

The S. Stephen

SAINT PETER & SAINT PAUL

2016

Vol. 15, No. 5

My Dear People,

At the time of my writing, I am looking forward to Sunday School Recognition and the Annual Parish Barbecue, which, by the time of your reading, will already have taken place. The 2015-2016 Program Year has now concluded, and planning for 2016-2017 has begun in earnest. Meanwhile, the summer months beckon.

The choir's last official liturgical appearance for the season was on Tuesday 31 May, the Feast of the Visitation. We made every effort to publicize this Solemn High Mass: an ad in the *Providence Journal*; a boosted event invitation on Facebook; a banner on the railing outside; an announcement in the previous issue of *The S. Stephen*; and weeks of announcements and inserts in the Sunday *Kalendar*. The publicity paid off: total attendance was 59—including a contingent of eight from Saint John's, Newport—not bad for a weekday evening. The choir was in top form with a tight and powerful rendition of Palestrina's *Missa 'Ave Maria'*. One area with perhaps some room for improvement, however, was attendance by regular parishioners: only *eleven* in the congregation of about thirty seated in the nave! We need to make it a priority to support our parish's liturgical celebrations of key dates in the Christian year. A great deal of work goes into preparing these services, and it builds mo-

From the Rector

rale and *esprit de corps* when the whole parish community demonstrably gets behind our efforts. Most of all, fulfilling our duty of worship on Sundays and major Holy Days ultimately



brings us great joy and fulfillment. I am confident that in the coming program year we will boost our numbers and go from strength to strength.

The first step is to recommit ourselves to faithful attendance at Sunday Mass in the coming weeks and months. The choir begins its 2016-2017 season on Sunday 2 October. In the meantime, the ceremonial is somewhat simplified without any loss of reverence or dignity. And while we miss the full choir during the summer, we have the opportunity to join in singing some wonderful congregational Mass settings as well as our favorite hymns.

Speaking of the choir, James Busby and I have sent out an appeal for contributions to the Special Music Fund. Just to be clear, the

Special Music Fund does not pay for the choir on Sunday mornings and principal Holy Days, which are covered by the parish's regular operating budget. It does provide funding for additional



Archbishop of Canterbury
Rowan Williams at Lourdes,
September 24, 2008 (Anglican Communion News Service)

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

non-Sunday-morning liturgical and musical offerings such as the occasional Solemn Evensong, Advent Lessons and Carols, and the Memorial Recital, as well as the musical ensembles for Christmas Midnight Mass and Easter Day. Our generosity to the Special Music Fund *now* will make all the difference to the quality and variety of the program we shall be able to plan for the coming season. (To avoid any misunderstanding: contributions to the Special Music Fund are separate from regular pledged giving and cannot be credited to the fulfillment of pledges; but they will be recorded as extra giving on the quarterly stewardship statements.)

For many of us, summer brings the opportunity for vacations and travel. Elizabeth and I are going to England and France for several weeks in July and August. During this time, we shall be joining in the English Society of Mary's Pilgrimage to Lourdes. It will be our first time visiting this town in the foothills of the French Pyrenees where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to the fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. Lourdes has since become one of the world's premier Catholic pilgrimage destinations; the waters of the spring that erupted in the grotto where the apparitions occurred have become renowned for their healing properties. As a mark of progress in Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical relations, in 2008 Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams visited Lourdes for the 150th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions and preached at the International Mass held there.

Since intercessory prayer is an integral component of pilgrimage, I will take to Lourdes any prayer requests that I receive before I depart. To this end, I will make available in the church forms on which you can write down any prayer intentions that you would like me to offer on your behalf at the Sanctuary of Lourdes. Your requests will be held in confidence. It will be an honor and privilege to carry some small portion of our parish community's hopes, fears, aspirations, and dreams as I make a long-anticipated journey to this holy place. And please keep us in your prayers as we travel.

With all best wishes and prayers for a relaxing and rejuvenating summer, I remain, faithfully,

Your Pastor and Priest
Fr. John D. Alexander

NEW SERVICE TIMES (as of June 2016)

Sunday

7:30 am—Morning Prayer
8 am—Low Mass
10 am—Sung Mass

Monday, Wednesday

5:30 pm—Evening Prayer
6 pm—Low Mass

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

12 noon—Angelus
12:10 pm—Low Mass

Saturday, Public Holidays

9 am—Morning Prayer
9:30 am—Low Mass

Confessions by appointment

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FR. YOST'S LETTER

An account of the last and most severe of the persecutions in the Roman Empire, beginning under Diocletian in 303, includes the following exchange between a Roman official and a Christian:

“Did you, contrary to the orders of the emperor, arrange for these persons to hold an assembly?”

“Certainly. We celebrated the Eucharist.”

“Why?”

“Because the Eucharist cannot be abandoned. As if a Christian could exist without the Eucharist, or the Eucharist without a Christian! We celebrated our assembly right gloriously!”

June, perhaps more than any other month, is a month of martyrs. The month begins with Justin, Martyr from the mid-second century, followed by commemorations of martyrs from different centuries on several continents, climaxing with the Feast of the two great Apostles and founders of the Church at Rome, Peter and Paul, on June 29, and the commemoration on June 30 of their companions in the Neronian persecution, the Protomartyrs of Rome.

