**All Saints Day** (November 1) falls on a Sunday this year; and we have an adult baptism planned in addition to some excellent music. On Monday 2 November we commemorate **All Souls Day** with a Sung Requiem Mass at 5:30 pm, and as always cards will be available ahead of time for you to fill in the names of the departed to be remembered. On **Remembrance Sunday** (November 8) we will offer a choral Requiem at 10 am for those who have lost their lives in war.

The following weekend, Deacon Tuck and I will be traveling to Washington DC to attend the annual Requiem of the **Guild of All Souls** on Saturday 14 November at Saint Paul's, K Street, where I will also be attending the meeting of the Guild Council. Saint Paul's was my fieldwork parish during my seminary days across the Potomac in Alexandria; and I am looking forward to seeing many old and new friends there. It pleases me that several parishioners have recently expressed interest in forming a ward of the Guild of All Souls here at S. Stephen's, and I am eager to facilitate this project.

Finally, it gives me great pleasure to announce the launching of a new blog for S. Stephen's Church with the web address <http://sstephensprovidence.blogspot.com>. This blog is designed to complement our parish website as a place where upcoming liturgies, events, programs, and activities can be announced and publicized in advance. Please do check it out, add it to your favorites, and come back often.

With all affection and prayers, I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest,

*Fr. John D. Alexander +*

Fr. John D. Alexander

# The Bride of Christ

by Phoebe Pettingell

No, this title doesn't refer to Dan Brown's claim that Mary Magdalene married Jesus. Instead, I want to meditate on one of our finest stained glass windows at S. Stephen's. A striking beauty of our church is the Marriage window in the narthex, given by the parish in 1911 as a memorial to Mary Greenough Fiske, the late wife of their rector, the Rev'd George Fiske, and executed by the English firm of C. E. Kempe which perfected the art of coloring glass with a wash of silver to create yellow tones of varying intensity. Even when visitors or parishioners take no conscious notice, its golden light provides a warmth and welcoming grace to S. Stephen's. Those who take time to study its details are richly repaid for their efforts because, in addition to its aesthetic value, this window celebrates not merely the central image of Christian marriage but also "the mystical union that is between Christ and his Church."

The center picture shows the marriage supper described in John 2: 1-11. Above it is an inscription from the old Prayer Book service for the Solemnization of Matrimony: "Which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee." Our Lord dominates the center of the window, blessing the jars of water which will turn into

finest wine [John 2:7-10]. Behind his chair stands his mother, directing the servants to "do whatever he tells you." [John: 2: 5]. The bride and groom can be seen seated to the right, absorbed in one another. The wedding guests gather around the table. Near Christ sits an "elder" beside the scroll of the Torah. He may be the rabbi who has performed the marriage ceremony. Rather than attempting to recreate the dress and customs of the first century, the artist has imitated the style of 16<sup>th</sup> century German or Flemish masters. An early Renaissance town can be seen through the high windows of the banquet hall and the dining table is decorated with fruits and flowers, symbolizing the desire for both physical and spiritual fecundity for the newly married couple.

Below this picture, three small panels depict scenes related to the window's theme. On the left, Isaac meets his bride Rebecca—their is one of the great love stories of Genesis. The text reads "Isaac & Rebecca lived faithfully together," (a passage from the Marriage rite dating back to the Middle Ages, but dropped in the 1928 Prayer Book) fidelity being one of the central marriage vows. The middle panel shows Our Lord on the

cross and quotes Ephesians 5:25: "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." The giving up of one's own will for one's partner is often a vital aspect of marriage. Indeed, the great liturgist and theologian Louis Bouyer argued that marriage is just as much a vocation to "death to self" in order to live in and through the new community of wedlock and family as a vocation to a religious order. The third panel shows another wedding scene. It might be supposed to be the marriage of Mary and Joseph, with a high priest of the temple garbed as a bishop officiating. However, the picture is captioned "The mystical union that is between Christ and His Church." This suggests that the bridegroom may represent Jesus with the Church as His bride. The priest's blessing of the marriage proclaims that God has "so con-

secrated the state of Matrimony that in it is represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and His Church."

