

Trinité

VOLUME 8 N° 2

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN CATHEDRAL IN PARIS

SPRING 2013



LUCINDA LAIRD,
OUR 10th DEAN
THE NUTS AND BOLTS
OF DISCERNMENT





Join *Les Arts George V*

SUPPORT THE CATHEDRAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Les Arts George V is dedicated to bringing professional quality artistic events to the American Cathedral for the benefit of the parishioners and the greater Paris community. Proceeds from the events and donations help underwrite the music program of the Cathedral.

Membership info:
www.americancathedral.org
"Music" tab



The American Cathedral in Paris

SPRING 2013

Trinité

The Magazine of
The American Cathedral in Paris

Dean and Rector

The Very Reverend
Lucinda Rawlings Laird

Canon Pastor

The Reverend
Elizabeth Hall Hendrick

Canon for Administration

Giles Williams

Director of Music

Zachary Ullery

Assistant Director of Music

Dominique McCormick

Trinité Editors

Nancy Janin
Walter Wells

Assistant Editor

John Freed

Cover Photos

Kristen Ketron

Design

Anastasia Komnou

Advertising

Allison Glasgow-Lafontaine

Please send comments to:
The American Cathedral in Paris
23 avenue George V
75008 Paris
France

Email: publications@americancathedral.org

Website: www.americancathedral.org



Letter from the new dean

3



The Reverend Lucinda Rawlings Laird will be instituted as the 10th dean of the American Cathedral on May 26, 2013, the culmination of a year-long discernment and search process.

The now Very Reverend Laird arrived in Paris in March to take up her responsibilities. Trinité asked the new dean to introduce herself to the magazine's readership of friends and alumni.

Many communities, one Community

Beloved in Christ,

"I'm the new dean of the American Cathedral in Paris."

I still can't say that without a huge grin, a sense of I-can't-quite-believe-this, and gratitude to God. I am so happy to be here! It's the beginning of a great adventure. It's also the beginning of a journey together, a journey of faith. Here's a bit about the journey that has brought me here.

My life as a priest for thirty years has been challenging, fulfilling, difficult, infuriating, and joyful – but most of all, it has been a gift and an adventure. I have met people, done things, gone places and grown in ways I never could have anticipated when Bishop Paul Moore ordained

me on a snowy Sunday in Pelham, New York, in 1982. I remember being scared, so very scared, before that ordination – and I think I was right to be.

Before I was a priest I was an actor, in New York. I thought that was my vocation. In college, with the wisdom that only a college sophomore possesses, I had decided that I was far too smart for all that religious stuff and called myself an atheist. In retrospect I was at best (or worst) an agnostic. It's pretty clear looking back that I was still searching for something I could not articulate, and that if I had rejected God, God had certainly not rejected me. Funny how in hindsight one can see all sorts of signs and hints. But after college it was the theater that called me, and I must admit that I loved it (and still do).



I went back to church in the autumn of 1976. I had just broken up with a boyfriend, and was at loose ends. I suspect that the yearning to fill what Pascal called that “God-shaped hole” was finally surfacing. I wandered into an Episcopal church, it brought back nice memories, someone invited me to coffee hour, I met some other actors, someone invited me to brunch, and the next thing I knew I was an acolyte and a lector.

This was my conversion experience – conversion in the midst of community. I had said I would be happy to believe in God if only someone could prove God’s existence to me – logically and definitively. But it was being part of a Christian community that opened my eyes and heart. I later learned that this is the classical way of conversion, but at the time all I knew was this amazing new reality: God’s palpable presence in my life, and God’s abundant love surrounding me.

Our new dean has been followed around by a hymn that sings of a community bigger than the one we see on Sunday morning.

Later I sought to bring thought and intellect into this relationship. I realized that I did not have to “park my brain at the door” of the church, as the saying goes, but should in fact use it more. God surely expects us to use the brains we are given! And I discovered that thought and intellect are but one way to the Holy. Sacrament and music and poetry can be windows onto the Divine, too, lowering the walls of hurt and pride and ego and self-absorption that we put up. And community. Always community.

I became a priest because it seemed like such a natural thing to do – a way to use all that I had

been given. Over the years I have gotten good at some of this, honed some skills, learned how to run a church. But living in the Christian community, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep, admitting and sharing fears and hopes and joys, asking for help from those who possess gifts I do not – all of this is what has formed me as priest and person.

Community. Always community.

I was ordained a deacon at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. (We are ordained as deacons first, then priests six months or more later.) I remember that we sang the bishop’s favorite hymn:

*In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love,
Throughout the whole wide earth.*

Little did I know at the time that this hymn would follow me. We sang it at my institution as Rector of St. Mark’s in Teaneck, New Jersey. We sang it again on a frigid December night as four of us were sent off to a refugee camp in Côte d’Ivoire; lo and behold, when we finally arrived, in tropical heat and after ten hours on a bush bus, we were greeted with the same hymn.

We sang it at St. Matthew’s in Louisville when I was instituted as rector, when we went off to work with AIDS orphans in Kenya, and on the Sunday after September 11, 2001. We sang it at General Convention in 2003 when things got dicey and it didn’t feel much like one great fellowship of love. The choir director sprang it on me on my last Sunday at St. Matthew’s, knowing that I would cry, and I did.

