

Conversion of St. Paul (1767) by Nicolas-Bernard Lepicq

THE EPISTLE

OF SAINT PAUL'S PARISH—K STREET

AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

JANUARY 2012—VOLUME XXV NUMBER 1

From the Rector

BE OPEN TO GOD'S VISION FOR US IN THIS PLACE AND FOR THE MOVEMENT AND DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

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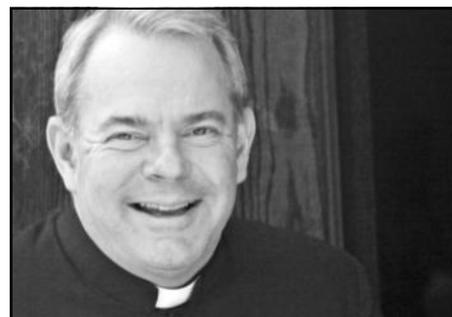
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My Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Paul's,

At the time of writing the new Christian year is off to a wonderful start in the season of Advent with fantastic attendance at our exquisitely beautiful processions of Advent Lessons and Carols. As I said last month, I think if we could do this on three or even four Sundays in Advent we would still be packed. Isn't it interesting how this non-holiday, "real Advent" service really resonates with people's hearts and minds!

The secular new year begins, obviously, on January 1st, but in the church calendar it is always the Feast of the Holy Name nowadays, and this year it falls on a Sunday. On Sunday, January 1st, we will have the usual Sunday schedule and I am delighted that my old friend from school days, Father David Houlding, will be staying with me that weekend and has graciously agreed to be our preacher at the 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Masses on that day. That will be a source not only of edification but, I suspect, amusement, no doubt at my expense, and everybody should come and enjoy that!

Friday, January 6th is the great Feast of the Epiphany and the culmination



THE REV'D ANDREW SLOANE

of the Twelve Days of Christmas. As I have often said before, in my mind, the Epiphany is to Christmas what Ascension Day is to Easter: namely, it makes sense of the full implications of the central tenets of the Christian faith, namely the Incarnation and the Resurrection. The subtitle for the Feast of the Epiphany is the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. And so, the great mystery that we have celebrated in the Twelve Days of Christmas, as God comes to his chosen people Israel, is universalized in the Feast of the Epiphany with the presence of the Magi. It is a wonderful and most important feast. I am delighted that Bishop James Montgomery, the former Bishop of Chicago, has, as in previous years, agreed to be the celebrant on this feast day. I am also delighted that the

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Reverend John Harmon, the Rector of Trinity Church here in the city, has graciously accepted my invitation to preach on this feast day. This is the first time that Father Harmon will have been in our pulpit – certainly since I've been here. Some of you will recognize his name and his face from his nomination as a candidate for election to be our Bishop last year. We certainly owe him a debt of gratitude for being willing to stand as a priest of the Diocese for this position. Father Harmon has a remarkable ministry as the Rector of Trinity Church and I know you will give him a warm welcome. January 6th is a Friday evening and there will be a Procession and Solemn Mass at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 8th, is the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, very much linked with the Feast of the Epiphany, and in the Orthodox tradition directly related to it. I am delighted that we shall have at least one baptism at the 11:15 Mass on that day. In the evening, we see another remarkable seasonal evening service with the service of Epiphany Lessons and Carols at 6 p.m.

The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul is January 25th. In this parish we have in recent years transferred this observance, as the Book of Common Prayer allows, as our patronal feast, to the following Sunday. So we shall keep the Conversion of Saint Paul as the patronal feast on January 29th. We will have as our preacher on that day my immediate predecessor, Father Richard Cornish Martin, who will preach at the 9 and 11:15 a.m. Masses and will be the celebrant at the Solemn Mass at 11:15 a.m. This will be part of the celebration of Father Martin's 50th Anniversary as a priest. That is quite a milestone for any ordained priest and it seemed appropriate to offer our pulpit and our altar for him to celebrate this milestone, in a place where he has spent many years

of ordained ministry. I do hope you will give Father Martin a warm welcome and join us all in congratulating him on this significant anniversary.

At the time of writing, this is always a somewhat stressful time of year in the parish, not simply because of the ever-burgeoning challenges of the so-called holiday season, but also as the financial year winds down and we begin to look at the budget for the following year. As you are all well aware, it costs approximately one million dollars to run this parish along the lines to which we have become accustomed. Nearly 100 percent of the income for that budget comes from the generous giving of our people. At the time of writing, we still have over 100 people who pledged last year who have not responded with a pledge for next year. At the same time, the parish expects the Vestry to act responsibly and in a timely way. Our plan is to adopt a budget for 2012 in January, obviously based on pledged income for the year. It needs to be said here that at the moment the projection for our pledging looks as though we will fall short of what we need to continue with life as it currently is here at St. Paul's. It is therefore vital that everybody respond with a pledge. Indeed we need new pledges to support financially, and in every other way, the life and ministry of this parish church. The Vestry will be spending a whole Saturday reviewing pledge income and budget on Saturday, January 14, in preparation for the January meeting of the Vestry, which will be on Tuesday, January 31. Let me be quite clear that as things stand at the moment, there will have to be some significant changes in our life. So if you are reading this and have not responded or have not given financial support to this parish, if you are expecting things to continue as things are, this will only happen if you respond immediately and generously. So this is fair warning to brace our-

selves for some significant changes in the life, mission and ministry of this parish church and to stay tuned as to where we may actually end up.