I am told by an older priest that there was a time when, in any sacristy, the vestments that showed the most wear were always the *red* ones; a witness to the frequent celebration of martyrs' feast days, a reminder of the character of Christianity in ages past. A more recent impulse has been to celebrate representative saints from every age and from different "constituencies"—men, women, lay, ordained, with various national and ethnic origins—a

well-intentioned effort to show that holiness is possible in many different ways and for all sorts of people. But what is obscured is the deep and abiding sense of the Church, enduring century after century, that martyrdom is the primary path to



sainthood and that it was *the* formative experience of the entire Church at a time when the powers of this world sought to expunge Christianity.

Occasionally one will hear the Episcopal Church described as “Catholic Lite.” One of our good qualities is not taking ourselves too seriously, and such a statement is not without its charm. However, while we ought not to take *ourselves* too seriously, we must take God very seriously indeed. The early Christian did. They thought so much of God, and so little of themselves, that they would rather risk their lives than be absent from the Sunday Eucharist. “As if a Christian could exist without the Eucharist, or the Christian!”

Eucharist without a Christian!”

I bring this up as a reminder that at the heart of Christian life is *sacrifice*. As I write, it is the Feast of the Sacred Heart (celebrated on Friday in the week following Corpus Christi). The Heart of Jesus is a heart of *love*, and that not merely a matter of sentiment, but encompassing the whole of his sacred humanity—the convergence of reason and will, as well as of temperament and sensitivity. So our love

Continued on page seven



RITUALISM: PART FIVE GEORGE MCCLELLAN FISKE AND S. STEPHEN'S

By Phoebe Pettingell

It seems fitting to conclude this series with S. Stephen's eighth rector, a leading Anglo-Catholic in his own time—now, alas, largely forgotten outside our parish. George McClellan Fiske (1850-1923) was called here in 1884, and despite being twice elected

bishop of biretta belt dioceses, along with invitations to serve parishes in larger cities, this brilliant leader chose to remain at S. Stephen's for 35 years. Despite his amiable and humorous pastoral manner, he proved an agent of change. During his tenure, the sanctuary was remodeled and the Guild House built. Of equal if not greater importance, he introduced Ritualist worship. Although influenced from the beginning by the principles of the Tractarians, S. Stephen's had yet to use much ceremony before Father Fiske. He brought along Eucharistic vestments, ritual choreography, and devotions such as Stations of the Cross and Vespers of the Blessed Sacrament. Changes to the sanctuary included the painted reredos, showing Christ reigning in glory surrounded by angels, with

saints, including "Doctors of the Church," both Eastern and Western. While Dr. Waterman had heard confessions, Fiske installed confessionals in the church. He established one of the first American Wards of The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament—the Holy Nativity Ward, which still exists today. Fiske started our parish magazine, *The S. Stephen*, which for the time was an innovative new communications vehicle and the first such publication in the Diocese of Rhode Island. Copies in the parish archives in the University of Rhode Island library preserve a record of how much went on in

his time as rector. For a variety of reasons he wanted a religious order in the parish: to assist with the increased sacristy work resulting from more ritual; to enlarge outreach to the poorer areas of Providence, to expand the Sunday School and adult classes, and to bake altar bread, make vestments, and train an altar guild.

His appeal to his good friend, Charles Chapman Grafton, who was just retiring as rector of Boston's Church of the Advent, brought the newly founded Sisters of the Holy Nativity here. Their Motherhouse remained in Providence from 1888 until 1906, when Grafton, now Bishop of Fond du Lac, moved them to Wisconsin, but a branch house remained near S. Stephen's until 1983.

Although Fiske made self-deprecating remarks about his preaching, fifteen of his sermons were printed, and give an excellent picture of the man. Most of them are homilies for Requiems, each presenting a vivid portrait of the deceased.

They are not gossipy anecdotal eulogies, but portraits of the person's life in Christ. His depiction of Bishop Grafton, in a sermon entitled "Of Whom the World was not Worthy," gives the clearest conception of that significant Anglo-Catholic pioneer, while "The Valiant Woman: A Sermon Preached at the Requiem Eucharist in S. Stephen's Church... in Memory of Anne Ives Carrington Dwight Ames..." remains in print to this day. So does his essay, "The Lord's Supper," in *The Church's Ministry of Grace*, a series of lectures sponsored by the Church Club in New York City in 1892. When the *Slocum Post* # 10, Grand Army



The Rev. George McClellan Fiske,
Eighth Rector of S. Stephen's
Church (1884–1919)

of the Republic, held a memorial service in Providence for the recently deceased former General and President, Ulysses S. Grant, Fiske was asked to preach the homily. Later, he offered a Requiem Mass for the assassinated Commander in Chief in 1901: "William McKinley, President, Patriot and Martyr." His eloquence reminds our more skeptical age that, at the time of his death, McKinley was the best-loved figure in American history. These respectful homilies for men who were not Episcopalians testify to Fiske's advanced ecumenical views in an era of fierce denominationalism.