I expect to sing it in Paris, too. It’s not the most sophisticated music, but it has been following me around for a reason: With God’s help, we learn to recognize Christ in one another wherever we are. We learn that community is bigger than what we can see on any given Sunday morning. We come to understand that all God’s children are included.

Lately, I have been using this invitation to



communion. It's widely used, but I first heard it at St. Stephen's Church in Richmond, Virginia. It's addressed to everyone:

This is the table, not of the church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love Him, and for those who want to love Him more.

So come, you who have much faith and you who have little; you who have been here often and you who have not been here long; you who have tried to follow, and you who have failed. Come – because it is the Lord who invites you. It is His will that those who want Him should meet Him here.

“The most extraordinary privilege of being a priest for me is celebrating the Eucharist. I love to preach, but it is the Eucharist that is the center of our life together.”

The most extraordinary privilege of being a priest for me is celebrating the Eucharist. I love to preach, but it is the Eucharist that is the center of our life together. Sometimes I catch myself standing at the altar with a sense of disbelief, even after all these years: how did I get here? But, of course, it's not me who is doing anything; it is Christ who is present when two or three are gathered together, and it is God's Spirit transforming not only bread and wine but us. All of us. No exceptions – and thank goodness for that. Community. Always community.

When Jeb Seder told me that the Cathedral vestry had voted to call me as your dean, I said (very clearly and calmly, I thought, but Jeb may disagree), “Je serais très heureuse d'être votre doyen.” Then I got in my car and started singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

In the weeks that followed, I alternated between great joy and deep sadness at leaving St. Matthew's, an extraordinary and loving community. It should hurt to leave a community – or what's the point? I do know, however, that we will always be bound together in Christ. Now I look forward to creating those bonds here in a new community.

So I will end with a verse from another favorite hymn (#304):

*As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
each proud division ends.
That love that made us makes us one,
and strangers now are friends.*

We are strangers who are becoming friends.
I am so grateful to be in this community. 🙏



**Yours in Christ,
Lucinda+**





By Anne Swardson

6



The gravity of responsibility, the buoyancy of God's presence

The duty of discernment

One day of discernment. One parish profile. Three candidate visits. Seven search-committee members. Fourteen months. Fifteen vestry members. Thirty conference calls. Seventy applications.

Many prayers. One breath from the Holy Spirit.

That's what it took for the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Paris to find, discern, interview and call the Reverend Lucinda Laird, the tenth dean of the cathedral and the first woman to hold that post.

The process of finding a dean to succeed Zachary Fleetwood began in September 2011 when the search committee was formed, with Peter Fellowes

as chair and Mary Lou Bradley, Jill Cameron, Allison Glasgow-Lafontaine, Hope Newhouse, Charles Trueheart and Creighton Willis as members.

They faced a daunting task. Not only had Zachary put his imprint on our community and made himself hard to replace, but his job was one of the most sought-after in the Episcopal Church. Even before the position was posted online, the search committee began receiving informal applications.

But there was much work to do before that. The committee conferred with the Right Reverend Pierre Whalon, Bishop-in-Charge of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe,



* SPIRITUALITY	4	9	2	4	8	7	7	2	6
* PASTORAL CARE	4	8	3	5	2	7	6	4	5
LITURGY									
ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP-DEC.									
ADAPTABILITY									
FUNDRAISING	4	6	4	8	0	3	1	1	1
CONFERENCE IN EXPERIMENTAL SPIRIT									
LEADERSHIP CSO	3	7	5	2	5	8	10	3	2
CREATIVITY									
AM PLAYER									
REACHING	1	5	9	12	12	2	9	4	
ACTION IN A									

SENIOR WARDEN JEB SEDER LED THE LONG, INTENSE DAY OF DELIBERATION AND FINALLY DECISION.



STUDIOUSNESS, REFLECTION AND PRAYERS FOR GUIDANCE FILLED THE DAY AND MADE THE PROCESS UNFORGETTABLE.



GOOD CHEER AND FELLOWSHIP CHARACTERIZED THE GATHERING, BUT THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO LEVITY.



and consulted the entire congregation to define who we were, what we needed and what kind of dean we sought. And there was a deadline: We wanted to have the new dean called and in place by March 2013.

The search committee went to work rapidly. Members held a full-day retreat in November 2011 with the Reverend Maria DeCarvalho, visiting priest, to prepare for the work ahead. Then in December, on a cold and rainy Saturday, more than 160 parishioners took part in an all-day workshop led by Bishop Whalon to help the search committee craft a parish survey that would in turn inform the parish profile – the document that would tell candidates whether we might be the right “fit” for them.

“The Cathedral’s retreat was a perfect example of what these retreats are meant to do: give all the parishioners a chance to express their opinions, fears and hopes in front of the leadership,” Bishop Whalon said. “It educated me as well.”

The survey, completed by 155 people, showed that we appreciated the Cathedral’s music program, its broad liturgy style, its tradition of inclusiveness and, especially, its communion table open to all. And what did we want in a new dean? Someone who was a gifted leader who could mobilize the talents of others. A stimulating preacher with strong spirituality. Someone who was empathetic and approachable with a strong sense of humor, and who could adapt to a challenging foreign environment.

Armed with that, the search committee went to work. In April 2012, the 22-page parish profile was posted on the Cathedral’s website. At the end, it invited anyone interested to apply online and included a link to do so.

