My dear People:

“Our God, heav’n cannot hold him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heav’n and earth shall welcome him
When he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ.”

These beautiful lines by Christina Rossetti are sung by the Church in one of the most compelling of our Christmas hymns, and they express for me some of the thoughts which I would share with you as we move through Advent towards the joy and splendor of the Feast of Our Lord’s Incarnation. Though always eclipsed by Easter in importance, Christmas remains for most Western Christians the time of deepest emotional significance in their religious lives, and the comfort and reassurance of Christmastide are sought out even by people who in a formal way have only a peripheral interest in the Christian faith. Christmas is popular – far beyond the boundaries of Christian observance. For Churchmen this is often a source of irritation. For us Christmas is nothing less than Jesus himself, Jesus made vulnerable to the world by the conditions of his earthly state. There is a vulgarity to the secular Christmas which is offensive to the Church’s life. And yet it appeals to the world. In some strange way
Jesus is there as well. And, for many people, it provides the only glimpse of Jesus Christ they will ever have. We can be glad of that. And we can pray that, for some, the glimpse will lead to a search, and the search can only bring them to Christ.

But my concern in this letter is with each of us, and with that better kind of Christmas which we as Christian men and women should want to observe. Just to read the psalter month by month is to marvel at how God surpasses all that we can imagine. Indeed, the heavens cannot hold him, though, if we go up to heaven, he is there, and, if we go down into hell, he is there also. The message of the Advent-Christmas cycle of the Church year is very simply that the God who transcends his creation also dwells within it, loving it and redeeming it for himself. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” What a marvelous theme this is, and how deeply it should penetrate our thoughts and prayers during these next several weeks! It is the message of hope for which our world continues to long. A Christian observance of the birth of Christ rejoices because the Son of God has already entered this world. It hopes anew because we believe that that same Son of God will come to this world again. He will be our judge, and the judgment he will render will be to give us the fulfillment of all the choices which we have made during our life on this earth. The Advent themes of death, judgment, heaven, and hell, are in the first place a recognition of the mortality of the entire human race. They are in the second place a recognition that God's love for us is so great, and his respect for our freedom so complete, that he allows us an eternity of our own choosing. It is thus as free men and women, whose liberty was gained by Christ himself, that we recall our Lord’s Incarnation at Christmastide, and that we prepare for that time when he will come again.

My prayer for every member of this parish church, and for our Friends scattered across and beyond these United States, is that your Christmas this year will be holy and good. In your Confessions carefully prepared for, in the Word of God proclaimed so beautifully at this time in our Sacred Writings, and most especially in the joy of your Christmas Communion, may the humility and love of Incarnate God bring you new hope and a sense of his peace. And know, please, that we are offering you to God in the bread of our labor at every Mass of Christmastide.

EDGAR F. WELLS

ADVENT

From the earliest stirrings of the human heart our race has known a message. “Prepare ye the way of the Lord!” It may be that the most accurate description of homo sapiens is that mankind is a species that knows hope, and has within it a divine gift of faith in the reality of its hope. Not that we are great intellectual beings. Not that we can philosophize. Not that we are tool-making creatures. But that we are creatures who know hope and faith.

To Isaiah came the picture of the Suffering Servant. In all the troubles of the times, the insight that there was purpose in struggle came through. That which human kind of itself could not do, God would supply.

Isaiah doubtless saw the Suffering Servant to be Israel itself. In the fullness of time God did supply. Jesus, His Incarnate Son came into the world. The Creeds of Catholic Faith are recitations of the details: where, when, through whom, why. In the creeds we affirm what God has done. In a single Person is to be found the Suffering Servant who takes upon Himself the sins of the world. Your sin, my sin, everyone’s sin. And through Him alone we are healed. Through Him we become what we are to be, fellow-heirs, sons and daughters of the Most High.

Christmass is the event, in Bethlehem, in the days of Caesar Augustus, through a young Jewish girl who said “Yes” to the great event of human history. The why can only be answered by awful, prayerful consideration of His Most Holy Life. In the Creeds we end our consideration of His life in two ways: first with the joyful proclamation that He will come again in glory; second by an equally joyful recognition of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The Story is not that a child was born, grew to beautiful full manhood and then went away. Going down to our graves we
Christian folk sing our Alleluias. He is near us, we in Him and He in us, always.

I have not yet used the name, ADVENT, but that is the season at hand. Prepare ye. Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Advent tells us Christ is near. Now. Our Christmasses are never pale memorials of an ancient event, long gone, long dead. We prepare in Advent as the wise virgins who know that even now our Bridegroom is at the gate. Here, with us: for all time in the flesh and blood of His Body, the Catholic Church.