For all that, Fiske, in common with many Anglo-Catholics of the period, fought to have the word "Protestant"

dropped from the official name of the Episcopal Church. He supported Grafton's desire that it be renamed "The American Catholic Church." This proposal was not accepted, and the decision to drop the term "Protestant" only came about in 1964, and it was not removed from the Oath of Conformity priests take at ordination until the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

(Nevertheless, we remain officially incorporated as "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church.") Today, it is common to refer to Anglicans as "both Protestant and Catholic." However, many, perhaps most, Anglo-Catholics reject the "Protestant" appellation. Fiske certainly did. He believed "Catholic" to be the name of Christian tradition passed down from the Apostles. He held to the "three branch" model of the Church Catholic: Roman, Orthodox, and Anglican. Again, in common with many Ritualists of his era he argued that Rome was corrupt and less truly Catholic than

the other branches because of its authoritarian, centralized governance, along with late doctrinal proclamations such as Papal Infallibility. Later generations of Ritualists produced the leaning known as "Anglo-Papalism:" striving for the reunion of the Western Church. However, in Fiske's day, Rome used Anglican converts to try to undermine the very notion of Anglo-Catholicism as anything but dressed-up Protestantism, while in both the Church of England and the Episcopal Church, clergy and laity overly sympathetic to Rome were sooner or later apt to "swim the Tiber." While many of the English Ritualists were Monarchists, leading American Anglo-Catholics staunchly believed in democ-

racy. They looked toward the Orthodox Churches, which were nationally grounded, and eager for Anglican allies, particularly in the United States. Fiske invited both Orthodox and "Old Catholic" bishops to preach at Evensongs at S. Stephen's. The Old Catholic Churches had departed from Rome after the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). Principally established in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Poland, they have no pope. By the 1920s most came into full communion with the Episcopal Church. However, in Fiske's day they estab-



The High Altar Reredos

lished close ties with the Ritualists. Although they were not in full communion with Rome, the Vatican nonetheless recognized their orders as valid. Fiske had Bishop Grafton give several lectures at S. Stephen's directly on returning from his historic visit to Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow in 1903, and he hosted a joint Anglican-Orthodox service in 1911. One of his heroes was John Mason Neale,

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

whose translations of Eastern liturgies helped Westerners appreciate their approach to ritual.

Today, when Christians worry about New Age cults and growing secularization, it is easy to assume that previous eras did not have this anxiety. After all, during Fiske's tenure, S. Stephen's boasted more members than before or since. By 1900, the number was up to 800—over twice as many as when he arrived. Furthermore, the parish enjoyed unsurpassed financial prosperity and respect, both in the diocese of Rhode Island and in the state. Yet belief in the supernatural was taking strange directions for many, while others were losing faith in it altogether. In a sermon on the Nicene Creed preached before the Diocesan Convention in 1894, Fiske warned his hearers of "Spiritualism, Christian Science, Theosophy, Naturalism, [and] Rationalistic Criticism"—the school of Bible Scholarship which explains away miracles, and treats Jesus as "the good Rabbi" rather than the Second Person of the Trinity. He acknowledged that many devotees of these faiths claimed "truth and goodness" in them, and added,

"It may be so. They are nonetheless works of the Devil for all that ... This mixture of good and evil in new and strange forms of Religion, wherein Satan says some true things, is that very Fraud and Craft of our Adversary of which we need specially to beware, and which we must resist most sturdily by Steadfastness in the Faith." In common with other Ritualists, Fiske believed that preaching and intellectual arguments alone were not enough to make faithful Christians. Ritual raised people's awareness of the supernatural mysteries of the sacraments. Its rites both proclaimed and demonstrated that the Church was not merely a human organ-

ization but divinely ordained, that in the Eucharist we receive Christ in the flesh just as surely and intimately as the Apostles walked and talked with Him in Galilee. The Sacrament was reserved in the tabernacle at S. Stephen's, which was part of the new altar and reredos Fiske had installed. "God speed the day" he declared "when in every church the Altar shall be daily used to speak to and to feast with God, where every church shall be an open church, where Jesus may be always found to bless the sick and dying, and to welcome all who turn aside from the noisy paths of men to seek His Face."

Reading Fiske renews appreciation for the role S. Stephen's played in the Ritual revival. While Waterman had adopted the Eastward position for the celebration of communion, by the time Fr. Fiske retired, all of the Anglo-Catholic "six points," including Eucharistic vestments, unleavened bread for the Eucharist, water mixed with wine in the chalice, altar candles, and incense were in place. Today, most Episcopalians take for granted that the Sacrament is reserved in their parish, forgetting that the right to revive this was a hard-fought battle. Fortunately, the Episcopal Church never



The Lady Chapel Confessional

jailed or suspended clergy over Ritualism, as was done in England—"Such acrimony as is current [there] is unknown to us," Fiske boasted as a long-time deputy to General Convention. During his tenure as rector, Rhode Island was fortunate to have bishops who appreciated what was done at S. Stephen's. Following him, the tradition was too strongly rooted to interfere with. Fiske left a foundation "built upon a rock" for subsequent rectors to develop.

