My dear People:

I often think that this March-April issue of AVE is the single most important issue to be mailed to you in the course of the year. In the dating of this letter I refer to it as the issue of Lent-Easter, 1987, and in making that designation I do in fact want to direct our attention to the liturgical and spiritual importance of these next two months. Lent and Easter express the heart of our Christian commitment each year. Though they are reckoned as separate seasons, the two of them together form a unity that we describe as the Church’s paschal mystery. That mystery is the cycle of our own human experience. It is the cycle of joy and sorrow, of despair and renewed hope, ultimately of death and resurrection, and it is experienced liturgically in our Lenten and Easter devotions. To know Jesus, to discover him anew in the confusion of our lives, to see those lives converted and transformed by the power of his death and resurrection, all this is to experience for ourselves the marvelous reality of his grace in our daily existence. That confession you have been meaning to make, that discipline of fasting and prayer, that class in Christian catechesis, that study and renewed interest in Christian spirituality, all of these are aspects of the journey that is ours each Lent and Holy Week, a journey that brings us the almost unbelievable joy of the Easter season.

I am of course writing you this letter as that journey begins. I can think of no parish that provides more than St. Mary’s by way of helping us along its path. I can also think of no place in which the temptation to do “all or nothing” can so thwart and even harm our spiritual lives. This year is the
ninth Lent that I will have spent at St. Mary's. I remember in my first Lent here how a young man attended every single service in this church during the whole Lent-Easter cycle. At first I was impressed with his presence. "How devout," I thought, "how extraordinary!" And of course, extraordinary was just the word. One night someone attempted to mug this young man as he left St. Mary's after Stations of the Cross. Undaunted, he faithfully maintained his worship here. And then one day he disappeared. It had all been too much. It had drained the energy right out of him. Most tellingly of all, he had had it with our kind of religion. He still comes here occasionally, and he will even stop at the door and greet the clergy as he leaves. But his attendance is sporadic, and I sense his fear of the kind of involvement that he knew during my first days in this parish.

And of course the experience of this young man is not an isolated incident. It reflects the pattern of many people who discover St. Mary's for the first time, who are literally bowled over by the richness and extravagance of our liturgical life, who are able to be maintained by it for a particular period in their religious pilgrimage, but who ultimately cannot continue the level of observance to which they have committed themselves. My own reaction is to say that I could not live at that level either. To be sure, the clergy of this parish maintain, and are maintained by, the rigorous cycle of worship that is our daily diet here. It is our joy and it is our first vocation in this place. But it has to be carried lightly, it has to be worn loosely and with ample room for accommodation. If not, it will straiten and constrict us. Ultimately we will not be able to bear it. Rightly understood, intelligently undertaken, the worship of this parish and the discipline of Catholic observance are meant to give us a sense of living our spiritual lives in a large and beautifully furnished room. They are meant to give us a sense of freedom. When that freedom is lost, when instead our religious experience becomes a rigidly adhered to succession of pious exercises, then the meaning of worship becomes blurred and forgotten. The moment comes when we can no longer sustain it, and in the end we give it up as a bad job. As well we should.

And all this is by way of exhorting you as you read this letter to keep a holy Lent and a joyous Eastertide! And I hope that you shall. But what I hope as well is that you will keep things simple, that your observance of this holy season will take into account your own limits and your own ability to absorb, and that you will therefore be able to maintain the discipline that you accept for yourself. Lent is not an "all or nothing" kind of venture. The joy of Easter is not dependent in any way on the inflicting of some kind of excessive hardship on your spiritual life. Quite the contrary. Our passover of gladness is the paschal mystery of the Son of God. He is our Easter joy, even as he is the expiation for our sins. So in whatever you are doing, in whatever you plan to do during this season, do it in moderation and be gentle to yourself. Our Lenten schedule appears in this issue of AVE. Use it, indeed but use it as a means of health and freedom.

And of course Father Sloane and Father Willoughby join me in wishing you all a deeply satisfying Lent and Easter this year. These two young priests encourage me in my own pilgrimage in a refreshingly wonderful way. And I know that the joy of our ministry together is a wonderful encouragement to you. The truth is that we all support and uplift one another, you no less than we. It is this mutuality of our life together that gives Lent and Easter their special flavor on 46th Street.

May God give you the gift of perseverance this Lent. May he give you the joy of his risen life this Eastertide.