The metaphor describing a marriage between God and the Children of Israel appears overtly and by implication throughout the Prophetic books of the Old Testament: "For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer." [Isaiah 54:5]. In a memorably vitriolic passage in Hosea [2:2-20], the prophet hears God

castigating his people as an adulterous wife who has betrayed him with many lovers. Yet his tone changes to the yearning bridegroom as he says, "I will allure her...and speak tenderly to her." Finally he forecasts her redemption and promises, "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord." In the New Testament, St. Paul writes that "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." He adds, "This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" [Ephesians 5:19]. In Revelation 21:2, the new Jerusalem is seen "coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband." Such imagery led the early Church Fathers to interpret the Song of Songs as a marriage hymn between our Lord and his beloved Church—this interpretation appeared in the chapter headings of the King James Bible. The "betrothal" of the Church to Jesus foretells "the consummation" of the Church at rest in the New Heaven, New Earth promised at Christ's Second Coming.



*In this detail from the Fiske Window, Our Lord dominates the center of the window, blessing the jars of water which will turn into finest wine [John 2:7-10].*

Many familiar hymns speak of the Church in these terms. #525 in our current hymnal describes how our Lord came from heaven “and sought her to be His holy bride.” Yet, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many Evangelicals individualized this imagery along the lines of “accepting Jesus Christ as my personal Savior”—a union between the soul and our Lord, rather than the Christian body in general. In more recent times, the metaphor has offended both feminists—who believe it to be associated with a subservient image of women as a kind of chattel—and the kind of Muscular Christianity which feels it makes the Church seem effeminate.

I would argue that, instead, the language helps us to better comprehend our relationship as God’s people. Truly understood, it guards us from the twin dangers of imagining the Church too transcendentally, or else as a human institution which may even interfere with the individual’s relationship with God. The first temptation may, at first, sound unlikely in this day and age. However, the desire to “purify” the body of believers from false teaching and error by breaking communion with those we disagree with is very much part of the current scene, as it has been throughout history. When we understand ourselves not as individuals with a private relationship to God but as part of Church-as-Bride-of Christ we cannot so easily disown fellow members with whom we disagree. We are bound to them in charity and love, and thus must treat them not as foes but as people who help us grow in Christ as we help them. If, on the other hand, we think of the Church as an ideal body, a repository of unchanging and eternal truth, we can be tempted to confuse our understanding for God’s, and thus regard disagreement as apostasy. Heresies spring up all the time, but schism is not the answer for it becomes a kind of divorce, hard to repair. Lust for purity has long been a motive for schism. Unfortunately, it leads to the assumption that somehow “we” can be less fallible than “they” are, encouraging self-righteousness and self-delusion.

The second temptation, that of reducing the Church to a political bureaucracy, makes the Utopian assumption that we are able to separate worship or works of mercy from the day-to-day business of administering an institution. Parish administration and pastoral tasks, upkeep and maintenance of buildings or the institution are not a price to be paid for our relationship with God. They are part of that relationship and we, as the Bride of Christ, are committed to this work in the same way a married couple manages household expenses, family activities and the like.

Both temptations – imagining the Church in too transcendent or too this-worldly terms – neglect the mystery of the Incarnation in which Christ came to earth to live like us in our brokenness and fallibility so that we might, by grace, be united with him. The Church is a mystery of Love—not reducible to its visible institutional and sociological parts. Its ultimate essence is hidden, not to be revealed until Christ’s second coming—just as we, as individuals, will become fully the person God has created us to be.

The Church has traditionally regarded marriage as the binding of two separate people into a new whole. When the marriage is fully lived into, the couple dies to isolated individualism so that they may be reborn: first as a two-some, then, “when it be God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.” The Prayer Book also tells us that wife and husband are made one flesh “for their mutual

joy” and “for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity.” In the same way, Jesus and the Church are united so that we may trust that if we stand faithfully with him, we may grow in grace until we are fully joined to him. The union of Christ and his Church brings new souls to birth in Holy Baptism. Just as life on earth emerged from the sea, and each of us grows in the amniotic fluid of the womb, so the Church brings the baptized out of water into a life that shall not end but is the beginning of the great work of redemption as God perfects his creation.

In the words of the ancient preface for the dedication of a Church—which we used on October 4 of this year, the Church “is the beloved and only Bride which Christ hath purchased with his Blood, and quickened by his Spirit; in whose bosom we, who have been regenerated by thy grace, are fed with the milk of the Word, are strengthened with the Bread of Life, and are comforted by the help of thy mercy. This is that Bride that on earth, being holpen by the Bridegroom, fighteth the good fight of faith, and being crowned by him in heaven, singeth the songs of triumphant joy.”



