

Volume LXXII, Number 1

January-February AD 2003

AVE

*A Bulletin of the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin
in the City of New York*



AVE

CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN
145 WEST 46TH STREET
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THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN
145 West Forty-Sixth Street, New York City

The church is open Sunday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and Saturday from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

WORSHIP

The Holy Eucharist

On Sunday, Mass is said at 9:00 AM; Sung Mass is offered at 10:00 AM and Solemn Mass at 11:00 AM. 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, Sung Matins are offered at 8:30 AM, and Solemn Evensong and Benediction at 5:00 PM. 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 from 11:30 AM to 12:00 noon and from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, and by appointment at other times.

DIRECTORY

The parish office is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Telephone: 212-869-5830 Facsimile: 212-869-7039

Worldwide Website: www.stmvirgin.org E-mail: info@stmvirgin.org

The Parish Clergy

The Reverend Stephen Gerth, *rector*,

The Reverend Matthew Weiler, *curate*, The Reverend James Ross Smith, *assistant*,

The Reverend Rosemari G. Sullivan, *assisting priest*,

The Reverend Canon Edgar F. Wells, *rector emeritus*.

The Parish Staff

Mr. Vince Amodei, *bookkeeper*, Mr. John Beddingfield, *rector's administrative assistant*,

Mr. Mervin Garraway, *building superintendent*,

Mr. Robert McCormick, *organist & music director*, Mr. Robert McDermitt, *assistant organist*,

Mr. Robert Rhodes & Mr. Noah Evans, *seminarians*.

The Board of Trustees

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A Bulletin of
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New York City

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December 4, 2002

Dear Friends in Christ,

In his autobiography, *The Seven-Storey Mountain*, Thomas Merton wrote of the serendipity of his entering a monastic community at the beginning of Advent. It's the season the church year begins. The earth is light for fewer hours each day. It is cold in our part of the country. When we gather in church, there is a certain austerity in the liturgy. The simple plainsong of Advent seems beautiful to me; it is unlike the more ascetic plainsong of Lent. The rhythmic hymns are simply tremendous. The warmth and light we experience in the liturgy is preparation for Christmas, and the Christmas season will carry us into the civil new year.

This fall, Jesus' words in Matthew about the kingdom of heaven have come to have specific meaning for me about this parish community: "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (13:52). It seems as if every week we are doing something wonderful that is wonderful because it is old and new, eternal yet specific to this time and place.

It is so tempting to write about the patronal feast, celebrated, in this year of grace, on Monday, December 9, and about Christmastide, and the completion of our new Advent vestment set. But this issue of AVE is dedicated to the first two months of the new year.

We begin, of course, at the altar. January 1 is the Feast of the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Solemn Mass of the day is at 11:00 AM. This is always a special Mass, but particularly so this year, when one of our seminarians from the General Theological Seminary, Robert Rhodes, will serve as deacon of the Mass for the first time. His ordination to the diaconate will take place December 27 at Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, Missouri. Rob will be with us for the rest of his senior year. I am delighted.

Then comes the Epiphany, on Monday, January 6. Procession & Solemn Mass will be at 6:00 PM. At the end of this Mass the traditional "Proclamation of the Date of Easter" is sung. This text, which announces to the assembly the major feasts and fasts of the year, dates from a time when calendars were not commonly available. It is sung to the



Photo by Alice V. Manning

tune of the Exsultet. It gives a special joy to the assembly and reminds us of the coming celebration of Easter.

The weekend of January 11 we will be observing the 70th anniversary of our organ, Aeolian-Skinner Opus 891-A. On Friday evening, January 10, at 7:30 PM, there will be a reception and dinner at the Yale Club to raise money for our organ endowment. (Tickets are \$200 per person; seating is limited. Please call the parish office for details or to make a reservation.) On Saturday, January 11, at 6:00 PM, McNeil Robinson, former music director of Saint Mary's, will play the anniversary recital. (Tickets are \$25 and are available at 212-869-5830, ext. 25.) It should be a memorable evening of great music on one of the truly great organs of North America.