The process was entirely digital; in May, the applications began pouring in by email. By the time the process had closed at the end of June, 70 candidates had applied. All applications, which included a self-introduction, a résumé, a standard Episcopal Church form, reference suggestions and links to sermons, were read by all committee

members. Promising candidates were interviewed initially by two-member committee teams.

Candidates who made the second round were interviewed by another two-person committee team. Third-round applicants were then interviewed by the remaining members of the search team who had not had prior exposure to the candidate. As a final step, the committee organized a site visit to each of the home parishes of the finalists, including attendance at a worship service led by the candidate and a face-to-face meeting afterwards. Three or four references were checked for each person, and sermons were listened to live and online.

“We all confronted something in ourselves and the candidates, and were moved by the Holy Spirit as a solution became clear.”

Jeb Seder, Senior Warden

Among the shortlisted candidates initially vetted by Bishop Whalon: a bishop, a dean and a canon, as well as rectors. They came from all over the United States as well as from the corners of the world from North Africa to the Antipodes.

Over an exhausting and prayerful summer filled with Skype meetings, travel and conference calls, the search committee reduced the list to four and then three. Bishop Whalon gave his canonical approval for the vestry to call any one of these.

“This was a prayer-led process accompanied by a wonderful sense of joy, moments of fun and a moving sense of respect among committee



members for each other,” Peter Fellowes said. “We felt the weight of responsibility in making choices for our parish from a field of highly qualified candidates – and we felt the lightness of God’s presence among us.”

On September 12, 2012, Peter Fellowes presented the three finalists to the vestry at an evening meeting and the names were approved with enthusiasm. Vestry members received a sealed envelope containing extensive dossiers on all three. The baton was passed.

Working especially with the two search committee members who were also on the vestry, Mary Lou Bradley and Creighton Willis, the vestry began to arrange Paris visits for the three finalists and, when appropriate, the spouse. The parish received an e-letter announcing that the list was down to the finalists. Senior wardens at the three churches of the candidates were called as a courtesy.

In October and November, the candidates visited. As much as possible, their itineraries were identical. On day one, they arrived and were picked up at the airport by their vestry “handlers.” After some rest, they were given a tour of the Cathedral, including the parts under construction, by either Junior Warden Mike Seeley or Canon for Administration Giles Williams, in some cases with a meeting or two following. That evening, they went to dinner with Senior Warden Jeb Seder and his wife, Francie.

The next day was filled with meetings – with Bishop Peter Lee, the interim dean, and Canon Pastor Elizabeth Hendrick, as well as all staff members. Bishop Whalon met with each candidate as well. Vestry members met with the candidate in small groups over breakfast and lunch during the course of the visit. That evening, the candidates were feted at a cocktail party attended by clergy, vestry and search committee members. Candidates gave a short talk about themselves that they previously had been asked to prepare. To keep things identical, the same caterer was used for each party!

The next day was filled with more interviews.

Then in the afternoon, the entire vestry met with the candidate in the Cathedral library. Follow-up questions were asked and the vestry worked together to make sure all bases were covered. After that, the candidate left the vestry and went downstairs to prepare a Vespers service, also by prior request. The candidates were given complete freedom to design the service as they wished, except that they were asked to include a homily in it.

After the service, the vestry met again in the library and reviewed together their reactions to the candidate, from the group meeting, in the small chats, and from the service. At the beginning, Jeb Seder went around the room and asked each vestry member to give, in just a word or two, the candidate’s strongest and weakest points. The discussion departed from there.

And at the end, the vestry broke and joined the candidate and spouse (where there was one), for an informal dinner at Restaurant Reed, on the rue Amélie.

“The process of selection, discernment, and calling was moving and sometimes arduous,” Jeb Seder said. “We all confronted something in ourselves and the candidates, and were moved by the Holy Spirit as a solution became clear to what was a very difficult and positive choice and process.”

Once each of the three visits had been completed, it was decision time. The vestry scheduled Saturday, December 1, and Sunday, December 2, for meetings. The Saturday session was held, with much appreciation, at the Champs-Élysées offices of Studios Architecture, where Creighton Willis is employed.

The session opened with a short but moving service led by Canon Hendrick that included Eucharist and a prayer that put into the words of liturgy the difficulty and importance of that day. The morning was spent analyzing each candidate. The vestry pulled up the list of key qualities it was felt the new dean needed to have, derived in part from the parish profile. Each person ranked



each candidate on how strongly they had those qualities, from 1 to 3. Those were then put onto a grid under each candidate's name.

At the same time, Creighton Willis drew, for each candidate, what looked something like a spider web, with the key qualities around the perimeter and gaps shaded in to show how each candidate was assessed in those qualities.

It had been a long morning and it was time for lunch. Vestry member Bruce McCoy had arranged for sandwiches, and participants took a refreshing break before what was hoped would be a final decision.

When the afternoon meeting was convened, the first item on the agenda was to see if any of the three candidates could be taken off the list. After much discussion but general agreement, that was done. Then a debate ensued over the two finalists.

When that was finished, Jeb Seder stood up. Speaking movingly, he asked the vestry members to take a 15-minute break and look into their hearts and seek the will of God. Only that, he said, would allow the vestry to make the right choice.