## Memorial Organ Recital

Sunday 18 October  
5:30 pm

James Busby, organ  
John Whittlesey, baritone  
Jane Murray, oboe  
Matthew Knippel, cello

The music of Johann Sebastian Bach  
Including *Cantata, BWV 82 "Ich habe genug"*

## BOOK REVIEW

By Fr. Alexander

Justo L. Gonzalez, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1990.

Several generations of seminarians are grateful to Justo Gonzalez as the author of a substantive yet notoriously easy-to-read two-volume introduction to church history, as well as a slightly more challenging three-volume history of Christian theology. As a distinguished church historian, Gonzalez begins *Faith and Wealth* by lamenting that fellow practitioners of his craft have largely neglected the history of Christian teaching on economic issues.

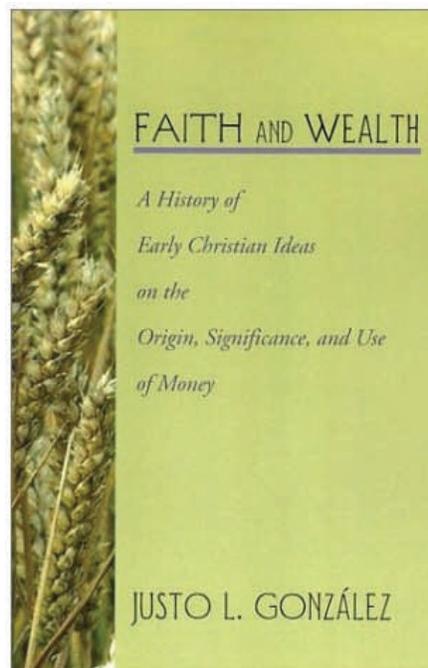
When, for example, the US Catholic bishops issued the pastoral letter on the economy *Economic Justice for All* (1986), or when Pope John Paul II issued the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987) on international development, many Christians questioned the wisdom of church leaders straying from theology and spirituality to make statements on social and economic concerns. The truth is, however, that for much of the Church's history economics was regarded as a theological issue, and in many quarters still is. Although he does not quote him, Gonzalez's position is similar to that of British economic historian R.H. Tawney, who once wrote that what requires explanation is not the traditional view that economic relations and social organization are the concern of the Church, but rather the modern view that they are not.

In *Faith and Wealth*, Gonzalez undertakes an in-depth exploration of Christian economic ethics during the first four centuries of the Church's life – from the New Testament to Saint Augustine. Early Church leaders and teachers had definite ideas about the implications of Christian faith for the proper uses of money, wealth, property, and possessions; and this book traces the development of their ideas.

### The Teaching of Jesus

Gonzalez observes that Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God abounds with

economic implications. Numerous statements in the Gospels anticipate an imminent great reversal of fortunes: "many that are first will be last, and the last first" (Mark 10:31). In this context, Jesus' appeal to his closest followers is a call to renunciation: "go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mark 10:21). Jesus promises that those who make this renunciation will receive a



hundredfold reward in the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10:30).

Certain New Testament scholars point out that beyond the immediate circle of disciples, some of Jesus' original followers – such as Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42; John 11) and the women who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (Mark 15:40-41) – appear not to have taken this radical step and continued to live in their homes with their families without renouncing all their possessions. They thus became "support communities" that provided the itinerant band of Jesus and his disciples with the hospitality, food, and shelter that they needed to survive.

Here Gonzalez makes the implausible argument that both the wandering disciples and the support communities suffered equally from involuntary poverty. Thus, he argues, what made the disciples distinctive was not that they had given up the wealth and possessions that the members of the support communities had retained, but rather that the disciples had voluntarily accepted their poverty and rejected the accompanying anxiety after the pattern of Jesus' exhortations in the Sermon on the Mount (e.g. Matthew 6:25-34).

But this argument seems unsustainable in light of such statements as that of Peter, "Lo, we have given up everything to follow you," and Jesus' response about the hundredfold reward awaiting all who have "left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel" (Mark 10:28-30). Although Gonzalez clearly believes that a distinction between those Christians who respond to more radical demands and those who adhere to more minimal requirements dates only to the rise of monasticism at the end of the third century, the internal evidence of the Gospels suggests that such a distinction was present in *some* form from the very beginning.