Throughout the Anglican Communion, the reclaiming of the Catholic tradition could truly be called a "Reformation" of the Church. The use of

that term was to counter the Protestant notion of reform, which actually eliminated the Early Church's ritual practices. While many Anglicans have never become Anglo-Catholics, it is now generally accepted that ritual preaches and teaches. It is true that sometimes this idea can be misused. True ritual is inherited from the past, and should not be manipulated or made up to make pastoral and didactic points. Conforming ourselves to the rites of the Church changes us, helps us believe, brings us closer to what Christ would have us become. Certainly, there have been times in my life when I felt I was only going through the motions in Church—we all have dry spells. However, once they passed, I could truthfully say that God brought me further along the path in a way that would never have happened had I simply quit.

In this series, I have only covered the beginning of the Ritualist movement. The history of its further development is just as interesting, but a subject for another time. I also regret that space kept me from discussing the vital role played by women outside the religious orders in the growth of Anglo-Catholicism: the novels of Charlotte Yonge, the poetry of Christina Rossetti, the biographies of Maria Trench and Eleanor Towle, the children's books of Kate Wiggins and Gertrude Hollis all helped fire imaginations and convert hearts. Among the lessons to be learned from the life and work of those who have gone before us is that a firm belief in the divine origin of the Church, its rites and creeds and sacraments, helps us to overcome worldly obstacles. Fiske's great strength was an unfailing certainty that if we are doing Christ's work it will prosper, whether we live to see it fulfilled in our lifetimes or must wait for that day when we are able to see God face to face.



FR. YOST'S LETTER

Continued from page three

must consist not only of words or feelings, but of what we do, encompassing the whole of our lives. The Lord shows his love for us in his self-offering—his sacrifice—on the Cross and calls us to respond with our love—our sacrifice.

This gift of love and our response begins with Baptism and is nourished by the Holy Eucharist. Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274) puts this well:

“Beloved brethren, since it had been ordained by a merciful Providence that the Church should be formed from the side of the crucified Christ and that the words of the Scriptures be fulfilled: They shall look upon him whom they have pierced—a soldier armed with a lance opened the sacred Breast. The Blood mingled with water, which was shed from that pierced side, was the price of our salvation. Flowing from the hidden fount of the Sacred Heart, it gave to the sacraments their power of conferring the life of grace, and to those already living in Christ a draught of the living fount, gushing forth unto life eternal.

“Your Heart, dearest Jesus, was wounded so that a visible scar would enable us to see the invisible wound of your love. For how could the ardor of your love be better shown than by this, that not only your Body but even your very Heart was pierced with a lance? Truly the wounds of the flesh showed forth the wounds of the spirit. Who is there who would not love One so loving? My dearly beloved, let us pray that the Sacred Heart may deign to wound our heart still so hard, still so impenitent, and bind it with the sweet bonds of his love.”



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AN *ACQUASANTIERA* FROM ORVIETO: THE S. STEPHEN'S BAPTISMAL FONT

By Fr. John D. Alexander

One of the glories of S. Stephen's is the white marble baptismal font: in the words of the parish website, "a reproduction of a holy water stoup in the Cathedral of Saint Mary in Orvieto, Italy ... installed and blessed in 1904." The *Book of Remembrance* in the Narthex identifies the font as the gift of Mrs. Robert Hale Ives Goddard in memory of her son William Groesbeck Goddard.

Recently, I came across an article about the original by Elinor M. Richter of Hunter College.¹ The sculptor was Antonio Federighi (c. 1420-1483). Richter had encountered another almost identical Federighi stoup in a private collection in London. The baptismal font in S. Stephen's thus appears to be a copy of not one but at least two stoups executed to more or less the same design in the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, we do not know the provenance of our copy: Was it carved in Italy, the United States, or somewhere else? Did Mrs.

Goddard acquire it (as I have always imagined) on the proverbial turn-of-the century European Grand Tour? For the moment, those questions must await further research for answers.

An architect and sculptor of the early Italian Renaissance style known as *quattrocento* (referring to the 1400s), Antonio Federighi was born and active mainly in Siena, where he served as *Capomaestro* (chief foreman of artistic works) of

the Cathedral from 1450 to 1480. He was also *Capomaestro* at the Cathedral in Orvieto from 1451 to 1456; during this period he executed the holy water stoup found there, which later had a statue of Saint John the Baptist surmounted on its basin.

The *quattrocento* style discarded the flat and stylized forms associated with Byzantine and medi-

eval art in favor of sensuous figures and motifs adapted from Greek and Roman mythology. In the centuries since, critics have both praised and disparaged this development as a reversion to paganism. However, the *quattrocento* artists re-imbued themes from classical antiquity with Christian meanings that the viewer can learn to decode with a little interpretative assistance from various manuals and guides. In describing the features of the Federighi stoups and their copy in S. Stephen's I want to acknowledge in advance my debt to Elinor Richter's illuminating descriptions and analyses.

At floor level, three sphinxes with upturned wings and fish tails culminating in tridents adorn the tripod base. They seem to be resting in water—perhaps an overflow from the basin—with a crab visible on the seabed floor. In classical mythology, sphinxes are the guardians of mysteries: here they guard not only the sacred mystery of baptism but all the Christian sacraments to which baptism is the entranceway.