Allow me to draw your attention to a new series that will begin in January of the Rector's Forum. Beginning January 22 there will be a five-week program introducing the work of the artist Jean Louis Forain, whose work I studied as part of my sabbatical leave. I am thrilled that Dr. Andrew Rodison, Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings of the National Gallery of Art, a regular worshipper in this parish church, has agreed to give two talks on the influence of Rembrandt on Forain's religious works. These will be on January 22 and 29. February 5 and 12 will see our own and very popular teacher, John Orens, who will put the work of Forain in the social context of the turn of the last century in Paris and France. Then on February 19 our parishioner Nancy Work, a scholar of Forain, will give a biographical introduction. This five-week course is by way of introduction to the five-week course that I shall be leading on the Sundays in Lent, using images of Forain's religious work for our reflection and meditation under the title "Sensual Spirituality: Bodies Broken and Bodies Glorified." To me, this sounds like an exciting double series and I hope you also will be enthusiastic to learn more about this. I am very grateful to Andrew, John and Nancy for their willingness to participate in this program and for their gifts of time and talent. I am always flabbergasted and humbled by the amount of talent that exists in this parish and the generosity with which that is shared along with vast quantities of time, and for no remuneration whatsoever. As always, we could not do what we do without the dedication and sacrifice of the work of our volunteers in every aspect of our parish life. For this I hope all of us give Almighty God great

thanks as we seek to build this church and extend God's kingdom.

Thus, as we begin the new year, I believe we do so in confidence and faith that God will continue to bless our work, mission and ministry. In the event that there will have to be significant changes, I will view that as a chance to do a reality check on what we are actually able to do with the resources that we have, and if it is necessary to pull back in any way that this will be a pulling back in order to stabilize in order to continue to grow. In all of this, we need to be open to God's vision for us in this place and for the movement and direction of the Holy Spirit.

This comes with every blessing for the new secular year and with my love and gratitude, as always, for who you are and what together we are able to do in the Holy Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We dedicate ourselves anew to the patronage of St. Paul, the great apostle.

With love in Christ,

Father Andrew



Meet a New Parishioner: Profile: Rosa Mezi-Steel

Church bells rang for 9 a.m. Mass on January 2 and I felt they were calling me. I walked the few short blocks to St. Paul's, a bit hesitant. The welcome I received so touched my heart that I returned—four times that week.

What keeps bringing me back (to 9 a.m. Mass) is what delighted me then:

The power of the Word preached;

The healing of the Sacraments offered;

The strong Fellowship extended; and, most certainly,

The transforming beauty of our Worship here.

I left London to join the World Bank in Washington in 1986. Professional success, exhilarating world travel, operas, concerts, theater, art exhibits—all my favorite things were abundantly shared in loving companionship with my husband and my mother. Cherished pets completed the family. Yet a nagging void persisted which I did not always fill wisely. It loomed larger following Paco's death and my mother's demise soon thereafter. Life grew hostile and cold. I left

the Bank and turned inwards, seeking solace in prayer and Scripture. Something critical was missing.

Now a grateful Pilgrim in Christ, I see what it was. Community. I thank the Lord for His faithfulness in leading me to the one at my very doorstep. The void is no more. Friendships and ministries beckon. He is restoring the years the locust has eaten—as promised.

My tradition is Anglo-Catholic. Baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church of Mexico, born of an American mother and Mexican father, I was schooled by Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. Protestants and Catholics, I suspected, were mainly different because the former spoke English and the latter Spanish. Things grew more complicated in France.

I guess my passion for bridging differences is as old as I am.

That is the one thing I would like St. Paul's to know about me: I believe in inclusion. It's why I became an international conference interpreter. More importantly, it's why I am Christian.



Rosi (on left) with a friend celebrating her birthday.

Why am I Christian? I am Christian because I believe Jesus died for me and through Him no sin is irredeemable, such unbelievable good news! I am Christian because Jesus says that in His Father's house are many mansions. There must be room for us all. And in the Spirit, we understand each other at last.

St. Paul's seems to grasp this. So here I have come home, to stay.



Meet Another of our Acolytes: Steven Chlapecka

At least two Sundays every month, I arrive at St. Paul's at 10:40 a.m. while parishioners and visitors mingle about the atrium and descend a winding stairwell adjacent to the sacristy. I enter a locked closet-like room containing only white and black garments - cassocks and cottas. After properly vesting in one of each, I proceed upstairs to the sacristy to receive any pre-Mass instructions and prepare for Mass.

This routine began for me more than a year ago, after being asked one Sunday by Fr. Andrew, Fr. Humphrey

and several members of the acolyte corps if I was interested in serving as an acolyte. At the time, I was looking for a way to become more involved at St. Paul's after attending regularly for more than a year. With little hesitation, I said yes.

Serving as an acolyte and assisting in worship was not new for me. In my youth and during high school, I was both an acolyte and a lector for the Methodist Church in my hometown. I continued serving while pursuing my undergraduate degree at Southern Methodist University in Dallas,

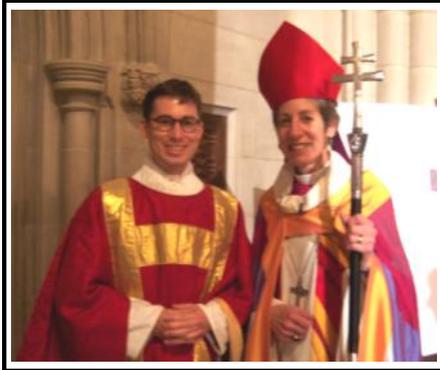


helping the Canterbury campus ministry with weekly Mass on campus.

Over the last year, I have been trained to serve in many of the roles acolytes are responsible for during the liturgy, including torch bearer, acolyte, crucifer and thurifer. Each one has a particular set of duties and all must work together seamlessly to assist the clergy and congregation in divine worship.

My discovery of, and arrival at, St. Paul's actually happened before I moved to Washington three years ago. During the summer of 2007, I was a research assistant at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and was living in student housing at George Washington University on the corner of 24th and K Streets. Before I departed Dallas for Washington, I asked the Rev. Canon Victoria Heard, a new canon to the Diocese of Dallas who lived in Virginia prior to taking the post in Dallas, for recommendations on parishes I should visit once I arrived in Washington. Mother Victoria

What Our Clergy Get Up to!



Deacon Eric Lobsinger served as chaplain to the Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori at the consecration of Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde as 9th Bishop of Washington on November 12, 2011.



Fr. Pham, our Honorary Assistant was "snapped" while he was testifying before the House Homeland Security Committee in December 2011 by Jay Mallin, who also photographed St. Paul's boy and girl choristers (see overleaf).

recommended two parishes and one was St. Paul's K Street.

The rest was history. I started attending Mass on Sunday and occasionally attending weekday Mass after work.

Every time I enter the doors at St. Paul's, I find myself transformed by God through the beauty of our

liturgy, the love of the community and the sacred space we share together. Through our baptism, we are all called to serve God and his church. As an acolyte, I am able to draw closer to God in worship, while carrying out that mission of service to others.



Vestry Report: Balancing the 2012 Budget

Robert Eikel, Vestry Secretary

The Vestry devoted most of its November meeting to discussing the 2012 parish budget. The 2012 pledge campaign is progressing, though many pledgers from 2011 remain to be heard from. Pledge income is expected to be at about the same level as in 2011. Given the poor state of the economy, and the difficult circumstances of many parishioners, this is a good result and a testament to the commitment and generosity of the parish.

However, expenses are not staying the same—they are going up. Health insurance costs for the staff increase every year, and the new buildings have brought higher utility bills and higher

maintenance costs. The Vestry discussed the importance of avoiding a deficit budget for 2012 and the potential effects of budget cuts to achieve a balanced budget. The Vestry also considered the risk that hasty or excessive cuts could damage the parish's vitality and attractiveness to newcomers, ultimately reducing giving and making the budget problems worse. Ideally, the joy that exists in so many people and ministries in the parish will lead to new volunteers, new energy, and new financial giving to continue the worship, music, mission, ministry, evangelization, and formation that make up St. Paul's.

Finally, turning away from the budget, the Vestry received the news

that parishioner Matthew Welch, who is now a postulant for Holy Orders, will stay with St. Paul's rather than being assigned to another parish to continue his discernment. The Vestry appointed Mr. Welch the Chair of the Commission on Mission, where he will bring his recent experience in Jerusalem to the parish's ministry to the needy at home and abroad.

Minutes of all Vestry meetings, and contact information for Vestry members, are on the parish website at <http://www.stpauls-kst.com/vestry>, and are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway on the first floor of Pillsbury House.



Growing St Paul's Chorister Program

Robert McCormick, Director of Music

Among the greatest treasures of the oft-treasured music program of St. Paul's Parish, K Street, are the professional choral training programs for boys and girls. I know of no other church in the DC metro area that offers anything like this. Far from a church "children's choir," in many ways, our program bridges the gap between the type of Royal School of Church Music-affiliated chorister programs that other churches run (frequently to a high standard of commitment and music-making) and a "full-time" commitment involving enrollment in a specific school (the only example in our area being the choirs of the Washington National Cathedral).

The choirs, a separate girls' choir and a choir of men and boys (which sing together only occasionally), were instituted in 1994. The amount of effort to get this program off the ground and to keep it running—effort expended nearly every day of the year by the music staff, often with a great deal of stress—is overwhelming and enormous. Why? Although St. Paul's is blessed (unlike many Anglo-Catholic parishes) with children (most recently, a wonderful influx of infants and toddlers!), there are not enough families with children of the right age to populate our program. Therefore recruitment remains exceedingly difficult, even more so as our culture values less and less the discipline of serious, no-nonsense, commitment that this program requires.

In essence, we largely "import" boys and girls into the parish to populate the choirs. Is it worth it? ABSOLUTELY. This Director of Music has no doubt about it. Forming children spiritually and to

the highest levels of musicianship, and in return having those children contribute to the liturgical and musical life of the parish, is a gift for which the entire parish and wider Church and musical community should be very grateful.

The model that we currently employ (entirely separate boys' and girls' choirs) has in many ways worked very well. I prefer this model for any number of reasons, not the least of which is that it has great precedent in most of cathedrals of England at the present time. Boys in particular flourish when singing is an activity that cannot in any way be considered "girly" or non-masculine. And we all know that St. Paul's aspires (and in many ways achieves, more than most cathedrals in the US) to run a "cathedral" liturgical schedule in a modest-sized church building.

However, unlike ANY of the English Cathedrals referenced above, St. Paul's has another principal choir (after the 1970s demise of the boys' choir until 1994, the parish's only choir), the semi-professional adult Parish Choir. If Anglicanism is thought of as a "three-legged stool" then the choral program at St. Paul's is similar, with three "principal choirs": girls, boys and adults (not counting the recently added Youth Choir for boys with changed voices, a small but highly successful initiative).

Quite simply, all our eggs can never go into one, or even two baskets. If our principal choir were, for example, a Choir of Men and boys, every available resource, recruitment initiative, and so forth would be poured into that choir. We do not have that luxury. A full-time director of music and part-time assistant are maintaining and growing this significant program, even while the

challenges of recruitment become ever more difficult and the expectation of excellence on the part of the parish grows (once an excellent result is achieved, a reputation formed, consistence excellence is then expected, and there can be no wavering from this standard!).

What is the general state of things at the present time? The standard remains high, with the program including children of considerable talent. As of November 2011, we have an enrollment consistent with or even higher than the historical norms. The girls' choir, while not huge, is as large as it has ever been, with twice as many girls (8 at present) as when I began my work here in August 2008. The lowest number was 3 in October 2008, and the highest was 9 in May 2011. There are 11 boys, which is the lower end of average for the program. It is certainly lower than I consider optimal, considering the transient nature of boys' voices. There were 12 boys in August 2008 upon my arrival. In my time here, the highest enrollment in the boys' choir at any one time has been 15, and the lowest 10. Fewer than 10 is an unsustainable number for this choir.

Keeping the focus on boys for the moment, one of the great challenges is that the loss of even one boy (whether due to voice change, a move away, a problem in discipline or wavering support and commitment from parents who allow the inevitable complaint of "I'm tired of choir" and "I want to quit" - statements that virtually every boy makes from time to time - to win out and subsequently withdraw their son from the choir) can have a devastating impact on the morale and singing of the entire choir, truly a "team." We have encountered all of these scenarios numerous times,



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with the exception of boys moving away (perhaps surprising in this DC area!). If we sustained a choir of 18-20 boys, the loss of one or two would be more easily overcome, but with scarcely more than a dozen, this is most definitely not the case. Even though the congregation at weekly Evensong may never know it from the beautiful and polished result that is usually achieved, much behind the scenes “cheerleading,” pleading and labor-intensive effort goes into bringing off each service successfully.

Comparatively, despite efforts to improve this, the girls still in many ways receive the “short end of the stick,” with less rehearsal time, less exposure (and therefore less vulnerability to the loss of a chorister or two, an upside perhaps), but as a result slower progress than they might otherwise make.

To turn this challenge on its head and use it to our advantage, while continuing to grow this invaluable program, we are founding the “St. Paul’s Choir School.” This is in most

senses a philosophical concept, not a literal school building (though the School’s “campus” will be the choir room and church of St. Paul’s). I have resisted this innovation for some time largely on the grounds that some might find it misleading. However, the word “school” is employed in many learning contexts, not just an institution with a dedicated building and grade levels of students. Sunday School is an ecclesial example that leaps to mind immediately!

I hope branding our professional

chorister training as the St. Paul's Choir School may in fact be a better "hook" when publicizing our program. The St. Paul's Choir School, if marketed in the right way, could describe more accurately the rigorous, professional training provided. Therefore, we could potentially enhance our "distinctiveness" and attractiveness.

Would this change have been helpful or warranted in 1994 or 2008? Most likely not. We could continue in the current fashion for a while longer and probably would get along, at least for a while, though the standard would rise and fall more easily than one might desire. We are not at a crisis point, and I want to avoid arriving at such a point at all costs. I do think this change is necessary at this juncture at the close of 2011 if we want to GROW the chorister program and by extension the parish. This change is not reactive, but is in fact proactive.

What will the St. Paul's Choir School look like? In most respects it will look very much like the program as it is presently constituted. There will be rehearsals nearly each weekday, and boys and girls will be formed musically and spiritually.

The most substantial change is that we will pool our resources to our best advantage to make a better and more satisfying experience for all involved, I believe. The Boys' and Girls' Choirs will remain distinct entities, rehearsing separately most of the time, but will join forces most Sundays to sing Evensong together. The musical standard is already high—but it will become even higher when our talented children, both boys and girls, can sing together much of the time.

English choir trainer, Martin Neary, formerly of Westminster Abby, remarked when working with our combined boys and girls in fall 2010 how wonderful they were—and he



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challenged and encouraged me to have them sing together more frequently, as the result was so extraordinary.

The boys will see very little change. Boys' rehearsals will likely remain as they are, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with the choice of attending two out of three (though one of those three days will be a rehearsal where some girls are present as well). On Sunday evenings, girls will join them to sing Evensong.

It is essential for the survival of a thriving boys' choir, however, that they retain an esprit de corps independent of the girls. This will be easily accomplished, though perhaps it will take a bit more conscious effort. I can well imagine, for example, saying at a Wednesday boys' practice, "Now guys, you're not going to let those girls out-sing you on Sunday, are you?" We all know that the competitive spirit is particularly present in many boys! Otherwise the commitment and schedule for boys and their parents

will remain exactly the same.

The girls will see more changes. The predominant reason for this is that they will be singing Evensong weekly, rather than Mass at 9:00 a.m. This involves much more music, and generally more demanding music, which will be a more comprehensive musical training vehicle than the 9:00 am Mass. It will inevitably involve more rehearsal time due to the increased musical demands. The girls will once again (as they did until fall 2008) attend rehearsal twice weekly. However, unlike previously, the girls will have the option of attending two out of three rehearsals (offering more flexibility) as the boys do at present. (One of these three rehearsals will be with boys). The rehearsals will be SHORTER than the present two-hour rehearsal. The 4:30 to 6:30p p.m. time slot is far too long for the attention span of young girls in particular. This change will finally give girls at St. Paul's complete

equality with the boys.

What changes will the parish see? Ultimately, I hope a chorister program that flourishes even more strongly than it presently does and in turn is better poised to thrive in the future, with musical standards that are even higher than today. Attendees at Evensong will continue to be drawn into prayer by choral music of the highest standard. Their ears will detect no difference, certainly not negative. The congregation at the 9:00 a.m. Mass will continue to hear an alternative rota of the full parish choir, but without girls joining. Again, the musical result will not suffer in the slightest, as these choral forces will abundantly meet the needs of the 9:00 a.m. liturgy, which has less choral music than the 11:15 a.m. Mass and Evensong. If anything, the parish choir will be able to sing for the 9:00 a.m. congregation some of its more demanding repertoire, something that is difficult at present as there is not sufficient rehearsal time to teach it to the girls.

In return, I am sure the parish will understand that this great music is not created in a vacuum, by musical magicians appearing on Sundays to sing for them. As I noted earlier, it is often easy to expect stellar music and world-class music making as norm, but it is always challenging to achieve this. One challenge of maintaining three “principal” choirs with equal and adequate resources for all, is the need to employ at least two, if not three, full-time musicians.

When will these changes take place? Parents will be offered prospective rehearsal schedules in the coming weeks (again, the boys’ schedule is not likely to change at all) with the opportunity to voice concerns as to its practicality. The new model could be phased in as soon as January 2012, though over the spring, I will be more lenient with the girls particularly, as I can hardly expect

them to immediately re-adjust to attending two weekday rehearsals. (Additionally, it may be possible for both boy and girl probationers to initially attend once a week only, allowing them to “get their toes wet” without the onslaught of the full commitment.)

Boys’ parents should rest assured that their sons’ experiences will not suffer in the slightest—in fact the contrary—and to continue their firm dedication to their commitment. Any concerns from their boys about performing with girls should be discussed as above, with the assurance that singing is just as much for them as for girls, and that they should do their “team” proud (the boys’ choir) and not allow the girls to better them!

Girls’ parents are asked to make every effort to build this new initiative into their schedules, as it will exponentially increase the musical experience for their daughters. An independent girls’ esprit de corps will be maintained as well. It is hoped that the flexibility of choosing which rehearsals to attend will aid in maintaining the schedule. Again, I will be understanding about scheduling conflicts, provided that each give it their best effort.

I would not propose this change if I did not believe—firmly and with great excitement—that it will only carry our program to the next level. In fact, if I did not value this program so greatly, I would be content to maintain it as at present, albeit with the enhanced risk of its stumbling or failing. I ask for your support, trust, patience and good humor as we, without fear, take this next step in growing our chorister program.

If you have a youngster interested in joining the boys or girls choir, or know of other parents with youngsters who might be interested, please contact me: mccormick@stpauls-kst.com.

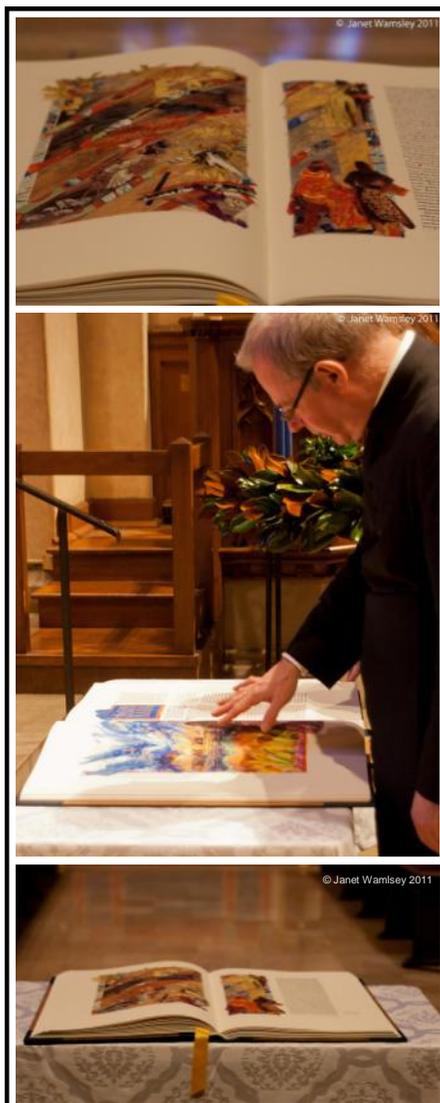


Look Upon God-inspired Beauty

The Co-editors

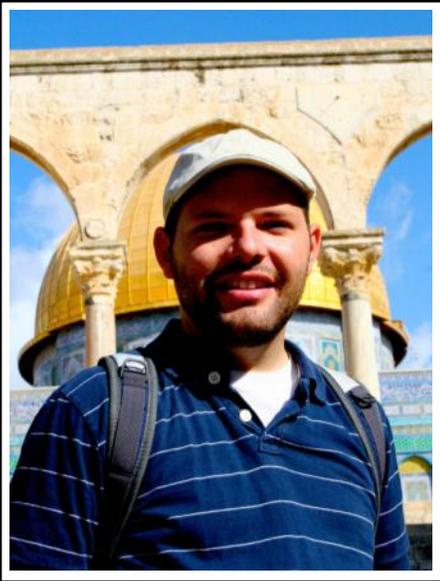
A facsimile of the Gospel and Acts volume of the St. John’s Bible from St. Johns, Collegeville MN was on loan to the parish during the season of Advent. This valuable and extraordinarily beautiful volume was used liturgically at Sunday services and afterwards was made available for supervised closer inspection.

One of the regular photographic contributors to the Parish, Janet Wamsley, captured these moments:



Finding Faith in Jerusalem

Editors Note: This Address was given by Mr. Matthew Welch to the 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services on November 27, 2011.



Matthew Welch

“Go forth and preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary.” Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Amen.

My name is Matthew Welch. I am a member of this parish and a postulant for ordination to the priesthood. And I am so incredibly humbled and grateful to have the honor of speaking to you this morning. I am grateful also to Fr. Andrew for this opportunity, and I am grateful beyond words to God for sending him to us, a man with such a clear vision of the kingdom of heaven, an ability to describe it in great detail, and who shows us all the ways in which our own sinews connect to the Body of Christ.

I have recently returned from two years in Jerusalem where I was a member of the US Foreign Service. The idea of speaking before you all today came from a discussion Fr. Andrew and I had about my experiences in Jerusalem. I explained

to him that I saw the church in Jerusalem in what I thought was its fullest potential: to live out the Gospels in a part of the world where God’s grace—battered and desecrated—seems wafer thin.

My impression of the Holy Land were influenced by my work at the US Consulate General. I was charged with reporting on the full range of human rights abuses in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Each week I was in the field with a camera and notepad, chronicling man’s dehumanization of the other. I met frequently with a group of Italian nuns who provided the only education service for children in greater Bethlehem with learning disabilities. When Israel’s separation barrier between the West Bank and Israel is complete, it will wrap around the nun’s school, effectively shuttering its 70-year operation.

I visited a minefield in the Palestinian village of Husan, a remnant from the 1967 war. The Israeli government would not allow for the mines’ removal, and they prohibited the villagers from posting warning signs near the field. The signs, they told us, lacked permits. Five people from the village died. I spent a great deal of time meeting with Palestinian children arrested, interrogated, tried and sentence in Israeli military courts. Seven hundred children as young as nine each year are ripped from their homes in the middle of the night.

The most difficult thing to stomach was the demolition of Palestinian homes—homes with kids and toys and family heirlooms—by the Jerusalem Municipality in what city officials described as an enforcement of local building ordinances. I watched as the police in

riot gear approached, the family strong-armed from their home, and the bulldozers escorted in to tear away the bricks and mortar and whatever belongings get tangled up among the rubble.

I struggled to separate this from my pilgrimage. Over time I lost my ability to reconcile my enthusiasm with being here in the Holy Land with what I was witnessing each day. I was no longer able to force these two discordant experiences into their own emotional compartments. My mind tired from the exercise, and I began to wonder if these two emotions—my faith in Christ and its heritage in this city, and my disgust with what I was seeing each day—were related. Was this apart of my pilgrimage?

My friends, Jerusalem is broken. It has been for thousands of years. It was before Christ came and taught and died and rose again, and it’s been broken since and will be for the near future. But God still loves it. God still holds out hope that we, in our fallibility can make the whole exercise work. God sent himself in the body of Christ to Jerusalem—not to the beach front decadence of Pontius Pilate’s Caesarea—but to a city always at odds with itself, always twisted up, but always under God’s watchful eye. Because for every person I saw commit evil in that city, I knew many more who tirelessly worked to reverse it. That’s God at work.

God loves Jerusalem in its brokenness and calls it and the people who love it, daily, to work towards a better future. We stumble, we make bad decisions. But we also pick ourselves up and we try again. In that way, we—the present day disciples of Christ—are much like the city that crucified him. We are broken. But God doesn’t give up on us! God calls us to be better tomorrow than we were today, to live a life which reflects the graciousness and glory of our Lord. We respond to the brokenness by

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living out our faith in our streets, our homes and offices, in the interaction of ourselves with ourselves and the gifts we bring to others.

Here is the great irony of my pilgrimage: I could see the Mount of Olives, the Temple Mount, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of Christ's crucifixion and burial, all from my apartment balcony. But it wasn't the close proximity to things holy that bolstered my faith. It was experiencing the depths of man's inhumanity in the land where God taught us how to be humane. It was seeing indignity in cities like Bethlehem where dignity 2,000 years ago was defined. In Jerusalem, the divinity of Christ and his charge for us as people of God in a 21st Century world are married together. Christ came to heal a broken world, and for us to be Christ-like, we are to do the same.

Because, it's in the brokenness of our world that God presents to us the potential of our faith. It's in the wilderness of our lives that God calls us to reflect his most Holy Light to those who need it, to reveal the glory of our Lord. And he sent his son Jesus Christ to show us how it's done.

My favorite spot in Jerusalem was the Church of Dominus Flevit on the Mount of Olives. As you come through the barren desert of Judea from Jericho and crown the Mount of Olives, you see luscious green hills, and in the middle, Jerusalem. The chapel here commemorates the moment when Jesus sees the city—in

all its ordained holiness and yet utter disrepair—and he weeps. He doesn't turn his back, he doesn't spit at its gates. He cries. And he calls Jerusalem to be better through an act of selflessness that ripped the curtains of the Temple. He is crucified, for the city, its people, the Kingdom of the Jews, the citizens of Rome, and you and me.

I felt like I was a better Christian in Jerusalem than I ever was before. The trappings and comfort of this world were raced far away from me; it was me alone in the desert confronting "unspeakable ungodliness." I clung to my Christ like a life raft in hostile waters. And there is something remarkable about witnessing Christ in the depths of earthly hell.

One's faith kicks in like instinct, the clarity of goodness and evil make judgment and action much more decisive. Our Lord Christ thrives in the muck, because the Light of Christ is most needed in darkness.

I had the great privilege of "adopting" several Marines in Jerusalem, 21 and 22 year olds away from their families, often for years, many transferring from Iraq or Afghanistan. We mentored one, then two, then four and eventually ten. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life, and through it God articulated a long dormant call to the priesthood through the ministry of military chaplaincy.

One of the most defining hallmarks of Marines is the

unwavering-ness of their commitment and discipline to their service to country and to one another. These young men and women were far from perfect, but they were masters at this. They taught me a great deal and made me a better man. And though most of them were not particularly religious, they set a remarkable example of Christ's servant spirit. See, these men didn't spend a lot of time rationalizing or debating the tangible benefits of their actions. If you asked them, "Why did you serve in Afghanistan, Iraq, Japan, or Haiti?" They didn't respond, "Well, I appreciated the strategic benefits of our presence in the Far East, or the potential for a stable Middle East through training local security forces, or that earthquake relief would bolster the public perceptions of the United States in the central Caribbean." They didn't say this, thanks be to God. They said . . . "I did it because it was my job. It is who I am. I am a Marine, and I worked along side other Marines who needed me." Case closed.

Imagine that selflessness.

Another angle . . . in Jerusalem the Christian community is dwarfed by the Jewish and Muslim communities. Many Jews and Muslims are deeply committed to their faith. They use the term "observant." I am an observant Jew, an observant Muslim. We don't use that terminology, and I always wondered what it would look like if we did. What is an "observant Christian?" There are no dietary restrictions on us. We are free to use electrical devices, or drive our cars on our sabbath day. We are not defined by these things.

But we are defined by our ability to mirror our Christ, in our corporate worship—which we in this parish do with unceasing commitment—and in our communities. Outside these doors.

Imagine what blind commitment to Christ would look like on K Street. Imagine our neighbors seeing us in action from across the street and saying, “Ah, yes, that there is a Christian.” Imagine when asked, “why do you do these things?” that we all responded, “Because it’s our job. It’s who we are. We are Christians, and we work along side other Christians who need us.” That’s faith as muscle memory. And it can honor, bless, aid, rebuild, re-consecrate and bring closer to our Christ anything we are so called to by God. It is the Holy Spirit in our hands, our feet, the fruits of our labor, and it is good.

Think of it this way. When a family prays for help after the flood, God also speaks to you and me to help. Through us he fulfills prayers. We are agents of God; God’s emissaries in the wilderness. And the wilderness is so vast.

I know I am not saying anything radical here. This is basic stuff! But stuff through time I began to overlook. See, nobody calls you out when you don’t participate in the Grate Patrol. No one fines you for not giving to the Commission on Mission’s funds for Malawi or the Middle East. There is no Salvation Army bell ringer standing next to me when I balance my check book.

There is, I admit, most often nothing gratifying in the near term in supporting these things. We don’t get to meet any of the kids at the school in Jordan when we sign our checks. Our children don’t attend their school. We don’t see any tangible results from our giving and service. When we are told it supported the installation or air conditioners or furniture, we are admittedly underwhelmed.

But we must see our giving as God sees it. As our brothers in Christ see it. We are not just installing a new hot water heater. We are

providing hope. We are not just improving the infrastructure. We are assuring others that God answers prayers. We are increasing faith in our Lord through our living out of our generosity as Christ lived out his generosity, being pushed not to a point of personal discomfort but well beyond it. All the way to the cross. Our sacrifices for others—while much smaller than that of Jesus—mirror that love of him. And in so doing, we spread faith like wildfire. And we wrap it in hope of a redeeming God who loves us all, on earth and in the life to come.

Each morning in Jerusalem on my daily walk with my dog Barnabas through the park, I saw the tower of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. It always reminded me of our Lord’s resurrection. How desperate and broken those disciples of Christ must have felt to see him hang dead on the cross. But we know his story doesn’t end there. Anything in Jerusalem is possible if you give it three days.

Let us go forth into our communities and offer our neighbors and our strangers the hope the Christ offered us through his resurrection. Let us mirror him in our own selflessness. And let us please God in so doing—not in saying, not in praying or in hoping for—but in so doing. May those outside our walls feel comfort as we do in the knowledge that a broken world is always redeemable through Christ.

I’d like to end with one last story from my time in Jerusalem; because for all I did there, I left with regret. It’s a fitting story in this, the first Sunday of Advent. I always wondered what it would have been like to have turned the Virgin Mary and her most chaste husband away from the inn that cold night in Bethlehem. I wonder every Advent if I have prepared a room in my own heart and in my living out of my faith for the Christ child. The most

challenging thing, of course, is defining what that room would look like. Because, as the Gospel this morning said, God calls us to service in unexpected, midnight hours.

A casual acquaintance of mine was the community leader of a small Arab neighborhood in East Jerusalem. We had a nice rapport. His wife was an incredible cook. One day he called, and he left a voice message saying that several homeowners in the neighborhood had received notifications from the Jerusalem Municipality that their homes were slated for random demolition. For reasons that will haunt me for the rest of my life, I never called him back.

In retrospect, I didn’t want him to think I could fix the neighborhood’s problems. My job was to represent my country, not be everyone’s American superhero, out to save the world. He called several more times and left more voice mails. Each one was more frantic than the last. The city had delivered fresh demolition orders, he said, and the neighborhood was panicking. I knew I could have helped him. I knew who to call in the municipality to stay the demolitions. But I didn’t want to set a precedent. I couldn’t save every home in the city slated for demolition. And I, frankly, didn’t appreciate him putting his problem on my shoulders.

He called back once again and again I ignored his call. At my leisure I checked his voicemail. I’ll never forget it. I’ll never bury my regret. He said clearly: “Matthew. For six months we have been calling you. We have needed your help. Today the bulldozers came. Five homes are demolished. Five families are on the street tonight.

“We called you to help us, and you didn’t not answer. You did not come.”



M3—Mission, Mzuzu, Malawi: Supporting the Sisters and Children of St. Mary's Convent Sister House at Luwinga

The Epistle Co-Editors: part of this content has been incorporated from the St. Mary's Messenger, courtesy of Mother Miriam.

At the end of November, Mother Miriam, the Mother Superior of St. Mary's Convent, Greenwich, New York visited St. Paul's. She preached at both 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. Masses and, in between, gave a talk to parishioners on the continuing work of St. Mary's Sister House, in Luwinga, Mzuzu, Malawi, which St. Paul's Parish has been supporting.

The Commission on Mission's initial goal for end-of-year fund-raising has been to fund 10 secondary school scholarships for AIDS orphans the Sisters in Luwinga have been assisting, a total cost of \$3,550. The good news is that St. Paul's met its initial goal and can fund 11 scholarships. Fr. Andrew presented Mother Miriam with a check for \$2,000 out of CoM resources. Another \$940 in contributions was raised during her visit, triggering a



match from the Carwithen outreach bequest of \$775.

At the same time, there are many more young people who will not be able to go to school. We need generous donors to make it possible to increase the number of scholarships we can fund.

Mother Miriam spoke and gave presentation on her recent visit with the Sister House at Luwinga, where St. Paul's earlier contributions have been making a difference to lives, self-sufficiency and ability of the Sisters to support the broader community.

St. Paul's K St. Memorial Chicken House!

Mother Miriam outlined how the building that we have contributed to was originally planned to support chicken raising as an income earner. She noted that the success of raising chickens had caught on so quickly in the surrounding area that an abundance supply of chickens made the venture difficult to sustain.

As a result, you know what they say about lemons and lemonade. Needless to say, the Sisters are very good at making lemonade! The St.

Paul's K Street Memorial Chicken House has been re-purposed by Sr. Martha as the Ecclesiastical Sewing Department! The House's windows have been framed in glass and an electrician has wired the house for irons and sewing machines with earnings from sewing clergy shirts.

Sister Jane's Life Profession

During Mother Miriam's visit, she shared in the celebration of Sr. Jane's (see picture below) Life Profession. This was the first Life Profession in six years in St. Mary's Convent on either side of the Atlantic. Most of the Sisters at Luwinga in 2011 studied for the Malawi School Certificate of Education examination. It was decided to wait until everyone finished their studies so that plans for the profession could be made.

The ceremony was a tremendous celebration with over four hundred people involved. Malawians understand the Bride of Christ imagery within a monastic profession, so much of the festivities were patterned on a wedding. The



The Community in Malawi, back row: the Rev'd Clement Matewera of St. George's, Zomba (Sr. Jane's rector); The Right Rev'd Brighton Malasa, Bishop Associate, Diocese of the Upper Shire; the Rt. Rev'd Fanuel Magangani, Bishop of Northern Malawi, Associate and the Sisters' Visitor; the Rev'd Arthur Chitowe, Convent Chaplain; and the Rev'd Masitala, Chaplain to Bishop Malasa; **standing in front:** CSM Sisters Silvia, J., Monica, Jane, and Martha.

profession was held in the open air outside St. George's church, Mzuzu, and the Malawi Broadcasting Company covered the ceremonies on the radio.

