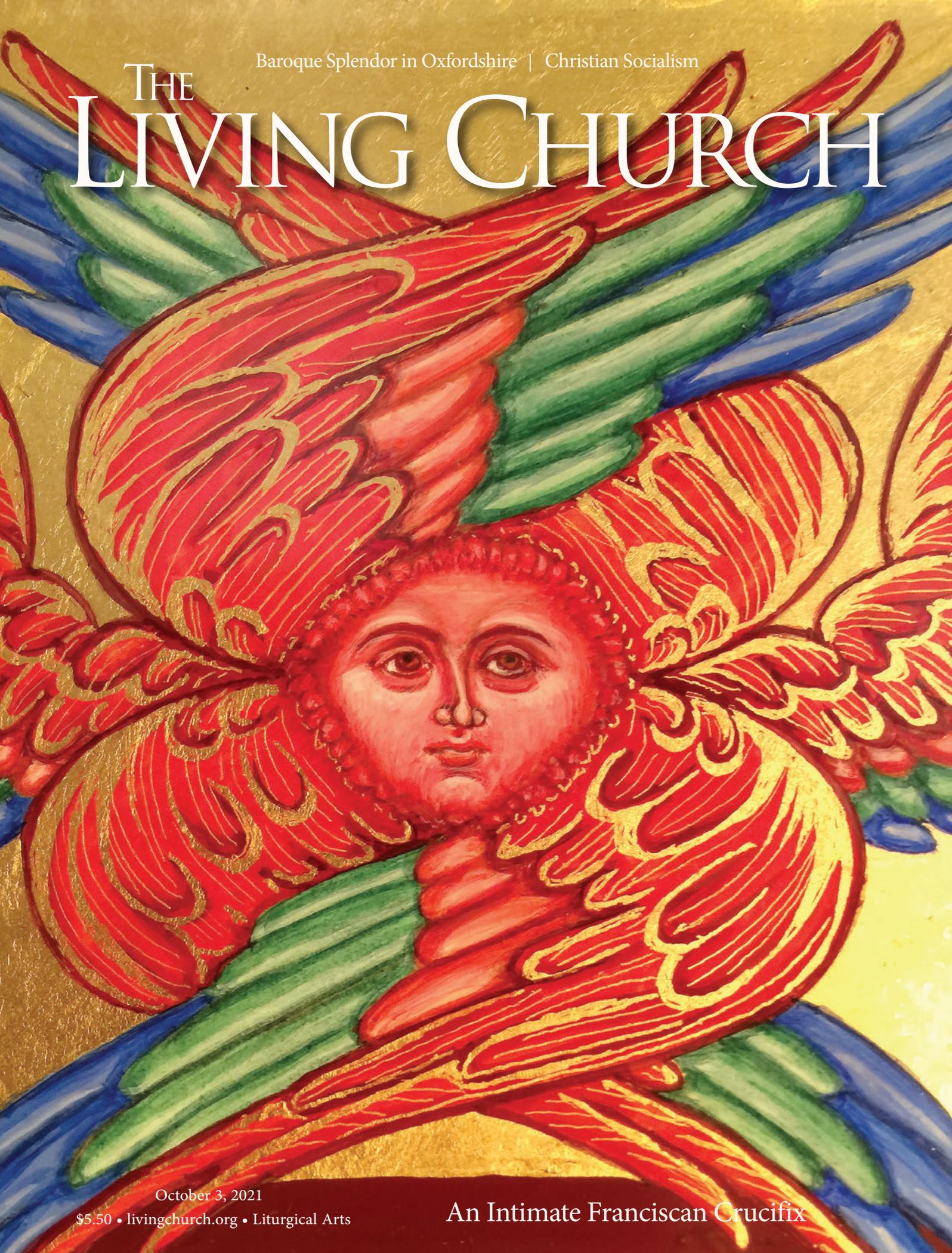


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ON THE COVER

In the Franciscan crucifix at Holy Trinity Church in New York City, a six-winged seraph derived from a fresco in the *Hagia Sophia*, referencing to a vision Saint Francis experienced near the end of his life (p. 16).

Photo courtesy of Holy Trinity Church



Iconoclast John Spong Dies at 90

One of the best-known and most controversial Episcopal bishops in the last half century, the Rt. Rev. John Shelby Spong, died in his sleep September 12 at the age of 90. He served as the VIII Bishop of Newark from 1979 to 2000.

Bishop Spong's assertively liberal perspective of Christianity, and his rejection of the literal truth of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, attracted both a passionate following and repeated accusations of heresy. For many conservatives, he became a symbol of everything that has gone wrong with the Episcopal Church. For many progressives, he provided a safe space for skepticism and for experiencing Christianity through a filter of contemporary society.

Of his two dozen books, perhaps the best known is *Why Christianity Must Change or Die: A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile*. In the preface of that 1999 book he described how the word "controversial" became "almost a part of my identity."

As a priest in Richmond, Virginia, in 1974, after publishing a book titled *This Hebrew Lord*, Spong held a series of public dialogues with a rabbi on the nature of God and Jesus. In response to a question from the rabbi, Spong said: "The Bible never says in a simplistic way that Jesus is God. Jesus prays to God in the Gospels. He is not talking to himself."

Spong wrote this was "a theological distinction far too subtle for the secular press to grasp. 'Jesus is not God, Rector Asserts' was the headline greeting readers of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* the next day, and the debate was on."

As Bishop of Newark, Spong championed the efforts of gay people to gain recognition in the church, and on December 16, 1989, he ordained the first openly gay, partnered priest, Robert Williams, causing an uproar.

After his assisting bishop, the Rt. Rev. Walter Righter, ordained Barry



Diocese of Newark/Wikimedia Commons

Stopfel as a deacon in 1990 with Spong's blessing, Righter was accused of heresy in 1996, and acquitted by a church court. Spong speculated that the church prosecuted Righter, even though Spong conducted the earlier ordination, because "perhaps they felt that he would be an easier target, or they simply did not want to give me so large a public forum."

In 1998, Spong published "Twelve

Points for Reform" in *The Voice*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Newark. Among the 12 points:

The Virgin Birth, understood as literal biology, makes Christ's divinity, as traditionally understood, impossible.

The miracle stories of the New Testament can no longer be interpreted in a post-Newtonian world as supernatural events performed by an incarnate deity.

The view of the cross as the sacrifice for the sins of the world is a barbarian idea based on primitive concepts of God and must be dismissed.

In response, Rowan Williams, the future Archbishop of Canterbury who was then the Bishop of Monmouth in the Church in Wales, wrote a lengthy rebuttal. Williams summarized by writing, "I cannot in any way see Bishop Spong's theses as representing a defensible or even an interesting Christian future. And I want to know whether the Christian past, scripture and tradition, really appears to him as empty and sterile as this text suggests."

Spong attended Virginia Theological Seminary, was ordained as a priest in 1955, and for 20 years served parishes in North Carolina and Virginia, until his election as bishop in 1976. Since retiring as Bishop of Newark in 2000, Spong continued an active career of writing, speaking, and teaching, until suffering a stroke in 2016.

He is survived by his second wife, Christine Mary Spong, and five children. His first wife, Joan Lydia Ketner Spong, died in 1988 after more than 30 years of marriage.

—*The Living Church staff*

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Church in Wales Approves Same-Sex Blessings

By Kirk Petersen

With unanimous support of the bishops present and voting, the Church in Wales authorized a service of blessing for same-sex civil partnerships or marriages at its Governing Body meeting on September 6.

The legislation enables only the blessing of secular unions — same-sex couples cannot have a religious wedding service in the Church in Wales. This positions the Welsh church between the Scottish Episcopal Church — which authorized same-sex weddings in 2017 — and the Church of England, which forbids same-sex blessings.

The legislation passed after several hours of debate by the necessary two-thirds majority in the clergy and lay orders, on votes of 28-12 and 49-10, respectively. The service will be used on an experimental basis for five years, and individual clergy will decide whether to participate in any such service.

The bishops' vote was perhaps closer than "unanimous" would imply, as the only bishops who vote in the Governing Body are those of the church's six dioceses. Church spokesman John Richfield told *TLC* that there is one vacancy, and another bishop was ill, so the 4-0 vote constituted exactly a two-thirds majority of the Order of Bishops.

"I come out of this debate with no sense of triumph but believing that the Church in Wales has done the right thing under God for the LGBTQIA+ community," said Bishop of St. Asaph Gregory Cameron, as quoted by the *Daily Mail*. Cameron introduced the legislation.

"The church has spoken decisively today in favor of blessings. There is a journey still to be taken, but I hope that we can do it together with all the wings of the church," he said.

Civil same-sex marriages have been legal in England, Wales, and Scotland since 2014, and in Northern Ireland since 2020.

The Church in Wales is among the smallest of the 41 autonomous provinces in the Anglican Communion, with membership reported at about 42,000

in 2018, making it slightly larger than the Diocese of Long Island in the Episcopal Church.

N.J. and Ohio Bishops Retiring in 2023

The Rt. Rev. William H. "Chip" Stokes, XII Bishop of New Jersey, announced on September 2 his intention to retire in June 2023, and has called for the election of a successor.

Stokes has served the diocese as bishop since 2013, before which he served churches in Florida.

"Prayer, discernment and a recognition of the changing needs and demands of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of New Jersey all indicate it is time for me to step aside and allow a new generation to step forward," Stokes said in his announcement, noting he will be 66 years old at the time of his retirement and will have

(Continued on page 7)

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(Continued from page 5)

served for nearly a decade.

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth Jr., XI Bishop of Ohio, announced on September 14 his intention to retire “some-time in 2023,” and called for the election of a bishop coadjutor, who would automatically become the XII Bishop of Ohio upon Hollingsworth’s retirement.

“After more than 40 years of ordained ministry and nearly 18 deeply fulfilling and happy years since coming to serve with you in the Diocese of Ohio, it is time to begin a process of episcopal transition,” Hollingsworth told the diocese. An election is anticipated at the diocesan convention in November 2022, and the coadjutor would serve alongside Hollingsworth for an undetermined period. Hollingsworth has been Bishop of Ohio since 2004.