In silence, the attendees separated. Some stood on the balcony of the fifth-floor office, which overlooked the rue Pierre Charron. Looking to the right, they could see the sun gently setting over the spire of the Cathedral. Others walked among the desks, or prayed quietly in the kitchen and a small meeting room.

When the vestry reconvened, one member after another began to speak, and it was as with one voice: Lucinda Laird should be called to become the dean of the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. People hugged and applauded. A procedural meeting the next day, before church, nailed down the final details and began the work of making the public announcement – to the parish, to the clergy and staff, and to the world. 🌍

Anne Swardson is chair of the Cathedral's Mission and Outreach Committee and an editor-at-large with Bloomberg News.

Meanwhile, back in Louisville ...

"Back in Kentucky, my own discernment began seriously in June. Of course I'd like to live in Paris! But that wasn't the question. The question was whether I truly felt called to be at the American Cathedral.

"Over the ensuing months, with many prayers and continuing discussions with the very few people who knew I had applied, the call emerged clearly. There was no one moment that I can point to, but rather a growing sense of excitement. I felt energized in new ways. With each person I talked to, I felt more and more that this would be

a "fit." Interestingly, I also became more and more aware of the gifts I had been given in Kentucky, and the joy of being with the congregation at St. Matthew's. The fall seemed full of God's presence.

"The process seemed long, and was often frustrating. Now, however, I am grateful beyond measure for the time taken and the prayers offered. By the time Jeb Seder telephoned me to extend the call, I knew what my answer would be."

Lucinda+



Money: Giving back to Caesar what is Caesar's

Money is what the Old Testament called a demon: a force that if mastered can be a force for good, but if it becomes your master it enslaves you. Today, when one looks at the content of our conversations or the pages of our newspapers the subject of money – of spending it, or saving it, or printing it, or taxing it – is omnipresent. We work for money more than in any other society, we call people who make a lot of money “masters of the universe” and make movies about them. God comes, if He comes at all, after money. At most we devote to Him part of one day. How often have I sacrificed a Sunday at Church for a business trip? That is a reflection of our priorities, and it is a sin of idolatry. Dusty McDonald, a previous interim dean, had this definition of idolatry: *“Taking something that’s important and making it all important.”* Jesus gave his followers a perspective on this sin when he said: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” [Matthew 22:21]

We all inevitably have a relationship with money – a relationship that is largely unexamined. It

behooves us to become aware of how it affects us deeply and to give it its proper place – a secondary place behind that of God, or the yearnings of our Soul for meaning. Money can buy almost anything, but it cannot buy meaning.

How did we come to put money above all else? The accumulation of money and advances in science are the two main reasons why modern society needs God less than it used to. We can take care of ourselves, relying on science to protect us from illness and insuring ourselves against unforeseen circumstances. Seven lean years might be unpleasant, but we will survive them. In fact, accumulating goods and money cannot help but foster the feeling of self-sufficiency.

All of it is not negative, quite the contrary. Money can do a lot of good in the world: It can restore our Cathedral, relieve poverty, build schools and hospitals, educate and protect our kids. It touches almost everything that we care about.

On a personal level, our desire to accumulate often



stems from very noble sentiments. One starts a career with the purpose of building a nest-egg so as to provide security for one's family and be able to contribute to the community. As time passes, we seem to lose our way. Accumulating becomes a goal in itself as opposed to a means to an end. We figure that a bit more will make us more secure, will buy us a little bit more stuff, and make us happier. We justify it with thoughts like "I don't want my kids to feel they are lacking" or "I want to make sure that I never have to ask others for charity." Unfortunately, as we carry on, we find ourselves using money to define our success and that of others.

Money has a dark side. It is the single reason we don't pursue what our souls long for.

On a societal level, we believe we need to secure more oil, more land, more control of the seas. There never seem to be enough resources to make us feel secure. We can see the effects of unbridled excess on our lives – we're too busy to be with each other – and on the environment and the state of the world. If we seek relief from this dreariness, advertisers will suggest shopping. It will make us feel better. Forms can range from a friend telling another, "Let's cheer ourselves up this



afternoon, and go to the mall", to a more technical discussions about the latest flat screen TV or iPad. Shopping has become a drug.

In sum, we hold a basic unexpressed belief about money: There is no such thing as having too much money. And more is always better.

Yet, is it? Money has a dark side. It is the single reason we don't pursue what our souls long for. We stay in careers that erode our souls, telling ourselves that we will do good in the later acts of our lives. We focus on accumulation and consumption, becoming hamsters pedaling ever harder, or squirrels endlessly counting our acorns. Like the hamster we become addicted to non-stop work and feel guilty when we are idle. If we lack money, we feel we can't afford anything. Every decision requires energy. We focus on the gap between the rich and the poor and it becomes the focus of our political conversations.

As a Christian, the church requests that you give 10 percent of your earnings. It is not a suggestion. It is a privilege and a duty to give. It should be a proportional and sacrificial part of your money.

The essential parable about money is Luke 18:22-25 in which a good ruler who followed all the commandments asks Jesus what else he needs to do to gain eternal life.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Let's get serious here. I have sympathy for the ruler. If I give all my money away, I will be poor and nobody will care about me. I know that in Luke 12:22-23 Jesus tells us: *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes."*



Still, we worry.