With my love in Christ,
MUSIC FOR MARCH AND APRIL

March 1 - (Last Epiphany) 11:00 am
Missa Luba (Mass in Congolese Style)
Arranged by Fr. Guido Haazen (20th century)

March 4 - (Ash Wednesday) 6:00 pm
Missa octavi toni (“Hor le tue forze Ad opra”)
Felice Anerio (1560-1614)

March 8 - (Lent 1) 11:00 am
Missa in illo tempore
Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

March 15 - (Lent II) 11:00 am
Missa sexti toni (Missae super “L’homme Arme”)
Josquin Despres (c.1440-1521)

March 22 - (Lent III) 11:00 am
Mass for four voices
William Byrd (1543-1623)

March 25 - (The Annunciation) 6:00 pm
Missa brevis
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525-1594)

March 29 - (Lent IV-Laetare) 11:00 am
Messe solennelle
Jean Langlais (b.1907)

April 1 - (Lent V) 11:00 am
Missa in die tribulationis
Roland de Lassus (1532-1594)

April 12 - (Passion/Palm Sunday) 11:00 am
Missa in die tribulationis
McNeil Robinson (b.1943)

April 15 - (Tenebrae) 7:00 PM
Tenebrae Responsories
Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548-1611)

April 16 - (Maundy Thursday) 6:00 pm
Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalenæ
Healey Willan (1880-1968)

April 17 - (Good Friday) 12:00 pm
Reproaches
Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548-1611)

April 18 - (Holy Saturday/Easter Eve) 10:00 pm
Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalenæ
Healey Willan (1880-1968)

April 19 - (Easter Day)
11:00 am
Messe G-dur, D.167
Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828)

Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem
Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

4:00 pm
Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in D
Alfred Herbert Brewer (1865-1928)

Te lucis ante terminum
Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950)
Laudate Dominum (from Vesperae solennes de confessore,
KV339)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

April 26 - (Easter II) 11:00 am
Missa brevis “Spatzenmesse,” (KV220)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
The following sermon was delivered by Father Wells Easter Day, April 7, 1985.

"Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him." Words of the angel to women at the tomb, part of this morning's gospel.

Just a few short days ago we were reading in the gospel of St. John how our Lord, as he went up to Jerusalem, was approached by some Greeks who had heard of him, who had come to Jerusalem during the Jewish Passover, and who wanted to meet him. Philip and Andrew interceded on their behalf, telling our Lord of the presence of these foreigners, and asking that he receive them. "Sir," they said to Philip, "we wish to see Jesus." But the time for interviews was over. "The hour has come," Jesus said, "for the son of man to be glorified." For the past three days you and I have been witnesses to the glory of God. For the past three days you and I have seen that glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

Jesus being greeted by the crowds on Palm Sunday. Jesus at supper with his disciples on the night of his betrayal. Jesus watching alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus lifted up and glorified on the cross of human shame and suffering, Jesus offering his life to his Father on behalf of the whole world. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And now today we are told of the three holy women as they approach the sepulchre on the third morning with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Imagine the fear that must have gripped them as they beheld the entrance to the tomb opened, the large stone that had sealed the tomb rolled back. Imagine the tentativeness of their approach, and the timidity with which they finally entered a place they fully expected to find shut and secured. And then the young man in the white robe, and the voice of the angel as he said, "You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here."

There is a similarity between those Greeks as they approached St. Philip during the days immediately before our Lord's crucifixion and those three women of this morning's gospel and they came to the tomb of their Lord to anoint his body. In each case they were seeking Jesus. Those Greeks went away unrewarded, for at the last moment they were denied their request. But the women of this morning's gospel went away literally frightened out of their minds. Theirs was to have been a mission of service, a corporal work of mercy involving the care of a friend and mentor whom they had deeply loved. They were not prepared for the empty tomb. They were frightened beyond measure at their encounter with the angel. They fled from the scene trembling and astonished. They did not yet possess the gift that has brought you and me to this church this morning. They were denied as yet the eyes of faith. And so they fled. And they spoke to no one because of their fear.

Strange, isn't it, that the Easter gospel should come to us today by means of a recorded encounter between God's messenger and three women whose immediate reaction was one of suspicion and fear? We know from the other accounts that their fear was soon allayed. We know because
of what happened to others, and because of the subsequent appearances of our Lord to those who loved him, that fear and doubt were soon to be replaced by faith in the risen Lord. But for the moment, and in terms of the gospel given to us today, faith had not yet been achieved. Astonishment, yes. Fear, absolutely. And, as St. Mark tells it, an immediate and overpowering desire to be gone from the scene of this incredible occurrence. St. Mark tells us that the women “said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

And of course we can say that in one sense it wasn’t meant to work out as St. Mark describes it. The desire of those who planned our Lord’s death was that he should be quickly forgotten. Dead, and therefore out of sight. Dead, and therefore out of mind. The memory of him perished. The great stone before his tomb was to ensure that his body would not be stolen. And the claim of a miraculous resurrection was the very thing that the Jewish leaders sought to forestall.

