

AVE

The Magazine of

the Society of Mary



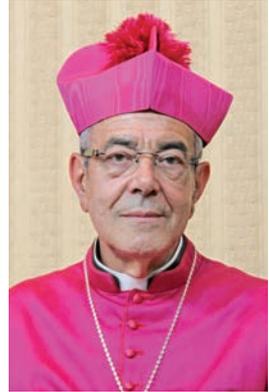
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Presentation of Our Lady, 2015

The Superior-General writes

Letter from the Superior-General

For the Society of Mary, no less than for all other Catholic Societies, the publication of “**Communion, Catholicity and Catholic Life – Statements by the Council of Bishops of The Society**” marks an important milestone since the enactment of the legislation to allow women to be bishops. That legislation provided a carefully negotiated framework, including the “Five Guiding Principles” to enable traditional Catholics, within their parishes, societies and groups, to thrive and remain an integral part of the Church.



The publication by the Bishops of the Society of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda takes fully into account the provisions made for us and sets out the ways, parameters and means by which Catholics can continue to serve God and His Holy Church and witness to the Gospel of Salvation in the world.

As such, the document serves as a support and template for the Catholic Societies and groups to establish and publish their own regulations and statutes appropriate to present circumstances. To do so in such a way as to enable them to continue to fulfil their purposes and work in the Church and community of faith.

At recent Meetings of the Society of Mary Executive and General Councils, careful and full initial discussion was undertaken towards setting out our particular revisions to regulations and statutes. A small group has been set up to work with me and Father Rowlands, our Chaplain-General. Our aim is to publish these revisions as soon as possible towards the end of the year or early in 2016.

Our work will take into account the parallel work of other societies and groups. Our purpose is to produce a scheme that is both particular to the Society of Mary and also compatible with similar structures provided by other organisations.

We were glad to have the visit of Father Alexander, Superior of the American Region of the Society of Mary. Father Alexander was with us for the May Devotion and his visit gave opportunity for important discussions. These gave closer insight into the demands and

opportunities of living the Catholic life within a Church that does not have our safeguards and provisions. In framing our future structures and procedures, we shall take these wider matters into account and hope to provide material that will be of help and support to our overseas members.

Like the foundation document “Communion, Catholicity and a Catholic Life” itself, what we produce at this time within the Society of Mary, must be considered interim. As time goes on and we can judge how both the legislation, its operation and practice is working out, it will be highly likely that further adjustments will be required of us. We aim, however, that our deliberations will provide a firm and sure foundation for every Member of the Society of Mary to continue to serve God and His Church in our particular calling to Marian devotion and Catholic life and spirituality.

We shall publish these new guidelines and regulations of The Society of Mary at the earliest and most appropriate time.

In giving time for prayer and thought at this time, I have been reflecting again on the wisdom that gave rise to the naming and patronage of The Society of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda.

As a former Bishop of Whitby, at a personal level, I was delighted that Saint Hilda of Whitby should be among our patrons; but it is the combination of the these Saints that is specially significant.

Contemporary records tell us that both Wilfrid and Hilda were strong, powerful and influential people, with special God-given gifts and responsibilities in the Church. Wilfrid is often said to have been difficult, argumentative and intransigent. Only his detractors would stop at such statements; Saint Wilfrid was also devout and unshakable in holding and living the true Faith. Hilda might be shown only as exercising her power against the background of her royal birth and ancestry. Yet it was she who encouraged Saint Caedmon to rise from his simplicity to compose the most profound poetry of God’s praise.

Imagine these two personalities coming together at the Synod of Whitby in the year 664 AD. Hilda strongly in favour of the traditions, ways and organisation of the endemic Celtic Church of Britain; Wilfrid, having been influenced by the Mission of Saint Augustine of Canterbury and having seen, at first hand, the working of the wider Church on the continent and in Rome, strongly in favour of alignment with the whole of Catholic Christendom.

But then see, under God, the outcome of the Synod. These jointly powerful, outstanding and courageous leaders of the Church, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, were able to come to an agreement; leading the Church forward in the way of unity which is Catholic and Apostolic yet rooted in that which is local and real and able to support and feed a devotional life, a deepening spirituality, a practice of worship and prayer and a true expression of Catholic Faith and Life.

May Saint Wilfrid, Saint Hilda and Our Lady Help of Christians pray for us.

With my love and Blessing

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✦ Robert Ladds – *Superior-General*

A Letter from the Chaplain-General

My dear friends,

As I write, the glow of the Pilgrimage to Loreto, Subiaco, Lanciano and Rome still has not faded. The weather was perfect (at least for me!), the pilgrimage experiences were very moving and helped us all to grow spiritually and the welcome we received was as warm as ever. It was a small group, but the advantage is that then we get to know one another quite well and it is relatively easy to organise going from one place to another. For the first time ever, I dared to make the group rehearse the music for Lauds of Our Lady on Saturday morning at Santa Maria Maggiore, which meant that it was a much more confident offering to God! I hope we shall, in some way, do it again.

