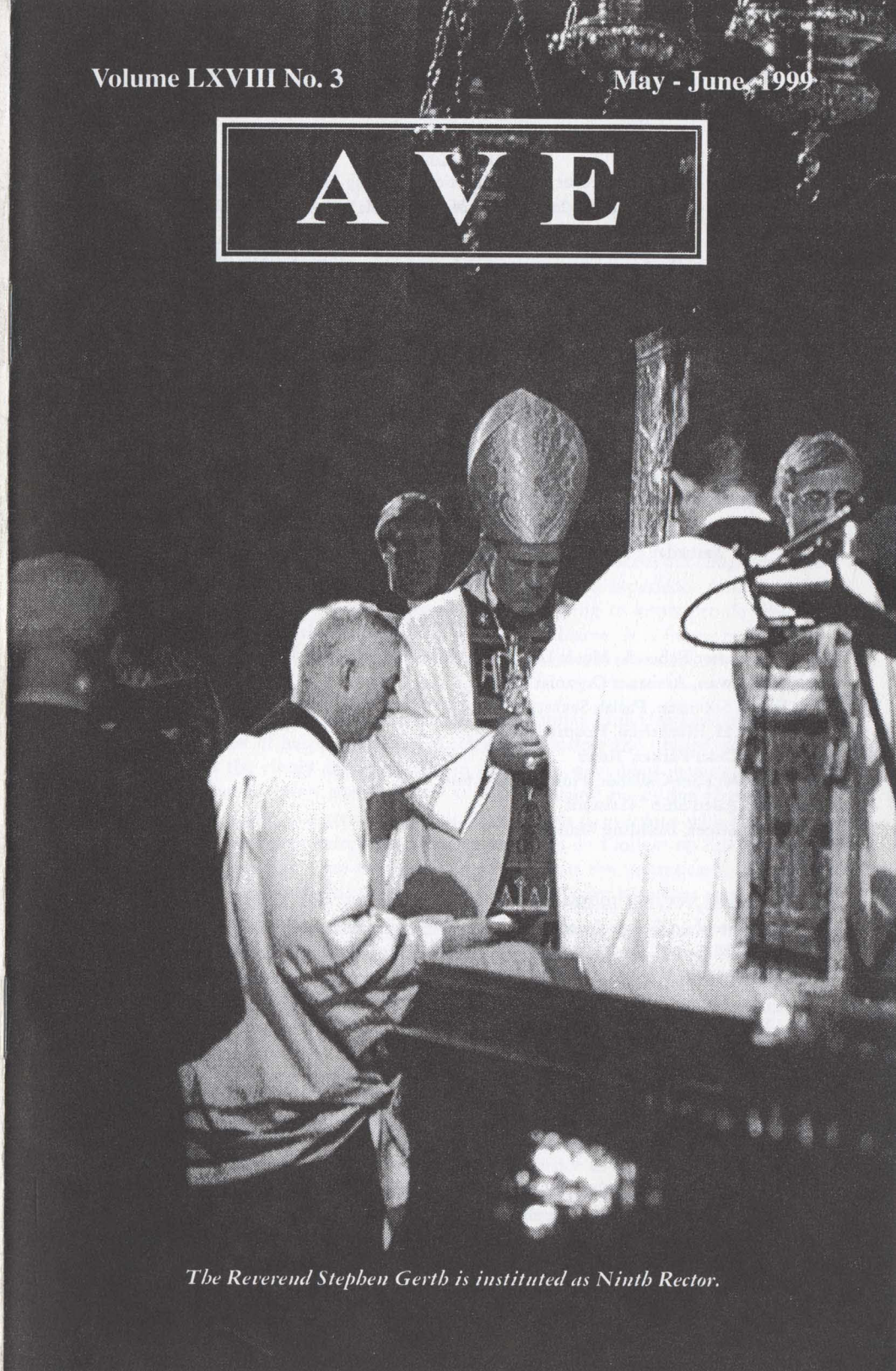


May - June 1999

Volume LXVIII No. 3

A V E



The Reverend Stephen Gerth is instituted as Ninth Rector.