Among Religious it is sometimes said that one at any time should be prepared for two things: to make one's Confession and to die. In this Advent season Christians might meditate on that statement. If it be understood profoundly, all other things necessary would be added to us. Our lives would then truly be dedicated to Preparing the Way of the Lord of Life who comes. The things of the interior life then would become rich beyond human telling: the joy of Mass and communion, of meditation on Holy Scripture, of a good confession and its liberation. Equally important are the external manifestations of faith: a zeal for charity, for human justice, for mercy and peace for others. If one is prepared in these, then all else falls into proper place. Advent is here.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord!

J.L.S.

A FINE CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO GIVE

A recording of Alessandro Scarlatti’s MESSA DI SANCTA CECILIA for soloists, chorus and string orchestra, the first release of St. Mary’s recording project, is now available. The recording is by the Schola Cantorum of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin conducted by Music Director McNeil Robinson. The 12” LP may be purchased through the St. Francis de Sales Shop each $6.95. Mail orders should include $1.00 per record for postage and handling and New York City or State residents should add applicable sales tax. Please make checks or money orders payable to the “Church of St. Mary the Virgin.”

SERMON PREACHED AT SAINT MARY’S ON THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

“But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Words from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark.

The purpose of the Church is quite simply to create saints. Saints are men and women who have confessed the Name of Jesus Christ in good times and in bad, in periods of joy and sorrow, as life brought these fulfillment, and again when there seemed no cause of hope — and saints have confessed the Name of Christ as the one Name which in the end could make sense of their lives. In their holiness theirs has been the voice of the Church throughout all the ages, witnessing in an unbelieving and sometimes hostile world to the one person who can change that world. Because in the end Christianity is more than a system of beliefs. It surpasses every theological construct which seeks to explain it — and although it implies an ethic, and in fact enjoins a way of life on us which on occasion seems inconvenient and confusing. Yet Christianity in the last analysis is not defined by that ethic. For the final end of Christianity is a person, not a system either of belief or of behavior; and the purpose of the Catholic Church — the meaning of her ministry of Word and Sacrament — is quite simply that we may know Jesus Christ, and that we may live in the power of his resurrection. Thus in this morning’s Collect we ask God’s grace that we may persevere in the confession of his Name and that we shall become saints. And we are reminded in today’s gospel that the person whose Name we are to confess came among us not as a Master but as a servant, not as one who would coerce us into following him but as one who would love us as we had never been loved before. “For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” The life of servanthood was given new meaning in the person of our blessed Lord. Your lives and mine, in terms of their service to the Christian
community, acquire meaning only in relationship to the servanthood of Jesus Christ. How like us He is. There is not a man or woman in this church this morning whom He does not understand. There is no one here whom He cannot love. Perhaps most importantly of all, there is no one here whom He cannot forgive. “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” And because of this the writer to the Hebrews urges us with confidence to “draw near to the throne of grace:” he asks that each of us have the courage to come into this holy place, this church, on this morning, in order that we may receive mercy and be filled anew with the grace of God. There is a lesson for us in all of this. The answer to loneliness is not to stay away from church. The complications and frustrations of our lives are not sorted out by turning our backs on the Christian community. Our tendencies to sin are not lessened by going it alone without the support of the Christian family. One thing we do know: if any one of us ever goes to hell, he will enter damnation totally and completely by himself. It is hell to be alone — and to be alone eternally, that is hell indeed.

And so the primary work — the primary liturgy — of the Christian community is the confession of the Name of Jesus Christ. In all of our life together, and pre-eminently in act of Eucharistic sacrifice in which the church is being most herself, in all of our life we are meant as members of the body of Christ to confess the Name of our Lord. That is why we are here this morning. That is why you will be wherever you will be once you have left here, and once you have been strengthened by this Christian family in this place.

In our corporate life here at St. Mary’s this fall we are examining in some depth the confession which we in this parish are making of the Name of Jesus Christ. Our Christian stewardship is nothing less than the proclaiming of Christ to our world. In each of our lives, by examination and confession, by forgiveness and renewal, we are with God’s help re-establishing the spiritual priorities of this congregation. If you love St. Mary’s that love may well first be tested on your knees in the confessional — for confession the Name of Christ has as its beginning our owning up to the failures and sins of our own lives. We ask forgiveness because we are indeed not like Christ, and we seek restoration because apart from him there is a dislocation of our individual and corporate lives. This is where renewal begins in my life, and where it has begun for more times than I can remember through years which now seem forgotten. If we are honest, it is where renewal begins for each of us — and therefore it is where new life begins for this parish.