The Eve of Our Lord's Nativity, 2001

Sunday, January 12, is the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. At 11:00 AM, in addition to the ordinary richness of Procession & Solemn Mass, the music will be *Messe Solennelle* by Louis Vierne (1870–1937) and *Tantum ergo* by Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937). On Sunday at 4:40 PM, before Solemn Evensong & Benediction, there will be another recital, by Mr. Robert Ridgell, organist of the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral. I hope very much that many friends of Saint Mary's will be able to be here for one or all of these events and liturgies.

This year the Feast of the Presentation, February 2, falls on Sunday. The Blessing of Candles, Procession & Solemn Mass will be at 11:00 AM. Monday, February 3, is the Feast of Saint Blase. The blessing of throats will be given at both Masses of the day.

LENT DOES NOT begin until March this year. However, there are several things on our parish calendar that many will want to know about in advance. Stations of the Cross will be held at Saint Mary's every Friday night this Lent, and our Bishop, the Right Reverend Mark S. Sisk, will be with us as officiant for the first of these services, on Friday, March 7, at 7:00 PM. On Tuesday, March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, the celebrant will be the Right Reverend C. Christopher Epting, Ecumenical Officer of the Episcopal Church. The preacher will be the Right Reverend Francis C. Gray, Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. The Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, the Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold, will be with

us to celebrate and preach at the principal liturgies of the Easter Triduum, on Maundy Thursday, April 17, Good Friday, April 18, and Easter Eve, April 19.

All of this is made possible by the prayers and gifts of people throughout the world who are committed to the witness and life of this parish, in this place, Times Square. I am often asked what are the special ministries of our parish community. I can recall being a little unsure of myself when I first came to Saint Mary's, and I would respond (with a big smile!), "Our doors are open every day of the year, and we do Masses and Offices every day of the year. We do church."

Again, we don't do church alone. This witness has been here for one hundred thirty-four years because people have been committed to it. It is something rare and precious, urban liturgical Christianity. On great days and in the quiet days of Advent, open doors and people at prayer at the altar or privately at a shrine are a witness to the world of God's love for us and for all people.

Finally, on a personal note, on February 1, 2003, I will begin my fifth year of service to this community as rector. Daily for me this work is a gift of grace and joy for which my words of thanks to God and to you will always be completely inadequate.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Ceuth

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 46th Street, New York City, [here state the nature or amount of the gift].

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVE

received with thanksgiving

Please make checks payable to the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin.

John Smihal, \$25; Charles Nelson, \$25; Roy Andrew Miller, \$50; Dean Argall, \$20; George Briggs, \$60; and Richard Pietro, \$25.

Reminder to our Canadian friends: Our bank will accept only international bank drafts denominated in U.S. dollars, or checks drawn in U.S. dollars on an American bank or the American branch of a Canadian bank.

Note to all our friends: AVE depends on your contributions. If you have not renewed your subscription in the past year, please remember to do so as soon as possible.

Forever on the Move

The Reverend Canon John G. B. Andrew, Rector Emeritus of Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, preached the following sermon at Saint Mary's at Solemn Evensong & Benediction on September 29, 2002, the Feast of Saint Michael & All Angels.

I WELCOME the chance to be with you for worship in this extraordinary place. It is especially dear to me because one of the people I have loved the most in my life, Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, my ordainer, my father, my mentor, my corrector, and my saint of a friend, found his vocation to the priesthood here, and would often tell me so. He came in, a politician in waiting. He went out, a priest in desire and hope. Something happened to him in this place.

I now think I know what it was. An angel flew past him and brushed his ear with a wing, to get his attention. He looked up, out of himself. +Michael was hard to get out of himself. I know. I spent 10 years following him as his chaplain. His interior life had a lot of the self in it. But an angel's wing could tip his ear and he would look up and out, and listen afresh, and worship, as he heard with clarity that still small voice which few of us have ever been fortunate enough to catch. That voice which called Matthew from his income-tax table called +Michael to minister at his own table. And he never ceased to thank God for it. To join in worship with you, then, on this lovely Feast, is a privilege for me, and as the son that +Michael never had—as he and Joan, his wife, would tell their friends (but never told me)—I can sense his presence and feel his amusement that I of all people should be honored with this pulpit.