A V E

CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN
145 WEST 46TH STREET
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The Church is open for prayer and meditation: Monday-Friday: 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM,
11:00 AM - 7:00 PM; Saturday: 11:30 AM - 5:30 PM; Sunday: 8:00 AM - 5:30 PM

SUNDAY

Morning Prayer 8:40 AM
Masses 9:00, 10:00 AM, 5:00 PM
Solemn Mass with Sermon 11:00 AM
Evening Prayer 4:45 PM

WEEKDAYS (Monday-Friday)

Morning Prayer 8:30 AM
Noonday Office 12:00 Noon
Daily Mass 12:15, 6:15 PM
Evening Prayer 6:00 PM

SATURDAY

Noonday Office 12:00 Noon
Mass 12:15 PM
Evening Prayer 5:00 PM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 11:30 - 12:00 Noon and 4:00 - 5:00 PM (Parish Clergy)
or by appointment

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A Bulletin of THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN New York City

Vol. LXVIII No. 3

MAY - JUNE, 1999

April 15, 1999

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the many great joys for me in this new position is the opportunity to meet and to know new people. Saint Mary's seems to me very clearly a place where people want to like each other and to help each other. It is a very joyful and happy community.

Another particular joy is to observe how proud this parish community is of its history, its tradition, its ministries, and its survival as "The Church in Times Square." Saint Mary's may well be the oldest institution in the Times Square neighborhood. The parish, including many current members, has seen this area when it was dangerous. The rectory is still armed with barred interior windows and emergency alarm buttons to protect the clergy, protections that were essential only a few short years ago.

Saint Mary's has survived, and it is easy for a new priest to observe our congregation's anxiety as new people come into our church home. I too experience some anxiety when I meet new people. I am not worried about getting to know people who are already here. They have shown me a very gracious welcome. It is fun to be a part of the community as it learns new ways to welcome others and to reach out to others in Jesus' name.

We've already started doing the easy things. The Sunday bulletins have been recast with the intention of helping a non-Church person follow the liturgy more easily. The ushers and the clergy are aggressive in a friendly way about getting people to sign the guest books. (Now there are two, so that our many guests don't have to wait as long to sign.) Letters of greeting go out on Mondays to everyone who has signed the book, and if we have a telephone number, we try to do a follow-up call to people in the metropolitan area. The real challenge, though, is the invitation to ourselves and to others to experience the relationship we have at Saint Mary's as essential.

I'm not sure that I experience my presence in the community as essential in the same way that I experience and understand my relationship, for example, to my own nuclear family. I feel a certain way about my sister and my brother that I never really feel about my sisters and brothers in Christ. The true and eternal relationship is not the blood relationship. With my own brother and sister, the true and eternal relationship is our relationship in Christ. What would Sunday morning be like, what would our lives be like, if we experienced this kind of essentiality in our parish community? I really don't know, but I would like to try to grow into it.

I have wondered aloud from pulpits for a while about what Mass might be like if every person in the room experienced his or her presence as essential, as essential as the Word of God, as essential as the bread and wine. Only as a celebrant with no other priest around (something that rarely happens at Saint Mary's!) do I feel essential, and that's not at all the point. There is work I need to do; perhaps there is work others need to do too.

I will always have a lot of opinions about my sister and brother. But I am long past the stage where I try to tell them what I might think about unimportant details in their lives. I see them very little now. When I am with them I have another agenda. I want to know what they are doing for fun and what they are eating (my own bias). I want to know what they are discovering. I want to let them lead me if possible into new interests. Nature programs us for sibling rivalry. I never seem to convey to them how much I appreciate their own journeys in life.

Perhaps because I am a bachelor and I live a good distance from my family, these issues arise for me in ways that they don't for others. I am feeling guilty even as I write about not having called my brother or sister since they were here for the institution. Yet, the ordinary language of the New Testament about Christian relationships is precisely the language I find I want to use with my sister and brother. What I feel about my sister and brother is what I want to learn to feel about the members of Christ.

Again, what would Sunday morning be like if every person at Mass experienced his or her presence as essential? I mean newcomers and visitors too. I want to find out what this might be like. It might be very like the light that spreads through the congregation at the beginning of the Great Vigil, light that spreads and spreads, light that reveals Christ's gift of us that no one can take away from us.

A happy and glorious Easter to you.

Stephen Gerth

—Stephen Gerth

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVE
are gratefully acknowledged.