Three hanging garlands of ripe fruit and flowers ornament the base further up. Such garlands are often found on ancient sarcophagi as symbols of life and immortality. The garlands frame three circular emblems: a cross, an “IHS” monogram and (on the side facing the wall) an eagle. Stretched across the eagle’s wings and breast is a horizontal strip with



downward facing crenelations; in heraldry this is known as an “embattled fess” but I have not been able to find out its significance here.

Above the tripod base, a bowl decorated with fluting and rosettes supports the shaft on which rests the great basin. Facing outward with their backs to the shaft, three *putti*—classical figures of chubby male children, naked and sporting little wings, not to be mistaken for cherubs—stand astride dolphins that

hold in their mouths the knotted cords from which are suspended the garlands below. In Greek mythology dolphins were believed to come to the aid of sailors in distress and by extension became in Christian iconography protectors of souls. Here the dolphins represent salvation through water. The three intrepid dolphin riders each hold one arm aloft clutching a billowing drapery.

Above the *putti*, three majestic eagles support the enormous fluted basin with outstretched wings.

The eagles on the S. Stephen’s font are smooth and streamlined; the feathering on the Federighi originals is much more detailed and sharply carved. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia* it was an ancient belief that an eagle could renew its youth by plunging three times into a spring of pure water; in Christian iconography eagles thus symbolize baptism, in which the candidate is plunged three times into the waters of salvation.

Dr. George McClellan Fiske, Rector of S. Stephen’s from 1884 to 1919, accepted the gift of this wonderful piece and installed it as a baptismal font despite its original design as a holy water basin. Since a chief purpose of holy water is to remind us of our baptism, all the symbolism associated with holy water points *a fortiori* to the baptismal waters themselves.

It is tempting to take for granted the priceless works of Christian art in the church and to overlook their rich symbolism. In a spare moment, it is rewarding to inspect and contemplate



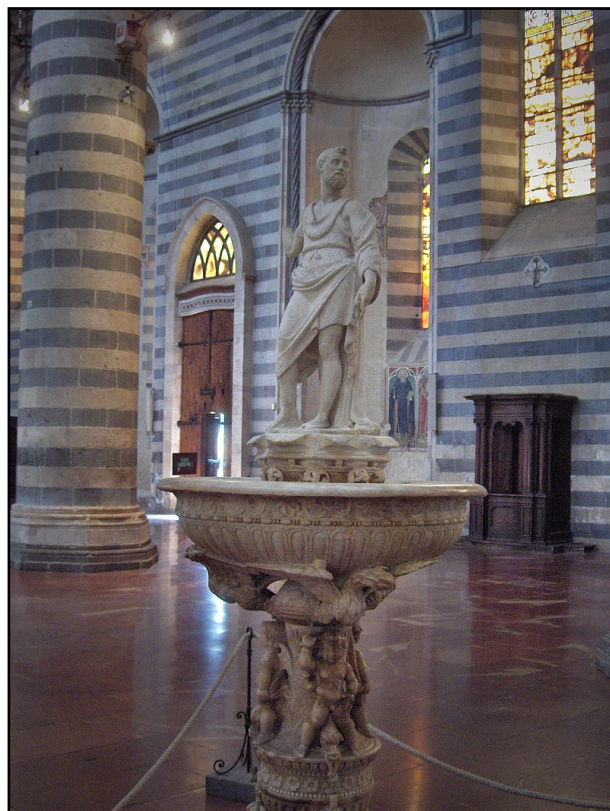
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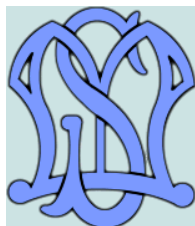


the baptismal font's iconography of sphinxes, garlands, dolphin riders, and eagles. Each of these features speaks in its own way of the mystery of resurrection to eternal life in Christ Jesus through Holy Baptism.

1. Elinor M. Richter, "Pulling out all the Stoups: A Newly-Discovered *Acquasantiera* by Antonio Federighi," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 29, No. 58 (2008), 9-27. For copyright reasons we cannot reproduce here Richter's magnificent color photographs of the London piece; but they are well worth a look for anyone who has access to the article through JSTOR.



Two views of the Federighi original in the Cathedral of Saint Mary, Orvieto, Italy. Above: View of the basin surmounted by statue of Saint John the Baptist. Below: Side view of the stoup.



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A RELIC OF BECKET

By William Dilworth

The Archbishop of Canterbury had had a problem. Thomas à Becket had been a close friend of his king, Henry II, but after his priesting and consecration he abandoned what had been a rather carefree life, became an ascetic, and gave himself entirely to his duties. His friendship with the king suffered as a result of his strenuous defense of the prerogatives of the Church against royal interference. He had been exiled, and upon his return he excommunicated three bishops for usurping the rights of the See of Canterbury by

crowning the heir apparent in the Archbishop's absence. When the prelates (and the news) reached Henry in Normandy he made a statement, one version of which has reached us as "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" Several of his knights interpreted this as a command to rid Henry of the Archbishop in the most permanent manner possible, so one

Yuletide evening in 1170 Thomas, his skull split open by swords in front of the very altar, stopped having a problem, because he stopped being Archbishop Thomas à Becket and became (in fact if not yet in title) *Saint* Thomas à Becket. His murder shocked Europe, and three years later the Pope canonized him.