Having said that, I hope and pray that our Lourdes Pilgrimage next year will consist of a much larger group. At the time of writing, we have about 45 firm bookings and I trust that will increase to well over 100. I am grateful to the General Council for agreeing to support the places for our Youth Group on that Pilgrimage, so that each of them need pay no more than £80 for the whole experience; my thanks also go to those individuals and groups who have already sent a



contribution to help with the cost of this. Please consider whether you too could help. If you are thinking of going on the Pilgrimage yourself, you need to do something about booking your place NOW before it is too late! Since we are supporting our young people so generously, the Executive have decided that for this coming year we shall give a block grant to the Shrine at Walsingham to help with the costs of the Youth Pilgrimage there, but that we shall not be able to give grants to individual groups for that Pilgrimage. The following year, we should return to the usual system of grant applications. Whilst on this subject, I should mention that Tom Middleton our Treasurer now deals with all grant applications so they should be sent to him in the first instance.

You will have gathered from Bishop Robert's letter that in the new circumstances following the decision of the Church of England to proceed with the ordination of women as bishops we need to define more closely who is regarded as a priest member of the Society and reiterate that only priest members may celebrate or concelebrate at Society functions. There will be a statement on the website in due course.

Our thanks go to the North West Ward for hosting the October Devotion this year and to Bishop Philip North for presiding and preaching at it. The numbers attending were very good and the Ward has produced a new and very simple method to help us to meditate on the Rosary which we shall publish as a separate leaflet. It reminds me very much of 'The Peoples Rosary Book' which was produced by the Church Literature Association and which has been out of print these many years, from which I first learned how to meditate on those Mysteries.

The May Devotion next year will be on Saturday 7th May at S. Silas and Holy Trinity: do make a note of the date now. Full details will appear in the next AVE. As you will see from the photographs in this issue, it is quite a jolly occasion! Next year, Lent is so early that the May Devotion actually takes place after the (original) Feast of the Ascension.

With my love and blessing,



Fr Graeme Rowlands, *Chaplain-General*

The May Devotion and AGM was held at S. Silas and Holy Trinity, London NW5 on Saturday 2nd May 2015

The day commenced at 12 noon with a Solemn Concelebrated Mass in S. Silas, followed by a street procession to Holy Trinity.



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THE MAY DEVOTION SERMON

Given by The Rev'd George Westhaver, Principal – Pusey House, Oxford

Why did the Lord first show His resurrection to a woman and not to a man? This is not a question driven by 21st century gender politics, but rather the great Syrian theologian, St Ephrem, contemplating the place of the mother of God in the mystery of the Incarnation: 'A mystery is here revealed to us with regard to the Church and the Lord's Mother. The Virgin received the first beginning of His advent on earth, and to a woman He himself showed His resurrection from the sepulchre. Both at the beginning and at the end, it is His mother's name that is there and resounds... It was a Mary that received Him on His coming into life, and a Mary who saw also the angels at the sepulchre'. St Ephrem helps us to see why Eastertide is as much the season of the Mother of God as Christmas and Epiphany. His praise for the holy God-bearer is full of wonder as he searches for language to describe the beauty and the joy of the Lady Mother of God, most high above all the earth. In the Saviour's first beginning, he says, 'Mary is made for us a heaven bearing the divinity, which Christ, without leaving His Father's glory, shut up within the narrow limits of her womb ... She is the temple of the Son of God ... that mystical new heaven, wherein dwelt the King of kings as in His mansion'. She is the new Eden, in which the tree of life is planted, the ladder of Jacob, whereby God has descended to us.

These titles and forms of praise help us to appreciate Our Lady's unique role in the work of salvation and in the renewal of creation. She only is the mother of God, 'the bride whom the Father betrothed, the bridal chamber of the divine incarnation of the Logos'. In a beautiful sermon E. B. Pusey contemplates her as the New Eve, the one who undoes the knot of Eve's disobedience, and leads us back to Paradise: 'She, being the Mother of Him Who is our Life, became the Mother of Life; she was the Gate of Paradise, because she bore Him Who restored to us our lost Paradise; she was "the gate of Heaven," because He, born of her, "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers."' Again, we hear the unique role of the New Eve proclaimed, but we are also moved to consider her as a model for the Church which she figures – what Christ has done in her, he must also do in us: "the gate of Heaven," because

He, born of her, “opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers”. This door is opened for us, and we are invited to enter in.

One of the great Old Testament figures of the Mother of God is the burning bush. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, speaks to Moses from the burning bush; the bush burns but is not consumed. In stained glass and icon this scene is presented as a type or foreshadowing of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary: just as the bush burned and was not consumed, so Mary gave birth while remaining a virgin, neither was she consumed by the divine fire. On the one hand, this type pictures Our Lady’s uniqueness—no other bears the fire of the Godhead in this way. And yet, the fire which burns in Mary, is the fire of the divine life which burns in all who have been co-interred and wrapt round in the life of the Risen Son. This is the fire of the Holy Spirit which does not consume us, and which yet is to burn up all that is mere earth, the stubble in our lives, whatever does not lead us back to God.