### Sharing Possessions in the Acts of the Apostles

Moving on, Gonzalez addresses two famous passages in the Acts of the Apostles describing what some commentators characterize as a communistic sharing of property and possessions in the early Jerusalem Church.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. (Acts 2:44-45)

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common ... There was not a needy person among

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them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need. (Acts 4:32, 34-35)

Some commentators treat these passages as the fictional description of an idealized past, while others regard them as an early experiment in communism that failed – and which likely also impoverished the Jerusalem Church so that the apostle Paul subsequently had to provide relief for it by collecting contributions from the churches he had founded in the wider Mediterranean world (e.g. I Corinthians 16:1-4).

Gonzalez argues convincingly against both interpretations. He points out that the Greek verbs describing selling and distribution are in the imperfect tense, which denotes a continuing activity – more literally translated as “were selling” or “used to sell” than as “sold.” In other words, the wealthier members of the Jerusalem Church did not impoverish themselves all in one great selloff and distribution, but rather engaged in a continuous activity of selling *some* of their possessions to share the proceeds with the poorer members of the community.

This sharing was voluntary and not compulsory, as is made clear by Peter's words to Ananias in Acts 5:4. Moreover, the frank picture of the dishonesty of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11, and the conflict over the distribution between the Aramaic and Greek speaking members of the community in Acts 6:1, both strongly suggest that this picture is no fictional representation of an idealized past but a description of events that really happened.

The self-understanding of the community, Gonzalez writes, was that of *koinonia*, a word usually translated as “fellowship” – but which goes well beyond inner dispositions of good will and affection to entail the sharing of material as well as spiritual goods. In this light, also, Paul's subsequent collection for the Church in Jerusalem can be seen as standing in direct continuity with the earliest practices described in Acts.

### The Patristic Development

The subsequent trajectory of early Christian teaching on faith and wealth takes its cue from such New Testament texts as Paul's First Letter to Timothy:

There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs. (I Timothy 6:6-10)

As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation

for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed. (I Timothy 6:17-19)

Such passages introduce themes developed by Christian writers from the second through the fourth centuries, including Hermas, Clement of Alexandria, Cyrian, Lactantius, the Cappadocians, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. In Gonzalez's view, however, this tradition of teaching concerning faith and wealth reaches its clearest and fullest articulation in Saint John Chrysostom (347-407) – whose sermons so offended the rich of Constantinople, and the Empress Eudoxia in particular, that he was twice exiled from his See and died in captivity.

Despite the great diversity of these writers, certain themes remain more or less consistent in their teachings on the accumulation, use, and disposal of wealth. From the beginning, early Christian teachers were concerned to affirm the goodness of God's creation and to refute Gnostic and dualistic heresies that denigrated the material world as evil. Almost all these writers thus refuse to condemn material possessions as evil in themselves. What is identified as evil is not wealth *per se*, but rather the inordinate attachment to wealth that constitutes the sin of greed or avarice.

A common theme is that God originally intended all things to be held in common, and that private property exists only on account of the Fall. Yet all these writers all accept the present existence of private property; for if no-one possessed anything of his own, it would be impossible to fulfill Jesus' command to give to the poor. Nevertheless, these early Christian writers also severely limit the moral scope of private property rights. Our property and possessions ultimately belong to God, who has entrusted only temporary stewardship of them to us during this life – a stewardship for which we will have to render account on the Last Day.

Rights of ownership are further limited by the proper use of wealth. The most common criterion of such proper use is *sufficiency*. That is, the owners of wealth are entitled to use for themselves only as much as necessary to meet their needs for food, clothing, and shelter. What exceeds this measure is *superfluous* and must be given to others who do not have enough to meet these same needs. To accumulate wealth for oneself, let alone to live in luxury and ostentation, is to misuse wealth, for its God-intended use is to meet human need. The sins of greed and avarice thus imperil the souls of the rich.

### Tensions and Contradictions

In addition to these common themes, Gonzalez also traces through this period some tensions that he believes ultimately led to the mitigation and abandonment of the early Christian economic ethic. It is ironic, given the difficulty that churches now have persuading their parishioners to tithe, that Gonzalez



offers the example of Augustine's concession that it is sufficient to give away only a tenth of one's possessions as a major relaxation of the early ethic's rigor.