His shrine became the most popular pilgrimage destination in England (think *The Canterbury Tales*) and was richly decorated. Churches were dedicated to him, a major feast celebrated his martyrdom in England and parts of France, and England's only military order, the Knights of St Thomas, was

founded under his patronage. He became a very popular saint indeed, and it would have been nice if things had stayed that way.

In the 1500s, though, St. Thomas came into posthumous conflict with another Henry, the reprehensible eighth of that name. For Henry VIII, St. Thomas was an intolerable reminder of both the limits of royal authority and the sinful enormity of Henry's treatment of the Church.

When he broke from Rome in 1529, Henry had

changed little about the nation's religious life, but not many years later he moved against the monastic orders, discouraged pilgrimages, and set about effacing the name of St. Thomas à Becket from the national memory. The martyr's shrine was stripped of its riches, his bones burned and scattered, and his feast and order abolished. Some nineteenth

century historians

even held that Henry put St. Thomas on trial for treason.

The illegal acts of one monarch could not destroy the memory of St. Thomas à Becket, though. After the Catholic Revival, the Church of England began to reclaim St. Thomas's place among the saints. There was hope that his relics had escaped destruction and had been found in 1888, but a twentieth century analysis of the remains proved them not to be Becket's. For years the only thing to remind churchmen of St Thomas's shrine was a candle marking the spot where it stood.



Continued next page

A RELIC OF BECKET

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A few relics of the saints did survive here and there, thanks to the practice of dividing relics to enable their veneration at large. One such piece was a bit of the saint's elbow which had been taken to Hungary during the Middle Ages. St. Thomas became popular in Hungary, especially during the Communist era when he functioned as a symbol of resistance to state interference in religion. Last month, in a show of European unity and a rapprochement between Canterbury and Rome, that small piece of bone came home to England once again, accompanied by the President of Hungary and the Cardinal Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest. The relic stopped at the Roman Westminster Cathedral (where Cardinal Nichols celebrated Mass), the Anglican Westminster Abbey, Parliament, and Rochester Cathedral before arriving at Canterbury Cathedral, where Justin Welby, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, welcomed the relic upon its arrival.

We have reminders of St. Thomas here at S. Stephen's. One of them is featured on our Lenten array altar frontal, and takes the form of a bishop's miter, cleaved with a sword. We don't have any relic of his, and that's a disappointment, but if it's any consolation – neither do the English. The relic couldn't stay in the UK, and after its English veneration it returned to Hungary (presumably taking the dignitaries with it).



SUMMER PATRONAL FESTIVAL THE FINDING OF THE RELICS OF SAINT STEPHEN 7 AUGUST 2016

Here at S. Stephen's we celebrate two patronal feasts: the Feast of Saint Stephen on December 26 (or the Sunday following), and The Finding of the Relics of Saint Stephen on August 5 (or the Sunday following). In 2008, the parish received a primary relic of Saint Stephen as a gift from Mr. Charles Calverley, Jr., and the Altar Guild purchased a reliquary in which to place it. At these two Masses we offer the opportunity to venerate the relic, which reposes on the Saint Stephen altar at the head of the north aisle. Join us in August as we celebrate the finding of the relics of the proto-martyr.



The Stoning of Saint Stephen
Rembrandt Harmensz, van Rijn 1606 - 1699



Quodlibet

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



This seems a great chance to think some on the preceding choral season and put it to rest, as the stacks of new repertoire for next year are already accumulating on my desk and adjoining window sill in the music room and I'm about to go into high brood dudgeon on how to program it. As my annual report usually contains specifics, the number of works sung, and other dross, I'll save all that for then and just think in writing about some things that have recently passed.

The Feast of the Visitation of the B.V.M. finalized the season on Tuesday 31 May with a well sung *Missa Ave Maria* of Palestrina, the Eccard motet commenting on the day's Gospel, and simply one of my favorite things, the solo motet *O quam tu pulchra es* of Alessandro Grandi—a desert island selection for me, and, though scant of duration, is gargantuan of intensity and beauty. What a way to close shop for the time and what a privilege to recreate these things *annum per annum*.

My annual recital, usually in the fall, wound up on Mother's Day this year (oh, don't ask) and I was so heartened by the turnout of friends and guests for what was a pretty self-indulgent display on my part! Starting with J. S. Bach and ending with a Sowerby barnstormer of a Toccata, the repertoire in between was music I'd always wanted to do and one is better pressing forward with these ideas rather than sitting and waiting for these things just to happen! Dr. Sowerby's *Ballade for English Horn and*

Organ, Gerald Finzi's cantata for tenor, *Dies Natalis*, and Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro*, originally for harp, flute, clarinet and strings, all put the Robert Hale Ives Goddard Memorial Organ through its paces, and kept me quite busy for the preceding weeks. Elegance and musicality personified my guests Megan Sesma (harp), Kevin

Darrow (English horn), as well as tenor and S. Stephen's regular, Jason Connell.