The life which is born of the God-bearer must also be born and grow in us. Lancelot Andrewes made this point with a wonderful image, describing the fountain of baptism as corresponding to the Virgin’s womb. The same life and ‘original’ which He took in the womb of the Virgin, the same He placed for us in the womb of the Church, the font of baptism.

I will conclude by considering how the Mother of God, His mother and ours in Him, serves as a model for us. Twice in second chapter of Gospel of St Luke, we are told that Mary ‘kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart’. Here Mary serves for us an image of the inner life of the Church. Mary pictures for us the attitude of attentive listening which is the stillness or silence of the heart (Luke 2:19, 51).

The great teacher of the mystical life, Baron Von Hugel said that ‘Man is what he does with his silence’. Well, brothers and sisters, is that not a disturbing thought? What do we do with our silence, if we have any at all? Do we pick up our favourite electronic gadget – text, surf, face time, or, in other words, anything but silence. Or, perhaps we have less electronic forms of distraction and dissipation. But what do we do with our silence? In Our Lady, we see an image of ‘the one who listens, who listened to the word of God at the Annunciation, who “kept all these sayings, and, pondered them in her heart”, who told the servants at the marriage feast to listen to her Son’.

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Mary is described as ‘a living heaven’ or ‘wider than heaven’ because of the life she bears, in John Donne’s words, ‘light in dark, and shutt’st in little room, Immensity, cloister’d in thy dear womb.’ But this ‘Immensity’ is not simply room in her body for a special baby, it is rather a spiritual landscape, the inner kingdom, the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity, and the place where she keeps and ponders all these things. We are invited not just to know about this kingdom, but to live in it.

The sayings and the things which Mary pondered are given to us especially in the Scriptures – they are placed into our hands that we may keep and ponder them with her. John Keble, one of the fathers of the Catholic revival whose fruits we enjoy and celebrate today, urged his readers to this kind of contemplation: ‘The words and doings of God cannot but be full-charged with heavenly and mysterious meaning’. The things which Mary contemplated in her heart, and the things and words that we are given to ponder, are full-charged with the heavenly life of Christ, the life and presence which is the life of the Church, His Body.

Mary is our joy, wider than heaven, the Mother of life, in part, because she is the model of contemplative union. This is not a message for spiritual superstars, but for each one of us. We may come to discover the inner kingdom if we can make any space for stillness and silence in our lives, to ponder the Word which she kept first in her womb then in her heart: ‘It is not in heaven ... Neither is it beyond the sea, but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart’ (Deut 30). This is the gift of the Mother of God to us – ‘Be it unto me according to thy word’ and through thy Word. The glories of the worship which we enjoy today belong to the reality which we may, with Our Lady, keep and ponder in our heart; they belong to the inner life of the Church which she embodies.

‘O divine living image in whom God the Creator has rejoiced, possessing a mind which is governed by God and directed to God alone, Earth-born little daughter whose womb contained a living heaven, a path of noetic silence: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit to the infinity of the ages of ages. Amen.

PROCESSION AND CROWNING OF OUR LADY

**at Holy Trinity Church, Ramsgate, Kent
on Sunday 3rd May, 2015**

For the first time in Holy Trinity's history, Mass was followed by a procession and crowning of our Lady. As the Parish Priest, Fr Peter Adams was away, the celebrant and preacher was Fr Ian Shackleton, SSC, Assistant Priest at St Andrew's, Deal, Kent. Fr Anthony Fletcher from St Clement's, Sandwich, Kent assisted. The organist was David Bleazard, MA BMus ARCO. Thanks are due to Fr Rowlands, whose May Devotion at St Silas the Martyr and Holy Trinity, north-west London, provided the inspiration for Holy Trinity, Ramsgate.

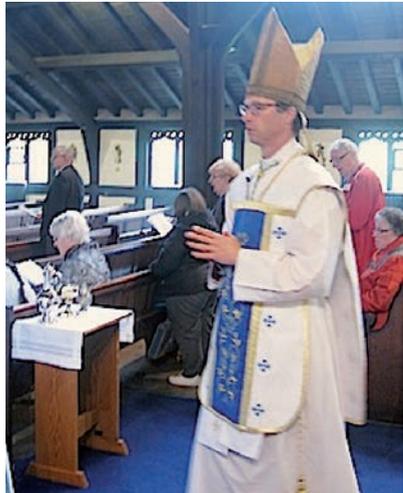


THE OCTOBER DEVOTION

was held at S. James the Great, Haydock on Saturday 10th October 2015

It would be a fairly safe bet that a mention of Haydock would conjure up for most people the image of a racecourse. The popular sporting venue in its present form dates from 1899, but not far away is the beautiful church of St James the Great consecrated a third of a century earlier. Then in the Diocese of Chester (the see of Liverpool was not created until 1880), it was from the beginning influenced by the Catholic Revival in the Church of England, and continues in that tradition today. The original church, being found too small for the rising population in the 1880s, became the Lady Chapel when the building was extended in 1891. It is consequently a fascinating building with two architectural styles blending harmoniously.

In this fine setting the Society's North West Ward of Our Lady of Victories was privileged to host the Regional October Devotion on Saturday 10th October, by kind invitation of Fr Rodney Middleton. As the Superior-General was unable to be with us on this occasion, Bishop Philip North joined us from Burnley to preside at the Mass, attended by over eighty people, with nine concelebrants, and to preach at the afternoon devotion. The offering of the Mass was gloriously enhanced by the St Nicholas Singers, brought together by Stuart Keen and accompanied by organist Michael Wynne, who sang Mozart's magnificent and joyful *Spatzenmesse*, with Victoria's *Ave Maria* as the Communion motet.



In the NW Chapter, splendid liturgy is invariably accompanied by generous hospitality. This was no exception; members of the St James Walsingham Cell rose to the occasion and provided a sumptuous buffet lunch.

The delightful Lady Chapel was packed as the afternoon devotion began with the recitation of the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary led by Reader Dr David Martlew (to whom we offer congratulations on his election to General Synod) in a version interspersed with Scriptural references which he has developed for use at Haydock. It can be found on the St James website and there is a link to it on the Ward website as well: www.stjamesthegreat.org.uk or www.som-northwest.org.uk.

Bishop Philip preached a lively and inspiring sermon urging us to follow Mary's example of sacrificial love and service in drawing people to Jesus so that all may flourish in him who came that we might have life in all its abundance. After a happy procession with some good old favourite hymns sung at full volume, we ended a memorable day of worship and fellowship quietly blessed by the Lord himself, present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

**FROM THE
EDITOR OF AVE**

*Copy for consideration for the Annunciationtide issue of AVE must be sent to the Editor and received by **Monday 7th March 2016 at the latest.** It would be helpful if copy were sent electronically – although hard copy of any pictures may be needed. The Editor reserves the right to amend or delete copy as may be expedient and as space permits. It is regretted that hard copy cannot be returned.*

**The Society of Mary
Webpage**

The Webmaster is always pleased to receive reports and photos for the website

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THE SOCIETY'S THIRD PILGRIMAGE TO SHRINES OF ITALY

*This took place on the third
week of September 2015*

LORETO

The first Mass of the Pilgrimage was at Loreto was held in the Sanctuary of the Holy House (Casa Santa) of S. Benedict's Abbey built around the cave.



■ Statue of Pope Sixtus V, who was responsible for building the Church.



■ The Holy House in the Basilica of Loreto.



■ Truly a place for prayer.

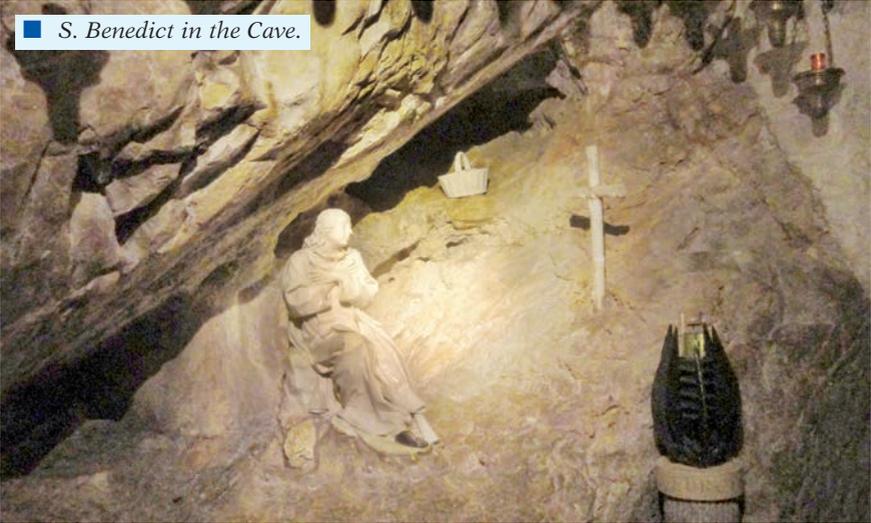


■ The Cappella del Crocifisso at Loreto where our Mass was offered..



■ Mass in the Sacro Speco at Subiaco.

■ *S. Benedict in the Cave.*



S. Benedict lived for three years as a hermit in Subiaco and was ministered to by a fellow monk, Romanus, by letting down food by means of a long rope.

When his three years as a hermit came to an end he established monasteries at Subiaco before moving to Monte Cassino where he built another monastery and became its Abbot.





■ *The Pilgrimage Group.*



LANCIANO – *The site of a Eucharistic Miracle*

On the third day we progressed to Lanciano, the site of a Eucharistic miracle which took place in the 8th century. A Mass was held in the Church of San Francesco which houses the relics of the miracle. A Basilian monk doubted the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. After the two-fold consecration the host was changed into live Flesh and the wine was changed into live Blood.

There have been many investigations into this event, some as recently as 1981. On this occasion an eminent Professor Odoardo Linoli, and assisted by Professor Ruggero Bartelli, University of Siena and the analyses were conducted with unquestionable scientific examination which showed:

- The Flesh and the Blood is real Flesh and Blood, from a human being.
- The Flesh consists of the muscular tissue of the heart.
- In the Flesh and the Blood we see present in sections: the myocardium, the endocardium, the vagus nerve and also the left ventricle of the heart myocardium.
- The Flesh is a 'HEART' complete in its essential structure.
- The Flesh and the Blood have the same Blood type: AB.
- In the Blood there were found proteins in the same normal proportions as are found in the scro-proteic make up of fresh blood.
- In Blood there were also found these minerals: chlorides, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, sodium and calcium.



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- The preservation of the Flesh and of the Blood which were left in the natural state for twelve centuries and exposed to the action of atmospheric and biological agents, remains an extraordinary phenomenon.

This scientific research has served to confirm what many generations of Christians have believed over the years and proves to us the working of a miracle which cannot be explained by any other means.

MANOPPELLO

In the afternoon we rejoined the coach as we journeyed on to Rome, but made a brief stop at Manoppello to view a unique relic of a picture of Christ, not painted by human hands. It was deposited in a bundle by a mysterious pilgrim and left in the Church in 1506.



ROMA

The Society were fortunate to stay again at *Domus Internationalis Paulus VI* in the centre of ‘The Eternal City’.



Visits were made to the major Basilicas and Churches of Rome, including **Santa Maria Maggiore** (S. Mary Major above), the Cathedral of Rome where Lauds of Our Lady was sung.

On Sunday afternoon the Catacombs of San Callisto were visited, with a guided tour through the maze of tunnels.

On Monday, Mass was celebrated near S. Peter’s Basilica, followed by a guided tour of it.

On Tuesday our Pilgrimage concluded with a Votive Mass of S. Peter before we set out to the airport.





HOLY TRINITY and S.SILAS SCHOOL PILGRIMAGE to WALSINGHAM

*Grateful thanks from all Year 6 children
at Holy Trinity and S. Silas School.*

In June this year, I took our Year 6 class to Walsingham on pilgrimage and we stayed overnight at the Shrine. That in itself is a remarkable statement, but I was absolutely amazed at the effect it had on every child, a transformation which they will never forget. Hitherto, we had only attempted a pilgrimage there and back in the course of one day. It was, appropriately, Corpus Christi, so we were able to have a Sung Mass of the Feast that evening and Exposition and Benediction the following morning. Whilst we were at the beach, Fr Graeme even removed his cassock!

We are so grateful to the Society of Mary for their financial support with this venture without which it would not have been possible. These are a few of the reflections the children wrote after the pilgrimage:

‘My favourite memory of our pilgrimage is when we lit the candles because it was nice to know our prayers would last for the whole day. Also, I enjoyed going to the beach because we could do whatever we wanted...’

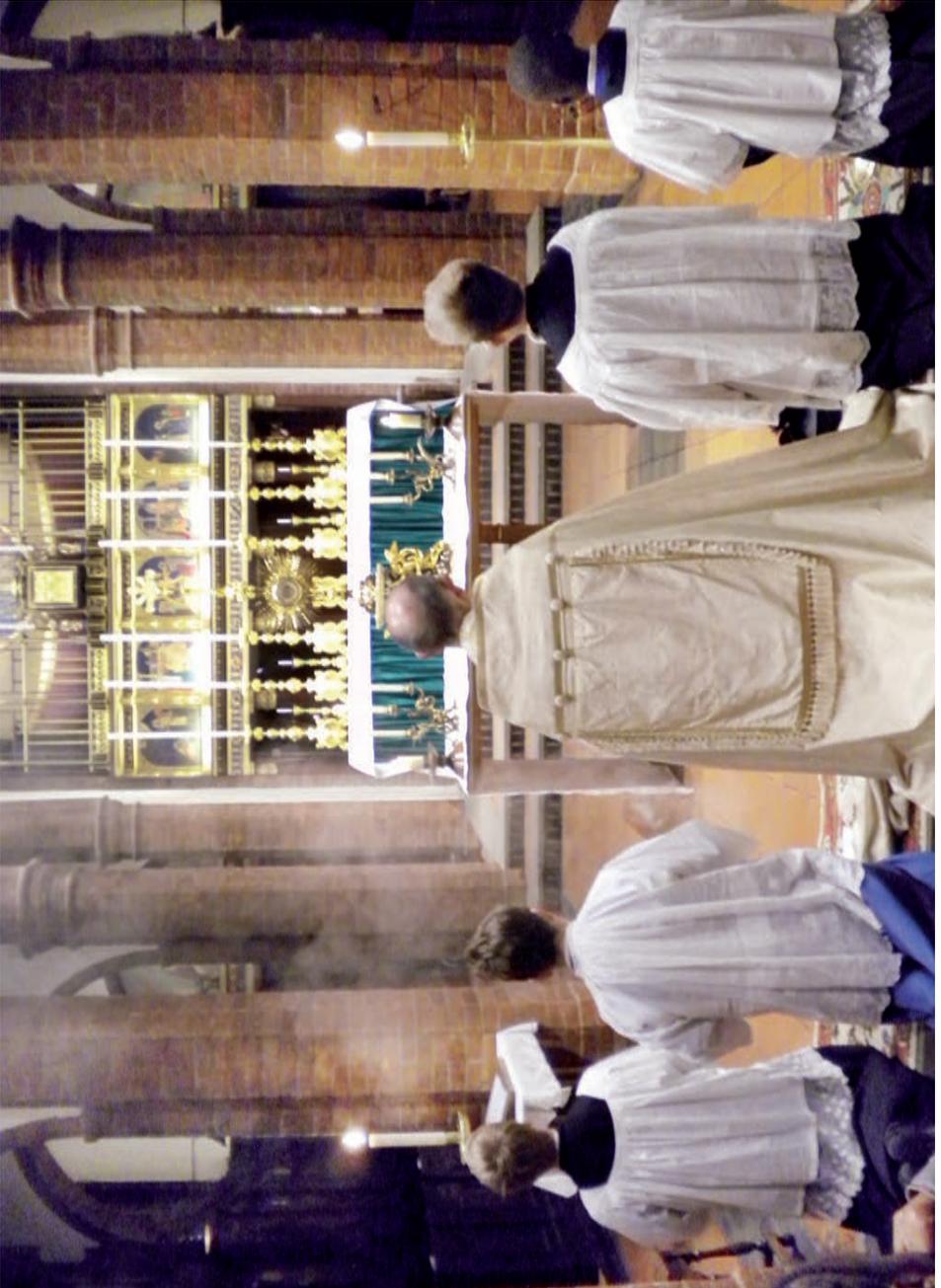
‘The accommodation was outstanding. The Holy House was really cool because back when Mary was around houses were so small.’

‘Going to the farm was really fun because we saw lots of animals...The food was lovely and very clean; there was also a wide selection.’

‘My favourite memories of our pilgrimage are the Abbey ruins, because you could imagine how it was...’

‘When we were praying to Our Lady of Walsingham, I knew my dad was being prayed for and it made me really happy.’

‘I enjoyed going to Mass in the evening, but it was very hard to sing without the organ. I loved going to other people’s rooms but it kind of got out of control’ (*It did not.....! G.*)











S. Silas, Kentish Town – Patronal Festival 11th July 2015

Sermon by Fr Paschal Worton, St Mary's Somers Town

Dear friends, it's a great delight and privilege for me to be with you today, as we gather in this beautiful Church to do something wonderful, to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. But we offer it especially in thanksgiving for your Patron, S. Silas, who was sent by the Apostles to the Churches of the Gentiles together with Paul and Barnabas, and who by tradition became Bishop of Corinth and was later martyred for the Faith. This Festival actually began last night with Vespers and the Procession and Veneration of the Relic of S. Silas, so I think that today it's worth briefly reflecting on the significance of relics. I believe this church has one or two!!

The early Church venerated with deep care the bodies of the early saints and martyrs, often celebrating the Eucharist over the tombs of

their slain fellow disciples and later, when Christians could build churches and worship freely, we have records of relics being joyfully acclaimed as they were carried triumphantly into a Church.

Yet there is much scope for the mocking and sneering of Relics... For both true and false relics produced a brisk trade, with its scope for wealth-creation, within Christendom! One shrine boasted even of the plume of a phoenix; the tip of Lucifer's tail lost in conflict with a Syrian hermit and the mark Cain had on his forehead! However, I especially like the 15th century Bishop of Durham who discerned that St Wilfrid's Episcopal ring, had the power to keep cattle free from pestilence ... so he went about signing cows with the sign of the cross in his spare time. There you go, Bishop Philip ... the herds of Lancashire are waiting!

The Reformers, especially Calvin, Luther and Wycliffe, opposed the use and misuse of relics, often with great wit, as they felt the veneration of the saints might detract from the Scriptures. Perhaps we can understand the lurking fear within some that relics can be a distraction from Christ's sacramental life within the Church. But, don't be fooled by reformish protests. even within such circles one can be surprised... I was given a tour of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, where the holy and great evangelical vicar, Charles Simeon preached and laboured so wonderfully. After seeing the pulpit which he graced for years I was taken to the back of the church where I was shown, with great reverence, Simeon's umbrella in a glass case! I suppose that might be deemed a 2nd Class Relic?

It's ironic, however, that within our secular world whilst many dismiss holy things as "superstitious trinkets", there is also a devotion for the things associated with special people e.g. Princess Diana's dresses; a footballer's boots in a Stadium's trophy case, or Elvis Presley's Grave at Graceland.

Relics still hold a strong fascination for us ... we want to be near them, to even, at times, touch and kiss them in veneration. When the tiny bones of S. Thérèse were being processed in New York, she managed to stop the traffic in 5th Avenue due to the thousands who turned out to be near them! Deep within the human psyche is this longing to be connected. It all begins within the womb, where the very first of our senses to develop is touch – before we can hear or see or

smell or taste – we can touch. So if it is essential to our well-being to reach out to touch ... it is only natural for Christians to reach out too ... we long for that which will link us with “the Holy”... we long for the touch of Christ Himself.

And this power of Christ, which is always Gospel for us, overflows from the Scriptures into every age through the lives of the saints. Their Christ-like holiness draws us towards healing and growth. We all know people who make us feel small, insignificant, and sinful ... in their presence we shrivel up, but really holy people don't diminish us, don't make us feel ashamed of our own shortcomings...they give hope.

Meeting S. Silas must have been like that ... here was someone, along with S. Paul, who was able to sing and praise God even in shackles in prison, here was someone who, despite being beaten and flogged, was still able to be generous to his captives ... Silas could resonate with Paul's words to the Corinthians, “We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us”..

And what that gaoler perceived and what we perceive, in the presence of holiness, is the possibility of humanity being shot through with God's power and so we are strengthened, not diminished by this reality. And with the gaoler and his family, we are summoned to a future, not a full-stop! We are reminded also that God participates in human affairs. Within our Christian tradition we're always invited to see our story within the larger context of the Scriptures and especially the story of Jesus. The Scriptures do not end when we close the book on our Mass readings today, Jesus Christ continues to write His story within your story, our story, as the Church in this place.

Yet the relic of S. Silas reminds us that our experience is more about fragments, fragility, and littleness than wholeness, strength or any height of sanctity ... In our taking up of the Cross each day, we're not natural martyrs, instead we mostly only manage to deal with splinters ... rather than carry the whole thing... and that's painful enough.

With Paul and Silas we can feel pinned down by circumstances in our lives over which we have no control. Some days, when faced with people's need and the Church's limited resources we can feel a bit defeated. If we're honest few of us need to learn how to be anxious, we do that quite well, but what we do need to learn is how to hope ... Yes,

we recognise the failures within any Church community, we know our parishes are not often places where we find Christian gladiators made of steel. But if sin and weakness are part of the reality of a parish so also is Redemption! True, hope does not depend on our changing moods, on being successful or in good shape ... Hope is not anchored in our everyday experience of struggle but in that power Paul talks of ... the power beyond ourselves ... This truth comes to contradict the tired outlook that some people have that nothing significant or fresh will ever happen in their lives ... their lives shackled and trapped, like some perpetual repeat of Coronation Street or worse, The Only Way is Essex! So when we feel, diminished, isolated or desolate we can cross over to Jesus story and Silas story and return to our own with a wider awareness that we are not alone. We are not solitary Anglo-Catholics digging frantically among our own ruins, ploughing for clues to discover why we ended up the way we are. As followers of Jesus, our fragility paradoxically but wonderfully, connects us to Him.

At the altar, in a few minutes, we are offered fragile elements. A fragment of bread and a sip of wine, which are sufficient to feed us with God Himself. The Mass is both a celebration of the Lord's Presence and a recognition that we wait together for His coming in Glory. We wait, we loiter, within our fragmented Church as faithful Catholic Christians but, in a sense, we can do no other, we have no choice, we can't keep away ... for the magnet of holiness, at the Altar, opens us to God's very life. So, that's why we hang around shrines, Churches and holy places. We take our turn in God's neighbourhood watch, we light our candles and throng around Silas' relic, knowing that by its very nature a relic always points us to something bigger, to that from which it came. It creates within us a longing for the whole. We wait in stubborn hope for the chance that, at this moment, in this place we may reach out and experience holiness.

In celebrating S.Silas we find God in the fragments, in the earthenware-ness of our lives, as he did, and we remain loyal to a vision of an unseen world which has come closer, faithful to paradise brought nearer and to that power from the Most High, which promises to take over and sanctify us, as it did our Patron. Amen.

Lourdes Pilgrimage 2016 Monday 1st - Friday 5th August

Lourdes 2016 ~ Update

Over forty confirmed bookings for the trip in August next year have been received. There are many more places available so do get those forms in. It would be especially helpful if 12-18 year olds could get their forms in as we may need to book more places in the Youth Village. More information and booking forms from: s.marysoffice@btinternet.com or 020 8808 6644.

A huge thank you to all those who have donated towards our appeal. We've received over £600 so far and this will enable us to subsidise two of our young people going. We hope to take twenty-eight young people so more donations would be gratefully received www.societyofmary.weebly.com



For **bookings**, contact s.marysoffice@btinternet.com or 020 8808 6644.

For **donations** online search Society of Mary at thebiggive.org.uk or cheques can be posted to S Mary's Vicarage, Lansdowne Road, N17 9XE.

To date there are over forty confirmed bookings.