Slate of 9 Candidates in Springfield

The Diocese of Springfield on September 14 announced a slate of nine nominees to become the XII Bishop of Springfield. In alphabetical order, they are:

- The Very Rev. Sheryl Leonard Black, Diocese of Springfield
- The Very Rev. Brian Kendall Burgess, Diocese of New Jersey
- The Rev. Canon George Arthur Munger Conger, Diocese of Central Florida
- The Rev. Canon Mark E. Evans, Diocese of Springfield
- The Rev. Michael P. T. Greene, Diocese of New Hampshire
- The Rev. Mary Ann Hill, Diocese of Oklahoma
- The Rev. Scott Allen Seefeldt, Diocese of Milwaukee
- The Rev. Jonathan (Jon) Robert Stratton, Diocese of Missouri
- The Rev. Dr. Gregory Allen Tournoux, Diocese of Springfield

Nine candidates is an unusually large slate in a bishop election. “Our diocese uses a uniquely transparent process for electing a bishop,” the election committee said in the announce-

ment. “There is no search committee that assembles a slate; instead, your delegates to our Nominating Synod, will choose the final three candidates from among this group of nominees who completed the application/nomination process and passed the required reference and background checks.”

The next bishop will succeed the Rt. Rev. Daniel Martins, who retired at the end of June 2021 after serving since 2011. Martins is secretary of the board of directors of The Living Church Foundation, Inc.

Trinity Dean and President Laurie Thompson to Retire

The Very Rev. Dr. Henry L. (Laurie) Thompson III, dean and president of Trinity School for Ministry for five

years, will retire in May 2022.

When he steps down after graduation in May 2022, Thompson will conclude 25 years of service to Trinity. Before serving as dean and president, Thompson was assistant professor of theology. He taught prayer book, sacramental theology and pastoral leadership, and supervised ministry colloquiums and pastoral care.

“It has been my great honor to serve the seminary whose mission and identity I have and will always cherish,” Thompson said.

“In my tenure, I have sought to honor the past and the wonderful legacy of evangelical Anglicans who sacrificed so much to give birth to and develop Trinity.”

The Most Rev. Robert W. Duncan and Dr. Sarah Lebharr Hall will lead a search committee for Thompson’s successor.

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In Philippines, Connections Crucial to COVID Relief

Neva Rae Fox
Correspondent

Faced with food issues and unemployment caused by COVID-19, the Episcopal Church in the Philippines began making connections.

The Episcopal Church in the Philippines, a member of the Anglican Communion, was founded in 1901 and comprises seven dioceses with more than 125,000 members.

COVID-19 continues to ravage the country. “Yesterday we had 14,000 cases,” said Floyd P. Lalwet, provincial secretary. “It is very difficult.”

As Reuters reported: “The Philippines health ministry reported a record 18,332 COVID-19 infections on Monday, August 23, and for the first time acknowledged community transmission of the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus in its capital region. The Philippines has recorded a total of 1.86 million COVID-19 cases.”

Lalwet described two initiatives to combat COVID-caused starvation throughout the Philippines.

The first issue to tackle was skyrocketing unemployment. COVID-19 halted the tourist trade, forcing thousands of jitney drivers out of work in Manila. Farmers in the mountains had no way to transport their food to the cities and to markets. Lalwet said the Philippines has food but lacked a way to deliver fresh goods.

For its part, the church’s call to action connected these two disparate groups for the benefit of the populace.

“When the pandemic started, we were going out to buy groceries, and we were shocked that the jitney drivers set up a begging station,” Lalwet said. “They were stopping all who went by and appealing for assistance. We learned that they were jitney drivers



Photos courtesy of Bruce Woodcock

The Episcopal Church in the Philippines assisted farmers in the north to harvest their produce and deliver to markets by connecting with unemployed jitney drivers.

and they lost their income. They were starving. That was happening right before our gate at the cathedral.”

At the same time, “We were working with farmers. No one was buying their product. We had a problem distributing vegetables.”

Lalwet said the church stepped in. “We invited them in, and asked to talk about it. And we had an answer to their problem. They folded up their begging tent. They started to do the deliveries of the vegetables. It just fits.”

In addition to food delivery, the church identified needed tasks at the cathedral complex in Quezon City, which meant more work for unemployed jitney drivers. “We had other jobs in the compound, like carpenters’ repairs,” Lalwet said. “It is very difficult

to get carpenters now.”

The church also established a voucher system for easy access to payments. “We set up a labor voucher,” Lalwet said. “They needed money urgently. We gave them a voucher for them to redeem when they work. It made everything easy.”

Calling the drivers “our regular partners,” Lalwet said the arrangement continues even as they slowly return to work. “When the jitney drivers went back to their usual job, their wives came to work. Now 260 families partner with us.”

Another connection came in the form of a United Thank Offering grant to help in the storage, regulation, and fair pricing of produce.

In Spring 2021, UTO awarded a



\$24,986 COVID-19 Impact Grant to the diocese of North Central Philippines for building a food center.

That request was in line with UTO's guidelines. "During the two rounds of COVID-19 grants, many of them went to feeding ministries," said the Rev. Heather Melton, the Episcopal Church's UTO coordinator.

The issue in the Philippines, Lalwet said, was the farmers would "harvest the product, bring it market, and just as they enter the city, the price drops down."

Through the UTO grant, a central coordinated food center will assist 500 farmers, allowing for better control of trade and avoiding price gouging. The center will help an online ordering system drastically cut food waste.

When completed, the center will be a true trading post. "Our famers can go to the center, wait out the price, and the center will provide a place to address any problems," Lalwet said.

Slowly the situation is getting better. In the Philippines, the biggest purchasers of produce are restaurants, Lalwet said. "With them closed because of COVID, no one was buying. During the pandemic we were selling directly to households. Now that restaurants have opened in a limited way, they are buying more vegetables."

Lalwet was reflective on the connections that were established. "People always say that we are helping them. The reality is that they are helping us. It's really a partnership. God really works in mysterious ways."



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In Service of the Divine Master

Tractarian Theologian and Activist Felicia Skene

By Elizabeth Orens

When Felicia Skene walked along the garden paths of Christ Church, Oxford, people noticed. Skene was tall, broadly built, had piercing gray eyes, and a shock of red hair. What casual walkers-by would not have known is that she was a novelist, spiritual theologian, nurse, prison visitor, social reformer, and a passionate advocate of Tractarian theology. Even the church pays little heed to this remarkable woman who made a unique contribution to the male-dominated Anglo-Catholic revival.

Felicia Mary Francis Skene (1821-99) was born into a prominent Scottish family in Aix-en-Provence, France. She was raised in Edinburgh, schooled in Paris and Leamington, and spent seven years of her early adult life (1838-45) in Athens. Her father, James Skene, a distinguished lawyer and diplomat, was a close friend of Sir Walter Scott. The entire family belonged to the Scottish Episcopal Church. Skene's cousin, Alexander Penrose Forbes, was its Tractarian bishop of Brechin and another cousin, George Hay Forbes, was a priest, patristics scholar, and editor.

The Skene family arrived in Oxford in 1850. Felicia was 29 years old at the time and remained in Oxford for 50 years. During this time, she wrote novels and theological essays, worked tirelessly among the working classes, nursed members of her parish during the cholera epidemic, edited the Tractarian journal *The Churchman's Companion* (1862-80), and ministered to prostitutes in the Oxford prison.

St. Thomas the Martyr Church was a significant center for Skene's Oxonian life and helped Skene shape her identity as a theologian and activist. The church was in the seediest part of town. Its vicar, Thomas Chamberlain, was a Christ Church graduate and a zealous disciple of John Henry Newman. Chamberlain initiated choral services, put candles on the altar, added incense, and offered weekly celebrations of the Eucharist. H.P. Liddon, E.B. Pusey, Robert Wilberforce, Charles Lowder, and other prominent Anglo-Catholic clergy preached frequently from St. Thomas's pulpit. Under their influence, Skene became engaged in the Tractarian ideas of the day, both intellectually and practically.

One of the gravest practical challenges that Skene faced was the cholera epidemic of 1854. Since St. Thomas was located close to the polluted Oxford canal and the river Isis, the parish was especially hard-hit; many people fell ill and died. Skene worked closely with the renowned Oxford doctor, Henry Wentworth Acland, and trained nurses who in turn treated patients in their homes.

An observer noted that “[Skene] visited daily every home within a certain area to instruct the nurses, to comfort the sick, to cheer the disconsolate. . . to relieve a wearied atten-

dant.” Florence Nightingale was so impressed by Skene's nursing skills that she asked her to train nurses to serve in the Crimea; Skene sent her as many as 14 nurses.

Skene never wavered from the Tractarian vision of sacramental worship, disciplined prayer, and service to the poor. For 20 years (1858-78), she visited women imprisoned for prostitution. She was particularly concerned about those who had no place to go upon release: their families no longer welcomed them and respectable society wanted nothing to do with them. So when they were released, Skene met these hapless women at the prison gate and invited them to her home for breakfast. She helped them find refuge with nuns who taught them the skills they would need to enter the labor force.

Skene's lifelong sensitivity to the problem of sin and suffering is a dominant theme in her literary work. In her most successful novel, *Hidden Depths* (1866) — which sold nearly 30,000 copies—Skene addressed the problem of prostitution—its sin and suffering, the moral responsibility that men bore, and the need for social reform. In her earlier novels, *Use and Abuse* (1849) and *The Tutor's Ward* (1851), Skene dealt with the issues of the sinful life, the holiness of God, being a servant for Christ, forgiveness and faith. Her novels are tendentious in scope. But these “sensation” novels touched the social and spiritual anxieties of her time. They revealed the suffering of the poor and the marginalized while pointing to the healing power of faith.

Underlying everything Skene did was her profound Tractarian faith. In her most important work of spiritual theology, *The Divine Master* (1852), she offered an answer to suffering by emphasizing the sacraments and the doctrines of the Atonement and the Incarnation. In a series of ten dialogues, the Divine Master, Christ, guides a pilgrim on the path to faith to seek mystical union with God through the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. Using King James English for dramatic effect, Skene's *Divine Master* reveals the essence of these sacraments: “In the first of these, My Holy Baptism, this union is commenced; therein, by water and the Holy Ghost, thou art born anew into Me — and into My Life — a life which is eternal. In the second most glorious Sacrament and Sacrifice, wherein thou dost receive Mine actual Body and Blood.”