During this coming week the witness of this parish is going to be focused on a unique and wonderful event in the life of the Catholic Church. We are going to offer a young man to God for the reception of the gift of Christ’s own High Priesthood. We are going to assemble together and we are going to present this man to his Bishop for the apostolic laying on of hands. His Bishop will carry the crozier of his own jurisdiction, not because he is our bishop — for, in fact, he is not, but because the man we are presenting does in fact belong to him. Thus, though Father Ousley will receive the grace of priestly Ordination in this parish church, the implication of what will be done here holds meaning for the life of the whole church throughout the world. Though appointed to serve in a particular place, a priest is first of all his Bishop’s man. His exercise of the priestly ministry is a delegation of the ministry of his Bishop and represents the fact that he is in communion with his Bishop, who himself is in communion with the Catholic Church throughout the world. So that, in one sense, Father Ousley does not belong to St. Mary’s. He does in fact belong to his Bishop. Our confession of the Name of Christ in this place means that we will lift up and support the priestly ministry of those whom God sends us here. Priests are themselves servants of their Lord. Their ministry, like that of their Master, is to expend themselves for others. And our love for them, and our willingness to use and to treat them as priests, is the measure of our understanding of the common vocation through which we are all to witness to the name of Christ. Would you love a priest? Make him your confessor. Do you care for a priest? Then use him as a priest. Do you really respect the priesthood? Then help your priests to be priests to you. Today we are called to witness anew to the Name of Christ. That is
what our life is all about in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. The Lord we love has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He is near to each of us, and He loves us always. As He has been a servant to us, so in His Name let us be servants to one another.

E.F.W.

The Clergy and Staff of
The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin
extend to all of our parishioners and friends
the best wishes for
A Most Happy and Blessed Christmastide

PARISH NOTES

Preaching recently at Saint Mary’s were Father Peter Geldard of the English Church Union, Father John Purnell of all Saints Church, Boston, Father Homer Rogers of Saint Francis’ Church in Dallas, and Father Edwin Norris of the Church of the Ascension in Chicago.

Father Purnell preached at the annual national meeting of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Guild of All Souls, which was held at Saint Mary’s on November tenth. A Solemn Requiem was celebrated in the presence of the Rt. Rev’d William Brady, the Bishop of Fond du Lac.

A parish quiet day has been scheduled for the 15th of December as part of the Advent observance at Saint Mary’s.

The patronal festival, the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, will be celebrated on the seventh of December with a Solemn High Mass and Procession. Father John Andrew of Saint Thomas Church will be the preacher.

At their fall meeting, the Trustees of Nashotah House elected Father Wells to join them as a Trustee of the House. Bishop Robert Terwilliger, Suffragan Bishop of Dallas, was also elected.

ORDINATION OF FR. OUSLEY TO SACRED PRIESTHOOD

On October 23, the Feast of St. James of Jerusalem, Father Ousley was ordained to the sacred Priesthood at a solemn pontifical Mass at Saint Mary’s. Bishop James Montgomery of Chicago was the celebrant, assisted by Father John Moser, Curate of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemont, Pennsylvania. Many friends and clergy participated in this very special occasion for St. Mary’s. Among the entering procession were Holy Cross Fathers, Sisters of the Community of Saint Mary, and Sisters of the Community of the Holy Spirit.

The procession was accompanied by Bruckner’s majestic setting of the responsory Ecce Sacerdos Magnus. Other music at the service included the Missa Sancti Joannis de Deo, of Franz Joseph Haydn, and the offertory Psallite Domino of Michel de la Lande.

Father Edwin Norris, Rector of the Church of the Ascension, Chicago, was the preacher, and Father Scott of St. Mary’s the litanist. Also participating were Father Leslie Lang of St. Thomas Church, Manhattan, and Father Lewis Warren of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, as Deacons of Honor; Father George Hillman, Curate of All Saints Church, Boston, as Deacon of the Mass; James Gregory of St. Mary’s as Subdeacon of the Mass. Father Brian Koehler, Curate of Emmanuel Church, Rockford, Illinois, was Mitre Bearer; Father Harry Krauss, Curate of All Saints Church, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, was Crozier Bearer. Edward Mueller, Edward James, and Father Wells of St. Mary’s presented David Ousley for ordination. Masters of Ceremonies were Robert May and Gilbert Cattell.