Please make checks payable to the
CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Diane Tomlinson, \$25.00; Robert Vanzant, Jr., \$25.00; Herbert E. Smith, \$10.00; Mary Jane A. Kress, \$25.00; Dan B. Franks, \$25.00; M. Hampton Carver, \$50.00; John Conrad Weiser, \$25.00; Thomas & Ethel Dodson, \$30.00; Stuart E. Money, \$15.00; J. Harrison Walker, \$25.00; The Rev'd Canon Ian L. Bockus, \$20.00; Gregory L. Falley, \$25.00; C. Lloyd Tyler, \$25.00; J. Alex McPherson, \$30.00; Betty L. Queener, \$25.00; The Rev'd Victor L. Austin, \$25.00; Martha A. Apgar, \$25.00; The Rev'd Gene H. Paradise, \$30.00; Peter L. Yeager, \$25.00.

The following sermon was preached by the Rev'd John McCausland, Vicar, Church of the Holy Cross, Weare, New Hampshire, on the occasion of the institution of the Rev'd Stephen Gerth as Ninth Rector of the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1999.

Some of you will have been to the town of Nazareth, to the site of the Annunciation.



There are, actually, two Annunciation sites in Nazareth, as there are two sites of almost all biblical events in the Holy Land: the Latin one (that is, the one recognized by the Roman Catholic Church), which is usually maintained by the Franciscans and marked by rather garish artistic style, and the Eastern Orthodox one, which is usually grubby, plastered with icons and hanging lamps, and smelling wonderfully of incense. Mostly we Anglicans haven't staked out any sites in the Holy Land, because the whole idea of sacred events taking place in a setting as chaotic and conflicted as the Middle East seems in rather poor taste to us. Why not the Annunciation at Chartres or Winchester, we say – or, of course, here at St. Mary the Virgin? With proper Gothic arches and stained glass, music by Elgar, Hassler, and Widor, and a master of ceremonies to tell Gabriel when to genuflect? But no, God chose Nazareth.

The Orthodox site for the Annunciation, which is the only one I've visited, has Mary at the village well – which seems appropriate, since drawing water was a woman's chore and the Bible is full of godly things happening to women when they go to draw water at wells. The well in this case is down at the bottom of a very deep stone shaft. You can lower a tin can on a cord and haul up water to drink, which is undoubtedly a holy thing to do, if not an entirely sanitary thing. Around this well the Orthodox have built what I can best describe as a storefront church – nothing like this grand worship space, but a little low-ceilinged room with space for perhaps a dozen or two tourists to come and go, and a tiny choir area and iconostasis. When our group was there, unloaded from our bus for 15 minutes or so, three or four ancient Greek priests were celebrating some liturgy or other. Like most Orthodox liturgies it involved a lot of chanting, a lot of popping in and out of the door to the iconostasis, and a great, great deal of incense – even by St. Mary's standards.

We tourists from the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago (clergy and their spouses or partners) were taking our turns peering down the stone shaft. Some of us had hauled up water and drunk reverently if dangerously out of the tin can. We were waiting for everyone to finish doing this, when suddenly it became apparent that we were about to be incorporated into the liturgy. The thurifer was bearing down upon us, swinging his incense like crazy, the bells on his thurible chains jingling in the Orthodox manner, ready to fumigate us within an inch of our lives.

Beside me was standing Janet Campbell – the Rev. Canon Janet Campbell, Frank Griswold's "canon queen of liturgy" when he was bishop of Chicago. Janet was not in her canon queen of liturgy mode, of course. She was dressed in blue jeans and a sort of poncho top, slung with cameras and knapsacks; she was standing there with her hands in her pockets. And along comes the thurifer, chanting Greek antiphons, censuring each of us in turn – doubles, triples, I don't remember what. Until he comes to Janet. There he stops. He checks the thurible smartly in mid-swing, stops chanting his Greek antiphons, and thrusts his bearded face right into Janet's. Whereupon he fairly shouts, in English: "Hands out of pockets!" (Which I suppose is not a bad maxim – for liturgy or, for that matter, for life.)

I tell this story because it's easy to chuckle at liturgy and at the foibles of human beings generally when we set ourselves to "do church." At least it's easy to chuckle when it's someone else and someplace else – like a Greek storefront shrine in Nazareth. It's hard to maintain that same detached perspective when it's we ourselves and our ways of "doing church." Hard – but essential.