Money worries occur because we cannot give accurate answers to the following questions:

- What is important to me and my family?
- How much money do I need to do that?
- How am I going to earn this money?

How much is enough? This is perfectly measurable if you put your head to it. This is a joint exercise with your spouse. Without going into the detailed mechanics, it requires you to calculate how much money you need to sustain your lifestyle, which determines the capital you need to accumulate. Most people don't calculate that number and that is a grave mistake. Knowing this number will set you free. In sum, we need money to live and satisfy our needs as we define them, and any amount above this number is a surplus and should be used as an instrument to do good deeds in the world, and become wiser in the process.

The real choice we have as human beings is to choose to live a life of sufficiency and abundance or to let the feeling of scarcity take over our lives.

Still, some of you might say: "Why should I give anyway? The real world is unfair and the strong will eat the weak." While you might be proud of this as a realistic stance, it also is a position of resignation and capitulation. It allows unfair practices to go on, such as slavery, discrimination, corruption, injustice. In fact, it makes us accomplices to them."

Jesus Christ and other religious figures have told us that giving was better than receiving, that it is the path to personal fulfillment. We do feel closer to God when we are generous. We feel we are part of something bigger, part of our Church, our community, our city, our world. We don't have to take Jesus's word for it. Numerous recent MRI studies on the neuroscience of emotions have shown that altruistic love and giving rank among the most positive emotions human minds can experience. We feel at peace. We do not miraculously grow confident that things will turn out all right, but we do realize that we will be able to handle adversity when it comes – calmly and with the help of God and our friends.

On the other hand, when we adopt a mindset of scarcity, we create a feeling of fear and insufficiency. Fear that there is not enough for us and our loved ones. We need to protect ourselves and hoard things. That mindset is not a true choice, it is the prevailing default setting of our world, the dominant voice in our culture. Listen to our politicians anywhere, they are talking budgets, austerity, etc. This is the voice of fear. It is all pervasive. When we let these fears into our heart, we become small. We scramble. We feel powerless, victimized, and our horizons narrow. We feel alone and isolated.

The real choice we have as human beings is to choose to live a life of sufficiency and abundance or to let the feeling of scarcity take over our lives. Showing gratitude for what we have, all the time, at every moment, helps us feel that we live in a generous world.

Are you satisfied today with what you are giving? If you are, chances are you are not giving enough. 🙏



Neil Janin, a parishioner since the early 90s, serves on the Mission and Outreach and Education Committees and is co-organizer of the Cathedral pilgrimages. He is a management consultant originally from Montreal.



By Anne Swardson

14

In each issue, Trinité reports on the Cathedral's various missions.

OUR MISSION

AT HOME AND IN THE WORLD

Career Day

Changing self-image, and maybe lives too

Fabienne was sure she wanted to work with children as a career. Then she came to the American Cathedral and gained a whole new perspective. As well as a wardrobe.

She was one of six women who spent much of a cold Saturday in March at the Cathedral learning job-hunting, interviewing, organization and résumé-writing skills.

Coached by five Cathedral parishioners, the young women emerged from the day energized and motivated to pursue their job hunts.

This was especially important because they usually don't have access to this kind of advice. The six attendees were sponsored by H.O.M.E., an association in the eastern suburbs of Paris that helps women in difficulty by promoting equality, counseling women in person and on the phone and providing temporary housing when needed. H.O.M.E. is supported by the Cathedral's Mission and Outreach Committee.

The women of the association, many of them mothers and many of them escapees from abusive marriages, do receive advice from H.O.M.E. staff on navigating France's labyrinth of social benefits and assistance. But the group doesn't have the resources to offer career and job counseling. That's where the Cathedral came in. The president of the association, Warda Sadoudi, suggested to M&O Committee member Francie Seder that the Cathedral could be most helpful in giving that kind of advice. Our canon pastor, the Reverend Elizabeth Hendrick, provided guidance based on a similar experience at her former church.

Volunteers were easily recruited. Andrea Richards and Jocelyn Phelps offered to discuss organizational and presentational skills, Ann Dushane handled résumé preparation, and Jeb Seder and Andrew de Csilléry specialized in interviewing techniques and career targeting. Sigun Coyle, aided by Elizabeth Osborne, provided lunch. And as a special treat, the women could select clothes and accessories to put together a professional wardrobe, thanks to clothing donations from parishioners and from a Paris nonprofit – and to Sondra Sefton, who volunteered to help the attendees pick out just the right outfit.

When the day came, all six women and Warda showed up, right on time at 10 a.m. They were hesitant at first, introducing themselves and their career goals in soft tones, looking down and at each other. Two women in

particular – Charlotte, clad in a beautiful blue hijab, and Sophia, the youngest at 19, in blue jeans – clung to each other on the couch in the narthex reception room as everyone sat in a circle. But as the sessions got under way, they began to open up. And to learn.

“Here,” Sondra would say, “try this. It would look good on you.”

Fabienne, for instance, had seen herself in a child-care career because she had two children. But as she began to speak with Jeb and Andrew, it became clear she had other skills and experience that she hadn’t mentioned before. She had worked in restaurants for years, as a waitress and a hostess, in three countries, including at exclusive hotels. Jeb and Andrew explained that she would be better off using her existing skills to interest employers, and she agreed to give that a try.