One tension was between an emphasis on the needs of the poor and an emphasis on the salvation of the rich as the motive for Christian generosity. As the salvation of the rich became the overriding concern, poverty came to be seen less and less as a scandal to be ameliorated if not eradicated, and more and more as the necessary condition for rich people to save their own souls by practicing almsgiving. That the poor were poor and the rich were rich thus came to be seen as a situation willed by God for the good of both.

A related tension involved a tendency to interiorize the criteria for the Christian possession and use of wealth. In the earliest documents, such as *The Shepherd* of Hermas, the possession of wealth itself is seen as an obstacle to the Christian life. Clement of Alexandria introduces the distinction between the possession of wealth and the avarice that tends to accompany it. By the time of Augustine, however, the focus is almost exclusively on the inner attitude of the soul, which must be one of detachment from material things. Gonzalez suggests that such an interior focus ultimately shifts the burden of conscience away from those who are so well off that they don't need to worry about material things, and toward those whose poverty is such that preoccupation with material needs is virtually inescapable.

Most of all, however, Gonzalez attributes the erosion of the early Christian economic ethic to the rise of monasticism in the late third and early fourth centuries, with the accompanying distinction between *precepts* that apply to all Christians, and *counsels* that apply only to the few who aspire to perfection. Gonzalez argues that there thus emerged in the early middle ages a division of labor in which monastics lived according to the ancient Christian tradition of limited and shared wealth, while lay Christians felt free to accumulate unlimited wealth so long as they used part of it to support monasteries and practice almsgiving – now understood as giving small change to beggars where it had once meant giving away everything superfluous to one's basic needs.

For all Gonzalez's careful study of the economic teaching of the patristic period, his description of the medieval period amounts to a caricature that is at best only half complete. The truth is that throughout the middle ages and well into the early modern period Christian teaching continued as much as ever to condemn the accumulation of wealth as manifesting the deadly sins of avarice and greed. The difference is that medieval society was seen as an all-embracing organism comprising many mutually interdependent classes, and one's needs were defined in terms of the duties of one's station in life. Lords, ladies, peasants, knights, priests, monks, nuns, craftsmen, and merchants occupied unequal stations with different responsibilities and duties, and so were considered to have unequal needs. Nonetheless, the Christian teaching remained universal and constant well past the Reformation that it was a deadly sin to accumulate personal wealth beyond the legitimate needs of one's station, and that any superfluity should be given away as alms.

It was only in the mid to late seventeenth century that such traditional Christian teachings began to undergo a reversal in certain quarters – particularly among Puritans in England and New England – so that acquisitiveness and the amassing of

wealth came to be seen as signs of God's election and blessing rather than of degeneracy and corruption. Simultaneously, poverty came to be seen as a sign of moral failure rather than of closeness to God, and generosity to the poor as an irresponsible practice encouraging laziness, idleness, and vice, rather than as a means of encountering the Lord in the least of his brethren. This process of reversal has been explored from various angles in such classic studies as Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), R.H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), and Amintore Fanfani's *Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism* (1935). These books effectively take up the story where Gonzalez leaves off, and offer a useful corrective to some of his misperceptions of the medieval period.

### Conclusion

Despite the shortcomings discussed above, Gonzalez's *Faith and Wealth* remains a helpful and informative study of the earliest Christian teaching on economic ethics. Gonzalez rightly points out that during the first four centuries, these economic teachings were as integral to the Church's message as its doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Sacraments. To the second century bishop Ignatius of Antioch, for example, the most damning indictment of Gnostic heretics, the ultimate proof of their error, was that they cared not for widows, orphans, and the oppressed. And Gonzalez poses the challenge to us: if we were to restore these teachings on faith and wealth to their proper place at the heart of the Church's self-understanding, what would the implications be for how we live the Christian life today?

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY  
8 NOVEMBER 2009  
10 AM

REQUIEM MASS  
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES IN WAR



Remembrance Sunday is the second Sunday of November, and the nearest to 11 November, which is the anniversary of the end of the hostilities of the First World War at 11 a.m. in 1918.



# Harmonia Anglicana

by Brian Ehlers

The choir season began on Sunday, September 20. Although the summer Masses were musically very successful, given the support of several men from the Schola who sang the propers, there's just nothing like a Solemn High Mass with a full choir! What a capable group of singers! Let me remind you that the first rehearsal for this Mass began at 8 am that morning. Not the week before! And they sang the service with the same full confidence most choirs only achieve after much long hard work. The S. Stephen's **Schola Cantorum** accomplished this in just 90 minutes of rehearsal after having just returned from a three month vacation. Come to 10 am Mass each and every Sunday to hear this choir sing the Mass. This excellence is repeated week after week.