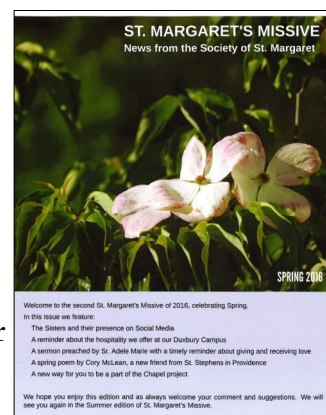
A gaff on my part kept the following out of the printed program and I feel it must be quoted here. "A gift has been made to The S. Stephen's Special Music Fund in support of today's guest artists, by Brian Ehlers." I am grateful for that gift and without it I would not have been able to have such prodigiously tal-

ented help share the evening with me.

A few weeks ago in my daily accumulation of bills, super market ads, increasingly generous opportunities for more credit, and such, came the occasional and attractive newsletter, *St. Margaret's Missive*, from Society of St. Margaret in Duxbury, Mass. (Sister Kristina Frances of the Order has been a regular



From left: Kevin Darrow, myself, Megan Sesma, & Jason Connell

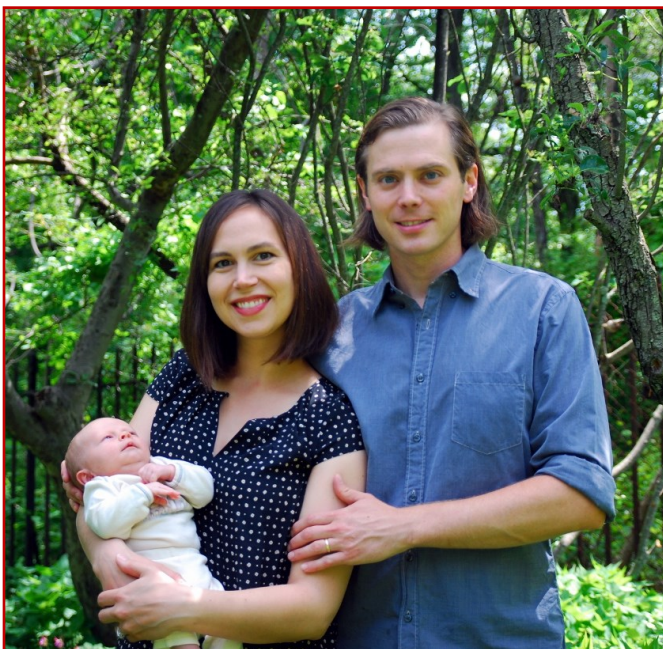


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Schola member this season and is just my cup of vocal Dom Perignon.) Imagine my pleasure and surprise to find in that publication a whole page devoted to a nice photo and a poem by our own Cory MacLean. It's so good to see Cory exercise her creativity and follow some bliss in ways that aren't just located on George Street.

Congratulations are due Alissa and Grant Randall on the birth of their son Elliot Timothy on May 4. Grant, as many of you know, is tenor, decani side, and my 'go to' guy for things brass, such as outdoor processions and the occasional Dufay Gloria. The three of them are adjusting well and I'm sure Elliot will have inherited musical genes from both parents; he'll be playing a mean rattle in no time!



Grant, Alissa, & Elliot Randall

Sunday last (May 29) I was away and in my stead was our old friend Brent Erstad playing and choir man Stephen Buck conducting. Straight out of Cleveland Institute of Music in 2008, Brent was here as Organ Scholar and I surely missed him when he was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at Trinity Church, Newport. In 2013 Brent became Associate Director of Chapel Music at St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, and has just

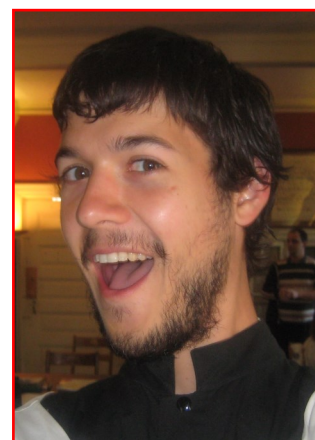


With Brent Erstad

been appointed Director of Choral Music at Episcopal High School, Alexandria, Virginia. Of his appointment Brent writes:

"Episcopal is just seven miles outside of Washington DC. The campus has an historic relationship with and abuts the Virginia Theological Seminary where your own Fr. Alexander spent some formative years. I'll conduct two curricular choirs, oversee the chapel music program and teach an elective class entitled *Religious Thought in Music*. The school meets three mornings each week for chapel in addition to a voluntary Sunday Eucharist and regular Choral Vespers. I'll continue to manage the Royal School of Church Music, Rhode Island Course, at St. George's School and to serve as organist of St. John's, Fishers Island in hopes of seeing through the installation of the new organ to be installed in 2018."

Sadly I must bring to attention a hail and farewell to our friend Derek Labrie, who has been in Schola since his music major, undergraduate days at University of Rhode Island, 2001 being the year, I believe. About two years ago Derek announced he was going to enter Rhode Island College,



Derek Labrie

ultimately pursuing a graduate degree in Math and Education. While simultaneously working three jobs and achieving highest marks he now finds the need to free up some time to reach his goals and that, ruefully, for me, includes singing in Schola Cantorum. There was not a more devoted choir man than Derek, approaching old as well as freshly composed music with equal enthusiasm, and his attentive demeanor awaiting a down beat or a cue is a conductor's dream. Derek epitomizes genuinely decent person and I'll miss him, as will his friends in Schola.