Yet the fact remained, the body of Jesus was not where it had been placed. Simple women, good women, devout women, were undone by trembling and astonishment. They said nothing to anyone. They were afraid.

The proof of our Lord’s resurrection does not depend in the last analysis on the testimony of any one person. The proof of our Lord’s resurrection is to be found in the recorded experience of that small band of disciples and their followers as they discovered in those hours and days immediately following the events at Calvary that the Lord whom they had believed to be dead was in fact alive and with them. A walk along the road to Emmaus. Another meal in the upper room, as Jesus made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread. These and other incidents constitute the evidence that the small band, so recently scattered in terror and disarray, so recently the victims of their own fears and unbelief, had found themselves anew because of the continuing presence, the renewed presence, if you will, of the Teacher whom they thought to have been taken from them forever. It is very important that we understand that St. Peter and the other disciples did not go home on Good Friday night filled with the comforting thought that in three days’ time their Lord would be returned to them. Quite the contrary. There stood at the cross of Jesus our Blessed Lady and St. Mary Magdalene. There stood at the cross of Jesus Mary, the wife of Clopas. There stood at the cross of Jesus the Beloved Disciple, the one whom Jesus so specially loved. The rest had scattered to the four winds. And had we asked St. John, or our Lady, or the other women, why they were there, they would have told us that they were there very simply out of love. They were there because of their love for him. Love requires no explanations. Love has no need to excuse itself. Love makes no apologies whatsoever. Love is its own sufficient answer.

On the first Easter morning, then, the disciples and the holy women did not wake up with a fully developed doctrine of what had taken place only a few short hours before. Rather they were dazed, they were numbed, and they were overcome by grief and by the magnitude of their loss. When those women arrived at that tomb, they were simply and totally unprepared for what they found.

Think again for a minute of those Greeks who had so wanted to meet our Lord during those days immediately prior to his death. Did they stay on in Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover, do you suppose? Were they perhaps along the roadside as that strange holy man walked silently past, burdened by the instrument of his own death? Having failed to interview him as they had planned, did they, do you suppose, hear at least by word of mouth of what had happened to him? We will never know. But about one thing we can at least surmise. Quite possibly, or indeed probably, the grandchildren or great grandchildren of those inquiring foreigners received the grace of baptism because of that very man whom their ancestors had very nearly come to know.

And then what can we say about each of us in this Church this morning? What can we say about you? What can be said of myself? Whatever the personal inclination that brought you here this morning, perhaps the desire to share with us if you are a stranger, perhaps the desire to immerse yourself in the joy of this Christian community if you are a believer,
whatever the personal inclination that brought you here this morning, the fact of the matter is that you are at this moment sharing in the witness of the Christian ages. What you are participating in is the joy of the whole church. Those women at the tomb in today's gospel, and those disciples who would soon be reconstituted and ordained by a Lord whom they had believed to be dead, and who would be sent forth in a manner that they could scarcely begin to imagine, those women and those disciples represent for us the Church throughout the ages. It is a Church that, humanly speaking, must always be imperfect, because it is composed of sinners. But it is a Church which, because of the presence of its risen Lord within it, and because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, is indeed the holy and sanctified people of God. We are in this Church today because we are the children of the New Covenant. The faith that we proclaim is not our private faith, itself imperfect and so susceptible to our human doubts and our human emotions. The faith we proclaim today is the faith of the Catholic Church, a faith that teaches us that Jesus came among us as one of us, a faith that teaches that he lived and suffered and died, and a faith which, because of the witness of millions of people through the ages, is able to say, "we believe in one God".....and we believe in Jesus Christ his Son our Lord.....for our sake he suffered death and was buried.....and on the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures."