You will recall that we had organ scholar **Brent Erstad** among us last choir season to study service music performance under James Busby. I am happy to report that Brent has been appointed organist and choir director of Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island. He is very excited about the appointment and will certainly use much of what he learned at S. Stephen's.

The S. Stephen's choir this coming season will be without its star tenor, **Aaron Sheehan**, who has relocated to Baltimore. Having asked Aaron for some thoughts on his time at S. Stephen's he sent me the following and I want to include it here:

"I started at S. Stephens in 2001 and I am proud to have sung there for the last eight years. In those eight years, I went from a singer who wasn't sure he wanted a weekly obligation to a church choir into a singer that adored the ritual, routine, and excellence that is present at S. Stephen's. I owe much of my musical growth as an adult to this choir and, namely, James Busby. James has not only become one of the most important musical mentors in my life, but is also one of my dearest friends. I will miss the car rides down and back to Boston with him, as well as the always animated rehearsals before Mass. I am still amazed that we could sing an anthem, sometimes two, and a new mass every week on 90 minutes of rehearsal or less. I will miss my talented colleagues and time spent weekly in the choir, but I know I will be back from time to time. S. Stephen's will always hold a special place in my heart and I know it will be a place I will come back to later in life and feel at home. Thanks for everything." Thank you, Aaron!

On 18 October at 5:30 **James Busby**, organist and choir director, will play his annual Memorial Organ Recital. This year the music will be all Bach, including *Cantata, BWV 83 "Ich habe genug"*. The recital will include **John Whittlesey**, baritone, **Matthew Knippel**, cello, and **Jane Murray**, oboe. It is my understanding that initial planning for this recital was done while Busby and Whittlesey were in Santa Fe this summer to attend the Santa Fe Opera and to do some whitewater rafting. It's hard to imagine the two planning a music program while being jostled around in the raft. It's hard for me to imagine either of them in a white water raft, period.



Whittlesey and Busby (left) rafting on the Rio Grande.

Those of you who attended the stewardship luncheon recently got to hear and meet Scott Nicholson, the guest speaker. Scott is a parishioner at St Columba's Chapel (Episcopal) in Middletown, RI. He and I are both on the Diocesan Commission on Finance. The last line of a note that he sent to me afterwards said: "Beautiful Church, the Choir was spectacular!" I like it when visitors get to witness our very special place of worship. Invite one of your friends to Mass sometime so that they can have the same special experience.

Please visit our website:  
[www.sstephens.org](http://www.sstephens.org)

Read *The S. Stephen* online.

Go paperless or print your own copy. Contact Cory MacLean in the church office. She will put your name on the email list and each month you will receive the link to the online issue of *The S. Stephen*.

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**Deadline for submissions:** the 5th of the month

**The S. Stephen**

October 16th

**Saint Gall**

*"If anyone would be my disciple" says Our Saviour, "let him deny himself." The denial of self is, then, the royal road to perfection.*

Father Alban Butler  
of Saint Gall



Saint Gall (550-646) was Irish, one of the twelve disciples who followed Saint Columbanus from Ireland to Gaul, in present-day western Switzerland. In 612, at the time Columbanus was ready to leave for Italy, Gall was seriously ill and had to remain with several companions in the forests of Swabia where he went on to live the life of a hermit.

There are a number of ancient stories told about Saint Gall. One of the most popular is the story of Fridiburga (the betrothed of Sigebert II, King of the Franks), who was possessed by demons. When cast out by Saint Gall they flew away as blackbirds. Also told is the story about the night when Gall and his companions built a fire in the forest to keep warm. When they ran out of wood, Gall commanded a bear to bring them some wood for the fire. The bear, of course, obeyed and the men stayed warm.

Saint Gall is the patron saint of Switzerland and images of him sometimes show him with a pilgrim's staff, blessing a bear. Some sources say that he is also the patron of birds and of Sweden. Father Alban Butler in his book *Lives of the Saints* writes the following:

"Saint Gall was a priest before he left Ireland, and having learned the language of the country where he settled, near the Lake of Constance, he converted to the faith a great number of idolaters. The cells which this saint built there for those who desired to serve God with him, he gave to the monastery which bears his name. A synod of bishops, with the clergy and people, earnestly desired to place the Saint in the Episcopal see of Constance; but his modesty refused the dignity."