Sr. Jane's parents "gave her away" to Mother Miriam at the beginning of the service. St. Agnes' girls danced as bridesmaids. Sr. Jane made the public proclamation of her vows which were put upon the altar and

received the profession from Bishop Fanuel Magangani.

Bishop Brighton Malasa from Sr. Jane's Diocese of Upper Shire, preached in English a strong sermon on Romans 12:1-2, the living sacrifice of a religious vocation. A lovely reception luncheon was held in St. George's Mzuzu, Parish Hall.



Other CoM News

The CoM has conducted two end-of-the-year fundraising efforts; one of which is described on Page 13. The second relates to **St. Savior's School** in Jordan, as part of our support for Christians in the Holy Land.

We hope to fund much needed repairs to the lavatories the students use. Our 2011 goal is \$5,500, just over half the total cost. \$3,500 of that will come from CoM funds and we approved a \$1000 match from the Carwithen bequest. Again, it is your generosity that will trigger the match and help us reach our target.



Also worth noting, orders for the Diocesan cookbook yielded over \$400 for the Diocesan Hunger Fund.



YOU ARE NEEDED! - CAN YOU HELP?

St. Paul's strives to apply our talent, time, and treasure to reach out and uplift those in need, both in our neighborhood and across the world. We welcome your involvement in:

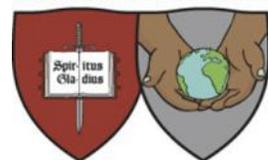
Grate Patrol – Delivery of Breakfast to Washington's homeless population

- Food Preparation: 2.30-4.30pm every Friday; Contact Lucky Ajueyitsi: akpoyoma@hotmail.com
- Food Delivery: 5:30am each Saturday & Sunday, Contact Glenn Marsh: Marsh_Glenn@emc.com
- Bag Set-up: Anytime before 3pm Friday; Contact Tina Mallett (202-965-9324 or tmallett@si.edu).

First Fridays – On the first Friday of each month, St. Paul's provides an evening meal for 100 homeless persons to be delivered from a special Salvation Army vehicle. Preparation help is needed (5:30 - 7:00 pm in the church kitchen). Contact Nancie Majkowski at (nmajkows@ngs.org, 202-857-7115 or 301-513-9563).

Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) is committed to training and developing neighborhood leaders, to addressing community issues such as homelessness, poverty, and injustice, and to holding elected and corporate officials accountable in Washington. Volunteers are desired to join in advocacy efforts and represent St. Paul's at meetings. Contact Deacon Eric Lobsinger: elobsinger@stpauls-kst.com

SAINT PAUL'S PARISH
COMMISSION ON MISSION



JANUARY ON K STREET

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS AT ST. PAUL'S PARISH

1 Linda DeBerry Ranell Schlatter	17 Richard Best Henry Holst Shanu Okwesa
4 Carol Berger Russ Nobile	19 Glen Koontz
6 Margaret Humphrey Sarah (Liz) Ryon	20 William Heron David McGaw
8 William Buzby Frank Parlier Eric Petersen Emerson Sieverts	21 John Crane Mark Freeland
9 Penelope Wilhelm	23 William Starrett Jr. USN (Rtd)
10 Laurita Liles Atlee Shidler Jeanne Smith	24 Michael Cunningham Caroline Cunningham William O'Brien
11 Peter Agnew Catherine Ballinger Linna Barnes	25 Margaret Haynes John Malcolm
14 Grace Buzby Edward Loucks	26 William Dame Grace Koontz
	27 Andrew Darmstadter
	28 David Parker
	31 Mildreth Thorberg

Marriages

Jim Meeks and Jennifer Shevchek, December 10, 2011

Transfers In

Daniel and Louise Oliver from Ascension and St. Agnes, Washington, DC
John and Mary Lee Malcolm from Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Washington, DC

Instated

Robert D. Slough

Transfer Out

Michael Hendron to Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, CA

PASTORAL CARE NEEDS?

Please make your needs known to the Pastoral Care Team. Also, let them know of others who may need their assistance.

You can complete one of the blue pastoral care cards found in the pews and place it either in the offering plate or in the box provided at the Visitors' desk in the atrium. You can telephone 202 337 2020 and leaving a message on extension 31; or email pastoralcare@stpauls-kst.com, or go to the website, www.stpauls-kst.com, click on "ministries," then "pastoral care request." If you would like to volunteer to be part of the pool of pastoral care volunteers providing assistance please email pastoralcare@stpauls-kst.com.



SPECIAL SERVICES

Sunday, January 1, 2011 | The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

7:30 am: Morning Prayer
7:45 am: Low Mass
9:00 am: Sung Mass
11:15 am: Solemn Mass
6:00 pm: Solemn Evensong and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday, January 6, 2012 | The Epiphany

6:45 am: Morning Prayer
7:00 am: Low Mass
5:30 pm: Prayers at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham
5:45 pm: Evening Prayer
6:30 pm: Procession and Solemn Mass

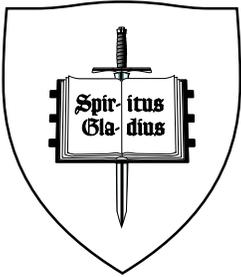
Sunday, January 8, 2012 | The Baptism of Our Lord

7:30 am: Morning Prayer
7:45 am: Low Mass
9:00 am: Sung Mass
11:15 am: Solemn Mass
6:00 pm: Epiphany Procession with Lessons and Carols, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

Sunday, January 29, 2012 | Patronal Feast: Conversion of St. Paul

7:30 am: Morning Prayer
7:45 am: Low Mass
9:00 am: Procession and Sung Mass
11:15 am: Procession and Solemn Mass
6:00 pm: Solemn Evensong and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament





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Remember to Mark your Calendars!

January 08, 2012— The Baptism of our Lord

January 29, 2012— Patronal Feast: Conversion of St. Paul



Annibale Carracci (1584) The Baptism of Christ
in San Gregorio, Bologna.