In keeping with the Tractarian emphasis on reverence, humility, and obedience, Skene offers a spiritual theology that promises those who follow a path of devotion a sublime reward: intimacy with Christ and eternal life. “Rise up, My child,” the Divine Master calls, “hide thee in the bosom of My love; withdraw thyself into My shadow, here shall thee find great delight — there shalt thou rest indeed,



Felicia Sken (left).

Photo via the-history-girls.blogspot.com

Skene challenges the seeker to test the truth of God's redemption and a purposeful life in Christ by embracing his incarnational love, and by humble service to the poor.

and with thy joy no stranger shall intermingle.”

The Divine Master then encourages the seeker to tend to those who carry heavy burdens: “Go to them in their sickness and affliction,” he says, “weep with them that weep, rejoice with them that do rejoice, thine be the voice of comfort in the hour of trial, of tenderness in their time of desolation. . . .” With this emphasis on Christ’s love and service, Skene connects a sacramental theology with social mission. Love of God and love of brother and sister are inseparable. Skene makes this same point in her long pamphlet, “The Ministry of Consolation” (1854). Receiving Christ’s generous love and consolation through confession, Skene argues, allows the penitent to turn and offer the same generosity to others.

Skene’s final work, *A Test of the Truth* (1897), continued to express her abiding Tractarian faith in the face of late-19th-century skepticism, agnosticism, and atheism. Skene acknowledges the reality of fin-de-siecle doubt, but laments the “tumultuous thought” and “hapless perplexity” to which it gave rise. She turns once again to the issue of suffering as her pivotal argument to sway the skeptic to a more noble path.

As a way out of the labyrinth of despair and bewilderment, she argues, the seeker needs to appeal to the “Eternal Christ.” In passionate language — always theological, at times philosophical — Skene challenges the seeker to test the truth of God’s redemption and a purposeful life in Christ by embracing his incarnational love, and by humble service to the poor. She concludes her essay by observing that all of humankind has an “uncomprehended and intolerable desire” for redemption — a thirst for the living God. When one’s thirst for the living God is quenched, then the believer comes to appreciate the words of Jesus proclaimed in the Gospel of John (quoted in Latin): “Quid est veritas? Ego sum veritas.”

Felicia Skene deserves to be remembered as a Tractarian novelist, social reformer, and spiritual theologian. Through her passionate faith, prayer, and service to the poor, she not only expressed the heart of the Tractarian movement through her works, but lived out its ideals with zeal.

The Rev. Elizabeth Orens is an honorary assistant at All Souls’ in Washington, D.C., and rector emeritus of St. James, Parkton, Md.

Liturgical Revision's Unintended Consequences

By Lawrence N. Crumb

Liturgical revision always begins with good intentions, but often ends with unintended results. When Archbishop Cranmer compiled the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549, he was concerned with a situation in which the laity attended Mass every Sunday but received Holy Communion only once a year. To correct the situation, he included a rubric: “So many as intend to be partakers of the holy Communion, shall signify their names to the Curate” (spelling modernized here and elsewhere).

Since the laity were reluctant to change their familiar pattern of behavior, few if any signed up, and the service had to stop after the Offertory. The unintended consequence was that the typical Sunday morning service for the next 300 years was Morning Prayer, Litany, and Ante-Communion, with a quarterly compromise of the full service, with all receiving, on Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, and a Sunday between then and Christmas. In view of this truncation, the 1552 revision, also by Cranmer, expanded the Morning Prayer segment with a consequence that was not immediate and will be mentioned later.

The 1559 book was part of the so-called Elizabethan Settlement, which settled nothing. Like many reform movements, it went too far for some and not far enough for others. Combining the 1549 words of administra-

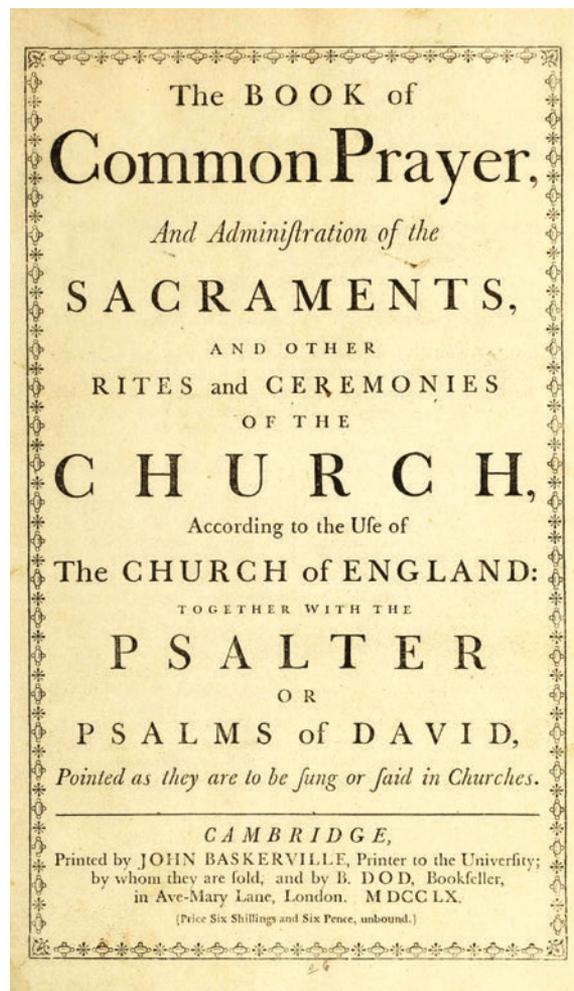
tion (“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ”) with those of 1552 (“Take and eat this, in remembrance”) was

ornaments [i.e., vestments] in the church as were in use by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth,” was intended to establish a national norm that all would follow. The objection of the Puritans resulted in the surplice being the *de facto* priestly vestment until the mid-19th century, at which time there were lawsuits over just what the rubric means.

The Restoration Settlement is now widely thought to be the point at which the Church of England became Anglican in the sense that the word would be used for the next 300 years. The “proto-Anglicans,” influenced by Archbishop Laud and the Caroline divines, were in the ascendant and would have liked a more Catholic book like the Scottish book of 1637.

But the regime of Charles II, like that of Elizabeth I, based its claim to legitimacy on the concept of a return to the *status quo ante*, and a more moderate revision was required, the introduction to the 1662 Prayer Book asserting, “It hath been the wisdom of the Church of *England*, ever since the first compiling of her Public Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variations from it.”

It was intended that the book be generally accepted, but the retention of such ceremonies as the ring in mar-



A 1760 printing of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (Wikimedia Commons)

intended to provide a comprehensive formula that all could accept. The result was a plurality of understandings of the eucharistic presence (or absence) that remains to this day. The Ornaments Rubric, requiring “such

riage and the sign of the cross in baptism was not acceptable to the Puritans. The result was the ejection of about 2,000 ministers who would not conform, and the beginning of England's "Nonconformist" churches, the ancestors of today's Baptists and Congregationalists.

The first American book of 1789 adapted the English Prayer Book to the American situation, including a drastic reduction of the marriage rite, since many weddings took place in private homes. All references to the king were removed, but the new prayer for the president, used at Morning and Evening Prayer, was a minimal adaptation of the old prayer for the king, and inappropriate for a head of state elected to a fixed term of office. (A less regal alternative was added in 1928.)

The first real revision was not of the texts but in how they were used. The General Convention of 1856 declared that Morning Prayer, Litany, and Holy Communion are distinct services and can be used separately, an unintended consequence of the expansion of the Morning Prayer segment in 1552. This provided a needed flexibility in the Sunday service, especially on the frontier, but changed the balance between material from the Old and New Testaments, with most services now having several psalms, a lesson from the Old Testament, and only one from the New.

Conversely, the quarterly Communion service had two lessons from the New and nothing from the Old. The imbalance was increased in the revision of 1928, which provided for a slight addition to the number of canticles from which to choose at Morning Prayer. The intent was to provide more variety, but the result was an almost universal and every-Sunday use of the new, shorter canticles, each of which was from the Old Testament or its Apocrypha.

By this time, parishes were starting to have Holy Communion at least once a month, so the imbalance was not as great as it might have been, although the more frequent alternation of services may have caused some confusion between the emphasis on a transcendent Creator one Sunday and an immanent Redeemer the next. (The

Order of Morning Prayer was only part of the complete service; the hour was completed with the addition of sermon, offering, altar prayers, and blessing, all vestiges of Ante-Communion.)

The revisers who produced the (cur-

The first real revision of the American prayer book was not of the texts but in how they were used.

rent) 1979 Prayer Book had the intention of providing liturgy in contemporary language for contemporary people, naively assuming that the alternate rites in traditional language would die out with the older members.

The late Thomas Talley, professor of liturgics at Nashotah House and the General Theological Seminary, observed, "We're reducing the ritual and putting the liturgy in contemporary language to appeal to young people, while young people are burning incense and saying prayers in Sanskrit." He had also observed, in reference to the list of occupations in the Prayers of the People in the first trial rite of 1967, "We're trying to be relevant to people in terms of their work at a time when their work is no longer relevant to them."

The intention to provide new material while avoiding archaic words and dependent clauses led to the unintended result of adding several masculine pronouns to the service that had never been there before (opening acclamation, Nicene Creed, *Sursum corda*, *Benedictus qui venit*).

As we gingerly tiptoe into our next experiment in liturgical revision, it's worth asking, what will be the good intentions that result in unintended consequences?

The Rev. Lawrence N. Crumb is vicar of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Cottage Grove, Oregon and the author of "The Making of the American Prayer Book of 1928," Anglican and Episcopal History, June 2020.



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Christian Socialism



By Simon Cuff

Socialism is a dirty word. In politics on both sides of the Atlantic, socialism is perceived as an unhelpful label for a politician seeking election to public office. During election periods, the specter of socialism is invoked to suggest images of failed regimes, large queues of unemployed people, state surveillance, and an environment hostile to religion and proclamation of the gospel.

Even Bernie Sanders, America's most prominent socialist, was at pains to distinguish himself from these images with the qualifier *democratic* for his particular brand of socialism in distinction to the popular images of the term in the American imagination.