Following Saint Gall's death in 646, Saint Othmar was appointed custodian of the relics and in 719, he founded the Abbey of Saint Gall on the site of the saint's Hermitage. There the arts, letters and sciences flourished until the Abby of Saint Gall developed into one of the chief Benedictine abbeys in Europe. During the 13<sup>th</sup> century the abbey became an independent principality. To this day the library at the abbey is one of the richest medieval libraries in the world.

**TREASURER'S CORNER**

Brian Ehlers

*Editor's Note:* The recent talk by Mr. Scott Nicholson at the Stewardship Luncheon on Sunday 4 October highlighted the need for greater communication in parishes between the leadership and the congregation concerning parish finances. Following a lively and creative discussion at the Vestry meeting the following Tuesday, Fr. Alexander asked Treasurer Brian Ehlers to contribute a monthly column to The S. Stephen sharing interesting facts and figures that will help raise awareness of where we are as a parish. Brian's first contribution follows below:

**Did you know?**

- The recent economic downturn has had a significant effect on the parish's endowment, which at the low point had lost almost one-third of its value
- 64% of S. Stephen's income is from the endowment.
- Increased pledging will only partially offset the lost income, but increase we must.
- Using 2007 data, the Average Sunday Attendance was 138 and the Total Operating Expense was \$446,552. Given these data the annual cost to operate S. Stephen's in 2007 was \$3,235.88 per attendee!
- \$6,330 was spent recently related to fire system upgrade requirements. Fortunately our systems have been kept in good repair avoiding costs that could have been much higher
- On a very positive note, our Property Insurance which cost \$23,622 for 2009 will be much less in 2010: \$13,919. This is due to a diocesan change in insurance providers following research by diocesan staff. That will be a big help in offsetting lost endowment income for 2010. Thanks be to God!
- In an effort to reduce health care costs the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted that all dioceses should be part of a common health care plan. It is currently estimated that this will reduce 2010 costs 7%.

Because we have so much beauty and excellence at S. Stephen's the casual observer might think we are a wealthy parish. Yes, in some ways we are very blessed, but there is very little if any waste and very little discretionary money. Balancing the budget is not as easy as many might think!

**S. Stephen's Prayer Group** meets Thursdays at

12:30 at Deborah Lawrence's home. For prayer requests, please contact Deborah at 621-3630, Cathy Bledsoe, at 246-2194, or send an email to vorkar@cox.net.

All are welcome!



### KITCHEN CLEANUP PROJECT

Or "So you think spring cleaning is tough?"

By Cory MacLean

On Sunday 11 October, twelve dedicated parishioners undertook the massive job of preparing the kitchen area for the arrival of the Epiphany Soup Kitchen (ESK) set for Saturday 17 October. We began by removing *everything* from the second floor storage closet, which was then completely vacuumed and washed down. The items removed from the closet and kitchen covered all eight coffee



hour tables as well as the two staging areas and the piano. The closet was then restocked with all the items that will not be used by ESK, and was sensibly organized for coffee hour and future events such as the pancake supper and parish barbecue.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, every plate, glass, cup, saucer, mug, bowl, utensil, and serving dish was sorted, washed, and stacked. We discovered, among other things, that we have a ridiculous number of small glass mugs, which were so filthy they looked yellow. (*Perhaps we should start a Christmas eggnog tradition here at the church.*) We have seven different types of coffee cups and saucers, and more dull knives than anyone



could ever use. We generated more than twenty bags of trash, discarding dozens of broken and chipped plates.

In more than five hours, this crew of incredibly hard working folks accomplished something quite extraordinary, both for our parish and for the ministry that we begin on the 17th; obeying our Lord's command to feed the hungry. Check out the closet and kitchen next time you're here. Many thanks to Ty and Nancy Gingrich, Bobby Rose and Chris Butler, Richard and Robyn Noble, Sandra and Rollin Bartlett, Sue Olson, Rhoda Steinhart and Phoebe Pettingell for their efforts.

The kitchen cleanup followed a day after the memorial service for former parishioner Michele Leighton. Michele, a chef by trade, was the designer of our current kitchen. Finally, after many years, it will get the kind of use for which it was intended, and represents a fitting legacy for a former parishioner who was known and loved by many.