A surprising number of American tourists find their way to Bath. It has become one of the most sought-after places to visit in Britain. It is a magical little 18th-century city. I should know. I had a place there with a garden I delighted in.

It has an Abbey church, a beauty of a place with a superb fan-vaulted ceiling and a fine set of bells in its central tower. Its west wall is remarkable for having two ladders carved in the stone from floor to roof, on either side of its great doors. Climbing up and down these ladders are angels on their way to and from Heaven. One angel has my especial favor and my sympathy: looking down over his/her shoulder as though fearful of the drop. I know exactly what that feeling is like; I have vertigo, too.

This late medieval carving is an amusing and effective depiction of Jacob's dream: *angels ascending and descending . . .*

The activity of the unseen and invisible is intense, if we believe what our Lord says to Nathaniel. Listen to his parting sentence, recorded by John in his Gospel: "In truth, in very truth I tell you all, you shall see heaven wide open, and God's angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" [John 1:51]. The constant, unceasing, eternal movement between Heaven and the things of the earth—it is something we easily can forget; it is something of which we would do well more often to be reminded: that unnoticed by us, unseen and unheard, the work of the loving creator and redeemer continues *at his initiative*.

A friend of mine has an expression which he employs when I get impatient or anxious about a project: "It's all happening." This is said to reassure me. Things planned are proceeding. Projects begun are approaching completion. It's all happening. The phrase is more than a reassurance, it's a courteous reminder that my faith is threadbare in some places and needs attention. The person I've involved in the enterprise has a sense of commitment, too. I am not alone, and I shouldn't forget that, shouldn't fuss and fret. The phrase works for me, and the gentle rebuke in it realigns perspectives and restores priorities.

IT COULD work for you, too. Not merely in the working out of your cherished plans and projects, so that the daily challenges in your lives are cut down to the size they should be, and can therefore be tackled with what the scriptures describe as "a good courage." It could work for you also in the area of your most secret self: the relationship you choose to have with God, the sort of life you wish to allow Christ to share with you.

Notice how I said that. By nature, we like to hedge our bets. If we are smart, we think we should assign an area for God to occupy, the God we talk to when we get into trouble, when we are obliged to live with the consequences of our own actions and we find the situation beyond us and hope we can finally and forever escape from it; so we talk privately to someone out there, and the hope is that help from out there will be forthcoming here. Fast. Only a fool, we would say, would deny himself the prudent gesture of assigning some area in his private soul for the rare occasion when God needs to be whistled up as an ally with clout to help him through.

But once we have been smart enough to make this prudent provision, what do we do? We worry that he isn't doing things right. For a start, we are not really sure that he will grab the stick we hold out to him. Then we are nervous that perhaps somehow he has got hold of the wrong end of it, that he doesn't thoroughly understand our particular predicament. We fret that somehow he might not work fast enough for us, or that the end result might not be as spectacularly in our favor as we think it should be.



Photo by Alice V. Manning

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . ."

What happens? I'll tell you what happens. Having started with the wrong series of pre-suppositions about God and his place in our lives, we find life curiously difficult to get through. It is lonely. It is disappointing. It may be successful financially, socially, vocationally, and geographically in terms of achieving the goals you had set for yourself. Christ has something to say about this in a phrase of four words: a man can "gain the whole world" [Matthew 16:26]. But it is lonely and disappointing, because there is an end which is unavoidable, inescapable, and the journey to it is irrevocable: death. Christ has something to say about that, too, and it is the second half of the axiom I mentioned: ". . . and lose his own soul." Nobody else can make that journey for you, so it is lonely. And when you've got all you've got, when there's only death for you at the end of it, what, you may ask yourself, is it all for, except to leave it behind for somebody you may not really enjoy? So life can be very disappointing.

The mistake we have made is to put ourselves and God in the wrong order of priority. We assign God a place in our lives. But what about the possibility of our having a part in God's life? What about the concept of being a respected and cherished part of God's plan, where we are expected and helped to make a contribution, where achievement on our part is viewed in the light of creation's enrichment, and where there never can be a danger of a man losing his soul because his soul has been forever found by its loving creator and redeemer, in whom, in the words of the scriptures, "we live and move and have our being"? What about *that* concept?

Look at life that way round and remember my friend's phrase: It's all happening. Of course it's all happening, for we are surrounded by souls who have been singularly loved enough to live here, and move and have their being and make their contribution and reflect that divine love because they are made in the divine image. The life of God in the world is seen in them and in their capacity for goodness, for nobility of motive, for self-sacrifice and unselfishness and respect. It is when I see evidence of this sort of capacity in human life that I am convinced that with God it's all happening.

WITHIN that purpose, within that plan and our individual place he has assigned to us, there is a lot happening if the creation of the world is to be maintained and sustained and cleansed with new life. "All my fresh springs shall be in thee" is the song of life of a soul aware of what is happening around her or him. The agencies employed in the world's continual recreation and refreshment defy calculation. Not only the seasonal reinvigoration with which the planet is enwrapped, but also the upsurge of new ideas, fresh concepts, further horizons for the human mind to travel to, new hope we bring up from the depth of the human personality in the face of frightful possibilities of humanity's misuse of its gifts. Nowhere, no place, at no time, is there no activity.

Christ himself points to these agencies and their ceaseless activity in terms his hearers then were familiar with: angels. You can hear him make this clear as he says: "In very truth I tell you all, you shall see heaven wide open and God's angels ascending and descending."

Whatever it was that his hearers grasped from that statement, with its allusion to the lad-

der in the dream which Jacob had as one of the nation's founding fathers, it speaks plainly of the link between the created order and its creator, and the initiative taken by the Divine love, for angels are God's heralds and messengers by definition: they effect his sovereign will. "Heaven wide open" is the eternal presence, unavoidable and inescapable, of the force of love unstoppable by any human artifice, undaunted by any human meanness of spirit, unquenchable by any fire of human angry passion. It is that love which makes the world and its history go round, and that love is ceaselessly energetic and salvific: it will save you from yourself and from all the miserable limitations which selfishness incurs, and it will continue to nourish the created order and make all things new through Christ. Christ is reminding us gently of our place in the scheme of things and of our potentiality for enjoying what we reflect—the image of a loving creator, and kinship with him who enjoys the fullness of the Godhead with its fearless love. He it is who teaches us what the psalm means: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him lower than angels, to crown him with glory and worship" [Psalm 8:4–5].

He is also warning us. He puts us in our place. Our place, our destiny, is to glorify the Father by reflecting his image, and not to waste time and risk eternity by glorifying ourselves in each other. We are here to tell his story, not to blow our own trumpet. Angels' trumpets are for God, not to announce their own presence.

Glorifying the Father involves our worship of him; the sacrificial offer of ourselves, our



Photo by Alice V. Manning

souls, our bodies, our wealth, all that we have, and all that we are. The Church is that family, that worshipping community which gathers and grows as it welcomes new members responding to the generosity of God, who gives all things and whose supreme gift is Christ himself, who "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now ascended to the right hand of the Throne of God" [Hebrews 12:2].

*My soul, bear thou thy part,
Triumph in God above:
And with a well-tuned heart
Sing thou the songs of love!
Let all thy days
Till life shall end,
Whate'er he send,
Be filled with praise.*

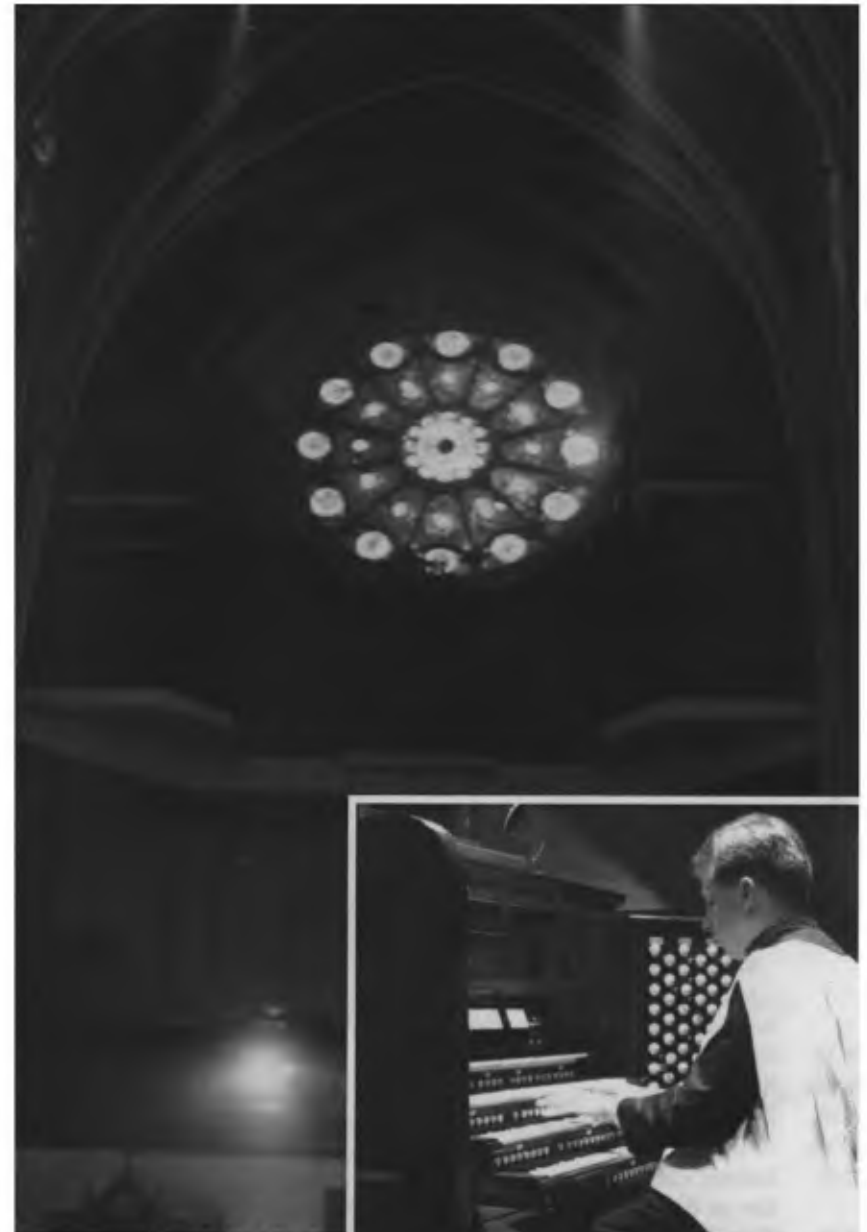
"Faith, our outward sense befriending, makes our inward vision clear."

A Joyful Noise unto the Lord

On October 6 and 7, Saint Mary's was the venue for Gospel Celebration 2002 by Broadway Inspirational Voices, a group of forty Broadway and off-Broadway performers. The proceeds from the two concerts will benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. . . . On January 11, the parish will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the dedication of our great organ, the Aeolian-Skinner Opus 891-A, with a special recital by our former music director McNeil Robinson.



Photo by Kenneth Blauvelt, Studio



Photos by Alice V. Manning

The Aeolian-Skinner with its current collaborator, Robert McCormick





THE CALENDAR FOR JANUARY



- 1 W THE HOLY NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
Civil New Year holiday; church office closed
- 2 Th Christmas Weekday
- 3 F Christmas Weekday *No Abstinence*
- 4 Sa Elizabeth Seton, *Religious*
- 5 SU THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY**
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
Mass ordinary: *Mass for Four Voices*, William Byrd (1543–1623)
Motet: *Surge, illuminare*, Byrd
- SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM
- 6 M THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
SUNG MASS 12:00 PM
ORGAN RECITAL 5:30
PROCESSION & SOLEMN MASS 6:00 PM
Mass ordinary: *Missa "O magnum mysterium,"* Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)
Motet: *Magi videntes stellam*, Blasius Amom (1560–1590)
- 7 Tu Weekday
- 8 W Weekday
- 9 Th Weekday
- 10 F William Laud, *Archbishop* *Abstinence*
- 11 Sa Of Our Lady
- 12 SU THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY: THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD**
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
Mass ordinary: *Messe solennelle*, Louis Vierne (1870–1937)
Motet: *Tantum ergo*, Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)
SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM
- 13 M Hilary of Poitiers, *Bishop*
- 14 Tu Weekday
- 15 W Weekday
- 16 Th Weekday
- 17 F Antony, *Abbot* *Abstinence*
- Eve of the Confession of Saint Peter 6:00 PM**
- 18 Sa THE CONFESSION OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE**
The beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 19 SU THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
Mass ordinary: *Missa "Iste confessor,"* Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594)