In practice, socialism is a much more mundane affair. If you've ever used a public road, sent your child to a public school, or received a federal-

ly funded COVID-19 vaccine, you've experienced something of what socialism intends. In a British context, the National Health Service represents the high point of British socialism, universal public health care "free at the point

of delivery." As one commentator wryly noted during the pandemic, President Trump's treatment for COVID-19 at the hands of federally funded medics is the closest an American has come to

the kind of medical treatment those of us living in Britain take for granted and for which we regularly give thanks. Socialism is less about political ideology and more about infrastructure. The stuff of everyday living that contributes

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to the common good: healthcare, education, roads, and transport. It entails a commitment to common possession of these goods in order that no private individual may exclude another from

these universally beneficial features of daily life. In practice, socialist governments tend to fail when they put themselves in the place of the wealthy individuals whose control of these amenities they have sought to replace. The success of socialism is the means at which it arrives at genuinely public or “common” participation in these everyday goods.

Some Christian readers will balk already, saying, “Socialism is un-Christian and un-American.” It might come as a surprise that the originator of the pledge of allegiance, Francis Bellamy, was a Christian socialist — thus the pledge’s call for “one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” designed to build a wider participation in public life, particularly for newly arrived Americans, through growth in civic pride and public education.

Likewise, it might surprise some that it’s impossible to tell the story of European socialism without noting its Christian roots. Gary Dorrien’s magisterial *Social Democracy in the Making: Political and Religious Roots of European Socialism* makes this case. In a British context it is famously, and probably rightly, said that the Labour Party “owes more to Methodism than to Marxism.”

Two specters haunt the Christian relationship to socialism. First is Marx himself. It’s thought that Marxism is integral to socialism and Marxism necessarily entails atheism. However, there are forms of socialism, including Christian socialism, whose grounds lie elsewhere (notably in Scripture) and which have little or no relation to the thought of Marx.

Marx’s comment that “religion is the opium of the people” is often misunderstood as a rejection in principle of religion, rather than a comment on the misery of working people. Marx’s emphasis is on the suffering of those exploited by capital: “religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature.” Marxism, not least as a form of Hegelianism, is not in principle incompatible with Christianity. Many have gone further

to show their fruitful compatibility, not least Denys Turner in *his Marxism and Christianity*, building on the legacy of Herbert McCabe.

The second specter is the reality of 20th-century communism and with it the brutality of state-sponsored atheism. However, communism, especially statist communism, is not socialism. Socialism is primarily concerned with

recognizing private administration of goods as the best means of communal stewardship, insists their possession remains communal: “man ought to possess external things, not as his own, but as common, so that, to wit, he is ready to communicate them to others in their need” (*Summa Theologica* 2.2.66). We see here foreshadowed the principle of delivery at the point of need we

Christian socialism is distinct from both secular communism and socialism, chiefly on the theological underpinnings for communal participation in social goods.

the public and cooperative participation in essentials of living and public life, leaving open the question of what these essentials are and how this public participation is to be achieved. Communism is an ideology of common ownership and possession distinct from socialism.

As a political theory, even communism is not itself at odds with Christianity. Indeed, Acts 2 and 4 set forth a vision of Christian living that extends beyond socialism as a form of Christian communism: “no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32).

Theological understandings of the communal nature of possessions (later referred to within Catholic social teaching as the “universal destination of goods”) were the majority opinion coming out of the medieval church. St Ambrose reflects this understanding: “You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich” (*On Naboth* 12.53).

Likewise, St. Thomas Aquinas, while

encountered in the British National Health service.

Christian socialism is distinct from both secular communism and socialism, chiefly on the theological underpinnings for communal participation in social goods. These are variously grounded in the doctrine of creation — God as Creator and source of all that is, and individuals not as ultimate owners but stewards of those gifts — and his particular concern for the poor which we encounter throughout Scripture, not least in the Magnificat’s celebration of God’s exaltation of the lowly and filling of the hungry.

These theological foundations of socialism generally and Christian socialism in particular, alongside the increasing levels of inequality in Western democracies and the precarious living standards provided by the rise of the low-wage and largely unregulated so-called gig economy, mean that the questions and problems that all forms of socialism seek to answer and address prompt a reevaluation of this particular tradition of social ethics.

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Baroque Splendor in the Vale of the White Horse

S. Swithin, Compton Beauchamp, Oxfordshire

By Simon Cotton

The Vale of the White Horse is probably the finest scenery in Oxfordshire. It takes its name from the Uffington White Horse, a Bronze Age figure cut into a grass-covered hilltop that exposes the white chalk beneath. Compton Beauchamp is a very small settlement nearby, located beneath the Downs.

Near a moated manor, the church has a low tower that only just manages to peep over the nave roof, but the

the nave raised last of all. The chancel is 13th-century, with a reticulated east window of circa 1330.

You walk into the north porch, and there is one of those familiar notices: “Whosoever that entereth this church...” You have seen lots of them before, but not so many that end with the words “and forget not the Souls of the Dead in Christ.” Onward through the door, and you are pulled up short: an interior full of gilded baroque fittings is not what you expect to see in a small English country church.

ture and furnishings was greeted with suspicion by some low church clergymen. The Rev. F. Close of Cheltenham preached a sermon in 1844, arguing that “The restoration of churches is the restoration of popery: proved and illustrated from the authenticated publications of the ‘Cambridge Camden Society.’”

As the 19th century drew on, both architecture and ceremonial progressed, and many were drawn to the Gothic Revival by both means. Services were closely based on the Book of Common Prayer, but the attendant ceremonies and furnishings followed different trajectories.

Ninian Comper’s study of medieval precedent resulted in the first “English altar,” complete with riddel posts and curtains, in the Yorkshire church of Cantley in 1897. The design was widely adopted in “English use” churches, which sought to model their practice closely on the late medieval Sarum rite, turning back the clock to the very moment before the Reformation altered Anglican worship.

Another group looked to the living practice of the Western church, favoring Roman ceremonial, with fiddleback vestments, and sometimes drawing texts directly from the Roman Missal (though some combined the BCP with Roman ceremonial). In 1910, proponents of this school of thought formed the Society of Saint Peter and Saint Paul (SSPP). It was supported and financed by Samuel Gurney, and after World War I ran the Anglo-Catholic Congresses. SSPP and the Anglo-Catholic Congress Movement became for a few years the driving force for renewal in the Church of England.

Samuel Gurney (1885-1968) bought the Old Rectory at Compton Beauchamp around 1924 and immediately



Photos courtesy of Simon Cotton

white chalk walls make it stand out from its surroundings. Unusually, it is largely constructed of the chalk known as clunch. There was a church here by the late 11th century, at the time of Domesday Book, but there is little suggestion of that. What you see appears to be from the 13th to 15th-century, with

The church captures a unique moment in Anglican history. To appreciate it, you have to go back to the inception of the Oxford Movement, paralleled by the Cambridge Camden Society, which promoted “the study of Gothic Architecture, and of Ecclesiastical Antiques.” This appreciation of medieval architec-



asked Martin Travers to undertake a re-furnishing of the church. Howard Martin Otho Travers (1886-1948), always known as Martin, studied at Tonbridge School, then at the Royal College of Art (1904-08), followed by very short periods with the architects Beresford Pite and Ninian Comper, before he set up on his own in 1911. He was a most distinguished stained glass artist, but also was a designer of church furnishings and vestments for the Society of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

Travers had worked with SSPP members from 1911 onward, and was an obvious candidate to embellish the little church. A very versatile designer, he had a facility for creating furnishings in the baroque style. Although like his former master Ninian Comper he is associated with gilded furnishings, Travers toned down the gold, creating the impression that his 20th-century furnishings had graced the church for centuries.

Travers started with a rood group of



Jesus flanked by Mary and John over the chancel arch (1927); the use of *papier-maché* is typical of many of Travers's furnishings, as his patrons' taste usually exceeded their means. The chancel already had striking vine murals by Lydia Lawrence, painted around 1900; Tra-

vers designed a characteristic Virgin and Child in the glass of the East window (1937); below the window is a gilded reredos and riddel-posted altar, with the tabernacle bearing a cross. There is a distinguished plaque attached to the south side of the chancel arch, depict-

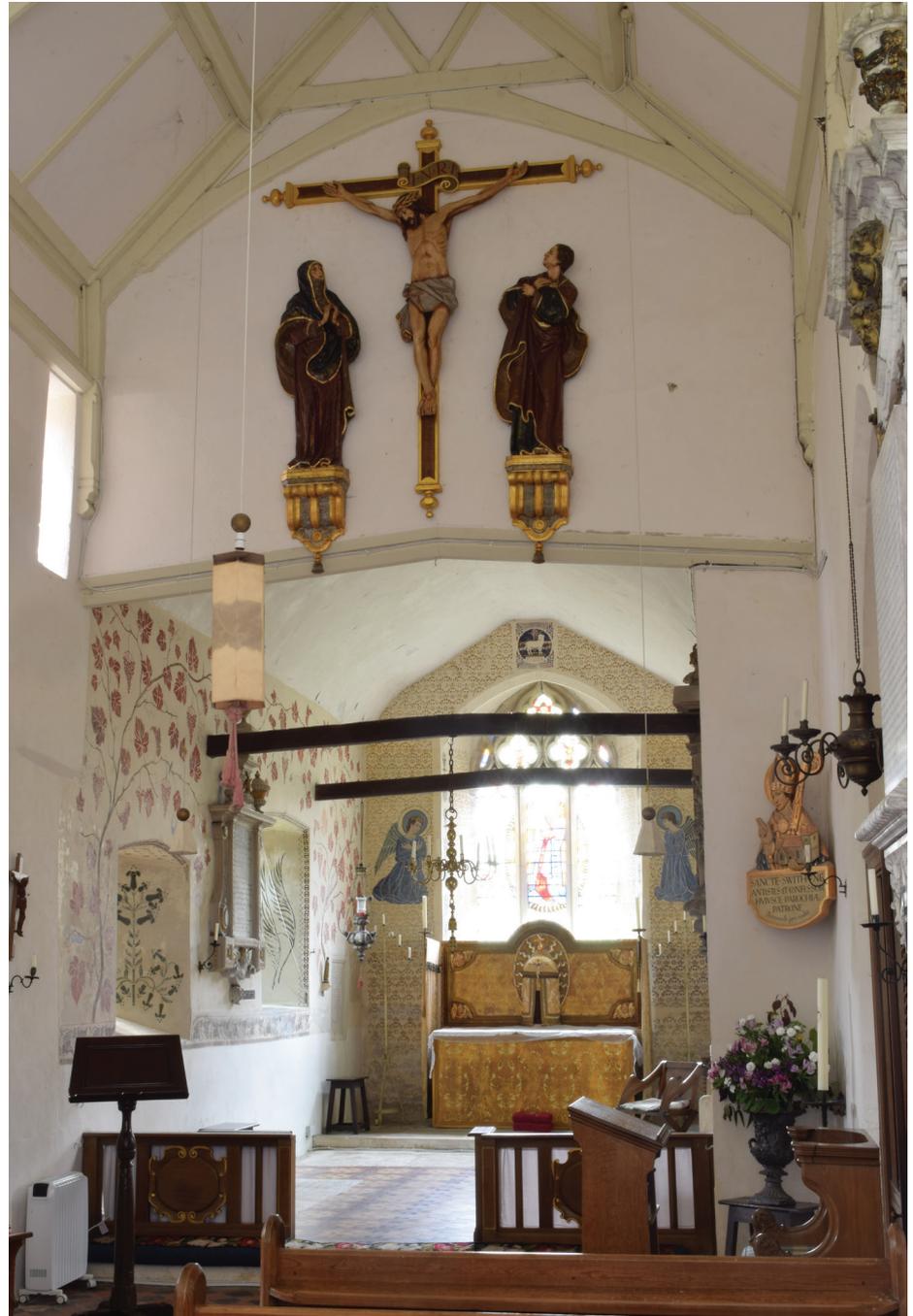


ing St. Swithun, the patron saint, holding a miniature of the church.

In memory of his mother, Lady Talbot de Malahide, Gurney commissioned from Travers a font canopy based on those at Great and Little Walsingham, Gurney's home village in Norfolk (1933). One surprise is Travers's placing of a Lady Altar in the very small space under the tower (1934), with a Virgin and Child altarpiece somewhat reminiscent of the one he designed for the Lady Chapel of St Augustine's, Queen's Gate, in South Kensington. Travers also provided ornate covers for the prayer books and hymn books, through the services strictly followed the BCP.

The attractions of Compton Beauchamp church do not end with Travers' work. There are some fine 18th-century wall monuments, several imbued with Dr. Johnson's belief that "in a lapidary inscription, no man is on oath," not least that of Mary Cooper (1762), who was a housekeeper who "became strictly intitled to the Commendation of a truly good and faithfull Servant." There is also a very understated tablet to Sam Gurney.

Go and see this joyful little church, where Sam Gurney lies among the daffodils in Compton Beauchamp churchyard.



Further reading

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Online

An essay at bit.ly/BacktoBaroque is a brilliantly illustrated account of Travers' work at Compton Beauchamp church.

Dr. Simon Cotton is honorary senior lecturer in chemistry at the University of Birmingham in the U.K. and a former churchwarden of St. Giles, Norwich, and St. Jude, Peterborough. He is a member of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.



De terra veritas

Learning from a Craftsman

Tom has given his life to upholstery. His garage workshop is a maze of fabric bolts, sample books, and foam rolls, with a few half-finished projects neatly stacked against the walls. He learned the trade working long hours alongside a master, and he's been out on his own for over 50 years. Tom's fingers are callused and swollen from thousands of hours of hand stitching, and he has trouble staying on his feet for long these days. He doesn't advertise anymore, but people keep calling him to do one more job, and he just can't say no.

There were once a dozen upholstery shops in his small city, Tom told me, back when he had a shopfront in a snazzy new strip. But young people don't want to mess with work like this anymore, he said, and most folks just throw away a couch that gets a big rip in the back.

Tom did a beautiful job with an East-lake loveseat I'd inherited from my grandparents a few years ago, finding the right navy brocade, nailing some loose fretwork back into place, refinishing the scuffed spots on its oak frame. A year into COVID-tide, our diocese was still discouraging kneeling for Holy Communion, and when the Altar Guild started talking about doing something about the browning velvet trim on the hassocks in the chancel, I knew just where to take them.

I went to pick them up a few days ago, making sure to set aside a good 45 minutes for shop talk. The hassocks looked brand new. Tom had handwashed the needlepointed tops multiple times and sought out a microfiber velvet from a fellow tradesman on the other side of the state, the shade of blue perfectly matched to the paint on the reredos wall. He had salvaged the dense foam inside ("they don't let them make it like that anymore," he said — and I didn't dare ask why), and installed zippers to make the work easier for the next upholsterer a half century hence.

As I expected, he had also prepared an extended technical critique of the

work of the hassocks' original craftsman, with a big pile of fabric scraps to illustrate his point. This was the moment he had been waiting for; he was truly, as my grandmother would say, "in his glory." I nodded along, enjoying his passion for the art.

Tom was sure I would want to recreate the explanation for my parishioners, because they too needed to know about the odd burlap backing and wrong color thread and uneven stitchery. He sent me home with labeled exhibits, placing far too much trust in my technical competence; maybe, for his sake, I'll try to run through them one Sunday after church with the fastidious Altar Guild members, the ones who tack up the loose embroidery on the frontals and know just how to patch a corporal. We have a few souls of his kind, after all.

After I gave him the check at the end of our long conversation, Tom filled out a receipt. Handing it back, he pointed a callused finger at the motto printed on the bottom: "Proverbs 22:29. Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before Kings; he will not stand before unknown men."

Upholstery isn't just a job for Tom. It's his way of serving God: offering back the gifts and talents seasoned by long experience for the life of the world and creating a little beauty in the midst of so much crass ugliness. It's a true vocation, and he aims to do it as honorably as he can, as long as possible. It rightfully commands respect from people of all kinds.

Tom is one of many craftsmen I have gotten to know in my work as a parish priest. Our old buildings and fussy accoutrements require a surprising number of them: the woodworker who turned out a perfect Paschal candlestick for the chapel, the timber framer who refitted the lych gate beams, organ tuners and bell founders, kind-hearted repairmen who know just how to coax another year out of a superannuated boiler.

By and large, they are eccentric and

passionate, always ready for a glass of lemonade and a technical chat. They don't know how long they will be able to keep at work like this, but they are grateful to do it while they can. Some of them pray before they get started (the young engineer planning our new HVAC system wrote ahead last week to tell me we needed to start our next meeting with intercession for wise discernment). They almost always assure me that doing work in God's house is something special, and that I can expect their very best.

We sometimes read Saint Paul's exhortations to share the Holy Spirit's gifts to build up the life of Christ's body only as summons to the members of our congregations to use their soft skills to help the church achieve its mission and maintain a common life of peace and goodwill. But those "in whom the Lord has put ability and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary" (Ex. 36:1) also share gifts worthy of respect and honor. Though few of our congregants know their names or have heard their stories, we are surrounded by the fruit of their labors, and their works are part of our common offering of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Since nearly all of us can safely worship together again, I hope we will hear no more of this "church is the people, not the building" talk for a while. Christians started building churches even before it became legal to do so. The Diocletian Persecution of 303 was provoked by the too-grand basilica that the local bishop had just completed, right across the street from the imperial palace. The inventories of confiscated goods taken by their ancient persecutors show that even then, they stuffed them with the most finely crafted goods they could afford. Our common work is the public worship of Almighty God, and such an undertaking demands a place fitted as best we can for that transcendent purpose.

Of course, if we had no buildings, or if our buildings were merely functional spaces, we would also have no use for craftsmen like Tom, and he would have no way to share his gifts. For such a loss, the world would be a bit sadder and less beautiful than God intended.

—Mark Michael



An Intimate, Franciscan Crucifix

By Dennis Raverty

At first glance, the Franciscan crucifix at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in New York City looks like a traditional Byzantine-style Eastern Orthodox icon. However, Francis of Assisi, beloved as he is among Western Christians, both Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, is not considered a saint by the Eastern Orthodox churches. So when icon writer Zachary Roesemann was commissioned to paint a Franciscan cross in a traditional manner, the artist faced the challenge of how to adapt the conservative style of icon painting to this non-traditional subject matter.

The impressive crucifix that resulted incorporates a distinctly Franciscan view of the body, seen not only as a site of sin, vice, and temptation, but also as a vessel of the human spirit created in the image of God. Even though that image has been tarnished by sin, it nonetheless reflects the image of God lying dormant within each of us. The figures represented in this crucifix are more fully embodied than in Eastern iconographic traditions, with substantial gravitas as well as grace, and representing physical, three-dimensional substance.

It was a painted, Romanesque-style cross that allegedly spoke to Francis; he had found it in the ruins of an abandoned chapel. Its figure of Christ famously told him, “Rebuild my Church.” The *San Damiano Crucifix*, as this work is known, is still preserved in the Church of Santa Chiara in Assisi.

Roesemann’s crucifix resembles the *San Damiano Crucifix* in certain respects: Christ is not suffering but is serene, almost floating over the cross rather than being suspended from it; his arms seem to open as if in a wide, welcoming gesture of embrace. In the *San Damiano* cross, the body is more schematic, two-dimensional and weightless. Roesemann’s corpus has more substantiality and gravitas, and the body is idealized in a more classical manner, closer to early Renaissance artist Fra Angelico than to anything

Byzantine or Romanesque. (It is interesting to note how many stories in the life of Francis involve the saint’s unashamed nakedness.)

The figures of Mary and Saint John on the sides of Roesemann’s cross are closely modeled after Byzantine prototypes, their hand gestures eloquently signifying traditional representations of mourning. But these figures are softer than the more rigid Byzantine style evident in the figure of Christ. This is

The icon writer faced the challenge of how to adapt the conservative style of icon painting to this non-traditional subject matter.

most apparent in the garments, which are more supple and curvilinear, more revealing of the three-dimensional bodies within than the *San Damiano*, in which garments are rendered in stiff geometric patterns that almost seem independent of the bodies underneath.

The face of Jesus in Roesemann’s icon is more naturalistic, less abstracted than the Romanesque cross that in part inspired it. The enlarged eyes of the *San Damiano* Christ seem to look up and gaze toward heaven, as if interceding with the Father on our behalf. Roesemann’s Christ, on the other hand, looks directly at the observer with an expression of calm acceptance, yet with a seriousness and perhaps even a slight sense of unease, as if the viewer has told him something that troubles him. He seems above all to listen intently with compassionate yet sober deliberation to the problems and entreaties of the faithful who confide in him. This is an icon that seems to invite these kinds of personal disclosures, a very intimate, prayerful, almost “confessional” crucifix.

The sense of trust that makes this kind of relationship between the viewer and the image possible is at least partly the result of the artist’s ren-

dering of the face, a softening of features, a greater naturalism, already evident in the treatment of the garments. Roesemann avoids the often stern and judgmental expression found on the faces of so many icons, and this helps create a sense of familiarity and tenderness (although his Christ is not totally without judgment).

At the base of the cross is a diminutive Saint Francis kissing the wounds in the feet of Christ. His body reveals the same marks as Jesus on his hands, feet and side, the miraculous stigmata or sign of his identification with Christ. So close was this identification that some called the saint the *Alter Christus*, or “Other Christ.” The implication in this was clear: that the saint manifested in his own person the interior Christ potential to such a degree that Francis became a sort of shining mirror of Christ, embodying the Logos by partaking in and reflecting his uncreated light.

Beneath the cross, a crack opens in the earth to reveal the skull of Adam, a traditional motif that serves as a reminder of human mortality. The body, it seems to suggest, despite all its glory, is ultimately transitory. The devout viewer, while inspired by the idealized corpus of the represented Christ to live a more robust, fully embodied existence, is nonetheless made aware of human limitations and fragility.

Above the cross is a six-winged seraph derived from a fresco in the *Hagia Sophia*, referencing to a vision Saint Francis experienced near the end of his life, often depicted in art. Here the vision is alluded to obliquely, reduced in size like Mary and John and even Francis, subordinated so that nothing may detract from the concerned and compassionate gaze of the fully human yet glorified body of Christ.

Dr. Dennis Raverty is an associate professor of art history at New Jersey City University, specializing in art of the 19th and 20th centuries.

A Dizzying Array of Oddments

Review by Mary Grace Gibbs DuPree

David Castleton's *Church Curiosities: Strange Objects and Bizarre Legends* catalogues a dizzying array of ecclesiastical oddments stored in, adjacent to, or loosely connected to British churches. Yew trees, labyrinths, holy wells, funeral effigies, and doors covered in human skin are just some of the things Castleton's book investigates, at the breakneck pace of an over-sugared third-grader in Disney World: after a while you just want to say "for the love of God, slow down." The sheer quantity of information crammed into this little book is too much for it to bear, and instead of allowing his readers to linger and contemplate deeper historical or theological questions, he yanks them on to the next attraction. Look, a mummified skull!

In chapter two ("Legendary Skulls, Strange Remains, and Weird Repositories") Castleton makes a statement every bit as much a curiosity as those the book purports to examine. Explaining why British churches are notably short on the sort of miracle-working relics found in other parts of Europe, he says that "Protestant disapproval... has meant that British churches have lacked the rich range of legendary, revered, and miracle-working relics found in other parts of Europe" (p. 21). And then Castleton moves quickly on to entice us with "a crusader's heart in a pillar, a much-loved church cat, [and] a severed head."

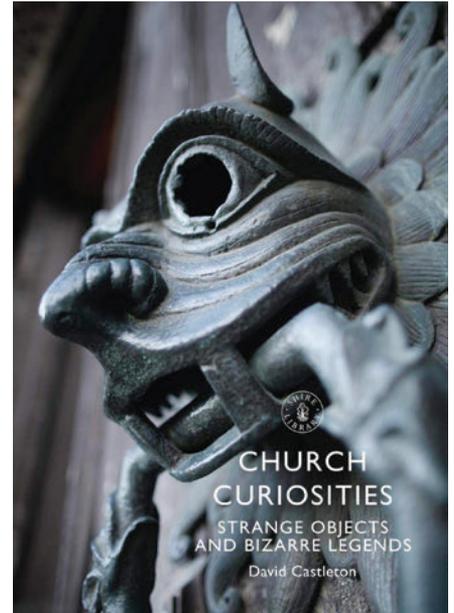
Any historian of the English Reformation would find "disapproval" an oddly prim way to describe the systematic looting, destruction, and desecration of England's churches in the 16th century, but Castleton has little — in fact, nothing — more to say about why it is that a book devoted to strange things in British churches has to resort to cat skeletons to lure a vis-

itor to church. That is the truly curious thing throughout this book: the superficial interest in history, coupled with a kind of breathless whirlwind of stuff piled on stuff — three, four, six curiosities a page, so that a reader trying to keep up is buried beneath a jumble of the strange, the macabre, and the idly fascinating alongside artifacts of real devotional significance. The book reads like a 19th-century maiden aunt's travelogue in its hunger to check all the boxes and see all the sights, with never enough of a pause to examine the how and why of a thing. In trying to do too much, Castleton only succeeds in doing too little.

The hand of the Apostle James (pp. 24-25) exemplifies the book's basic problem. The relic of James's hand has a long and fascinating history: by 640 we have documentation that places the severed hand in the possession of the Bishop of Torcello, but it becomes relevant to English history when the Empress Matilda, King Henry I's daughter and claimant to the English throne, donated the hand to Reading Abbey.

Castleton identifies this complicated woman who sits at the crossroads of so much of English history simply as "the widow of Henry V," and it requires a historically astute reader to know that he must mean Emperor Henry V of the Holy Roman Empire, not King Henry V of England. The hand was concealed by monks during the Dissolution and recovered by workmen in the 18th century, and these are all very fascinating facts, but the trouble is that each and every one of them is readily available on the web, and Castleton's summary reads suspiciously like a Google search massaged into paragraph form.

There is little in Castleton's research that seems particularly deserving of the name, and at every opportunity to tell us more — what exactly happened



Church Curiosities Strange Objects and Bizarre Legends

By David Castleton
Shire Publications, pp. 96, \$14

to Reading Abbey during the Dissolution? How did the hand of James end up in a Catholic (instead of Anglican) church? Who was the mysterious J. Scott Murray who bought the hand from a private museum, and which museum? — Castleton resolutely tells us as little as possible.

He closes the discussion of the hand of St. James by noting that if you want to see the relic, you must make application to the resident canon of St. Peter's Church, Marlow, Buckinghamshire. Did Castleton make that application? Has he seen the hand himself, and what were his impressions of his visit? There is nothing in his bare recounting of facts — about the hand of James or any of the other curiosities in the book — to suggest to a reader that Castleton has actually been to any of these places, or that his research is anything but armchair investigation.

The book's treatment of the Ruthwell

Cross (p. 15) is a case of the wrong information, rather than too little information. The Ruthwell Cross is lumped into a chapter called “Standing Stones, Runes, and Pagan Altars,” and then Castleton attempts to connect this profoundly Christian monument to an imagined pagan past by pointing out that it was written in runes, “said to have been discovered by the Norse god Odin.”

Lumping the Ruthwell Cross in with pagan altars and Norse mythology is not so much inaccurate as painfully wrong, and the whiff of the pagan and “exotic” is used as a lure to make the Cross more interesting to a reader — when of course, the Ruthwell Cross’s complicated history at the intersection of early English Christianity, desert monasticism, and Anglo-Saxon poetry is fascinating enough without any imagined pagan icing thrown on top.

When he slows down enough to dig into local legend, Castleton’s book does a solid job. In discussing the old Lincolnshire ritual of the washing of Molly Grime (p. 69) on Good Friday — a tomb effigy of an unknown woman in the graveyard of St. Peter’s Church, Glenthams — Castleton speculates that “Molly Grime” may be a corruption of the word *malgraen*, local dialect meaning the washing of holy images. When the Reformation forbade the practice, it survived only in the washing of Lady Anne Tourney’s grave.

A thoughtful reader will note the way the English Reformation, in eliminating traditional religious practices, left intact the honor due to the landed gentry, so that by the end of the 16th century a rich social and psychological landscape populated by saints, hermits, monks, holy women, and lords as objects of equal veneration had been whittled down substantially. Instead of saints, the English were left with lords, and the women of Glenthams were allowed to wash only the tombs of their betters, instead of their intercessors. Sadly, Castleton is not a very thoughtful reader, and he does not follow the custom of Molly Grime to its larger social and religious conclusions.

The idea of the book — to introduce a general reader to the strange and wonderful things lurking in British churchyards, porches, and parish chests — is charming, and as a jumping-off point for further research it does an adequate job. This is the sort of book that a group of American tourists just starting to learn about English churches might find useful; if nothing else it could point readers to those subjects they would like to explore more fully.

Someone, however, who already has some familiarity with English churches is going to find this a maddening jumble of loosely connected sensationalism, which is frustrating because there is an unarticulated idea running beneath Castleton’s book like a secret tunnel (pp. 47-58 if that’s your thing).

These parish churches scattered

through the English countryside and cityscapes were more than places to gather on Sunday. They became what Castleton calls “the national storehouse of the strange” (p. 79) because they were first and foremost the beating heart of their communities, and thus the repository of the miraculous, the mysterious, and the numinous in their parishioners’ lives, as well as the mundane, the violent, and the bizarre. These places represent an entirely different and more robust model of what a church can be, and it is that lost way of being that Castleton’s overstuffed guidebook ignores.

Mary Grace Gibbs DuPree is the Sheila Carson Graduate Fellow in history and medieval studies at Emory University, and a parishioner of St. James in Marietta, Georgia.

Rich and Useful Adornments

Review by Mary Grace Gibbs DuPree

Jonathan Swift’s satire *A Tale of a Tub* tells the story of three brothers: Peter, Martin, and Jack. Their father has left them in his will three fine coats.

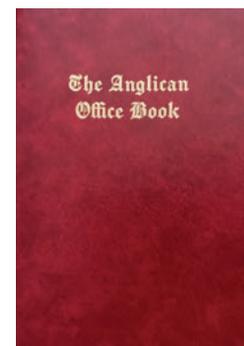
The first brother, Peter, proceeds to alter the coat by sewing on all sorts of additional adornments and designs and badges, so that the original lines of the coat are almost entirely obscured.

The youngest brother, Jack, tears at his coat in a righteous fury, ripping off so many of the original adornments that his coat is left with gaping holes, and hangs on him in tatters.

The middle brother, Martin, embarks on a kind of compromise. He removes some of the ornaments that he feels obscure the lines of the coat, but unlike Jack, never so many as to damage the fabric of the coat, and unlike Peter, he keeps his adornments to a minimum.

Only Martin achieves a beauty without unnecessary augmentation, a clean simplicity that yet preserves the fabric of what he has been given.