On Monday, ESK staff and volunteers moved in their appliances and supplies with the help of Bruce Lennihan and Ransom Widmer, who also should be thanked for taking several boxes of items from our cleanup project to the Salvation Army.



Before

We are now well set to begin the job of feeding the many regulars who depend on Epiphany Soup Kitchen. **If you are interested in helping out, please contact Bruce at [blennihan@comcast.net](mailto:blennihan@comcast.net) or leave a message at 508-384-3035 or 508-735-1669.**

*But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. - 1 John 3:17, 18*



After

## Curate's Letter

Deacon Michael Tuck writes:



Dear People of S. Stephen's,

The past month has been exhilarating for me. It has been really wonderful to see the beginning of the year with all of the accompanying planning and activity. In addition to the choir's return and the start of the program year, we've also begun the new services for the Episcopal Campus Ministry.

For the past several weeks, the Episcopal Campus Ministry has been meeting for Evening Prayer and supper at 5pm on Sunday evenings. We have started with a small, but remarkably faithful group of students from across all four years. It's also been amazing to see the remarkable diversity of denominations and backgrounds among all of the students. In just a few weeks, we've really begun to build a community of prayer. Once again I have been struck by how people can come together through the power of the liturgy. Of course, supper after the service hasn't hurt either. The discussions over supper have been wide ranging and challenging, from courses to food to travel and even a bit of theology thrown in as well. But for students who are not from the East Coast, there is a consistent theme of surprise at how close together everything is! Things are off to a very good start, and I'm sure that God will continue to build up this community.

I was also quite inspired by the *Goodbye, Columbus!* discussion we had a few weeks ago. At events like this, S. Stephen's is able to make a real contribution to both the university and also the wider community. By getting someone from the student body and someone from the Sons of Italy to discuss the reasons why Brown renamed Columbus Day, S. Stephen's took full advantage of its place to act as a bridge from the university to the wider community. Helping to reconcile people is an important mission of the Church and, by hosting *Goodbye, Columbus!*, S. Stephen's was able to contribute to that mission.

One of the things that I was most impressed with in that event was the audience's willingness to listen closely to what the speakers had to say. One of the reasons I found the topic and the discussion so interesting was that it seemed to me, as I was reading the statements in the Providence Journal, that the two groups – the student activists and the Sons of Italy – were talking past each other. The students were advocating for a better understanding and recognition of the effect of colonisation on indigenous peoples in the Americas. The Sons of Italy were advocating for recognition of the contribution of Italian-Americans within American society. Both groups were concerned that a group of people who had been traditionally overlooked would continue to be marginalized.

In the vision of the Kingdom of God presented by Our Lord, the marginalized are given a privileged place. Our Lord talks again and again about how the prevailing social values will be overturned and upended in the Kingdom. *Goodbye, Columbus!* gave me a chance to think about how these two groups – indigenous peoples and Italian-Americans – have both been treated within American society. When we, as Christians, listen to the voice of the marginalized, we are forced to reconsider how well we are living out the commands of the Gospel. On this score and on many others, *Goodbye, Columbus!* was a success.

## ALL SAINTS DAY

1 November 2009

will be kept at 8 & 10 am

THEY WERE STONED THEY WERE SAWN



ASUNDER THEY WERE TEMPTED  
THEY WERE SLAIN WITH THE SWORD

*For all the saints, who from their labors rest,  
Who thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blessed!  
Alleluia, alleluia!*

### FLOWER OFFERINGS

If you would like to offer flowers for the High Altar in honor or memory of a loved one, please contact the parish office at (401) 421-6702 or send email to [office@sstephens.necoxmail.com](mailto:office@sstephens.necoxmail.com) to arrange an available date. The cost is \$90, and can be made payable to S. Stephen's Church, with "flowers" in the memo portion of your check. *The altar is unadorned during Advent and Lent.*





S. Stephen's Church in Providence  
114 George Street  
Providence, RI 02906  
*Address Correction Requested*

LO THE BOOKEY ACTLY WORDED

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE TO MARK WHAT IS DONE AMISS: O LORD WHO MAY ABIDE IT

WHEREIN ALL HATH BEEN RECORDED TENC SHAL JUDGEMENT BE AWARDED

# All Souls Day

## Commemoration of all Faithful Departed Sung Requiem Mass

Monday 2 November at 5:30 pm