St. Mary’s was honored, as well as Father Ousley, by this distinguished clerical gathering. All of us rejoice with Father Ousley as he assumes the duties of priesthood and ministry in this parish. He celebrated Mass for the first time on October 24, and Solemn Mass on Sunday the 28th. Scheduled times for Confession now include Father Ousley from 2 to 3 on Saturday, Holy Cross Fathers from 5 to 6 on Friday, and Father Wells from 5 to 6 on Saturday.
MUSIC FOR DECEMBER

December 2 - ADVENT I
Messe de Toulouse .......................... (ca. 1325)

December 7 - CONCEPTION B.V.M.
Missa ad fugam ............................ Trent Codices

December 9 - ADVENT II
Missa Brevis in G .......................... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

December 16 - ADVENT III
Missa Brevis ................................. Vladimir Ussachevsky (b. 1911)

December 23 - ADVENT IV
Missa l' hora passa .......................... Lodovico da Viadana (1564-1645)

December 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE
Missa Brevis in F (K. 192)  Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

December 30 - CHRISTMAS I
Messe in G ................................. Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

DONATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS MUSIC
Donations, given in addition to regular and Christmas contributions, will be gratefully accepted to help off-set the extra expense incurred in producing the Christmas music. Please make payment to Church of Saint Mary the Virgin - Special Music Fund, in care of the church office.

ORGAN RECITAL
CHARLES KRIGBAUM
Organist of Yale University
Wednesday, December 12, 1979 at 8 p.m.

Annual contributions of five dollars or more are asked from those who do not make other contributions to the parish and wish to receive AVE. Please notify us promptly of change of address.

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

1. Sa. Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1637
2. Su. ADVENT I
3. M. St. Francis Xavier, Priest, 1552
4. Tu. St. John of Damascus, Priest, c. 760
5. W. St. Clement of Alexandria, Priest, c. 210
6. Th. St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342
7. F. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397
   Masses at 7:30 a.m. and 12:10 p.m.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
   Evening Prayer 5:30 p.m.
   Solemn Mass with Procession 6 p.m.

8. Sa. The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9. Su. ADVENT II
10. M. Requiem
11. Tu. THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH, 1895
12. W. THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH, 1895
13. Th. St. Lucy, Martyr in Sicily, 304
14. F. St. John of the Cross, Priest, 1605
15. Sa. ADVENT III
16. Su. Requiem
17. M. EMBER DAY
18. Tu. SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE
19. W. EMBER DAY
20. Th. SAINT STEPHEN, DEACON AND MARTYR
21. F. SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST
22. Sa. THE HOLY INNOCENTS
23. Su. ADVENT IV
24. M. SAINT THOMAS, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY & MARTYR

25. Tu. CHRISTMAS DAY
   Solemn Mass of Midnight, preceded by a Procession at 11:45;
   Mass of the Dawn 7:30 a.m. Mass of the Day 9 & 10 a.m.;
   Solemn Mass of the Day 11 a.m. No Mass at 12:10 or 6:15 p.m.

26. W. SAINT STEPHEN, DEACON AND MARTYR
27. Th. SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST
28. F. THE HOLY INNOCENTS

30. Su. CHRISTMAS I
   Solemn Mass with Procession 11 a.m.

31. M. St. Sylvester, Bishop of Rome and Martyr
NEW FRIENDS


Friends will be remembered at the altar on the patronal feast, and on the first Friday of every month. Be with us in spirit!

FRIENDS’ PRAYER

O ETERNAL GOD, whose glory is in all world: Look upon that house of prayer for which we now pray, and accept our thanks for the tabernacle of thy presence in the midst of the city. To priests and people seeking to serve thee there, give that faith which built it and such favour as may keep it strong. Let friends join to tell, and all who pass by rejoice to see, that in that place thou wilt give peace, through him who is our peace, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERVICES

SUNDAYS

Morning Prayer ........................................ 7:10 a.m.
Mass .................................................... 7:30, 10:00 a.m., and 5 p.m.
Family Mass & Church School .......................... 9:00 a.m.
Solemn Mass with Sermon .............................. 11:00 a.m.
Evensong and Benediction ............................ 6:00 p.m.
(preceded by an organ recital at 5:30 p.m.)

WEEKDAYS

Morning Prayer ........................................ 7:10 a.m. (11:40 a.m. Saturdays)
Mass daily ............................................ 7:30 a.m., * 12:10 and 6:20 p.m.
*Except Saturdays

Evening Prayer .......................................... 6:00 p.m.

FIRST FRIDAY

Holy Hour .................................................. 7 p.m.

Other services during the week and on festivals
as announced on the preceding Sunday

CONFESSIONS

DAILY, 12:40 - 1 p.m.
FRIDAY, 5-6 p.m.
SATURDAY, 2-3 and 5-6 p.m.
SUNDAY, 8:40 - 9 a.m.