It's essential because of course the Annunciation (and all other such holy moments) did not occur in elegant, beautiful, ordered settings like this one. They did not occur and do not occur where and when we structure them or prepare for them or want them. Rather, God's angels of incarnation always appear under circumstances that "deconstruct" our control, our culture, and our very selves.

Awonderful example is the Old Testament passage tonight. King Ahaz is under grave political stress. It looks as though his royal House of David is going to fall – which is unthinkable to him and to his people, because God's covenant with David was to be eternal. In the midst of this crisis the Lord says to Ahaz, "Ask me for a sign." Ask me, in other words, to break into your little theological certainties with my deconstructing word of truth. But Ahaz, whose very sense of himself and his power and godliness depends on his maintaining these certainties, says politely, "Oh no, Lord, I wouldn't think of offending you by putting you to the test." Whereupon God goes ahead and gives old Ahaz a sign anyway: the House of David *as it has been understood* is going to be overthrown. But God is going to raise it up again in a new and revolutionary way, for "a virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."

Fast-forward then to the Gospel account of the Annunciation and the fulfillment of this sign: another deconstructive move by God, with the angel telling Mary, "Don't be afraid, dear, but you're going to bear God's Son"; and Mary protesting defensively, "But how can this be?" We may call to mind the great van Eyck painting of this scene, everything exquisite and every detail highly symbolic, perfectly ordered liturgically and theologically. Or we can see it taking place at the well in Nazareth on a perfectly ordinary day, or outside the doors of St. Mary's on this very night, or at any random moment where we live or where we work or where we play: a surprising, even shocking intrusion by God, a sign unasked for, deconstructing the very safest parts of our lives.

The point, of course, is that real annunciations, because they belong not to us but to God, are always in the latter category: in messiness, in mistakes, in tragedies, in setbacks, in struggles and controversies and chaos and change. To use the words of the Hebrews reading, real annunciations always occur "in the *body*" – "sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me." That is, real annunciations always occur incarnationally, in real time and real life, in real priests, in real congregations, real parishes, real people.

So here we are, instituting Stephen Gerth as the rector of St. Mary the Virgin. Stephen and I were seminary classmates. Before that, we were fellow High Church conspirators on a vestry in Chicago. Stephen even lived for a few months in our house when he was in graduate school. We've drunk beer together on back roads in northern Wisconsin and skinny-dipped together amidst black flies in a freezing northern Wisconsin lake. When a member of your search committee called me for a

recommendation on Stephen some months ago, I said that Stephen was a good Anglo-Catholic, and could be trusted to know the liturgical moves and talk the talk and walk the walk of this parish's proud tradition.

But I also said that for Stephen, as for me, the years since seminary have been filled with annunciations that have made him more than any simple label can describe. And it is these annunciations that I believe will make him a gift to St. Mary's. One of these is something called the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a splendid and transforming approach to spiritual formation for young children – which has the power also to transform adults and even whole churches. The Catechesis is based upon the presentation, using lovely Montessori-style materials, of biblical and liturgical materials to which children are invited to react in wonder. One of these Catechesis scenes is of the Annunciation, and I have a lovely story about it that seems appropriate to this celebration. Presenting it, the catechist in one of my parishes asked her children – three-to-six-year-olds – what they thought would have happened if Mary had rejected the message of the angel. There was a pause, but only a very brief one, before a child responded, "Why, God would have sent another angel, of course." Which is very profound theology. God is an angel-sending, helplessly announcing God.

Another annunciation for Stephen is the work he did with the late Rabbi Edwin Friedman, on the family dynamics (especially the family dysfunctions) of parishes and their clergy. Those of us who sat at Ed Friedman's feet learned that it is precisely through the conflicts of parish families that we are all called to our own salvation – to replay the dysfunctions of our past and this time get them a little bit more right!

So these are two instances of annunciation experiences that have radically touched, transformed, and deconstructed your new rector and through him will touch and transform and maybe even deconstruct you. I am sure there are others. And I am sure that you, too, here at St. Mary the Virgin, will bring to Stephen annunciations that will touch and transform and even deconstruct him. I don't know what they will be – and you don't either, Stephen! — but they are there, because this match is of God, not just the Church Deployment Office.