Similarly, Fanny wanted to work with animals. But her CV showed very little experience in the field. When Ann sat down with her for advice, she started questioning Fanny about her volunteer activities. It turned out that she’d learned cat grooming by having her own long-haired Persian that she later entered in cat shows. In addition, she had volunteered at the animal shelter in Gennevilliers. Why wasn’t that already on her CV? “I didn’t think it was allowed,” Fanny said,

adding quickly that she’d insert the information as soon as she could.

With Andrea and Jocelyn, the women learned to target their approaches rather than sending out CVs willy-nilly. Even one student who envisioned being in administrative work came to understand that she still had to

“Here,” Sondra would say, “try this. It would look good on you.” In two minutes, Sophia was twirling in front of the mirror in an orange coat, and Stephanie was trying on a navy jacket. From behind the screen where several of them were donning items, Sondra would hear giggling and whispers as they decided who looked better in what.



focus on one industry. Another important lesson: Pick out your interview clothing several days in advance, so you’re not frantically trying on outfits as the time to get to the interview slips away.

That task got easier, too, after a visit to Sondra’s wardrobe corner in the dusty parish hall. Coats, jackets and skirts hung on racks (the choir robes had been carefully removed earlier) and were folded on the table. So were sweaters, blouses and pants. Shoes were lined up across the room, and handbags hung on doorknobs and window handles.

The women couldn’t have been more thrilled. They stopped in between training sessions, hesitant at first to do more than look.

By the end of the day, after the lunch of cheese sandwiches, the participants walked differently – more confidently, with their heads held high. As Fabienne put it: “This day has helped me re-center. It’s given me a base.”

Added Warda: “The participants really put the women at ease. They really instilled confidence – the women feel valued now.”

Stay tuned for more projects with the women of H.O.M.E. Because of them, we too walked away from the Cathedral that day differently, with brighter smiles and happier hearts. 🌸





By Nancy Janin

16



Pilgrimage to a historic outpost

“Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.” – John 11:54

Called Taybeh now, this village where Jesus sought refuge near the end of His life has become a regular stop on Cathedral pilgrimages to the Holy Land. This is where Christ came when the news of His raising of Lazarus began to agitate the chiefs and the high priests, and this is where He prayed for the courage to face the end that He knew awaited him.

Thus Taybeh is unusual in ways large and small.

The name was changed from Ephraim by Saladin in the 12th century. He found that the town’s alternate name – Ophrah – sounded too much like “demon” in Arabic and wanted a name that reflected the type of people he found there – taybeh, “goodly.”

Taybeh today is the last all-Christian village in the Holy Land – ironic 2000 years after Christ’s birth

so nearby. The flight of Palestinian Christians has been documented extensively, such as in a controversial CBS News “60 Minutes” report (April 22, 2012), which also included a special web-only feature about Taybeh.

Christians now represent about two percent of the population of Israel/Palestine, and their numbers are declining. Their birthrate is low, and emigration is relatively easy for them because of higher educational and vocational levels. Being the only all-Christian town has the advantage of focusing attention on Taybeh, but attention brings difficulties, too.

With only 1,400 residents, Taybeh has three churches – Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Melkite Eastern Catholic – and the ecumenism is striking. For example, Easter is celebrated jointly in each church by turn.



A BULLETIN BOARD WITH AN EASTER THEME;
BELOW: NANCY JANIN PRESENTS THE JUNIOR
GUILD DONATION
TO SISTER CLAUDINE.



BELOW: ST. GEORGE
CHURCH WHERE
SACRIFICES ARE MADE.
FAR RIGHT: STREET
SCENE ON A QUIET DAY.





One of the Cathedral pilgrimage leaders, Neil Janin, had heard that the three churches, like their Muslim neighbors, participated in the ancient ritual of animal sacrifice. During the April 2012 visit he took a few minutes to check out the mentioned site and found, in fact, bones and blood-stained walls, evidence of a recent sacrifice.

The school operated by the Roman Catholic Church is the most important stop for the Cathedral group. It is run by three French nuns of the Order of the Ste. Croix de Jerusalem and has been supported financially by the Cathedral's Junior Guild for many years. A third of the nearly 500 students are Muslim and come from the area; all students attend mass in the adjoining church building.

Sister Claudine, the school principal, is also the passionate tour guide to the 350-year-old Parable House, an ancient Palestinian residence where a convincing case is made that Jesus was not born in a stable as we understand that word, but rather in a home very like this one. She patiently explains to visiting groups that the ingrained hospitality of people of that region would have made it unthinkable ever to turn anyone away, and certainly not a woman in labor.

Inside the Parable House entrance there is a small space with a very low ceiling, the place where the smaller animals would stay both for safety and to provide heat for the family whose quarters were above. Just beyond, there is a ground-floor area where larger animals were housed – cattle, donkeys, etc. And to the left there is a storeroom for foodstuffs that would have been harvested in quantities to last the year.

As all the family ate and slept in the upper room over the small animal enclosure, there would have been no privacy for a woman giving birth – and thus Mary would have been given the space with the larger animals where she would be warm and private. Local lore has it that the family that most recently lived in this house, leaving only in 1974, used this space as a birthing area, too.

Many other biblical stories take on new meaning

for the visitor looking at the home in detail with its bushel baskets, a hole in the ceiling of the storage area where an invalid could be lowered if the crowds outside were too large, an old robe hanging on a peg on which one would never sew a new patch.