Prayer for Saint Mary’s Mission
March 9-11, 1980

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep; Bless, we beseech thee, the effort soon to be made to convert souls unto thee; Open the ears of the wanderers, that they may hear the words which belong to their salvation; And grant that those whom thou dost raise to newness of life, may through thy grace persevere to the end: of thy mercy, O our God, who are blessed, and livest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God world without end. Amen.
CONTRIBUTIONS to the cost of AVE are gratefully acknowledged: Rev’d Stephen V. Burger, $6; William P. Haithcoat, $5; Walter J. Salmon, Jr., $6; Douglas Carner, $10; Rev’d James W. Samter, $5; Mrs. M. L. Schelle, $5; Stephen Veenker, $7; Donald Farley, $25.

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CLASSES are held for study and discussion. Sunday mornings at 9:45 and during the week as announced. All are welcome. Individual instruction can be arranged with the clergy.

***

SAINT VINCENT’S GUILD

ACOLYTES at the high altar on Sundays and feasts, and those who serve on weekdays. Communicants who wish to serve should speak to the Clergy.

***

SAINT RAPHAEL’S GUILD

USHERS at parish services, Sunday mornings and evenings, and on feasts. Communicants who can help should speak to the Head Usher.

***

SAINT MARTIN’S GUILD

TOURS of the church are conducted after Sunday Solemn Mass. Volunteers will be trained for this mission of welcome.

***

BROTHER LAURENCE GUILD

KITCHEN helpers for refreshments after Solemn Mass and for occasions when meals are served. Volunteers are needed for this mission of fellowship.

***

SAINT MARY’S GUILD

SACRED VESSELS AND VESTMENTS are cared for by communicants working together on Saturday afternoons. Speak to the Clergy.

***

DEVOTIONAL SOCIETIES

SAINT MARY’S WARDS of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Guild of All Souls, and the Society of Mary are open to all communicants.

ALTAR FLOWER MEMORIALS

December 8 — Conception BVM, Departed Trustees of Saint Mary’s; Virgil Evans Pyle, R.I.P.

December 25 — Christmas Day, Thomas McKee Brown, priest, founder, and first Rector; Cadney & Stringham Families, R.I.P.

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES SHOP

BOOKS MAY BE BOUGHT at the shop next to the parish hall after Sunday Solemn Mass. There are also crucifixes, rosaries, medals, and other aids to devotion. Orders may be placed by mail.

SAINT MARY’S PUBLICATIONS

A tribute to Saint Mary’s, Dr. John Macquarrie’s articles on Benediction, Stations and Saint Mary’s: 50¢ (mailing 15¢)

Music at Saint Mary’s, James L. Palsgrove’s historical review with music lists today: 50¢ (mailing 25¢)

Worship in Spirit and Truth, papers at the 1970 liturgical conference on the Proposed Prayer Book: $2.95 (Mailing 60¢)

Vêpres du Commun, Marcel Dupré’s organ antiphons played at Saint Mary’s by McNeil Robinson: stereophonic: $6.95 (Mailing 80¢)

A Walk around Saint Mary’s, self-guided tour of the church and chapels, with plan: 25¢ (mailing 15¢)

Picture postcards: interior and exterior in color: 15¢ each

New York State residents, add state/local tax

Order from the Saint Francis de Sales Shop

1980 ORDO KALENDAR with days in liturgical colour and with a picture of the shrine of Our Lady: $2 in our shop; mailing 50¢.

REMEMBER SAINT MARY’S IN YOUR WILL

BEQUESTS may be made in the following form:

“I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to the Society of the Free Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, and having its principal office at 145 West Forty-sixth Street, New York City, [here state the nature or amount of the gift].”
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139 West 46th Street, New York
(East of Times Square, between 6th and 7th Avenues)
Church open daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
except Saturday, open from 11 a.m.

RECTORY
144 West 47th Street, New York
THE REVEREND EDGAR F. WELLS, Rector
THE REVEREND DAVID A. OUSLEY, Curate
(212) 757-6750

PARISH OFFICE
145 West 46th Street, New York, New York 10036
Office hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday - Friday, except legal holidays
(212) 757-6750

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THE REVEREND JOHN L. SCOTT
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The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin depends on the offerings of parishioners and friends. Pledge envelopes may be obtained from the Parish Secretary. Your support is appreciated.

If you would like to give flowers in 1980 and have not had a day in the past year, please inform the Clergy at this time. If you already have a day, it will be continued unless notice is given that you wish to change or discontinue it. We ask an offering of fifteen dollars, at least. Flowers may be given as thank offerings as well as memorials.