Just remember, when they come along, that in all things, the message of the angel is as it has always been: "Do not be afraid!" And our response must be as Mary's: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Father Gerth has started producing a weekly parish newsletter, *The Angelus*. Each issue contains a short essay (usually, but not always, by the Rector), lists of people needing our prayers, and a chronicle of parish doings. For a sample copy, contact the parish office. Subscriptions (for those who are not pledging Members or Friends of the parish) are \$25 a year. For those with Internet access, an electronic version of *The Angelus*, updated weekly, is available on our website at www.stmvmv.org

*The Institution of
The Reverend Stephen Gerth
as Ninth Rector
of the
Church of Saint Mary the Virgin*



Left: Father Gerth joins the procession to Our Lady's shrine. Above: Bishop Grein blesses the people. Below: The congregation offers a solemn Te Deum. (Photos: Alice Manning)



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Solemn Mass & Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sunday, May 2, 11:00 AM
Sermon by the Reverend Allen Shin
Missa brevis, KV 194 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
My beloved spake Patrick Hadley
Regina coeli Gregor Aichinger

ASCENSION DAY

Procession & Solemn Mass
Thursday, May 13, 6:00 PM
Sermon by the Rector
Missa brevis Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
O Rex gloriae Luca Marenzio

Organ Recital, 5:30 PM, *Donald Dumler*

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Procession & Solemn Mass
Sunday, May 23, 11:00 AM
Sermon by the Rector
Missa brevis Jackson Hill
Expectans expectavi Charles Wood

TRINITY SUNDAY

Procession & Solemn Mass
Sunday, May 30, 11:00 AM
Sermon by the Rector
Missa Resurrectionis Gerre Hancock
Judge Eternal Gerre Hancock

THE SOLEMNITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI

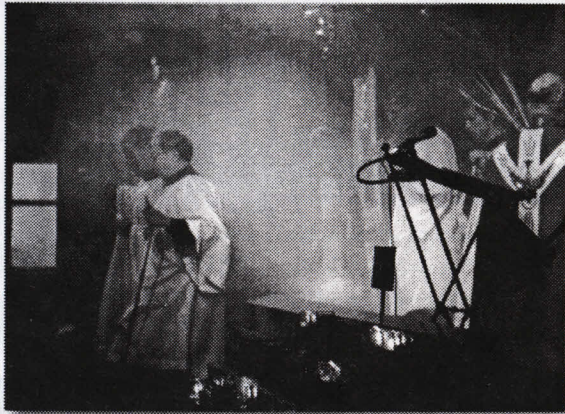
Solemn Mass,
Procession through Times Square,
& Benediction
Sunday, June 6, 11:00 AM
Sermon by the Rector
Missa brevis, KV 258 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
O taste and see Ralph Vaughan Williams
O Salutaris & Tantum ergo Anton Bruckner
Laudate dominum Kyler Brown

Organ Recital, 10:30 AM, *Felix Hell*

Holy Week at Saint Mary's



The Celebrant blesses the palms prior to distribution to the people.



Four smoking thuribles led the Palm Sunday procession out of the church and into Times Square.

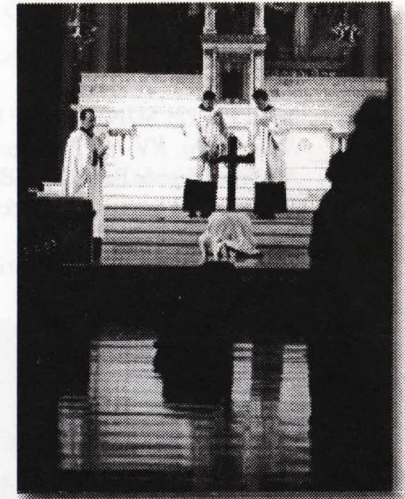


Heads were turning and cameras were clicking as the procession made its way through the streets.

(Photos by Linda Bridges)



For the first time at Saint Mary's, members of the congregation washed one another's feet on Maundy Thursday.



One of the sacred ministers prepares to venerate the cross on Good Friday.



The new fire is lit at the beginning of the Great Vigil of Easter.



Carrying the paschal candle, the deacon leads the procession to the font.

(Photos by Alice Manning)

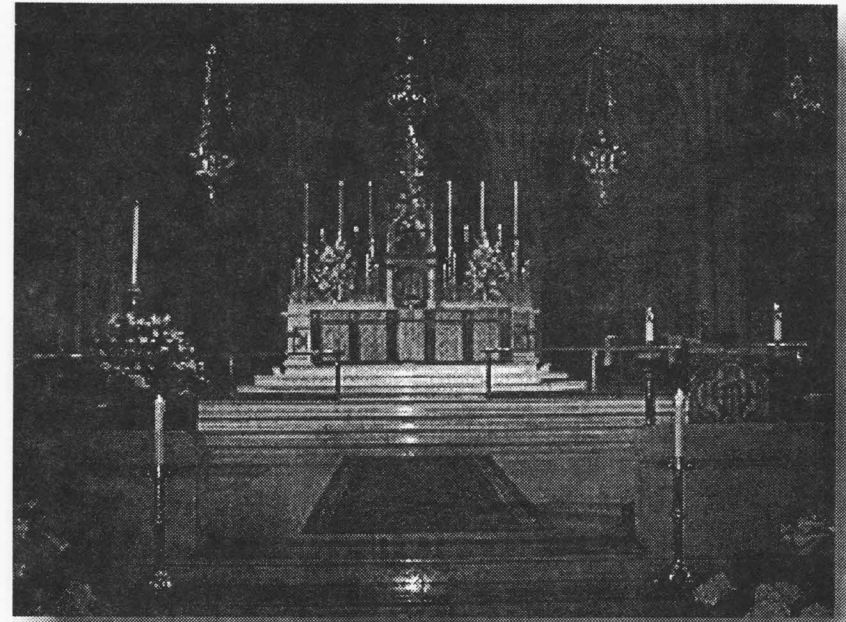
NOTES FROM THE MUSIC OFFICE

Six special concerts were scheduled this season at St. Mary's. The final one takes place on Sunday, May 9 (Mother's Day) at 3:00 PM. The Princeton Singers will perform. This group, made up of volunteer musicians, is nothing short of extraordinary! A recent review described them as "fresh voiced and convincing." The concert is free, and the group's fine recordings will be available for sale.

CALENDAR FOR MAY

- 1 Sa SAINT PHILIP AND SAINT JAMES, APOSTLES
- 2 Su THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Missa brevis, KV 194 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
My beloved spake Patrick Hadley
Regina coeli Gregor Aichinger
- 3 M
- 4 Tu Monnica, Mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387
- 5 W
- 6 Th
- 7 F *No Abstinence*
- 8 Sa Dame Julian of Norwich, c. 1417
- 9 Su THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Missa Pange lingua Josquin des Prez
Sing ye to the Lord Edward C. Bairstow
- 10 M Rogation Day
- 11 Tu Rogation Day
- 12 W Rogation Day
- 13 Th ASCENSION DAY
 Organ Recital: 5:30 PM *Donald Dumler*
 Procession and Solemn Mass: 6:00 PM
Missa brevis Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
O Rex gloriae Luca Marenzio
- 14 F *No Abstinence*
Monthly Requiem
- 15 Sa *Of Our Lady*
- 16 Su THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Missa brevis Lennox Berkeley
O clap your hands Ralph Vaughan Williams
- 17 M
- 18 Tu
- 19 W Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, 988
- 20 Th Alcuin, Deacon, and Abbot of Tours, 804
- 21 F *No Abstinence*
- 22 Sa *Of Our Lady*
- 23 Su THE DAY OF PENTECOST
Missa brevis Jackson Hill
Expectans expectavi Charles Wood
- 24 M Jackson Kemper, First Missionary Bishop in the U.S., 1870
- 25 Tu Bede, the Venerable, Priest, and Monk of Jarrow, 735
- 26 W Ember Day (Augustine, First Archbishop of Canterbury, 605)
- 27 Th The First Book of Common Prayer, 1549
- 28 F *Abstinence*
- 29 Sa Ember Day

- 30 Su TRINITY SUNDAY
Missa Resurrectionis Gerre Hancock
Judge Eternal Gerre Hancock
- 31 M THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
 Memorial Day *One Mass only, at 12:15 PM*



*The high altar on Easter morning.
 (Photo by Sean Cassidy)*

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]:

CALENDAR FOR JUNE

1 Tu	Justin, Martyr at Rome, c. 167	
2 W	The Martyrs of Lyons, 177	
3 Th	Corpus Christi	
4 F		<i>Abstinence</i>
5 Sa	Boniface, Archbishop of Mainz, Missionary to Germany, and Martyr, 754	
6 Su	THE SOLEMNITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI	
	Organ Recital: 10:30 AM <i>Felix Hell</i>	
	<i>Missa brevis</i> , KV 258 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	
	<i>O taste and see</i> Ralph Vaughan Williams	
	<i>O Salutaris & Tantum ergo</i> Anton Bruckner	
	<i>Laudate dominum</i> Kylee Brown	
7 M		
8 Tu	William, Archbishop of York, 1154	
9 W	Columba, Abbot of Iona, 597	
10 Th	Ephrem of Edessa, Syria, Deacon, 373	
11 F	SAINT BARNABAS THE APOSTLE	<i>Abstinence</i>
12 Sa	<i>Of Our Lady</i>	
13 Su	THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
14 M	Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea, 379	
15 Tu	Evelyn Underhill, 1941	
16 W	Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, 1752	
17 Th		
18 F	Bernard Mizeki, Catechist and Martyr in Rhodesia, 1896	<i>Abstinence</i>
19 Sa	<i>Of Our Lady</i>	
20 Su	THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
21 M		
22 Tu	Alban, First Martyr of Britain, c. 304	
23 W	Ethelreda, Queen, Foundress and Abbess of Ely, 679	
24 Th	THE NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST	
25 F	<i>Monthly Requiem</i>	<i>Abstinence</i>
26 Sa	<i>Of Our Lady</i>	
27 Su	THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
28 M	Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, Martyr, c. 202	
29 Tu	SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL, APOSTLES	
30 W	Protomartyrs of Rome, 1st cent.	

PARISH NOTES

I recently received at my office a thick envelope with an unfamiliar return address. It turned out to be from a man named Donald Whitcomb, now living in Missouri, who identified himself as a member of SMV's "Diaspora congregation." The envelope was thick because Mr. Whitcomb thought (quite rightly!) that we might like to have some Mass programs from 1949 that he had found in his attic. His letter came as a timely reminder of the extent of St. Mary's in Diaspora—the large number of you who, for a variety of reasons, can't make St. Mary's your regular parish home but who keep this place in your hearts. And so, as Father Gerth begins his rectorate here, we thought it appropriate to offer, in place of our usual listing of guilds, a series of short articles giving news & notes about lay ministries at St. Mary's.

There are many new faces in the acolytes' guild, and the processions on the Feast of the Annunciation and during Holy Week were fine indeed. A special joy is the return of boat boys and girls, after a period of more than a year when there were no children of the right age in the parish. We now have a full rota of boat bearers (Myriam Choate, Amanda Crommett, Alexander Feldman, John Gillespie, and Natalie and Molly Landis), and the ranks of torch bearers now include several parishioners in the next age groups (Tom Cote, Gerald Cerulli, Sylvie Preston). We are blessed in them.

Meanwhile, some of our Diaspora members who are careful readers of AVE's masthead have wondered about the sizable turnover in the board of trustees. At the end of 1997, two trustees, Tom Kamm and Jon Bryant, intended to rotate off the board, having served for three years; however, they were asked to stay on for the sake of continuity during the search, and they agreed to do so. They duly announced their retirement as soon as Father Gerth had accepted the call. At the same time, two other trustees were joining the Diaspora congregation. Bill Franklin (whose Epiphany 1997 sermon appeared in AVE two issues ago) had been called to be Dean of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, and John Mann found the perfect house for his retirement in his native England. Bill and John both stay in close touch with the parish (indeed, Bill marched in the procession at Father Gerth's Institution). Tom and Jon are in the thick of things here on West 46th Street, Jon as an acolyte, in the bookstore, as a flower arranger, and on the hospitality team, Tom as an usher, a lector, and in the finance office.

Three new trustees joined the board just before Father Gerth arrived. Phil Burgess is an acolyte and the production editor of AVE; he is also webmaster for our website, taking care of design and technical aspects. Howard Christian, who served on the search committee, is a longtime acolyte and the principal flower arranger. David Crommett has served on the stewardship committee and as one of our representatives to the Inter-Parish Council; he also acts as liaison with some of the theater groups that operate in our parish house.

They, and all of us, rejoice in being a part of the Body of Christ at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin as Father Gerth takes his place among us.

—Linda Bridges