Last night in this church our Bishop Suffragan referred to the Church of St. Mary the Virgin as the "miracle on 46th Street." If this parish is a miracle, it is a miracle because of what we celebrate today. If in our worship this morning your faith is restored, and your hope renewed, it is because of what Christians believe took place on this day. Do you seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified? To you as to those women the messenger of God declares, "he has risen, he is not here." And in the Church's worship this morning he says to us all, "see the place where they laid him."
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| 1 Su. | THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY  
Pontifical High Mass & Visitation, 11:00 AM  
The Rt. Rev'd Paul Moore, Bishop of New York, Preaching and Celebrating |
| 2 M. | Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, 672 |
| 3 Tu. | John and Charles Wesley, Priests 1791, 1788 Shrove Tuesday |
| 4 W. | ASH WEDNESDAY  
Strict Fast & Abstinence, Ashes imposed at all Masses. Low Masses 8:00 AM & 12:15 PM.  
SOLEMN MASS WITH PENITENTIAL OFFICE, 6:00 PM |
| 5 Th. | Lenten Weekday |
| 6 F. | Lenten Weekday Stations of the Cross & Benediction, 7:00 PM |
| 7 Sa. | Lenten Weekday (Perpetua and her Companions, Martyrs at Carthage, 202) |
| 8 Su. | THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT |
| 9 M. | Lenten Weekday (Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, c.394) |
| 10 Tu. | Lenten Weekday (The Forty Martyrs of Sabaste, 4th c.) |
| 11 W. | Ember Day |
| 12 Th. | Lenten Weekday (Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604) |
| 13 F. | Ember Day Stations of the Cross & Benediction, 7:00 PM |
| 14 Sa. | Ember Day |
| 15 Su. | THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT |
| 16 M. | Lenten Weekday |
| 17 Tu. | Lenten Weekday (Patrick, Bishop and Missionary of Ireland, 461) |
| 18 W. | Lenten Weekday (Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, 385) |
| 19 Th. | SAINT JOSEPH |
| 20 F. | Lenten Weekday (Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, 687)  
Stations of the Cross & Benediction, 7:00 PM |
| 21 Sa. | Lenten Weekday (Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1711) |
| 22 Su. | THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT |
| 23 M. | Lenten Weekday (Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop and Missionary of Armenia, c.332) |
| 24 Tu. | Lenten Weekday |
| 25 W. | THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
Procession & Solemn Mass, 6:00 PM (Abstinence dispensed) |
| 26 Th. | Lenten Weekday |
| 27 F. | Lenten Weekday (Charles Henry Brent, Bishop of the Philippines and of Western New York, 1929) |
| 28 Sa. | Lenten Weekday |
| 29 Su. | THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT |
| 30 M. | Lenten Weekday |
| 31 Tu. | Lenten Weekday (John Donne, Priest, 1631) |

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<td>1 W.</td>
<td>Lenten Weekday (Frederick Denison Maurice, Priest, 1872)</td>
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<td>2 Th.</td>
<td>Lenten Weekday (James Lloyd Breck, Priest, 1878)</td>
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| 3 F. | Lenten Weekday (Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253)  
Stations of the Cross & Benediction, 7:00 PM |
| 4 Sa. | Lenten Weekday |
| 5 Su. | THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT |
| 6 M. | Lenten Weekday |
| 7 Tu. | Lenten Weekday |
| 8 W. | Lenten Weekday (William Augustus Muhlenberg, Priest, 1877) |
| 9 Th. | Lenten Weekday (William Law, Priest, 1761) |
| 10 F. | Lenten Weekday Stations of the Cross & Benediction, 7:00 PM |
| 11 Sa. | Lenten Weekday (George Augustus Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand and of Lichfield, 1878) |
| 12 Su. | THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY |
| 13 M. | Monday in Holy Week Masses at 8:00, 12:15, & 6:15 |
| 14 Tu. | Tuesday in Holy Week Masses at 8:00, 12:15, & 6:15 |
| 15 W. | Wednesday in Holy Week Masses at 8:00, 12:15, & 6:15  
SERVICE OF TENEBRAE, 7:00 PM |
| 16 Th. | MAUNDY THURSDAY  
Morning Prayer, 8:30 AM  
Evening Prayer, 5:30 PM  
SOLEMN MASS & PROCESSION TO THE ALTAR OF REPOSE, 6:00 PM (Fr. Wells) |
| 17 F. | GOOD FRIDAY  
Strict Fast & Abstinence  
Morning Prayer, 8:30 AM  
Evening Prayer, 6:00 PM  
Solemn Liturgy and Preaching of the Passion, 12:00 Noon (Fr. Wells)  
Stations of the Cross, 6:15 PM |
| 18 Sa. | HOLY SATURDAY  
Solemn Vigil, 10:00 PM |
| 19 Su. | THE SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION (EASTER SUNDAY)  
First Solemn Mass of Easter & Visitation, 12:00 Midnight  
The Rt. Rev'd J. Stuart Wetmore, Suffragan Bishop of New York, Preaching and Celebrating  
Procession and Solemn Mass, 11:00 AM (Fr. Sloane)  
Solemn Evensong, Procession & Benediction, 4:00 PM |
| 20 M. | MONDAY IN EASTER WEEK |
| 21 Tu. | TUESDAY IN EASTER WEEK |
| 22 W. | WEDNESDAY IN EASTER WEEK |
| 23 Th. | THURSDAY IN EASTER WEEK |
| 24 F. | FRIDAY IN EASTER WEEK  
No Abstinence |
| 25 Sa. | SATURDAY IN EASTER WEEK |
| 26 Su. | THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER |
| 27 M. | SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST (transferred) |
| 28 Tu. | Catherine of Siena, 1380 |
| 29 W. | Catherine of Siena, 1380 |
| 30 Th. | |
PREACHERS IN MARCH & APRIL