Readers in the early 18th-century



The Anglican Office Book

Whithorn Press,
pp. 726, \$75

found this an easy (if uncomfortable) allegory to grasp. The elder brother, Peter, is the Roman Catholic Church, with its excess of sentimental devotion and accretion of liturgy; the younger brother, Jack, represents the Puritans and Dissenters; and moderate Martin is the English Church, hewing to her via media of the “just right” amount of liturgy, devotion, and theology.

Swift’s allegory remains a helpful lens through which to see the push and pull within the Anglican Communion (and the Episcopal Church) over questions of liturgy to this day. If there is such a thing as an Anglo-Catholic liturgical

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project, the goal has always been to sew a few more patches on Martin's coat, and to persuade him that perhaps — in his haste to set himself apart from his brother Peter — he might have removed some adornments that are not only beautiful but theologically useful.

The recent publication of *The Anglican Office Book* by Whithorn Press of St. Andrew's Academy (ACNA) in California is a handsome, manageable little volume that strives to clothe the bare bones of the classical Anglican office with the office hymns, antiphons, invitatories, and propers that were stripped away in the Reformation and in many cases predate the Prayer Book.

Editor Lance Davis has used as his foundation Fr. Paul Hartzell's *Prayer Book Office*, sadly now out of print, but he has turned that book into something both more ambitious and more aesthetically pleasing. Using the *Anglican Office Book*, all Christians of the Anglican tradition have available to them not just the richest and fullest version of Morning and Evening Prayer (or Mattins and Vespers, as the Office Book has it) along with the Coverdale Psalter, but also the Little Hours (Prime, Terce, Sext, and None) along with Compline.

For most Christians, that represents a prayer life more robust than can be maintained in a working day, but that is exactly the point of this book — and, I would argue, the Anglo-Catholic project from its 19th-century inception: to present ordinary Christians with the maximum of devotional possibility and trust them to choose from that richness what best suits both their ability and their station in life. Davis's

book fills the spiritual toolbox of Anglican Christians, and puts at their disposal previously unplumbed riches.

For those looking to diversify their biblical readings, the Anglican Office Book provides not just the American 1943 lectionary, but also the 1962 Canadian (a revision of the 1922 English) and the 1549. Thumbing through this Office Book is a bit like wandering the halls of an old manor house — there's never any telling what treasure lurks behind a given door. In addition to a wealth of litanies, collects, and suffrages, there are the prayers of itinerary, the commendation of the dying, an office of preparation for Holy Communion, and (what Anglo-Catholic volume could omit?) the Marian Antiphons, in Latin and English.

But this prayer book has perhaps the most to offer in the proper of saints, where the American Prayer Book is the most wanting. Instead of having to fumble through a second book with the proper collects or plugging in a generic "saint's name here" collect from the Prayer Book, the Anglican Office Book provides both proper collects and, in the case of more significant feasts, a common office with antiphons, hymns, and invitatories relevant to the saint. The result is that the Christian praying with this book comes away with a richer awareness of the communion of the saints, that "blessed company of all faithful people," and the effect is not to detract from the salvific work of God in Christ, but to witness to its manifestation in the holy men and women who pray alongside us.

Davis's work builds not only on the work of Fr. Hartzell and the many faithful Anglo-Catholics who (through years of juggling books in order to say their

prayers) led to this volume, but also on the unparalleled translations of Blessed John Mason Neale, without whom the rich treasure box of Latin hymnography would have remained closed to English-speaking Christians. As I write this, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene approaches, for which the Anglican Office Book provides antiphons on the psalms and the canticles that draw out the meaning of the feast and emphasize Mary's role in salvation history. Here is Neale's rendering of the first stanza of the office hymn of Mattins:

*Weep not, Mary, weep no longer
Nor other seek to find;
Here indeed the Gardener standeth,
Gardener of the thirsty mind:
In the Spirit's inner garden
Seek that gardener ever kind.*

The hymn moves us from an imaginative contemplation of Mary standing in the garden to the idea of Jesus as the gardener of our souls — the "thirsty mind" that is hungry for the rain of Christ's presence — and finally to the idea of the interior garden that we enter in order to encounter our Gardener. This is the best of what liturgical poetry can do, taking the readings of a feast day and urging us a step beyond, into theological and emotional depth. By restoring the fullness of liturgical poetry to the center of the daily office, the Anglican Office Book offers its readers a prayer experience that plunges them into the heart of the Western office while remaining firmly rooted in their Anglican heritage.

What would Dean Swift have made of this book? The office for the feast of Our Lady of Walsingham on October 15 acclaims Our Lady as "Queen of Heaven and Queen of England," and since England had but one Queen in Swift's day (and a crotchety one at that) I suspect he would have regarded this book — and the Anglo-Catholic project in general — with suspicion. But Augustine of Canterbury would have found the form and intent of this office recognizable, if not the language, and as such, the Anglican Office Book represents a historic and praiseworthy bid to place the best of Western liturgy in the hands of praying Christians.

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A Better Way to Live

Review by Ben Lima

It is easy to criticize what falls short of virtue; far harder it is to find examples of the genuinely true, good, and beautiful, and to do them justice. But that is just what Catholic historian Todd Hartch has done in his study of contemporary American cultural renewal. His book is addressed to an audience that, deprived of a culture that values the transcendentals, knows how to pray and worship, but is unsure of how to beautify the world.

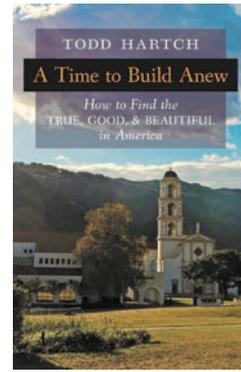
In seven chapters, Hartch considers both individual and institutional case studies, making detailed examination of the careers of a sculptor; a longtime mayor; an order of sisters and an order of friars; a humanities program; an architecture school; and a university. His findings offer reasons for hope in an age when mainstream institutions are at best indifferent, and at worst hostile, to the transcendentals. Though his primary frame of reference is Catholic, he writes appreciatively of the American DNA of religiously inspired renewal, from the colonial Puritans and Quakers onward.

In different ways, each of Hartch's subjects has been able to put aside distractions and to cultivate what is good. Inspired by Aristotle, the Integrated Humanities Program at the University of Kansas used stargazing (followed by the memorization and recitation of poetry) to gently introduce deracinated, culturally impoverished American teenagers to the "primary experience of reality," or "poetic knowledge" — to delight in the wonder and splendor of being, which inspires love. In contrast to the impersonal American "multiversity" culture, the Franciscan University of Steubenville offers college students a thoroughly personal and familial educational community, grounded in Franciscan humility, which equips graduates for the work of evangelization. The Dominican friars achieve the rare combination of "rev-

erent liturgy, vibrant orthodoxy and life of intellectual achievement," constructively engaging via their Thomistic Institute with the full range of modern secular intellectual culture.

Hartch emphasizes how his subjects' very fidelity to tradition enables their creative achievements, citing G.K. Chesterton on the "adventure" of orthodoxy. The goal of formation in the classical transcendentals is absolutely *not* the mindless repetition of past models. Instead, such formation is simply the precondition of an adequately creative response to new conditions. For example, the Dominicans can respond intelligently to new questions *because of* their formation in the Thomist tradition. Trained in the classical tradition, graduates of the Notre Dame School of Architecture can design beautiful *new* buildings that respect their sites and complement their neighbors.

Still less do the transcendentals entail an absolute attachment to the past, over against the present. During his ten terms as mayor of Charleston (from 1975 to 2016), Joe Riley both worked to preserve and repair its price-



A Time to Build Anew

How to Find the True, Good, and Beautiful in America

By Todd Hartch
Angelico Press,
pp. 234, \$26

less, beautiful historic urban fabric, and stood firmly with the African-American community to work for racial justice and rectify the legacy of historic injustice. At the end of Riley's administration, *Conde Nast Traveler* named Charleston the top U.S. tourist destination for eight consecutive years.

The most emotionally moving chapter profiles the Sisters of Life, whose ministry is to love and serve women who are considering abortion, primarily by offering them a place of "security and stability" during their pregnancy. Unsurprisingly, the sisters' self-giving love bears better fruit than any number of heated debates on the topic. Hartch quotes one non-religious former client of the sisters, "Jane," who stayed at their convent during her pregnancy and who marveled at their relentless kindness, so unlike her previous experience with communal living

(Continued on next page)

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in a women's dorm during college.

Guests such as Jane also see a model for loving, self-giving male-female relations, in the form of the team of male volunteers who help support the sisters in their work by fixing appliances, moving furniture, and other tasks. Despite working amid the most painful of human situations, the sisters relentlessly share love and joy with their clients. This whole way of life is founded on prayer: the sisters pray for four and a half hours every day. (Another of Hartch's subjects, Michael Scanlan, visionary president of Steubenville, also spends three or four hours each morning in prayer.)

For each of his subjects, but perhaps especially for the sisters, Hartch emphasizes how the truth and goodness of their work "shines forth" in the form of beauty. In his conclusion, citing James Matthew Wilson's *Vision of the Soul*, he explains how beauty, "the splendor of all the transcendentals ... comes first and also last in our experience." Beauty is what initially draws us into the good and then, "after contemplation, becomes in the end both more real and more intense."

While praising his subjects' accomplishments, Hartch is unafraid to offer criticism. He shows how the charismatic leadership of the Kansas project attracted understandable concern from observers worried about appropriate boundaries between faculty and students. He argues that for sculptor Frederick Hart, isolation by the modernist establishment kept him from full participation in a living intellectual and artistic tradition, and led to certain weaknesses, such as a "puerile Teilhardian theology." He laments that Providence College, founded by the Dominicans in 1917, appears to be losing its distinctiveness, absorbed into the broader therapeutic-bureaucratic culture of American academia.

Hartch also frankly acknowledges that commitment to the transcendentals may come at the cost of worldly success. The Kansas project was ultimately dissolved by hostile administrators. Hart's sculpture was alternately ignored and derided by mainstream critics who were blind to the virtues of his work.

