The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin

The Church in Times Square
145 West 46th Street

The Church is open for prayer and services:
Sunday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Saturday, 11:00 AM to 5:30 PM

WORSHIP

The Holy Eucharist
On Sunday, Mass is said at 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 5:00 PM. A Solemn Mass is offered at 11:00 AM.
From Monday through Friday, Mass is said at 12:15 PM and 6:20 PM.
On Saturday, Mass is said at 12:15 PM.

The Daily Office
On Sunday, Morning Prayer is said at 8:30 AM and Evening Prayer at 4:45 PM.
From Monday through Friday, Morning Prayer is said at 8:30 AM, the Noonday Office at 12:00 noon, and Evening Prayer at 6:00 PM.
On Saturday, the Noonday Office is said at 12:00 noon and Evening Prayer at 5:00 PM.

The Reconciliation of Penitents
Confessions are heard on Saturdays between 11:30 and 12:00 and between 4:00 and 5:00. Appointments can also be made at other times.

DIRECTORY

The Parish Office is open Monday through Friday, 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.
Telephone 212.869.5830, facsimile 212.869.7039
Worldwide Website: stmvirgin.com

The Parish Clergy and Staff
The Reverend Stephen Gerth, Rector • The Reverend Allen Shin, Curate • The Reverend Thomas Breidenthal, Assistant • Mr. Andrew Adams, Interim Choral Director • Mr. John Beddingfield, Rector's Administrative Assistant • Mrs. Eileen Sorensen, Parish Secretary • Mr. Vince Amodei, Bookkeeper • Mr. Steve Gilger, Building Manager • The Reverend Mary Haddad and Mr. Richard Lawson, Seminarians

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A Bulletin of

The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin
New York City

Vol. LXIX No. 4

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
May 31, 2000
Dear Friends in Christ,

M ost readers of this bulletin know that in addition to the sanctuary lamp that burns before the tabernacle at Saint Mary's, across the chancel there are seven hanging lamps with red glass globes. During the restoration of the interior of the church these lamps were refurbished as a gift from the rector and parish of Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York. The lamps really are splendid and contributed to a moment of personal joy for me during the Great Vigil of Easter this year.

The rector's stall is just under these lamps. During the "great noise" before the singing of Gloria in excelsis I suddenly found Robert Eikel, an altar server, thrusting red globes into my hands for me to assist in the relighting of the lamps. There was something about pulling down the lamps (they are on very long chains with counterweights), putting the globes in, lighting a candle for each globe, and then helping to push the lamp back up into place that gave me a feeling of exuberance. The lighting of the candles and the sound and sight of the lamp and chains moving gave another physical expression to the joy that had fallen on the parish community gathered for Easter.

There was Easter joy even before the Vigil began. The Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church was going to be with us. Saint Mary's is always excited when bishops come. We like them and I am sure they like us too. Part of the ministry of this congregation has always been to be a place where the great days of the Christian year are celebrated in the fullest possible way. It begins with a faithful community, but it also requires a magnificent building, extraordinary music, and loads of workers, from altar servers to ushers to ministers of hospitality. The stational Mass of a bishop on a great feast day is a particular sign of the Body of Christ. It was simply an extraordinary event for the Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold to be here as celebrant and preacher at the Great Vigil, simply extraordinary and extraordinarily wonderful in every way.

I continue to think and to pray about how Saint Mary's can grow more deeply into a ministry of calling men and women to new life in Christ. Certainly it was a great honor for us to have Bishop Griswold with us. It was an honor to have a large congregation of members, friends, and visitors. All the elements that make possible the liturgical act were here in the very best way. Yet believe me when I tell you that the center of all the rites and what gives meaning to all the rites was unambiguously the celebration of Holy Baptism. This is the great catholic tradition. This is our catholic heritage. This is the Real Presence of the Lord Jesus dying and rising still in those he is calling to faith through his Body,
the Church. Saint Mary’s is a place where people who do not know the Lord can come to faith and to participation in a full expression of Christian faith through the Church.

Let me also take the time to say something about the local parish community and the members who week by week enable the doors of this parish to be open. The local parish community really isn’t very large, about 150 members actually on the rolls as communicants in good standing. There is no shortage of joy and commitment. In every period of a congregation’s life and history there are new opportunities opening for the work of the Lord. Of course our building and the liturgy are very attractive, but more attractive is the character of our community’s Christian commitment. This is a place of faith, and the fruits of that faith can be seen in the faces and heard in the voices of the people who are here.

The Easter Season extends into June this year. Today is the Visitation of Our Lady. Tomorrow, Ascension Day, our Bishop Coadjutor, the Right Reverend Mark S. Sisk, will be here for the first time as celebrant and preacher for Solemn Mass. Corpus Christi will be celebrated on Sunday, June 25. And, yes, weather permitting, we will again be processing at the end of Mass through Times Square and will return to the church for Eucharistic Benediction. We will be more than ready for ordinary time when it arrives.

Finally and most importantly, I want you to know that on the Solemnity of the Assumption, Tuesday, August 15, the Reverend Canon Edgar F. Wells, rector emeritus, will preside at the Procession & Solemn Mass at 6:00 PM. Father was ordained to the priesthood forty years ago on August 9, 1960. I told the Board of Trustees I would like for us to do something special to mark this anniversary, and they suggested that he be invited for this feast. We are all delighted and honored that he will be here and so very thankful for his ministry in this place. In addition, an old friend of Saint Mary’s and of Father Wells, the Venerable Peter Hannen, Archdeacon of the Diocese of Montreal, will be the preacher for the feast. The Assumption is an occasion when local friends of Saint Mary’s and members of the wider parish community can be here. I hope that many of you will be able to be with us this year.

The parish clergy join me in thanking you for the privilege of being your priests. One of us is always on duty here, and we always welcome the opportunity to know how we may be helpful to you.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Careth

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Not Just Another Pretty Vase
Howard Christian and His Remarkable Flower Ministry

When the Reverend Victor Stock—rector of Saint Mary-Le-Bow in London and guest preacher at Saint Mary the Virgin on October 7, 1995—ascended into the pulpit, he looked around, smiled, and obviously did some on-the-spot recalculating of his sermon’s opening. This was, after all, a Solemn Evensong and Benediction not only in honor of the Feast of Dedication, but including the blessing of our newly completed organ as well. And all the stops, as they say, were out.

Surveying a grand floral display that probably seemed to him only slightly more modest than his own city’s Chelsea Flower Show, Fr. Stock first took it all in: the graceful masses of blossoms on the altar; the ornamental urns at the choir steps, right out of an Edward Gorey illustration and the size of oil drums, yet still barely able to contain those arching stems of greenery; the elegant arrangements at the shrines. He looked around, collected himself, and then began to speak in the precise English manner an ordained David Niven might have used. “Do you know what gives me such great hope for the future spirit of Saint Mary’s?” He beamed, pausing for effect. “Why, it’s the size of your flower arrangements!”

Now we were all confused—exactly Fr. Stock’s objective. So on he went. “You see, in parishes that are hopelessly bogged down in endless arguments over liturgical language, or whether women have or don’t have a place at the altar, or whether gay people should or should not be ordained, you always notice the flowers are severe, pinched, unimaginative affairs, like those stingy little mounds you get from FTD. But look!” he exclaimed, with an expansive arm gesture that took in displays nearly as high as the pulpit itself. “Look at what you have here!”

Look at what we have here indeed, Fr. Stock. And though we join him in hoping that our flowers signal a generous spirit, they don’t do it by themselves. They do it because Howard Christian—parishioner, altar server, hospitality-
As it turned out, they were. And the fact that they were was so obvious that it took then-rector Father Edgar Wells less than 24 hours to conclude that this was a parishioner who had a gift Saint Mary's needed. Typically determined, Father Wells informed Howard of his decision. The appointment was made.

Well made, too. For although the most obvious job requirement is the ability to make flower groupings beautiful—as opposed to just dumping a bunch of stems into a vase—it also takes a pretty good grounding in horticulture. “How tight do you want them, Howard?” asks the salesman during our flower-district safari for Easter apple blossoms. The reply, decisive and specific, clearly comes from someone who knows how apple blossoms operate: “I'll need some color by Saturday night, and showy by Sunday morning.” There is just enough stock left that fits those bloom-time requirements. As we move along, similar standards must be met by the weeping willows, forsythia, giant coco palms, and giant fans destined for our Garden of Gethsemane, surrounding the Altar of Repose. And this is just one market morning. There will be two or three more before all the Easter flowers have been found.

Many hours of hard, and highly creative, work later, the chapel is ready to receive the Blessed Sacrament for the all-night vigil.

Marian feast days are celebrated with nothing but white; Pentecost is ushered in with anthuriums. But for the most part, what you see on the Sunday altar is whatever proved the highest quality at the lowest price in last Friday's market. Howard breezily calls “designing as you go along.” After a while, he claims, the arrangements take mental shape during the shopping trip in a process that carry through space and, used in lavish enough quantities, don’t come off—vanish from sight. It’s the reds, whites, pinks, and other “hot” colors that do. But for the most part, what you see on the Sunday altar is what? Flowers by Saint Mary’s needed. Typically determined, Howard is a focused and driven design team of one. Fortunately, the supply for most “ordinary” Sundays can be assembled in one trip. As soon as it is, typically, it’s that cab back to Saint Mary’s, where everything is hauled into the kitchen and each stem is recut (“On an angle, please; they drink more that way”); lower leaves are stripped away so they don’t deprive the blossoms of water; the tops of any gladioli are pinched off (“Those never open, and they just take water away from the buds that do”); and the whole collection is then plunged into a solution of water and FloraLife to make the blooms well fed, well hydrated, and as durable as possible by the time Saturday night rolls around. For Saturday night is when Howard goes to work creating... what? Flowers may be the only part of our worship that isn’t covered by any kind of rule. There is no floral Fortescue, no Book of Occasional Bouquets. Oh, there are the parish traditions, of course: calla lilies absolutely own Maundy Thursday; lilies absolute, of course: calla lilies absolutely own Maundy Thursday;
"Rare beauty" is clearly a relative term. In fact, Howard might be accused of letting modesty prevent him from seeing the forest for the trees. For though the blooms he uses may not be exotic and in short supply, the grace and elegance and dignity of his creations are rare enough in their own right. They are qualities that simply go beyond price tags or availability.

And in a sense, spreading grace and elegance and dignity is the only purpose of those creations. Pressed for his own words to describe the piece of the worship puzzle his carnations and gladioli and lilies represent, Howard essentially lets the flowers speak for themselves. Our music and vestments may change to see that something new liturgically was always happening at Saint Mary's during the first three rectorates, those of Father Brown, Father Christian, and Father Barry. I believe it is correct to say that in these years the common life of Saint Mary's reflected a serious effort to live out the very best thinking about what Catholic Christian parish life should be. Saint Mary's was not a place to come if you were not interested in an evolving pattern of worship. It was changing all the time as Saint Mary's quickly became one of the leading parishes of the Anglo-Catholic movement in the American Church.

Father Barry seems to have had a large hand in arranging for the Trustees to elect a monastic, the Reverend Granville Mercer Williams of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (the "Cowley Fathers"), to succeed Father Delany. Father Williams and some of his brother priests of the S.S.J.E. would staff the parish until 1939, when Father Williams was elected superior of the order. The next rector would be the Reverend Grieg Taber, rector of All Saints' Church, Ashmont, Massachusetts.

I think the character of the parish really did change with the onset of the Great Depression and a decision by many Anglo-Catholics not to follow where the next generation of scholars was leading. For the first time one could say that the liturgical life of Saint Mary's was no longer on the leading edge of the best thinking about Catholic liturgy. By the 1930s, both among Roman Catholics and among Anglicans, the idea of a Solemn High Mass at which only the celebrant himself received Holy Communion no longer represented the best thinking about the liturgy. It is remarkable that this practice changed only when the Reverend Donald Garfield made it a condition of his accepting

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**Some Preliminary Observations On the History of Saint Mary's**

During Lent I spent some time looking through old service bulletins, which have been kept in bound volumes back to the first rectorate of this parish. I was looking for information on the evolution of Holy Week at Saint Mary's. I didn't do a very careful survey, but with the reading I have done about the parish and my own experience of being here, I came away with the strong impression that the first six decades of the parish's history were very different from the next few decades.

Saint Mary's started as a great religious experiment. In 1868 it was a very new thing to establish an Episcopal parish on, to use the Founder's words, "a thoroughly Catholic basis." One doesn't have to look far in the bulletins to see that something new liturgically was always happening at Saint Mary's. Selden Peabody Delany, became the next rector in January 1929. The great lay leader and benefactor of Saint Mary's, Haley Fiske, died in March 1929. In June 1930 Father Delany resigned the ministry of the Episcopal Church and entered the Roman Catholic Church.

Father Barry retired in December 1928, and his senior curate, the Reverend Selden Peabody Delany, became the next rector in January 1929. The great lay leader and benefactor of Saint Mary's, Haley Fiske, died in March 1929. In June 1930 Father Delany resigned the ministry of the Episcopal Church and entered the Roman Catholic Church.

I think the character of the parish really did change with the onset of the Great Depression and a decision by many Anglo-Catholics not to follow where the next generation of scholars was leading. For the first time one could say that the liturgical life of Saint Mary's was no longer on the leading edge of the best thinking about Catholic liturgy. By the 1930s, both among Roman Catholics and among Anglicans, the idea of a Solemn High Mass at which only the celebrant himself received Holy Communion no longer represented the best thinking about the liturgy. It is remarkable that this practice changed only when the Reverend Donald Garfield made it a condition of his accepting
the call to become the seventh rector in 1964. As far as I can tell, Father Williams followed the rules of the Roman Rite wherever possible, even when academic thinking about liturgy and pastoral practice among many Anglicans and some brave Roman Catholic scholars and parish priests had moved on.

More telling was the parish's decision in the 1950s not to embrace the reforms of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum that were required in the Roman Church and spreading among Anglicans. Saint Mary's celebrated the Easter Vigil on Saturday morning from the late 1920s until the arrival of Father Garfield, even though it had celebrated an evening rite beginning in 1918. What had happened to Saint Mary's? What had changed?

One thing that changed was available funds. Up until the beginning of the Depression an orchestra performed along with the organ and paid choir at every Solemn Mass from October through June. The Depression put an end to this. Deferred maintenance—the buildings balancing the budget—became normative at Saint Mary's until the rectorate of my predecessor, the Reverend Canon Edgar F. Wells.

The decision of Father Delany to resign the rectorate and renounce the ministry of the Church was very difficult for this community. Even more difficult was the changing of the Times Square neighborhood following World War II. Saint Mary's was founded to be a neighborhood church in addition to whatever missionary and witness it had to the wider Church. The Mission House was for ministry to women and children; the Parish House housed the curates and a ministry for men and boys. I have a sense that starting in 1930 the emotional heart of the parish was no longer set on what was the latest and best thinking about worship and Catholic parish life—the genesis of the idea of Saint Mary's—but understandably on survival.

One doesn't know how the history of Saint Mary's might have been written if the parish had not dug in its heels. Would Saint Mary's have continued to lead in the 1940s and 1950s the way it had from 1868 until the late 1920s? Certainly Father Taber was renowned as a priest, preacher, and confessor. The parish might not have survived the 1960s and 1970s had it not been for the teaching Father did that meant Saint Mary's was remembered in so many wills.

There's possibly another factor here too. It may have been the case that once the parish began to focus on survival the newcomers it attracted were no longer people who were drawn in by the best current thinking about worship and Christian life but people who did not want their church experience to change. What would Saint Mary's be like today if the liturgical life had not evolved from where Father Garfield found it in 1964? Would the parish still be here?

I have written in the weekly newsletter that I wonder what the best thinking for Saint Mary's is today, but I do think you and I are inheritors of the tradition which asks that question. I don't know what it will be like for us to minister in a business district without an immediate residential neighborhood. But I hope we will be the kind of stewards of the parish who are as unafraid of the future as the first members of Saint Mary's. There was a confidence to Anglo-Catholicism then, a confidence that was still around when I was a seminarian. I believe our best future lies in being open to the very best thinking about what it means for this community to be the Body of Christ and to act on that thinking. I believe it's fair to say that that was the Father Founder's work. It's our parish's greatest heritage. It's in our building and our bones.

—Stephen Gerth

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVE
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CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Carol Pepper, $25.00; Richard Nutt, $75.00; Gene Paradise, $10.00; William Haincourt, $20.00; George Gosden, $25.00; Peter Yeager, $25.00; Roland Blackburn, $25.00; George Godsen, $25.00; Brother Joseph P. Reilly, FSC, $100.00; John Douglas Ruff, $25.00; Howard L. Byrne, $35.00; Nancy Lynn Hagoort, $50.00; the Rev’d Canon John H. B. Rye, $25.00; and Narvel J. Crawford Jr., $25.00.

Note: AVE is again running a deficit. If you have not contributed this year, and if you wish to continue receiving AVE, please send your contribution now.

Reminder to our Canadian friends: The only forms of deposits our bank will accept from you are (1) an international money order denominated in U.S. dollars; or (2) a check in U.S. dollars written on a U.S. branch of a Canadian bank.
For the second time in three years, Saint Mary's was blessed with the presence of the Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, the Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold, to celebrate the Great Vigil of Easter. The photos on these pages can only in a small way capture the spirit of the occasion.

The candidates are presented for baptism, confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation.
THE CALENDAR FOR JULY 2000

1 Sa Monthly Requiem
2 Su The Third Sunday after Pentecost
3 M Weekday
4 Tu Independence Day
   Federal holiday; one Mass only, at 12:15 PM
5 W Weekday
6 Th Weekday
7 F Weekday
8 Sa Of Our Lady

9 Su The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
10 M Weekday
11 Tu Benedict of Nursia, abbot
12 W Weekday
13 Th Weekday
14 F Weekday
15 Sa Of Our Lady

16 Su The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
17 M William White, bishop
18 Tu Weekday
19 W Weekday
20 Th Weekday
21 F Weekday
22 Sa Saint Mary Magdalene

23 Su The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
24 M Thomas à Kempis, priest
   Eve of Saint James’s Day 6:20 PM
25 Tu Saint James the Apostle
26 W The Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary
27 Th William Reed Huntington, priest
28 F Weekday
29 Sa Mary and Martha of Bethany
30 Su The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
31 M Ignatius of Loyola, priest

Friday Abstinence: The ordinary Fridays of the year are observed by special acts of discipline and self-denial in commemoration of the crucifixion of the Lord.

Federal Holiday Schedule: On ordinary federal holidays the parish office is closed and the only public service is the 12:15 PM Mass.

THE CALENDAR FOR AUGUST 2000

1 Tu Joseph of Arimathea
2 W Weekday
3 Th Weekday
4 F Jean Marie Vianney, priest
5 Sa Monthly Requiem

6 Su The Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ
7 M John Mason Neale, priest
8 Tu Dominic, priest and friar
9 W Weekday
10 Th Laurence, deacon and martyr
11 F Clare, abbess
12 Sa Of Our Lady

13 Su The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
14 M Jonathan Myrick Daniels, seminarian
15 Tu The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
   Procession Through Times Square & Solemn Mass 6:00 PM
   The Reverend Canon Edgar F. Wells, celebrant
   The Venerable Peter Hannen, Archdeacon of Montreal, preacher
16 W Weekday
17 Th Weekday
18 F William Porcher DuBose, priest
19 Sa Of Our Lady

20 Su The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
21 M Weekday
22 Tu Weekday
23 W Weekday
   Eve of Saint Bartholomew’s Day 6:20 PM
24 Th Saint Bartholomew the Apostle
25 F Louis, king
26 Sa Of Our Lady

27 Su The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
28 M Augustine of Hippo, bishop
29 Tu The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist
30 W Weekday
31 Th Aidan, bishop