Mar. 1    Last Sunday after the Epiphany    Bishop Moore
Mar. 4    Ash Wednesday - 6 PM    Father Wells
Mar. 8    Lent I    Father Sloane
MAR. 15    Lent II    Father Wells
Mar. 22    Lent III    Father Sloane
Mar. 25    Annunciation of Our Lord - 6 PM    Father Philips
Mar. 29    Lent IV    Father Wells
Apr. 5    Lent V    Father Willoughby
Apr. 12    Sunday of the Passion    Father Sloane
Apr. 16    Maundy Thursday - 6 PM    Father Wells
Apr. 17    Good Friday - 12 Noon    Father Wells
Apr. 18    Holy Saturday - 10 PM    The Rt. Rev'd J. Stuart Wetmore
Apr. 19    Easter Day    Father Sloane
Apr. 26    Easter II    Father Wells

ALTAR FLOWER MEMORIALS

Mar. 1 — LAST SUNDAY AFTER EPHANY: Robert & Katherine Greene, Frances Greene Nix; John & Josephine Mastroianni, Josephine McGrath
Mar. 25 — ANNUNCIATION: Emma & Willard Headley
Mar. 29 — LENT IV: Gertrude Schrage & William Falk Schrage; Frank Boatner
Apr. 16 — MAUNDY THURSDAY: Albertine Russell
Apr. 19 — EASTER DAY: Grieg Taber, Priest & Rector
Apr. 26 — EASTER II: Mildred Werner Larsen

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 principle office at 145 West Forty-sixth Street, New York City, [here state the nature or amount of the gift]."
The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin
139 West 46th Street • New York • New York • 10036-8591

The Church is open for prayer and meditation
Monday-Fridays: 7 a.m. - 9 a.m., 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturdays: 11:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sunday: 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

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THE REVEREND EDGAR F. WELLS, Rector
THE REVEREND ANDREW L. SLOANE, Curate
(212) 869-5831

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Office Hours from 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday, except legal holidays
(212) 869-5830

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133 West 46th Street • New York • New York • 10036-8591
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Mr. Ian R. McCart, Treasurer 869-5830
Mr. Quentin Lane, Director of Music 869-5830
Mr. Emil Denworth, Head Usher (718) 263-6385
Mr. George H. Blackshire, Hospitality (718) 858-5797
Mr. Philip D. Parker, Tours 582-0807
Miss Doreen Swan, Bookshop 431-3568
Mr. Ralph M. Morehead, Funeral Director 744-2500

After prayerful consideration of the needs of my church and of God’s gifts to me, I pledge for 1987:

$ —— □ weekly: □ monthly: □ annually.
I □ want envelopes: □ do not want envelopes.

NAME: (Please print)

ADDRESS:
(no.) (street) (apt.)
City ———— State ———— ———— Zip ————
I am a □ Parishioner of St. Mary’s □ Friend of St. Mary’s
Please check □ Within each appropriate box. This pledge may be changed by notifying the Treasurer.

Signature Date

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Please check the address label on the other side of this page. If your address is incorrect, or if you plan to move, please fill in the portion below and return it to us as soon as possible.

Name

New Address (no.) (street) (apt.)
City ———— State ———— ———— Zip ————
Former Address (no.) (street) (apt.)
City ———— State ———— ———— Zip ————

The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin depends for its operation expenses on the sacrificial giving of its clergy, parishioners, and friends. Pledge envelopes may be obtained from the Parish Secretary by phoning (212) 869-5830. We need and are grateful for your support.

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