Grateful thanks are recorded to those who have given support to those going on next year's Lourdes Pilgrimage.

Donations to support the youngsters (aged 12-18) going to Lourdes for the 2016 Pilgrimage Could beneficiaries kindly send their donations through the search engine via The Society of Mary and go to: thebiggive.org.uk

Future Council Meetings of the Society

Friday 1st February, 2016 at 2.30 pm

Preceded by Benediction at 2.15 pm

Thursday 6th October, 2016 at 2.30 pm

Preceded by Rosary at 2.00 pm

and Benediction at 2.15 pm

The Executive meets at 11.00 am on the above dates
and also on Monday 4th July.

PRINTING AND POSTAGE OF AVE

In order to avoid unnecessary printing and postage costs it is requested that Ward Secretaries and individual members attached to the Headquarters Membership please advise the Membership and Grants Secretary (*contact details inside back cover*) of cases where only one copy of each edition of AVE is acceptable for any one address, rather than individual copies for each member.

Celia Bush, Secretary

THE CHANTRY BOOK

Mary Marston, The Rev'd J. C. Edwards,
Gillian Russell, Margaret Wealleans, Elsie Reed,
Jimmy East, Olive Keast, Sister Anne Julian,
Barbara Shailes, A. Idowu, Sylvia Pearce
and Vera Chopping

JESU MERCY

MARY PRAY

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2016

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1st January 2016.

1. Individual subscriptions: £15
2. Life Membership: £150
3. Children under 16 free, but once they reach the age of 16, full rate applies, and
4. All Families of 2 Adults: A minimum of £25 provided they only receive a single copy of *Ave*.

5. New Members receive a Medal and a Society Manual.

Headquarters registered members pay directly to the Membership Secretary, and she would be pleased to receive these as soon as possible and preferably by 30th April 2016. Members in arrears will not receive *Ave* after March.

Please would all members inform me when they move house. We still cannot always trace some copies of *Ave* returned by the Post Office. Life members are kept on file with the hope that a new address for them will eventually be established.

It would be helpful if members who change an email address could let me know by sending an email to **membershipsecretary@societyofmary.net**

Please advise me when Members die, in order that I can ensure that they are recorded in the Chantry Book.

Brigid Reeve, *Membership and Grants Secretary*.

A list of Wards, with Superiors may be found on pages 15 and 16 of the Annunciationtide 2014 Ave. The following Ward was omitted:

Ward: Skirbeck, Boston **Superior:** Rev'd P. V. Noble

E-mail: frpnoble@skirbeckrectory.freereserve.co.uk

Phone: 01205 362734

Secretary: Mrs M. Ferguson **Phone:** 01205 359685

S.O.M. – Merchandise Order Form

Please send this form, together with your remittance which should be made payable to **The Society of Mary, to the Treasurer**, Mr Tom Middleton, Flat 1, Cedar House, 1 Woodland Crescent, LONDON SE16 6YL.

Enquiries should be directed to tom.middleton@london.gov.uk

Quantity	Item	Price (inc P&P)	Total
	Society Medal, Manual & Lapel Badge	£10.00	
	Mary – A focus for Unity for all Christians & People, Places and Things	£5.00	
Remittance – £			

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Telephone

E-mail address

Officers of the Society

Superior-General

The Rt Rev'd Robert Ladds,
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Tel: 020 7488 3864
Tel: 07530 285389
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Chaplain-General

and Director of Pilgrimage
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The Society of Mary

(Established 1931)

The Society of Mary springs from two similar societies founded in 1880 and 1901 respectively, which united in 1931. It has members all over the world and is not confined to Anglicans. Where there are sufficient members in one place or area, they combine to form a Ward, with a priest as Superior and an elected Secretary. They can organise regular services, meetings and many other activities. Five or more members may form a Cell, and organise joint prayer and fellowship.

Isolated members are joined to the Headquarters Ward.

The Society publishes its magazine *Ave* twice each year with details of pilgrimages, retreats, festival services etc. It is free to all members and is the effective link between the various Regions.

The Society is not affiliated to any single Shrine or Marian institution, and is the only organisation endeavouring to promote equally all the different aspects of devotion to Mary.

The Society of Mary

The Society is dedicated to the glory of God and in honour of the Holy Incarnation under the invocation of Our Lady, Help of Christians.

1. Members shall keep a Rule of Life, which will include such special devotions as the Angelus, the Rosary, the Litany and Anthems of Our Lady.
2. They will pray for Departed Members of the Society and offer Mass for them.
3. They will take part in the Mass on the principal Feasts of Our Lady.
4. They will engage in apostolic and pastoral work, according to opportunity, under the guidance of the local Ward Officers and the General Council.

Objects and Membership of the Society

The Society was founded as an Anglican Society with these Objects:

1. To love and honour Mary.
2. To spread devotion to her in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian Unity.
3. To take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family life.



Photo © by John Salmon

**The Superior-General, the Chaplain-General,
Officers and General-Council of the Society
wish you all a Happy Christmaside.**