



St Luke the Evangelist  
Icon from the Royal Gates of the Kazan  
Cathedral of St. Petersburg  
Vladimir Borvikovsky (1757-1825)

# THE EPISTLE

OF SAINT PAUL'S PARISH—K STREET

AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

OCTOBER 2018 XXXI I NUMBER 9

## Giving Community

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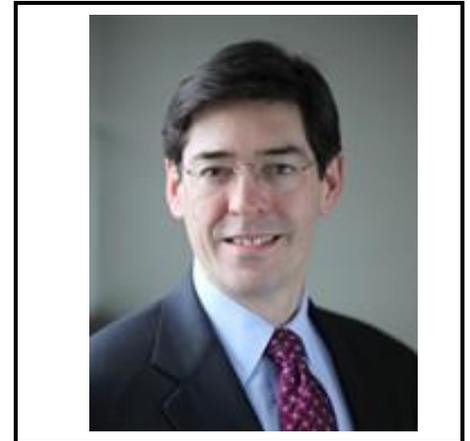
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St. Paul's annual pledge campaign will commence on Sunday, October 7. On this day, we will celebrate the Feast of the Dedication in a single Mass at 10:30 a.m. Thereafter will follow a parish lunch and the start of the pledge campaign.

The theme of this year's campaign is "Giving Community." It is recognition of two essential parts of Christianity – giving and community. Fundamental to our religion, they are also part of every pledge campaign.

Pledge campaigns are about giving. The obvious part is the gift of money. But there is more to it than that. A pledge doesn't have to be financial. It could also be a service you perform. Or it might be as simple as your very presence in the congregation of faithful.

A pledge is a promise to try to do something positive for someone else. It can take many forms. But no matter what the form, it is always a gift, freely given, no strings attached,



DAVID SCHNORREBERG

entirely and utterly Christ-like and Christian.

Pledge campaigns are also about community. The Church doesn't exist as a result of one person's pledge. It requires a community of promises. Those gifts come from all manner of God's children. And there is something magical about what happens when those gifts are brought together. The gifts are like the joiinder of parish-



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ioner hands. They form a network of love, care and concern. The gifts form community.

Pledge campaigns are also about planning the mission of the parish community – asking what we want to accomplish, and what we can accomplish, as a giving community in the coming year. Financial ability is part of that equation. As we contemplate giving community, we should consider our current financial state. The last several years have seen St. Paul's pledge numbers and pledge income decrease substantially. In 2010, we had 260 pledgers contributing \$888,000. Last year, we had 162 pledgers contributing \$631,000.

As a parish, we should be working hard to increase the number of our financial contributors. Meanwhile, our financial reality underscores the importance of each financial pledge from our existing membership and where possible an increase in the amount of those pledges above the amount given last year. Increased pledges will help ensure maintenance of the worship, pastoral care, formation, outreach, and evangelism that we hope to give to our community inside and outside the walls of St. Paul's.

Whatever we do in 2019 depends on giving community. With that thought in mind, the 2019 pledge campaign will launch on October 7.



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# Make it New

Dr. Jeffrey Smith, Director of Music

Situated as we are, in a center of culture, it's tempting to view our liturgical music as a 'program,' among the niche-market attractions of, say, the Kennedy Center or the Bach Consort. Some might describe us (perhaps negatively) as a 'boutique parish.' By economic reality if no other motivation, Saint Paul's has had to narrow its brief; we cannot, perhaps should not, attempt a generalist approach to liturgy. We presume that liturgy is sung, often chorally. The lurking danger, perhaps, is that we take for granted the extraordinary *ministry* of musicians—and in this cohort I include every congregant who sings with skill or who sings with vigor. Or who sings.

The notion of a 'traditional' parish choir is surprisingly recent; the Tractarians replaced West Gallery singers and rugged metrical psalms with surpliced choirs up front. Here we recall Churchill's maxim: "We shape our buildings and thereafter our buildings shape us." In emulating cathedral practice, the Tractarians advocated for 'decently and in good order,' yes, but they also legitimized a dangerous architectural trend: en-

closed, platform-like choir stalls intended for singers only. This is not at all the best ethos in which to experience choral worship. Ideally, congregation and choir play on the same team and share the same court. In the huge 'Quire' of an English cathedral, listeners in the stalls are, by virtue of their placement and posture, unlikely to confuse Evensong with a concert. But most of us worship in smaller acreage, with our singers architecturally segregated. We must guard against perceiving music as something generated by Those Experts Up There.

Recently, Fr. Richard mused on his visit to a Boston gallery:

*Embracing our heritage does not mean being a dusty repository of what once was—a shrine of blank walls and empty frames—but a way of giving our inheritance fresh expression and voice in the here and now. We are not a museum, but a living, breathing Body called into life by God for action, vibrancy, and purpose: we have work to do!*

It would be easy, in our enthusiastic Anglophilia, to forget that the musicians of the Oxford Movement were, like their clergy, *countercultural*.

'Establishment' figures like Ouseley, Wesley, Helmore, and Stainer rolled up their sleeves to improve the quality of church music, its devotional setting and its performance standard. Their gaze exceeded mere antiquarianism or ceremonial minutiae. Though they'd have abhorred the phrase, they were all about 'building community'

One of the aspects which I love and respect about Saint Paul's is the oscillation we enjoy between expert choral singing and hearty congregational singing. Our devoted choir members are energized in a ministry. They sing *with* and *for* the congregation, not *at them* or *to them*. Our congregational singing is equally fervent. To my mind, 'participatory worship' is not so much about *who* is talking, *who* is singing; rather, that *all* present cultivate a shared sense of prayer.

Whether bogglingly complex or dirt-simple, our music must become a living and breathing offering. And in this, we do well to remember Wagner's pre-performance command to his orchestra, after hundreds of hours of rehearsing the Ring Cycle: "Children, make it new!"



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# Summer Chapel on Hatteras Island

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Eric Grubb, Seminarian



The Anglican/Episcopal Church has a rich history on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. On August 18, 1587, the first English child born in the colonies, Virginia Dare, was baptized. Three days later Manteo was the first Native American to be baptized. However, with the mysterious disappearance of the “Lost Colony” on Roanoke Island it would be almost 300 years before the Episcopal Church would return to the Outer Banks.

In 1849, the summer retreat chapel, All Saint’s, was built in Nags Head. All Saint’s was torn down during the Civil War and the materials were used

to make a shelter for runaway slaves seeking refuge on Roanoke Island. In 1916 a new summer chapel was built, St. Andrews by-the-sea. That chapel is now a thriving parish in Nags Head and the 1916 chapel is still in use today.

This summer, the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina decided to start a new summer chapel on Hatteras Island about an hour south of Nags Head. I was lucky enough to be one of the two seminarians leading this new summer chapel. On my way down to the Outer Banks, I had no idea what to expect for the summer. We had no building, no programming, and only had contact with one family on that part of the island. After a few days of planning and getting to know our summer neighbors we were able to get to work.

We offered two services during the week, Sunday Morning Prayer on the beach by the Hatteras lighthouse and Wednesday Evening Prayer at a local Roman Catholic church. In between services we set up a booth at the

local farmers market, started a youth group, planned special activities and services for the 4th of July, and helped at St. Andrew’s Vacation Bible School. We quickly discovered that there were many Episcopalians who lived on that part of the island but because St. Andrew’s was an hour away they no longer attended. We were surprised to see as the summer went on that our regular attendance was growing and most attendees were locals. By the end of the summer we were doing more than setting the framework for future summer chapels but also helping the diocese look at ways to establish a year-round worshipping community on Hatteras.

At a time when it is easy to feel overwhelmed with the “doom and gloom” messages of waning church attendance and of congregations struggling to stay open, this summer has given me new hope in seeing the start of a new worshipping community on Hatteras Island.



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## Emmaus, Five Weeks of Learning Together and Diving Deeper

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Luke’s Gospel describes a scene (Luke 24:13-35) more familiar than we might first think: two disciples walking away from Jerusalem after the horror of Good Friday. On their way to Emmaus they meet a man, and describe the sadness of all they were leaving behind. They persuade the stranger to eat with them - and in the breaking of bread they suddenly recognize Jesus. *Have you ever experienced an unexpected intervention when you were feeling down?*

Conversion and transformation — finding and recognizing Jesus — is the tone and rhythm of our entire Christian life and journey. This fall we

offer a formation program geared for all seeking a deeper relationship with Christ, regardless of where we find our Emmaus and what it may mean to us. Fr. Richard will lead us, using resources from *Pilgrims in Christ*, a program of spiritual growth used here in years past, along with support and inspiration from *With Burning Hearts, A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life*, a tiny but powerful book by Henri Nouwen. *Would you like to enrich your life with a deeper sense of hope?*

Learning together and diving deeper in small groups and in community is a proven way of changing lives. Whether you are new to the faith, or a

seasoned Episcopalian, we hope and believe that this program might be transformative for you. *Is there any part your life that you would like transformed?*

Commitment converts. So we ask for an initial commitment of five Wednesday evenings, 6:30-8:30, beginning October 10th (omitting October 31st) in the Dining Hall. It would be helpful to know how many people to plan for, **so please email [jeannsmith2430@gmail.com](mailto:jeannsmith2430@gmail.com) as soon as possible if you plan to join us on October 10.**

Join us in learning together and diving deeper!

# On Matters of the Soul

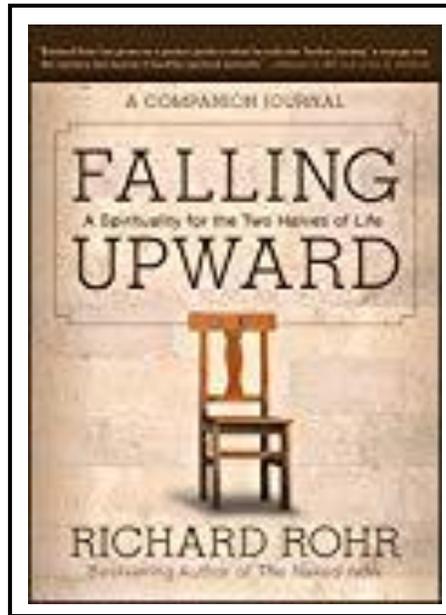
Ed Loucks

Our Monday evening fellowship and spiritual formation group has started a new book by Fr. Richard Rohr entitled *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. The title raises eyebrows, so let's look into what it means.

How does Fr. Rohr divide our lives into two halves? Not by the number of years we have lived, that's for certain. He suggests that we spend the first part of our life jumping to the commands of our materialistic culture. We work hard in school, get good grades, earn more degrees and certificates, obtain good jobs, win promotions, buy a nice house and a cool car, and garner the praise of our friends, family and associates. It's all about competition—getting there first.

Some of us never get beyond this stage of life. On our deathbed, we will say, "I wish I had spent more time at the office!" This is because we live in a culture that reinforces and rewards grasping and gaining, winning at all costs. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Things are in the saddle, and ride mankind." He wrote that about 150 years ago, and it's more true today than ever. The people who seem to have the most difficulty reaching the second half, according to Fr. Rohr, are the "rich and the religious." Jesus warns us often of how hard it is for the rich to get into heaven, and His most caustic language is directed at the legalistic Pharisees.

Even our churches are prisoners of our culture. Growth is the measure of success. We have to be cool, so we can attract cool, young people. We sing happy, clappy choruses, reading the lyrics projected on overhead screens, accompanied by garage bands, while a "worship team" dances



and claps on stage, where the high altar should be. Choirs made up of people each holding their own handheld mic, half a dozen sermonettes, none longer than 5 minutes, delivered by cheerleaders in jeans and black, form-fitting T-shirts. The congregation sits in theater-style chairs, watching the show as if we were in a movie house, demanding to be entertained. If we are not sufficiently humored, we go church-shopping.

What does the second half of life look like? A Scottish theologian named William Barclay tells us, "There are two great days in a person's life—the day we are born and the day we discover why." Fr. Rohr is writing to us about discovering why. He acknowledges that we live in a "first half of life culture," largely concerned about surviving successfully, with the measure of success dictated by others. When we open the door to discovering why we were born, we begin a dazzling new journey that will last the rest of our lives. And we do it best with the help and companionship

of others who are on the same journey with us. And we pray that God will give us the kind of wisdom that comes from Him—see James 3:13-18:

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace."

This kind of wisdom from God is promised to those who pray.

Some people come to the second half of life early in years. They respond to God's call to a life of service, and they never turn back. Others come later. I'm told that the average age of people entering seminary is 43 – people who heed God's call after having experienced what the culture has to offer. Whenever the seeker opens the door to the second half of life, the experience is unique to that individual. No two are just alike. Each person must walk the journey in faith and trust. It helps to have companions walking with us on this journey.

And we are just getting started in Fr. Rohr's challenging study!



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# Ritual and Revolution: Conrad Noel and the Catholic Crusade

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*Editors' Note: Presentation given at St. Paul's on Wednesday, September 19. All present thought this should be shared with those who were unable to attend.*

John Orens

On 10 May 1910, Ernest Maxted, the vicar of the hamlet of Tilty in the English county of Essex, traveled to the neighboring village of Thaxted. In the medieval guild hall he addressed anxious villagers, urging them to welcome their new vicar, the notorious Catholic socialist, Conrad Noel. But Maxted was himself a controversial character, well known for his radical politics and ritualistic religion. His audience soon become restless and the meeting turned into a riot. Maxted was knocked down and had to flee under police escort, shouting as he was led away, *"I have chastised you with whips. One is coming who will chastise you with scorpions!"* Maxted was delighted with his performance. Recounting his adventure to Noel, he remarked cheerfully, "There, Conrad, I've prepared the way for you!" Noel was appalled and quickly set about reassuring his parishioners that he had not come to turn their world upside down. And doubtless he was sincere. But, in fact, he had come to turn their world—indeed, the whole world—upside down, and he had been brandishing a fistful of scorpions for some time.

Conrad Ledespenser Roden Noel was born in 1869 on the grounds of the royal palace at Kew where his father, an aspiring writer and the second son of the Earl of Gainsborough, was groom of the privy chamber. But Noel truly sprang from that secret place where poets, prophets, and pranksters are born. As a youth he had shocked his parents by denouncing marriage as an affront to Christian liberty. He

went up to Cambridge only to be sent down for the zeal with which he evaded lectures for the pleasures of elaborate supper parties, effigy burning, and serenading the young ladies at Newnham College. He never returned and never received a degree. But drawn to Catholic worship by its beauty, and to Catholic mission by the heroic labors of ritualist clergy in the slums, he decided to seek ordination.

Somehow he was admitted to Chichester Theological College where his gift for unsettling authority continued. He urged the Principal to invite Protestant Dissenters, Jesuits, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists to address the students. He taunted conservative seminarians with quotations culled from the Church Fathers denouncing private wealth.

This was not the path to ecclesiastical preferment. The Bishop of Exeter refused to ordain him to the diaconate. The Bishop of Chester refused to ordain him to the priesthood. And once ordained, Noel carried on as before.

As a curate at St. Philip's, Newcastle, he denounced the Boer War with such ferocity that the munitions workers threatened to blow up the church. Fortunately for Noel, his vicar shared his political and theological proclivities. When Noel reported the threat, the vicar replied, *"My dear Noel, let the preaching go on, as it is the truth; and if we lose our church, which is the ugliest structure in Newcastle, we can build a new one with the insurance money."*

Hiring Noel as your curate was a journey into the unknown. His personality was so winning, and his genius so obvious, that sooner or later an older and wiser priest would take him under his wing. But even those who, like Noel, counted themselves Catholic socialists, were often taken aback

by his revolutionary language and theological daring.

Noel himself acknowledged that his views were hard to categorize. *"I'm a Liberal-Humanist-Democratic Catholic,"* he once joked, *"but you can't go around with a label like that tied to yourself."* Nor, of course, could you hope to find a parish of your own with a label like that"; i.e., unless you found a patron as eccentric as you were. And that is what Noel found in the person of Frances, the socialist countess of Warwick, and it was she who presented him with the living of Thaxted.

Now it is very unlikely that the good countess understood what a liberal-humanist-democratic Catholic might be. We too are apt to be bewildered, for the phrase meant something very different to Noel from what it suggests to us. But if we take time to consider what Noel was trying to say, and why, a world of promise may open before us.

Noel grew up in age of extraordinary ferment. Young people were casting aside their parents' Victorian certainties, embracing the hope of a new life, a new beauty, a new society, and for some, the hope of a bright new faith. Noel was intoxicated by this great tide of aspiration, and his theology is best understood as a theology of yearning.

Christianity, he believed, is a religion of sacramental transformation; a transformation so profound that it demands nothing less than revolution at every level of our being: personal, political, social, and spiritual. Revolution is not a word we associate with the Oxford fathers of Anglo-Catholicism, but it was through them that Noel discovered the Catholic faith. Rather it was through the daring and sometimes reckless priests who lived that faith among the poor. As for doctrine, Noel looked to F. D. Mau-

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*Christianity, Noel believed, is a religion of sacramental transformation; a transformation so profound that it demands nothing less than revolution at every level of our being: personal, political, social, and spiritual.*

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rice, the idiosyncratic theologian whose sense of God's presence in the humblest of things and the humblest of people made him the father of English Christian socialism. It was from such people and from the passions of the age, that Noel forged the sacramental universalism that underlay everything he did.

Like all Catholic Christians, Noel insisted that Christ is truly present in the sacrament of the altar. But he was equally insistent that Christ is truly present in ordinary bread and wine, *"in oil, salt, flowers, water fruit, the colour of the tulip, the secret of the rose, the sounds of the sea, the grace and symmetry of the human body."* "God," he wrote, *"is perpetually thrusting himself into the world below,"* breaking down the wall that pietists have raised between heaven and earth. Because this is so, Noel argued, redemption must be material as well as spiritual, corporate as well as individual. No one can be saved apart from others, for Christ our redeemer is the supreme sacrament in whom the whole of humanity in all its humanity has its being, and through whom it shares in the loving community of the Holy Trinity.

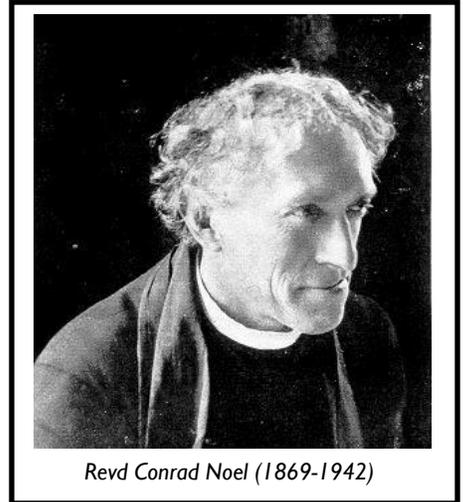
It is this vision of the world set ablaze by the glory of God that inspired Noel's socialism and the apocalyptic rhetoric with which he clothed it. Noel saw God's fiery renewing presence everywhere, and so he was more at home in the eschatological world of the New Testament than were most of his contemporaries. And living as he was in an age of political unrest, from the rise of the Labour Party to the struggles of the suffragettes—he believed that the new world for which he

yearned was about to be born. The very year he came to Thaxted he wrote: *"We are living in the last days, and as the prophet Joel foretold, God is pouring out his spirit on all flesh."* God's mission to the Church was clear. It was to be *"the organ of the Coming Age . . . , the midwife of a new world in the pangs of birth."*

Given his revolutionary ardor, many of Noel's friends were surprised that he had accepted the living of a small Essex town. Even the Countess of Warwick expected him to leave the parish in the hands of a curate while he took to the hustings. But Noel's politics were rooted in his faith, not the other way round. It is in the parish, he was convinced, that God's kingdom must be born and nurtured. Socialist organizations might mobilize multitudes; only the church could raise up saints.

It was Thaxted that would be his life's work. And so, almost as soon as he arrived, he plunged into his pastoral labors, eliminating what he saw as the outward and visible signs of a dreary and disordered class-bound society. He threw out the moldy Bible boxes with which the rich reserved the best seats in the church. He removed machine-made ecclesiastical bric-a-brac and replaced it with handcrafted banners and tapestries. He reformed the liturgy, adopting the English use championed by his fellow Catholic socialist, Percy Dearmer, infusing it with a grace and beauty that no church in England could match.

Not only did he make the worship more beautiful; he made it more democratic. He deprived the choir of its surplices and of its privileged place in the chancel. He opened its member-



Revd Conrad Noel (1869-1942)

ship to women, and —11:15 people beware—he encouraged the congregation to sing the service. On feast days, clergy and people processed together, the women wearing brightly colored scarves and the children bearing garlands of flowers.

Thaxted church was to be a true fellowship, a classless gathering of Christian comrades, united by a common faith, fed at a common board, and engaged in a common struggle for the sacramental world to which all the Church's sacraments bore witness.

Had Noel been a mere political agitator, his zeal for combat could have turned the parish into an ideological bootcamp with all the charm of a military base. But Noel was a Catholic revolutionary. His faith began with joy, it pointed to the coming age of joy, and it embraced the tangible grace of joy here and now.

Only a few months into his ministry, he and his wife Miriam—a gifted artist in her own right—began weaving country dancing, Morris dancing, and folk singing into the fabric of parish life. There was nothing cloying about this, no self-conscious artifice. Rather,

it was an authentic celebration of English country life; one that the villagers took up with abandon. In 1913 Gustav Holst settled in the village. He and Noel became fast friends, and together they organized an annual music festival. Holst eventually left the village, but even then he would return at Christmas to play the organ. As many in our parish know, the lovely melody for the hymn “I Vow to Thee, My Country” bears the name Thaxted because that is where it was written. It was also in Thaxted that Holst wrote his setting for the medieval carol “Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day”; a carol whose words he first read on a sheet of paper that Noel had posted in the church. And this carol would become one of the parish’s most beloved anthems, a musical evocation of Noel’s vision of the world a-dance in God.

In music, in bright colors, and in joyful worship Noel sought to form Thaxted into an image of the heavenly Jerusalem. But he knew that heaven could not be confined to Essex. It would encompass the whole church, the nation, and the world. So it was that on the evening of 10 April 1918, a group of men and women numbering less than a dozen gathered in the vicarage to establish the Catholic Crusade of the Servants of the Most Precious Blood “to break up the present world order and make a new in the power of the Outlaw of Galilee.”

The name was extravagant; the manifesto, written by Noel, was even more so. But its extravagance was rooted in the same faith that you and I profess, as we shall see if we put our politics aside and ponder the manifesto’s appeal:

*If you believe in the Blessed Trinity and a Divine Commonwealth steeped in the worship of the Social God, the Blessed Trin-*

*ity, One-in-Many, Many-in One, Variety-in-Unity, not as a senseless dogmas for Sundays only, but as the basis and meaning of life; if you believe in re-creating the world in the similitude of the Social God, in whom we live and move our being, Help the Catholic Crusade. . . . If you are prepared to fight the soul-savers with their Glory-for-me religion, and to join the soul-losers for Christ’s Cause with their Glory-for-all religion, Help the Crusade. . . . If you understand that membership of the Crusade means the enmity of the world, and especially of the world in its intensest essence, the Clergy; if you understand that you will be thought a crank by the revolutionaries and made an out-cast by the pietists; if you realize that the rebels will suspect you and your religion, and if in spite of this you are prepared to keep your religion well to the fore; if you are prepared to lose your job and your friends; if you are willing to give not only your money or your life, but if necessary your money and your life, Enlist in the Crusade. We ask of you everything; we offer you nothing—nothing but adventure, risks, battle, perhaps ruin; with the love and loyalty of comrades, and the Peace of God which passeth understanding.*

It is not surprising that the Crusade soon attracted a great deal of attention. And it is not surprising that it attracted very few members. Quite apart from its stirring but overwrought language—among other things, the Crusade promised to “shatter the British Empire and all Empires to bits”—Noel deliberately made membership difficult to obtain. Few were the parishes willing to take on a Crusade incumbent, and those incumbents who hired a Crusade cu-

rate often came to regret it. As one exhausted vicar said to his Crusade assistant, “I know that you are doing God’s work, but why, oh why, did he send you to me?”; words that Noel’s evangelical bishop, John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield, surely uttered more than once..

The Bishop of Chelmsford could see that Thaxted church was flourishing. By 1918 it had become something of a shrine for Anglo-Catholics and radicals alike. So many villagers and visitors, especially young people, were flocking to the Sunday mass. But with fame there came trouble, for not every spirit was friendly, and Noel was hard pressed to keep his own spirit in check. Two epic confrontations would follow; confrontations that have become the stuff of Anglo-Catholic legend.

On 19 June 1919, against the express wishes of his bishop, Noel celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi, carrying the Host in a monstrance from the church to the vicarage garden. He then informed the bishop that nine days later, at the midsummer festival, the Host would again be carried in procession, this time through the streets of the village, until it was returned to the church for a service of Benediction. In so doing, he declared, the church would be lifting up the Son of Man as the God of Justice.

And as if to add fuel to the fire, Noel concluded his advertisement for the festival in the *Church Times* with these words: “*The Catholic Crusade welcomes all who wish to join in the procession of the Divine Outlaw and to receive His blessing to encourage them in battle. Mere onlookers are not welcome.*”

On the day appointed, the village was crowded with pilgrims who had come to worship and with Protestant rowdies who had come to stop them. Thanks to a squad of uniformed policemen guarding the procession,

Noel and his supporters could account the day a great success. The bishop did not. He summoned Noel to Chelmsford and demanded that the processions cease forthwith. Noel refused. Both were in danger of losing their temper when the bishop, trying to calm the troubled waters, invited Noel to lunch. To which Noel replied, "I cannot sit at the table of a heretic" and walked out. The bishop promptly placed Thaxted under an interdict. No curate would be licensed and no child confirmed until Noel gave way; which, of course, he would not. The interdict remained, two years passed, and then another battle erupted.

At the beginning of the First World War, Noel had placed the flags of Britain and its allies in the church around an icon of St. George. Later he added a red flag to symbolize the unity of the laboring people of all nations, and the flag of Sinn Fein to honor the Irish struggle for independence. There were complaints about these additions, but nothing came of them.

When the war ended, Noel removed the display and replaced it with just three flags: the red flag, the Sinn Fein flag, and the flag of St. George, England's patron saint. The union jack, he explained, being a flag of empire had no place in a church. Again there were complaints and again no one took much notice; i.e., until 1 May 1921. That day being both a Sunday and the May Day festival of workers, the red flag was carried in procession around the church. Soon after, someone snuck into the church and stole the red flag. Noel brought in a new one, and two weeks later some Cambridge undergraduates stole it and the Sinn Fein flag to boot, and then sent the flags to the bishop. Watts-Ditchfield's fondest hope must have been that the Noel, the flags, and the undergraduates would all go away. They did not.

By this time the news from Thaxted had made its way into the national press. On 24 May, Empire Day, more than a thousand demonstrators carrying union jacks descended on the village, and the village descended into pandemonium. There were fistfights in the streets, the church was invaded, and once again the flags were stolen. Noel's life had been threatened, so H. G. Wells, who was living nearby, drove to the vicarage in his Rolls Royce and offered to spirit Noel away. Noel was determined to stay and emerged from the ordeal unscathed.

But in the weeks that followed the disorders continued. Finally, he was summoned before a consistory court presided over by the chancellor of the diocese. Why not remove the flags?, the chancellor asked. "*You will get on much better without them.*" "*I do not want to get on,*" Noel answered. "*I want to preach the full gospel of Jesus Christ whether I get on or not.*" The chancellor ordered the flags removed and Noel reluctantly complied.

But the day after the judgment, he preached a fiery and unrepentant sermon. "*These ladies and gentlemen who oppose us have the power of destroying much,*" he said. "*They can destroy symbols. They can destroy material things. They can mob us and hurt us. They can hound our people out of office, They can destroy the body, but thanks be to God, they cannot destroy the soul.*"

Years later, Noel expressed regret about the angry tone of his sermon, but this was vintage Conrad Noel: eloquent, faithful, proud, and defiant. And so he would be for the remaining twenty years of his life, all of which he spent as vicar of Thaxted.

In at least one respect they were easier than the twelve years just passed. Bishop Watts-Ditchfield died in 1923, and his successors were far more tolerant of Noel than he had been. The interdict was lifted and

Thaxted was allowed to go its own way. The church continued to flourish, pilgrims still made their way to its doors, and for a time the Crusade kept up its march under St. George's banner.

Noel even found time to write a long and idiosyncratic study of the life of Jesus. But pain and disappointment awaited as well. Noel was diagnosed with diabetes, and despite receiving insulin, by 1935 he was totally blind and had to conduct the services by memory. Some sight returned later, but then he was found to have an inoperable cancer from which he died on 22 July 1942. He had been vicar of Thaxted for thirty-two years.

Noel endured his illnesses with great courage. More difficult for him to endure was his failure to usher in the new church and the new age for which he longed. And the irony is that Noel's expectation that it could be otherwise made his failure all the more likely. Ever hopeful and ever impatient,

Noel plunged ever leftward, isolating himself from the main body of socialists, Christian and secular alike, and from the working people for whom he cared so much. Although he made a sharp distinction between his faith and the ideological structures of the Communist Party, the Crusade and the party became entangled with each other. It was an uncomfortable alliance, not only theologically but also politically, for Noel's socialism had much more in common with William Morris than it did with Karl Marx. While Lenin and Stalin were trying to build an industrial superstate, Noel was rhapsodizing the English countryside with its small farms and cozy pubs. But the Communists promised revolution, and so the Crusade drew close to it; so close that when the party was riven by the dispute between Stalinists and Trotskyists, so was the Crusade. The party

survived the ugly conflict; the Crusade did not.

The same impatience that clouded Noel's political judgment, at times clouded his theological judgment. As Noel told it, the story of Christianity was a saga of heroes and villains; Catholic workers struggling against Protestant capitalists, orthodox democrats warring against heretical tyrants.

Convinced that his own beliefs were orthodox, Catholic, and democratic, Noel castigated his opponents with language that was always pointed and sometimes violent. The violence, moreover, was not always intended to be merely metaphorical. Noel believed that there are turning points in history when the saints can bring heaven closer to earth by a revolutionary act of sanctified will; that force can hasten the coming of the kingdom. And this, as we all know, is not only deluded. It is dangerous.

Noel stirs and enchants us, but the more we seek his legacy, the more we seem to be pursuing a beautiful mirage, like the multitudes who left Thaxted church after Mass, rubbing their eyes in disbelief. Even Reg Groves, Noel's friend and devoted biographer, could only describe the Crusade manifesto as "*a surviving fragment of a dream.*" But, as Noel once observed, "*the life of this world [began as] a dream in the mind of God, just as the City of God is a dream in his mind and in the mind of man.*" There is a substance to our dreams, and there is something about Thaxted that continues to draw men and women to the village and to its church; something that will speak to us if we have but ears to hear.

What might it be? The answers begins with beauty: the haunting loveliness of the church and its worship. Noel reminds us that beauty—be it in Thaxted, on K Street, or in our own homes—is a firm of righteousness, a sign of God's presence, and a revela-



tion of God's character. What is danced on the stage, painted on canvas, or sung in church (or in the shower) is the overflowing love of the Holy Trinity. The wondrous world we enjoy through our senses, the wondrous world to which our imagination give birth: these declare the divinity that binds us together in Christ and point us to the Kingdom of God. And in this kingdom, beauty and justice, righteousness and mercy, will forever kiss, for their root is the egalitarian community that is God's deepest self.

Noel's vision of justice as a trinitarian mystery is one to which we should hold fast in these troubled days. We are all of us too prone to fashion our political preferences into theological icons. Conservatives deify order and continuity, liberals worship the gods of individual freedom and toleration, socialists gather at the shrine of common ownership and economic equality. All these things are good in some measure. But to what end do we pursue them? Noel's answer is simple and humbling and Catholic. Our goal and source, our ending and our beginning, are one and the same: the free and joyful fellowship of the God-graced human family. For all his revolutionary fervor and socialist convictions, Noel cautioned against identifying the kingdom with any secular prescription. Jesus, he wrote, never said that you shall create fellowship "by

means of peasant proprietorship, or by means of feudal ownership, or by means of economic socialism. He did say, You shall carry it into effect." If Noel is right, then we are free; free to begin the hard work of community listening and God listening. This is a time for the theological wrestling that F. D. Maurice called "digging." What we most urgently need are not programs but vision, the courage to dream and the courage to act on our dreams. Daunting challenges await, but that is the price of adventure, and for Noel it was adventure that made life worth living.

Speaking at Noel's funeral, the Bishop of Chelmsford said, "*I believe it to be literally true that Conrad Noel was the greatest personality among the clergy in the diocese, as a student, as a writer, as a religious and political leader, as a man of artistic and musical sense, and most of all as a saint of God.*" And then, after the burial, Reg Groves tells us, Noel passed into "*the tales told by the Essex folk in warm convivial corners on wild winter nights . . . [while] the wind whispered . . . to the quiet ghosts in the churchyard, 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.'*" That same wind is whispering to us, to you and to me. We have all sensed it, have we not? But what word does it bear? Perhaps simply this: Tomorrow shall be my dancing day.



# OCTOBER ON K STREET

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS AT ST. PAUL'S PARISH

2   Joan Miller Sylvia Rortvedt	<b>BIRTHDAY</b> <b>HAPPY</b>	15   Kris Brown Coleman Wilfred Keats
6   Aidan Crane		17   Sally O'Brien
7   Sarah Schnorrenberg Patrick White		23   Elizabeth Schnorrenberg
9   Benjamin Best		24   Patricia Byrd
10   Alistair Coleman		25   Charlotte Gillespie
12   Sarah Barrientos		26   Betty Ajueyitsi
13   Peter Britton		29   Benton Crane
		30   Lydia Taylor Benjamin Kong



## SPECIAL SERVICES

### Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (translated)

**Saturday, October 6, 2018**

12:30: Blessing of Animals, West Lawn (Atrium if inclement weather)

### Feast of Dedication

**Sunday, October 7, 2018**

7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

7:45 a.m. Low Mass

10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass

4:00 p.m. Solemn Evensong & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

### All Saints' Day

**Thursday, November 1, 2018**

6:45 a.m.: Morning Prayer

7:00 a.m.: Low Mass

5:45 p.m.: Evening Prayer

6:45 p.m.: Procession & Solemn High Mass

### All Souls' Day

**Friday, November 2, 2018**

6:45 a.m.: Morning Prayer

7:00 a.m.: Low Mass

5:45 p.m.: Evening Prayer

6:45 p.m.: Solemn Requiem Mass for all Faithful Departed



## August Vestry Report



*Lindsay Raffetto*

A regular meeting of the vestry was held on August 28, 2018.

Fr. Shawn presented plans for the coming year's exciting Christian formation programs. On Sundays this fall we will be treated to a five-part forum discussion called "Journey with the Johanine Community," led by Dr. Ian Boxall. Sunday forums in the winter will be led by Rev. Dr. A. Katherine Grieb focusing on the Pauline epistles, and in the spring the forums will feature discussions on the General Epistles and will be led by Dr. Shively Smith. Fr. Richard added that he, with help from Jeanne Smith and Edie Davis, will be leading a catechumenate class called Emmaus, which will begin in October and run up until Lent. During Wednesdays in Lent, programming on "The Way of Love" will be offered.

Treasurer Katherine Britton reported that the church is on track with its budget at present. She expects that by the end of the year we

will have a \$78,000 deficit, which was about what was budgeted for, and that amount will be taken out of the undesignated bequests when needed.

Gwyneth Zakaib updated the vestry on the progress that is being made on updating the church website. She reported that the website should be completed in about two months.

Junior Warden Anne Windle reported on how things have been going with Acton Academy. Acton opened on September 4th with nine students, and because of the school's rolling admissions model and expressed interest from several families in the neighborhood, Action expects that it will have more students by the end of the academic year. Ms. Windle reported that she and Fr. Richard had gone on a tour of the school and were very impressed with the significant remodel work that had been done and with the dedicated and enthusiastic staff now working with the school. The vestry discussed how St. Paul's might continue developing our relationship

with Acton Academy and its families, including possibilities like working together to prepare for Grate Patrol and introducing the Acton students to our music program.

Finally, the vestry reviewed upcoming events at the church, including the September 28th Music Gala and the October 7th Feast of the Dedication and following parish lunch.





# SAINT PAUL'S PARISH

K STREET — WASHINGTON

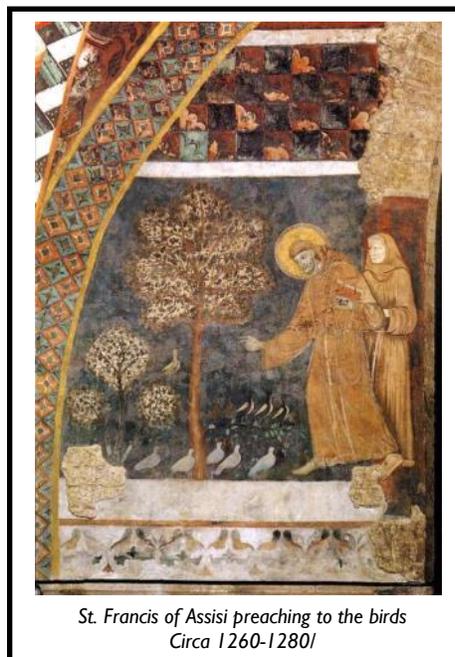
2430 K Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20037

202.337.2020  
<http://www.stpauls-kst.com>

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## Remember to mark your Calendar:

**Feast of Dedication, Sunday, October 7: Parish Mass at 10:30 a.m.  
with luncheon following**



*St. Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds  
Circa 1260-1280!*