My end of season thanks must go to Editor Phoebe Pettingell for the opportunity to verbally amble through these pages. I'm grateful for this chance to communicate a little and will take the time to remind you that Mass in the summer is sung with congregational settings and needs your participation! All good, James



THE GUILD OF ALL SOULS
will meet on Monday evenings
July 11 & August 1
for Requiem Mass at 6 pm

The Guild of All souls prays for the departed. If you have recently suffered a loss, find comfort in better understanding the mystery of the Resurrection.

**A Prayer by
the Reverend George McClellan Fiske, D.D.**

Almighty and living God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named; we beseech Thee to look with love and mercy on us, Thy children, throughout the day. Keep us in Thy faith and fear. Give us grace to resist the devil, and to renounce all his works and temptations. Guard us from the lusts and sins of the flesh. Shield us from the corruption of the world. Make us diligent and faithful in our appointed work. Keep us patient under trial. In anxiety and worry, help us to find trust and peace in Thee. To Thee we offer our thoughts, words, and actions of this day, and beg that Thou wilt bless them. In ills of the body and vexations of the spirit, be Thou our healing and our strength. Bless our friends and neighbors. Increase their joys and soothe their sorrows and their sufferings. Protect Thy Holy Church spread throughout the world, that it may abide with steadfast faith in the confession of Thy Name. Take the dying to Thy rest, and comfort the departed with larger and larger measures of holiness and happiness. Dwell in our hearts and guide us with Thy counsel, that after this life Thou mightest receive us with glory. All of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.



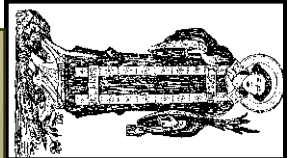
EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION
Third Saturday of the month

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



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

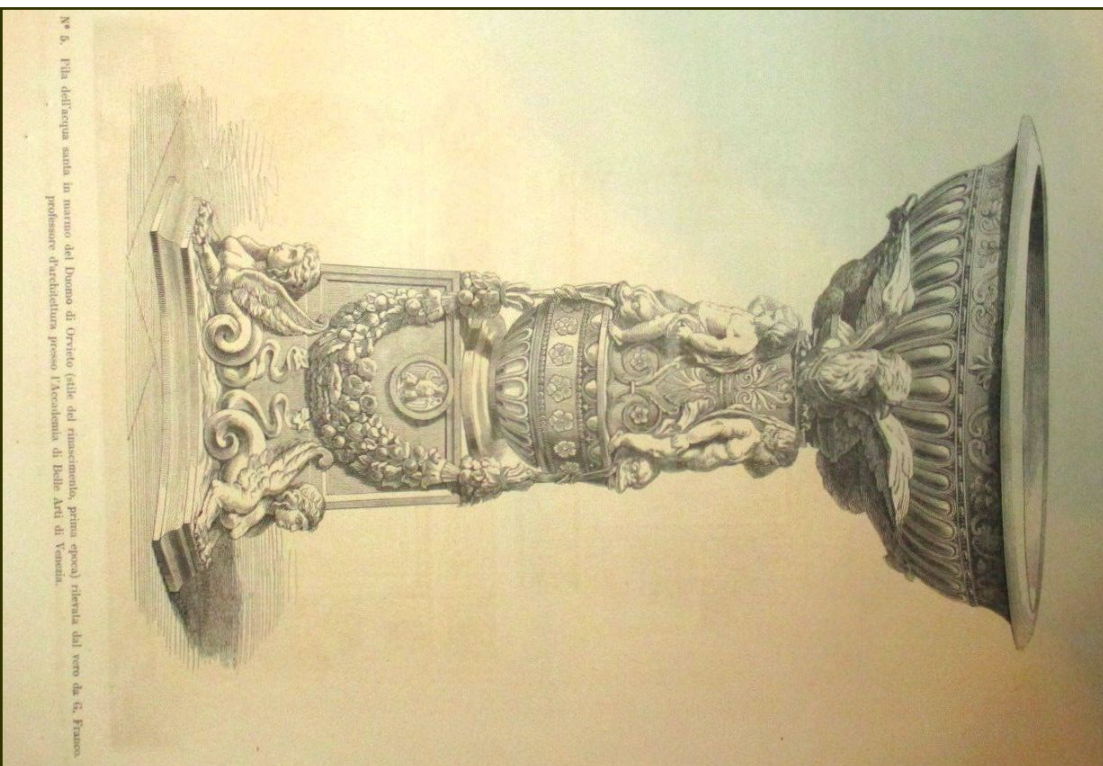
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The S. Stephen

SAINT PETER & SAINT PAUL

2016



N° 5. Vaso dell'acqua santa in marmo del Duomo di Orvieto (stile del rinascimento, prima epoca) ritrovato dal vero da G. Frascari, professore d'architetture presso l'Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia.