

Volume LXVIII No. 4

July - August, 1999

AV E

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CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN
145 WEST 46TH STREET
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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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145 W. 46th St., NY, NY 10036-8591
The Rev'd Stephen Gerth, Rector
(212) 869-5831
Fax (212) 869-7039

PARISH OFFICE

145 W. 46th St., NY, NY 10036-8591
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A Bulletin of THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN New York City

Vol. LXVIII No. 4

JULY - AUGUST, 1999

June 15, 1999

Dear Friends in Christ,

I think it is correct to say Saint Mary's has been since its inception a community that has desired "the liturgical act." The people of this parish have sought, found, and been sustained by the mystery of liturgical worship. I think it is also correct to say that through its history Saint Mary's has been a place where the parish and the wider Church grew in their understanding of the liturgical act.

Three years ago, when the parish leadership was considering the final design for the redecoration of the church, the decision was made to replicate in the ceiling of the nave the design of the underside of the high altar's tabernacle baldachino. The underside of the baldachino was painted dark blue with gold stars. Many people, I understand, were worried about the decision. The results, however, were even more magnificent than anyone had imagined.

The completion and restoration of the great organ in 1995 and the repainting of the church interior in 1997 are obvious signs that Saint Mary's survived a very challenging period in her history, challenging because of the transitions in the neighborhood she has always served and challenging because of the transitions in the common life of the Church of which she has always been an integral part.

There certainly was something prophetic about the design of the original and present church buildings of this community. The core of the present altar was in the old Saint Mary's on West 45th Street. In 1921 the baldachino for the tabernacle was added (along with the throne for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament). The 1997 repainting of the church interior was an enhancement of the original architectural design. I think the decision about how to paint the nave ceiling says something else too.

The Oxford Movement recalled the Anglican Communion to its Catholic heritage. In this country Saint Mary's and a handful of other parishes in the nineteenth century paved the way for the forward movement of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. They proclaimed that the Mass mattered and that it was the center of Christian life and worship. They took away communion tables and erected altars. They reserved the Eucharist and brought back historic ceremony of Catholic belief and practice. They adored Christ's eucharistic presence and knelt before it. The common life of the wider Episcopal Church today has been positively influenced by the life of these parish communities. Perhaps in the same way that the nineteenth-century designs were a prophetic sign for the Anglo-Catholics of that time, the late-twentieth-century designs imply something about the next stage of our pilgrim journey as a parish.

The tabernacle is on the altar at Saint Mary's; but the tabernacle is also the entire church. The chief sign of the presence of God among us is not the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament reposed, the curtain hanging before it, or the lamp that always burns. The chief sign of God's presence is baptized people.

The new design reflects something that I suspect had already happened at Saint Mary's. There is a new sense here of what it is to be Christian people. It also seems prophetic of the place where God is calling this community to go in its understanding of its life and mission. We have given a new and beautiful physical expression to our belief that the People of God are the Body of Christ.

Jesus said to his disciples that the kingdom of God was in them. They didn't believe him, at least not for a long time. I certainly don't act and live as if I believe it all the time. It is too easy for me sometimes to have a reverence for sacred space, things, and music that I don't have for sacred people. Saint Mary's church building has always been a crucial part of the mission and ministry of this parish community, a sign to us and to others of God's love for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Here is a home for the liturgical act.

I believe the liturgical act can happen when a parish community is committed to trying not merely to follow Christ but to be the Body of Christ. In the liturgical act a Christian assembly seeks to recognize Christ's real presence in scripture, in the bread and wine, and in the assembly of the baptized. The liturgical act is also, one might add, always canonical. We don't invent it. We do it. We live it. I believe that you and I should expect God to lead us to a new place in our understanding of his love for us and a new understanding of how we can serve him in our lives.

Yours faithfully,



Stephen Gerth

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVE
are gratefully acknowledged.

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CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Alice A. Dannenbaum, \$10.00; Andrew G.B. Heath, \$25.00; Robert & Eileen Sorensen, \$30.00; Benjamin A. Shaver, \$25.00; The Rt. Rev'd J. W. Montgomery, \$25.00; Robert W. Squire, \$25.00; and Narvel J. Crawford, Jr., \$25.00.

The following sermon was preached at St. Mary's last summer by the Reverend Dr. Peter Groves, who had been our visiting English seminarian for the first three months of 1997.

"Which of you, seeking to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" —Words from St. Luke's gospel, the fourteenth chapter and the twenty-eighth verse. + In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

First let me say what a delight and a privilege it is to stand here this morning. When, just eighteen months ago, I was here as a seminarian, I scarcely thought that I should be preaching here only ten weeks after my ordination to the priesthood. As some of you may remember, I had never been to the United States before, and I had much to pick up and get used to in a short period of time. I quickly realized, however, that St. Mary's is about as typical an Episcopal church as New York is a typical North American city. I also rapidly became accustomed to the fact that some people found me difficult to understand; I had an English accent, which was really quite unreasonable given that we were conversing in English. So if you can't understand me this morning, you'll have to ask your neighbor for a simultaneous translation - I don't do subtitles.

This morning's gospel could not be more appropriate had I chosen it myself. A visiting preacher will often tell you a little about his own parish - particularly if that parish is abroad - but he won't often be able to use his own church as a literal example to illustrate a parable of Jesus. Listen again to Our Lord's words: "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.'"

I come from a place called Leigh-on-Sea, an old fishing village which has become a commuter suburb. (Only forty-five minutes on the train from central London, so if you'd like a holiday, catch me afterwards.) My church, St. Margaret's, was built only in 1931. About thirty years after that, the parish priest, Fr. Bundock - and there's a typical old English name - persuaded a local factory owner to give the church money to build a bell tower, a freestanding campanile, somewhat ambitiously modeled on the one in Siena. But Fr. Bundock's grand design was too grand, and he ran out of money. Meanwhile, the benefactor had fallen on hard times, and there was no more money to give. So the building stopped. The tower had reached almost its full height, but only in shell form. The unclad exterior shows nothing but concrete, and the best efforts of local gardeners have failed to persuade any ivy to grow up it and mask its ugliness. And so, another thirty years on, it still stands. For years the hope was that more money would be found to complete it. Now the cost of finishing and the cost of demolition would be about the same. It remains truly hideous, and has been christened in memory of the priest who planned it - Bundock's Folly.

So St. Margaret's, Leigh-on-Sea, lived out the very opposite of Our Lord's parable - it did not first sit down and count the cost, and as a consequence all who see it can mock us, saying, "They began to build, and were not able to finish." Imagine the restoration work at St. Mary's being left incomplete in one corner, with no paint, no stonework, and no gilding, and you get the idea.

Jesus' words are about discipleship. About following. Acting upon the gospel which he was preaching was no minor matter. It called for radical response, for the sort of dramatic action which befits a time of crisis, of judgment. There was no room for half measures, for a foot in both camps, for clinging to home comforts. But what is our call? We are not in first-century Palestine, but the call of the gospel is no less clear and no less paramount. How do we go about the Christian life which asks us to reckon before we build, to count before we spend? What are the resources we shall draw upon to build our tower, and how can we be sure that they will not run out, that the supply will not dry up before the tower is built?

The answer seems to me to be clear. The resource of the Christian life is Christ himself. Jesus Christ, who comes to us in prayer and in worship, in the sacraments and in the scriptures. This is why we can never place too great a stress on Christian devotion. For those who are called to the Christian life, their first duty is always to seek the Lord in prayer. To look to Christ as the source and the goal of all things. Now of course the Christian life is one of action. A life of charity and generosity, a life of patience and of kindness. But these are virtues which we humans are all too weak at displaying; we are too selfish to give fully to others. It is only the grace of God in Christ which enables us to give to our fullest potential, which lets us truly love with all our hearts. If we do not attend first and always to Jesus, and to the love which he gives us, then how will we know that it is Jesus whom we serve when we love others?

The resources we need are prayer and worship, scripture, the sacraments, the teachings of the Catholic faith. These are the materials for our tower, and the most wonderful thing is that they are all provided for us in unlimited measure. Unlike Fr. Bundock in Leigh-on-Sea, we do not rely on a finite benefactor, on the whims of a merchant or on the financial climate of the day. For our benefactor is God the Holy Spirit, whose gifts are promised to us all if we simply turn to receive them.

The Christian calling is a high calling and a radical one, but it is not beyond us. As you kneel in prayer, as you receive Our Lord in the sacrament, as you read the scriptures, as you make your confessions, as you live out the love of Christ in compassion and generosity - as you do all this, reflect that, brick by brick, God is helping you to build your tower. He has helped you count the cost, he has supplied all your materials, and he will see the tower completed in all its splendor. And rather like this house of prayer now restored, your tower is not designed to take you to heaven. It is designed to show heaven to the world.

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Father Gerth produces 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.stmvirgin.com

Corpus Christi, 1999 —

Taking Our Lord to the streets of Times Square

Times Square sees all manner of crowds. On New Year's Eve, of course, it is filled to overflowing with revelers. A few weeks ago, 200 people took off their clothes and lay down in the street, blocking traffic. (The photographer who had organized the event was arrested before he could take their picture.) There are sometimes snake handlers and race-baiting orators; there are always pimps, prostitutes, and pickpockets.

One might be tempted to ask, Is this any place to bring our Blessed Lord? But to ask the question is to answer it, and St. Mary's did just that on June 6, at the Solemnity of his Body and Blood. Led by our own choir and a brass quarter, the Mystical Body of Christ, his people, sang "Amazing Grace" as they accompanied his Sacramental Body out the 47th Street door, around by Seventh Avenue, and back through the main door on 46th Street.

We wish we could report that waves of bystanders fell to their knees as Jesus passed by—just as our own congregation does inside the church, and as country folk would at an outdoor Corpus Christi procession in Austria, Italy, or France. However, we *can* report that several people who had not started out with us followed us back into St. Mary's and stayed for Benediction.

And one never knows what seeds will be sown. In the period between this century's world wars, a little Jewish boy and his father, walking along a country road in Bavaria, came upon a Corpus Christi procession. The sight of Our Lord in that gleaming monstrance made a powerful impression on the boy. His parents later sent him to England, to save him from Hitler's power. Ulrich Simon's parents perished during the war, but he became a great priest of our church.

At our own procession, one passerby asked the question we were waiting for: "Can you enlighten us as to what this is all about?" We gave him and his friends a thumbnail version of the answer: that Pope Urban IV wanted to find a way, during a period of ferocious Eucharistic controversy, of proclaiming and celebrating Our Lord's Real Presence in the Eucharist. Pope Urban had come from the Diocese of Liège, where this feast had been established at the urgings of a local nun, Juliana of Mont-Cornillon. Pope Urban promulgated the feast of Corpus Christi throughout the Western Church and gave Thomas Aquinas the task of writing the propers for it. Our choir sang Bruckner's settings of some of St. Thomas's words as the sacred ministers prepared for the procession and as they returned from it: "O saving Victim, opening wide the gates of heaven to us below," and "Therefore, we before him bending this great Sacrament revere."

Thus by our words and actions we reaffirm that, through God's grace, he truly abides in us, and we in him.

—Linda Bridges

Photos on following two pages

*Corpus Christi, 1999,
at St. Mary's*



The view from the back of the church

Ushering, in the great ceremonial parishes like Saint Mary's, is not what it used to be. And that's a good thing, judging from John Shelton Reed's accounts in *Glorious Battle*, a history of the Ritualist phase of Anglo-Catholicism in England. At one point during the 1870's, when every non-clergy person from acolyte to chorister to lector was jealous for a bit of the ceremonial limelight in the leading High Church parishes, ushers were not above the fray. In fact, there were "frequent complaints about the uncouthness of those entrusted with the arrangement of the sittings." Imagine being, as one parishioner huffed, "poked about by officious young persons in cassocks . . . arbitrary and uppish youths not quite sufficiently educated perhaps to be in the choir."

Today, thankfully, we're long past all that officious poking. Nor do we affect cassocks (black tie on occasion, but not cassocks). And not one Saint Mary's usher has expressed any aspirations to sit in the choir. Welcoming our parishioners and guests and making them feel at home is responsibility enough. Besides, we have the unique opportunity to see over and over the power of Saint Mary's, as first-time visitors walk in and stop short, thunderstruck at what lies around them. They are constant, wide-eyed reminders of how magnificent our restored interior is.

Father Andrew Mead, rector of the not unimpressive Saint Thomas's, Fifth Avenue, set the pace when he strode into Saint Mary's on the Eve of the Feast of the Dedication, 1997, the night of our restoration's official unveiling. Father Mead literally almost toppled backward admiring the artistic work overhead.

Today, Saint Mary's glorious power continues to impress — and occasionally to confound — a steady stream of visitors. Here are a few remarks from the obviously somewhat stunned (and some of the responses the ushers strive mightily to repress):

"Excuse me. But has this beautiful church always been here?" (Why yes. As a matter of fact it has. Where do you think "now and forever, world without end," came from?)

"How could anyone have covered these beautiful marble walls with that dark paint that used to be here?" [In fact, the painted plaster walls were simply stripped and repainted, this time to create the illusion of marble. —Ed.] (Weren't we fortunate, though, to rediscover such a hidden architectural treasure!)

"Is this a cathedral?" (Well, we don't have a bishop, but why quibble?)

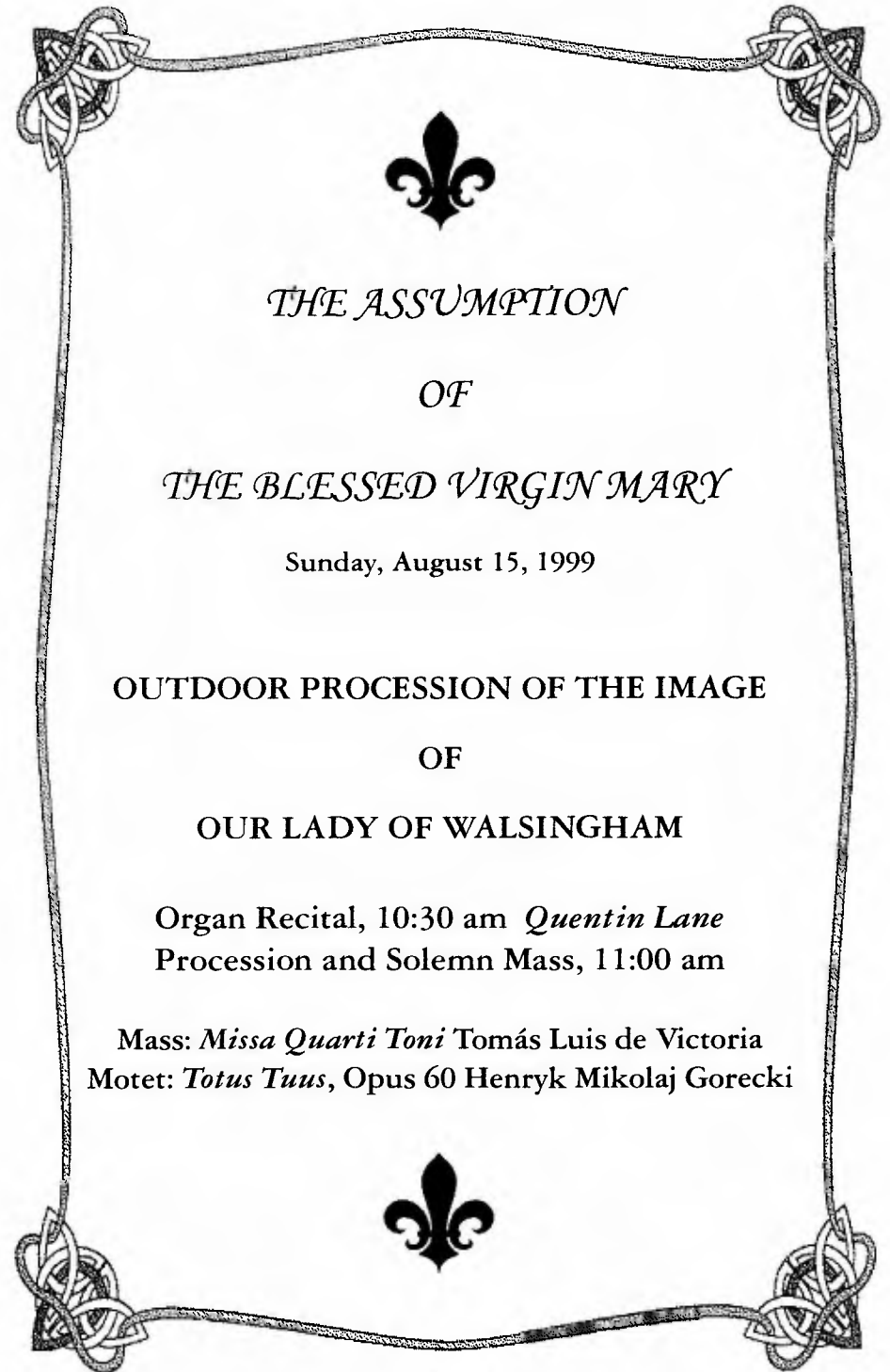
"I've been to Chartres and I've been here. I prefer it here." (And think of the travel time you'll save every Sunday.)

"That was a lovely service. But we're a little confused by the church and its statues and confessionals and all. Exactly what is the difference between Catholic and Protestant?" (Protestants don't have those things.)

After an elaborate, nearly two-hour procession and Mass on some major midweek feast day: "Do you do this all the time?" (Oh no. On Sundays we start earlier and don't have to leave out all the parts we skipped tonight.)

And finally, from a dazzled first-timer receiving his worship booklet and getting his bearings, the question that always tests an usher's composure: "Do you use incense here?"

—John Delves



THE ASSUMPTION

OF

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Sunday, August 15, 1999

OUTDOOR PROCESSION OF THE IMAGE

OF

OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM

Organ Recital, 10:30 am *Quentin Lane*
Procession and Solemn Mass, 11:00 am

Mass: *Missa Quarti Toni* Tomás Luis de Victoria
Motet: *Totus Tuus*, Opus 60 Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki

CALENDAR FOR JULY

1 Th		
2 F		<i>Abstinence</i>
3 Sa	Of our Lady	
4 Su	THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
5 M	Independence Day Holiday (12:15 PM Mass only)	
6 Tu		
7 W		
8 Th	Aquila and Priscilla, Disciples of Paul, 1st Cent.	
9 F	<i>Monthly Requiem</i>	<i>Abstinence</i>
10 Sa	Of our Lady	
11 Su	THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
12 M		
13 Tu		
14 W	Bonaventure, Bishop & Doctor of Albano, 1274	
15 Th	Swithun, Bishop of Winchester, 862	
16 F	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	<i>Abstinence</i>
17 Sa	William White, Bishop of Pennsylvania, 1836	
18 Su	THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
19 M		
20 Tu		
21 W		
22 Th	SAINT MARY MAGDALENE	
23 F		<i>Abstinence</i>
24 Sa	Thomas a Kempis, Priest, 1471	
25 Su	THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
26 M	SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE (transferred from 7/25)	
27 Tu	William Reed Huntington, Priest, 1909	
28 W		
29 Th	Mary and Martha of Bethany	
30 F	William Wilberforce, 1833	<i>Abstinence</i>
31 Sa	Ignatius of Loyola, Priest. Monastic & Founder of the Society of Jesus, 1556	

CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

1 Su	THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
2 M		
3 Tu	Nicodemus, Martyr, 1st Cent.	
4 W	Jean Vianney, Priest, 1859	
5 Th	Oswald, King of Northumbria, Martyr, 642	
6 F	THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST	<i>No Abstinence</i>
7 Sa	John Mason Neale, Priest, 1866	
8 Su	THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
9 M	Benedicta Edith Stein, 1945	
10 Tu	Laurence, Deacon and Martyr at Rome, 258	
11 W	Clare, Abbess at Assisi, 1253	
12 Th	Hippolytus, Priest & Martyr, 235	
13 F	Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down, Conner, and Dromore, 1667	<i>Abstinence</i>
14 Sa	Jonathan Myrick Daniels, Seminarian, 1965	
15 Su	THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 10:30 AM Organ Recital, Quentin Lane 11:00 AM Outdoor Procession of the Image of Our Lady of Walsingham, Solemn Mass Mass: <i>Missa Quarti Toni</i> Tomás Luis de Victoria Motet: <i>Totus Tuus</i> , Opus 60 Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki	
16 M		
17 Tu		
18 W	William Porcher Du Bose, Priest, 1918	
19 Th	<i>Monthly Requiem</i>	
20 F	Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, and Doctor, 1153	<i>Abstinence</i>
21 Sa	Of our Lady	
22 Su	THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
23 M		
24 Tu	SAINT BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE	
25 W	Louis, King of France, 1270	
26 Th		
27 F	Thomas Gallauder, and Henry Winter Syle, 1902, 1890	<i>Abstinence</i>
28 Sa	Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and Doctor, 430	
29 Su	THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	
30 M		
31 Tu	Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, 651	

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]:

GUILDS AT SAINT MARY'S

THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

One of the oldest devotional guilds of the Catholic Revival (of which St. Mary's Ward was one of the first established in the American Church), dedicated to the centrality of the Eucharist and devotion to the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The Guild meets four times a year for the purposes of study, reflection, and adoration.

SAINT MARY'S GUILD

Sacred vessels and vestments are cared for by men and women working together on assigned weekends each month and at other specified times. To volunteer, please contact one of the clergy.

THE CURSILLO COMMUNITY

A group of men and women, clergy and laity, dedicated to the building of Christian community within our parish life. Members meet weekly at various convenient times for the purpose of sharing their experience of the Christian life in small groups, and come together monthly as a large body for common worship, adoration, and the sharing of Christian fellowship. All parishioners are welcome at meetings.

SAINT VINCENT'S GUILD

Acolytes' Guild serving at Sunday and weekday services. Those interested should speak to the clergy. Guild members occasionally serve as Readers as well.

SAINT RAPHAEL'S GUILD

Ushers, serving at Solemn Mass on Sundays and Feast days. Interested persons, men and women, should contact George Handy at (212) 757-1071.

SAINT MARTIN'S GUILD

Tours of the church are conducted after Sunday Solemn Mass, and Guild members are trained for this special ministry. If interested, please phone Philip Dean Parker at (212) 582-0807.

BROTHER LAURENCE GUILD

Hosts and Hostesses in charge of refreshments after Solemn Mass on Sundays and Feast days, and at special parish meals.

SAINT CECILIA'S GUILD

The Guild strives by fundraising to enhance the musical life of the parish throughout the year. Masses with orchestral accompaniment, music during the summer months, and special events are among its priorities. The Music Director works closely with the Guild to share ideas and establish needs and goals. James Dennis is Chairman.

Clergy Notes

By the time you read this, Father William Parker will have left St. Mary's, having served us here for nearly three years, first as Curate, then as Parish Vicar during the interim period, and then as Curate again. Father has been a good pastor to the people of St. Mary's, and he led us through a difficult year in our parish life. Our prayers and love go with him as he moves on to the next stage of his ministry.

His successor as Curate is no stranger to St. Mary's, although he is less well known to those of you who keep in touch with our parish life mainly through AVE: Father Allen Shin, who has been our resident assistant these past three years. The resident assistant's position is a part-time one, and Father's day job has been at the Episcopal Church Center, where he has been Assistant in the office of the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry. These duties have frequently taken him to California, to Georgia, to southwest Florida, and most recently to Hong Kong and his native Korea, where he was one of the organizers of a major international conference of Asian Anglicans. The Presiding Bishop, who as Bishop of Chicago ordained Father Shin to the diaconate three years ago, tells us he is sorry to be losing him from 815 Second Avenue, but delighted to see him becoming a larger presence in our parish life. —Ed.