THE CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY



- Motet: *Dies sanctificatus*, Palestrina
- SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM
Preacher: The Very Reverend Kevin D. Robb, O.P., Prior & Pastor, the Dominican Priory and Church of Saint Vincent Ferrer
- 20 M Fabian, *Martyr*
Martin Luther King Day (Federal holiday schedule: One Mass only, at 12:15 PM)
- 21 Tu Agnes, *Martyr*
- 22 W Vincent, *Deacon & Martyr*
- 23 Th Weekday
- 24 F Weekday *Abstinence*
- Eve of the Conversion of Saint Paul 6:00 PM**
- 25 SA THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE**
The end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 26 SU THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**
SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
Mass ordinary: *Communion Service in F*, Herbert Sumsion (1899–1995)
Carol: *Jesus Christ the apple tree*, Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)
SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM
- 27 M John Chrysostom, *Bishop*
- 28 Tu Thomas Aquinas, *Priest & Friar*
- 29 W Weekday
- 30 Th Weekday
- 31 F Weekday *Abstinence*
- 1 Sa Brigid, *Abbess*
- 2 SU THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE**
BLESSING OF CANDLES, PROCESSION & SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM
Nunc dimittis (Short Service), John Amner (1579–1641)
Mass ordinary: *Missa "Ich stund an einem morgen,"* Jacob Handl (1550–1591)
Motet: *When Mary to the temple went*, Johannes Eccard (1553–1611)
SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM
- 3 M Blase, *Bishop & Martyr*
The Blessing of Throats will be given during the Masses today.
- 4 Tu Cornelius the Centurion
- 5 W The Martyrs of Japan
- 6 Th Weekday
- 7 F Weekday *Abstinence*
- 8 Sa Of Our Lady

9 SU THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM

Mass ordinary: *Missa sine nomine*, G. P. da Palestrina

Motet: *Exsultate Deo*, Palestrina

SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM

10 M Weekday

11 Tu Weekday

12 W Weekday

13 Th Absalom Jones, *Priest*

14 F Cyril, *Monk*, & Methodius, *Bishop, Missionaries*

Abstinence

15 Sa Thomas Bray, *Priest & Missionary*

16 SU THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS 11:00 AM

Mass ordinary: *Missa in honorem Sancti Josephi* (Op. 21), Flor Peeters
(1903–1986)

Anthem: *Like as the hart*, Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

*Celebrant & Preacher: The Right Reverend C. Christopher Epting, Ecumenical Officer
of the Episcopal Church*

SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM

17 M Weekday

Presidents' Day (Federal holiday schedule: One Mass only, at 12:15 PM)

18 Tu Weekday

19 W Weekday

20 Th Weekday

21 F Weekday

Abstinence

22 Sa Of Our Lady

23 SU THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

SOLEMN MASS 11:00 AM

Mass ordinary: *Missa "In illo tempore,"* Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

Motet: *Jubilate Deo*, Cipriano de Rore (1516–1565)

SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDICTION 5:00 PM

24 M SAINT MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE

25 Tu Weekday

26 W George Herbert, *Priest*

27 Th Weekday

28 F Weekday

Abstinence

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.

Anniversary Organ Recital

by

McNeil Robinson

*Former Music Director & Organist
Of the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin*



*At 6:00 PM on Saturday, January 11, 2003,
the 70th anniversary
of the dedicatory recital of the parish organ,
Aeolian-Skinner Opus 891-A*



For tickets, call 212-869-5830, extension 25