However, Hartch keeps his focus on what can realistically be achieved, despite difficult obstacles. All his case studies offer much to learn from. Criticizing the false, the bad, and the ugly can easily be more than a full-time job for anyone who wants it, but to do so risks running afoul of the numerous warnings against anger and wrath in Proverbs and the Epistles. Hartch

An Act of Worship That Invites

Review by Walker Robinson

Choral Evensong emerged out of the monastic tradition and was made particularly Anglican both through the poetic prose of Cranmer and Coverdale, as well as through the English choral tradition from Tallis to Howells. It is considered by many an anomaly in the hustle and bustle of the 21st-century Anglophone world.

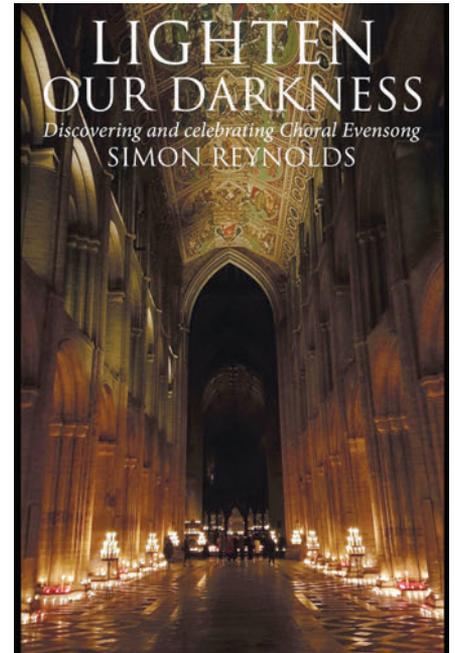
Lighten Our Darkness by Simon Reynolds suggests many reasons why Choral Evensong, especially in the cathedrals and large parish churches of the Anglican Communion, has thrived despite declining church membership and the secularization of our culture. Reynolds, an Anglican priest, academic, and former succentor at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, seeks in this small volume to explain the appeal of Choral Evensong to its audience, to trace the historic emergence of Choral Evensong out of its early Christian and monastic roots, and finally (in the bulk of this book) to walk novices through and to reflect upon the liturgical structure of a Choral Evensong service.

Each portion of the Evensong liturgy (the Preces and Responses, Psalms, Readings, Canticles, Prayers, and the Anthem) is given an individual chapter situating it within the history of Christian liturgy and highlighting its distinctive Anglican formulation in the mid-17th century with the publication of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Closing each chapter are "Words of Reflection," by writers as varied as John Calvin, Siegfried Sassoon, and Rowan Williams, centered on Reynolds's topic.

Why are contemporary worshipers (and, perhaps more intriguingly,

shows a much better way: how real successes, however few in number and overlooked by the broader culture, can light the way for generations to come.

Ben Lima (@lectionaryart on Twitter) is an art historian and critic, and a parishioner at Church of the Incarnation in Dallas.



Lighten Our Darkness

Discovering and Celebrating

Choral Evensong

By Simon Reynolds

Darton, Longman, and Todd, pp. 128, \$22.99

tourists) drawn to this centuries-old service full of occasionally stilted Elizabethan language? Reynolds is at his best when grappling with this question. Central to this appeal is the anonymity allowed to worshipers as participants in Choral Evensong, as well as the provision of a space of stillness and silence separated from the pace and pressure of contemporary life.

Challenging arguments for the inherent narcissism of contemporary Western European (and American) culture, Reynolds posits that Choral Evensong is appealing explicitly in its ability to take us out of ourselves and to challenge our self-referential tendencies.

Reynolds writes that Choral Evensong is a “gift that demands little or nothing in return,” and is “an act of worship that invites rather than compels.”

I am a Choral Evensong lover at my core, having whet my appetite attending many Evensong services while studying abroad in the U.K. during my undergraduate years, and I now sing frequently in Choral Evensong services at my alma mater. If you too are an enthusiast, the chapter-by-chapter breakdown of the liturgical components of the Choral Evensong service may seem a bit pedantic for your tastes.

Reynolds adds several nuggets of insight within these chapters, like when he discusses the poetic parallelism of the psalms and the different approaches to singing them from the pre-Christian synagogue to the current day. In another chapter, he discusses the historical change in cathedral singing lists from an early focus on sacred texts set by primarily English composers to a more diverse, broader repertoire (even at times secular) by composers from around the world and in many different languages.

Reynolds closes this brief volume

with a chapter pointing the reader to live Choral Evensong services, websites for live-streamed services, and even websites for archived recorded services from the past century. My sincere hope is that this book invites seekers, believers, and music lovers around the world to better understand, reflect upon, and appreciate more fully the beauty of Choral Evensong.

Walker Robinson is a physician who lives in Durham, North Carolina, and sings in the Choral Evensong Singers and the Chapel Choir of Duke University.

PEOPLE & PLACES

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The Rev. **Carl Adair** is curate at Zion, Douglaston, N.Y.

The Rev. **Larry Adams-Thompson** is deacon in charge of St. John's, Marlin, Texas.

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The Rev. **Mary Barnett** is missional priest in charge of Holy Trinity, Middletown, Conn.

The Rev. **Miguel Carmona** is curate of St. Barnabas, Garland, Texas.

The Rev. **Amber B. Carswell** is rector of Christ Church, Warwick, N.Y.

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We are social creatures, and we need friends.

"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner'" (Gen. 2:18). The Lord acts, but not by creating another co-equal human. Instead, the Lord creates out of the ground all animal life as a partner to humanity, though subject to human stewardship. Indeed, the Lord forms animal life from the mud of the earth, the same substance from which Adam was created. The Lord gives animal life to humanity in a particular way, allowing Adam to name the creatures and thereby raise them to the level of intelligibility. Humanity, then, interacts with animals outwardly *and* thinks of them inwardly, gives them mental space, and comes to know them. We share the ground from which we were made and the divine hand that made us with all animal life. "What God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mark 10:9).

Wild animals may terrify us, but this fear instills an appropriate reverence. Domesticated animals and our beloved pets call forth our deep respect as well. "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field" (Gen. 2:19-20). The first human being found a flock of friends. The Psalmist celebrates this moment. "You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:6-10). We do well to recall that God and

humanity and animal life belong together. And, along with vegetative life and all celestial beings, everything seen and unseen, one chorus of endless praise ascends to God the Creator of all being. "O all ye works of the LORD, bless ye the Lord."

In the animal world, we have partners, but not a co-equal partner. We see "another" but not "another self," not a friend in the most profound sense. God goes to work again. "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man" (Gen. 2:22). Because Adam was made from the dust of the earth, the woman, by derivation, is also from the earth. On yet another level, they are from each other. The woman is from the man and the man from the woman because differentiation requires both. Adam cannot sing to "the bone of my bones" until there is a woman. This is an ancient story about the first marriage, the first parents, but it is also a story about the emergence of human society. We need each other.

We cannot survive alone. "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mark 10:9).

We need animals, human partners, vegetative life, angelic companions, celestial beings, the music of the spheres.

Look It Up

Read Hebrews 1:2

Think About It

"He has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds." Encountering each other and all created beings, we meet Jesus.

Lowest to Highest

The proverbial patience of Job and his far more exhaustive impatience over the injustice of his suffering anticipate the sufferings of Christ. For Christ goes to his cross willingly and yet feels the anguish and God-forsakenness of his torturous death. Job cries out, "If I go forward, he is not there; or backward, I cannot perceive him; on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him: I turn to the right, but I cannot see him" (Job 23:8-9). From the cross, Jesus quoted the first line of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Every moment of human suffering is a moment known to Jesus. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Jesus is with us as one who sympathizes but not merely so. Being without sin, he is not trapped by the human condition he assumes. Instead, Jesus transforms every human experience by the addition of his divine life and power. Classically stated, he became what we are so that we might become what he is. As a morning hymn puts it, "he reconciled the lowest things to the highest thing."

Every human experience is assumed and elevated by Jesus. A medieval text of great renown, *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, illustrates this beautifully in the story of St. Silvester. While engaging in a debate with a group of learned Jewish scholars, one of whom asks St. Silvester why Jesus underwent "mockery and suffering and death," the saint insists that Jesus wrought, at every step, liberation and transformation.

"Christ suffered hunger that he might feed us, he thirsted in order to quench our dryness with a life-giving draft; he was tempted to liberate us from temptation; he was taken captive to deliver us from capture by the demons; he was mocked to free us

from the demons' mockery; he was bound in order to untie for us the knot of bondage and malediction; he was humiliated in order to exalt us; he was stripped of his garments to clothe with his pardon the nakedness of our primal privation; he accepted the crown of thorns in order to give back to us the flowers of paradise; he was hung upon the tree to condemn the evil desires that a tree had stirred; he was given gall and vinegar to drink in order to bring man into the land flowing with milk and honey and to open for us fountains running with honey; he took mortality upon himself to confer immortality upon us; he was buried to bless the tombs of saints; he rose to restore life to the dead; he ascended into heaven to open heaven's gates; he is seated at God's right hand to hear and grant the prayers of the faithful" (trans. William Granger Ryan).

Because Jesus has touched and transformed the lowest places, the sting of death is removed, and the promise of everlasting life shines forth.

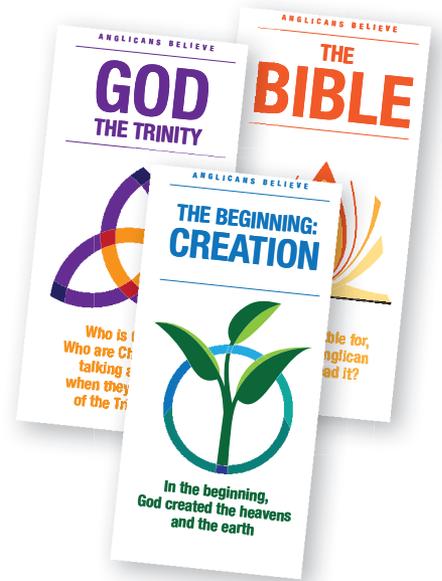
Still, we must go with Jesus to the recesses of suffering and death, carrying our cross, and, in this way, take hold of his divine power moment by moment. Jesus is always loving us and saying to us, "You lack one thing." He calls us to deeper and deeper self-renunciation until his life bears fruit in us a hundredfold (Mark 10:17-31).

Jesus has assumed our life into his divine person. From the lowest places, Christ lifts redeemed humanity to the heights of heaven.

Look It Up
Read Psalm 22:1

Think About It

We will all know bitter sorrow, and yet we will set our minds, in hope, on things above.



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