A visit with the Roman Catholic priest, Father Raed Abusahlia, a dynamic personality, is not to be missed. While we drink tea or lemonade, seated rather formally on the many couches lining the walls, he tells us about the peace lamp project – he wants every church in the world to have a Taybeh lamp, shaped like a dove and burning Taybeh's own olive oil. The lamps are available, he assures us, at the gift shop his community has started. He offers to sell us CDs of "D'Une Seule Voix," the children's choir that has performed in Jerusalem with Israeli children and that toured France in 2006. He reports on the Beit Afram, the senior citizens' home that was created since the security wall cut off this part of Palestine from the only existing Palestinian facility in the West Bank. He talks of Caritas, the newly renovated medical center in town that is especially important in cases of complicated pregnancies and deliveries since there had been many cases of childbirth at the border crossings, which can take hours. As he says, "They accuse me of having too many ideas ... it is true." He also ties this flurry of activity to the core mission of the church "The role of the church is to answer needs, and we try to have an answer to every need."

The Taybeh Brewing Company offers a welcome change of scene. The brewery website includes a quote from Newsweek calling it "the best microbrewery in the Middle East." At the time that was written it may have been the only one, and even now it is one of only two – a Lebanese beer, 961, was launched in 2006. But the Taybeh brewery's beer, using imported German hops and made to demanding German sanitation laws, is excellent indeed.

The Khoury family, who founded the brewery in 1995 in the euphoric days after the Oslo accords, had roots in Taybeh, although they had been living in Boston for decades. Two brothers, Nadim and David, took their \$1.2 million life savings to



start the brewery, and by obtaining the blessing of Yasser Arafat they skirted possible resistance from the overwhelmingly Muslim area surrounding Taybeh.

Oktoberfest attracts thousands each year – Palestinians, tourists from all over the world, and Israelis who want to support Palestinian businesses. The organizer, Maria Khoury, wife of David (who is the mayor of Taybeh town) says that local traders sell more of their produce during the two-day festival than in the rest of the year. That also helps the Muslims accept the operation of the brewery.

There are challenges, however: the second intifada, 2000-'05, saw a sharp decline in business of all types in the West Bank. The Israeli government reacted to the violence with tight restrictions on the movement of machinery, raw materials and people. Production and sales were severely hampered. For example, the Israeli government often turns off the water supply to Taybeh, critical in brewing; Khoury must “export” Taybeh beer into Israel, a mere 10 kilometers away, carting along each time an opened beer cask to help the checkpoint soldiers estimate the weight of the cask itself so they can evaluate whether the cask contains only liquid.

In addition to the problems created by Israel’s policies toward Palestinians, the people of Taybeh also have to deal with being a Christian island in a Muslim sea. The Palestinians we spoke with, in Taybeh and elsewhere, feel that Christian-Muslim relationships are on the most part very good and that the Israeli occupation is far and away the largest obstacle to peace and prosperity.

But there has been at least one recent incident in Taybeh that shows how quickly good relationships can go bad. In 2005 a 30-year-old unmarried Muslim woman was poisoned by her family after she admitted to being pregnant by a Christian man from Taybeh. Her family then came to town and began burning homes of anyone suspected of being a relative of this man. After 14 homes were torched, and just as the Khourys’ house was being set afire, the Palestinian police arrived and stopped

the violence and arrested the perpetrators.

With all the hardships, dangers, uncertainties and obstacles they face, the Christians in Taybeh continue to worship God, care for the sick and the elderly, sing, learn, celebrate and have fun together. It has been our delight to get to know them through our pilgrimage visits and to draw inspiration from their example. Goodly and godly people. ☺

Nancy Janin, a parishioner and member of the choir since 1988, is co-editor of Trinite.



Reverend Robert G. Oliver

1930-2013

The Reverend Robert G. Oliver, former Dean of the American Cathedral in Paris, died April 27, 2013, in Atlanta, at the age of 83. He moved there in 1990 and began what was described as an active retirement until recent health issues.

Dean Oliver’s five-year term in Paris ended in 1979. He spent the next 11 years as rector of St. James’ Church in downtown Los Angeles, where he spearheaded a number of major building projects. The first of those, rededicated in 1990 as Oliver Hall, provides affordable housing for senior citizens.

His years in Paris were marked by controversial changes in liturgy, notably the adoption of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. As he worked to pull the Cathedral parish into the Episcopal mainstream, he said he appreciated the open-mindedness of most parishioners about the new liturgies.

Two years ago the Reverend Oliver told Trinité that he remembered his time in Paris as a highlight of his life. “I can’t think of any better place to have been or any better people to have been with.”



By Mark Carroll

20



Gene Bedient Helping keep the music glorious

**A volunteer organ builder applies Band-Aids
to the Cathedral's 19th century masterpiece.**



There are all sorts of reasons people go to church, and not all of them are pretty. On the nobler end are the searches for spiritual growth and guidance, and the commitment to the mission and the work of the church. On the baser end there's free babysitting.

Last year, Gallup research reinforced previous studies showing that Americans who attend church frequently have a higher sense of wellbeing than those who don't, and that on Sundays they enjoy an extra boost to their mood. The poll leaves unanswered the question of why churchgoers get this boost, but it's logical, if unscientific, to posit that on Sunday mornings they're spending time with people they love and who love them, in an environment that emanates fellowship and caring and, above all, God's love.

At the American Cathedral, the Sunday



morning mood enhancer includes a first-class music program. When the parish conducted a discernment workshop in 2011 to prepare for the search for the Cathedral's next dean, the music was consistently cited as among the most important reasons that today's parishioners were first attracted to the Cathedral.

And no wonder. The Cathedral adult choir is among the best in Paris. The children's choir – strengthened by a “feeder” program based on Orff Schulwerk that gives children ages 5-7 a solid grounding in creating music – is so good that one Sunday a month they provide all of the music for the 11 a.m. service.

And then there's the organ.

Built in 1887 by Aristide Cavallé-Coll, considered the most distinguished organ builder of the 19th century, the Cathedral organ has been rebuilt and adjusted numerous times over the years, leaving us today with an instrument that is by turns magnificent and, especially for the organists, frustrating. Parishioners might at times be startled during a particularly solemn moment in the service by a renegade note known as a “cipher.” A pipe sounds spontaneously, with no intent or intervention from the organist. Or they may be distracted by the wheezing from the bellows beneath the pipes. But under the talented fingers and feet of the Cathedral organists, the manuals and pedals bring forth glorious sound that belies the hard work needed to keep the sound glorious.

Luckily, the organists are no longer dealing with the problems on their own. In the autumn of 2012, Gene Bedient arrived in Paris, the trailing spouse of Gwen, a State Department employee newly assigned to the U.S. Mission at the OECD. They came from Algiers, where they had been living during Gwen's first overseas posting.

This was a later-life career move for Gwen. With a newly retired husband, and the last child graduated from college, she decided to apply for a job with the Foreign Service. In January 2010 she was accepted, and by March she was on her way to Washington, where orientation and training included French

language classes. Living outside the Continental U.S. had always been a dream for both Gwen and Gene, so they were excited to learn that her first assignment would start the following September at the American Embassy in Algiers.

Always interested in music, Gene soon found an outlet in Algiers. In addition to playing the organ for Lessons & Carols at Holy Trinity Anglican Church and an Easter service at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Notre Dame d'Afrique, he soon organized an *a cappella* choir, drawing on choral conducting experience he gained as a university student. Comprising eight or nine people, the group gave a number of concerts of the music of Palestrina, Brahms, Victoria – classical pieces that he could find on the internet at the Choral Public Domain Library. (While Gene loves close harmony, the group never did any barbershop.)

In July 2011, Gwen bid for her second posting with the Foreign Service and soon learned that she had gotten her first choice: Paris! The tour started in September 2012. In Paris, as in Algiers, Gwen looked for an English-speaking Christian congregation and soon found the American Cathedral. Attending a service with her one Sunday morning, Gene was struck by “the beauty of the music at the Cathedral,” a feeling reinforced when he heard the Paris Choral Society perform the Brahms German Requiem.

Gene has high praise for Director of Music Zachary Ullery (“he does an amazing job with the choir”) and Organist Andrew Dewar (“a fantastic talent”). His interest wasn't just as a parishioner with a love of good music. Gene, it turned out, was a professional organ builder, recently retired, who over a 40-year period built more than 80 pipe organs for churches, universities, concert halls and homes all over the United States. Born and raised in Hemingford, in rural western Nebraska, Gene began studying piano at age 11. His music education wasn't all classical – he used to listen to 78 rpm records on his family's crank-type phonograph, songs from the 1920s and 1930s, including the famous Frank Silver-Irving Cohn song, “Yes! We Have No Bananas.”



He started college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as an electrical engineering major. At the same time, he was singing in a church choir, where the director introduced him to the pipe organ. Gene was fascinated. “It became apparent that someone had to make them, and I was very interested in technical things, and so I pursued it right away, both from the standpoint of learning how to play the organ and also learning what went into making them.”

At UNL, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in music education and a master’s in music, he could study playing the organ, but there were no classes on how to build them. So he worked summers with the Charles W. McManis Company, a Kansas City organ builder of the era – and came to France to study old organs and their sounds.

Bedient organs are known for a warm, rich sound.

“It was interesting to see how the metal was handled and certain techniques they used in deciding how they were actually going to make the pipe... When you delve into it to the point of building an organ yourself, you come to have a great sense of appreciation for techniques and ideas that earlier builders had.”

The metal used for the pipes was usually lead, which lends a rich, warm sound. For strength, the lead is alloyed with tin, and by varying the percentages of each metal, and by adding trace amounts of other metals, organ builders can create their own signature sound, easily recognizable to organ aficionados.

At the time, Lincoln had no local business to maintain and tune pipe organs, so to support his graduate studies, Gene started his own company. He had contacts both from school and from church jobs, and found immediate success. Not long afterwards, a church asked him to bid on building a new organ. It had two manuals and pedals, and about 25 sets of pipes, and wasn’t, on Gene’s own

admission, the best organ he ever built. It suffered from mechanical problems, which he later corrected by rebuilding the organ at his own expense.

Gene founded the Bedient Pipe Organ Company in 1969. Located in Roca, Nebraska, the company custom-designs and builds all parts of a pipe organ, using traditional techniques combined with modern technology, but always focusing on a sound that customers describe as warm and rich. “In a world filled with factories and assembly lines, the idea of a small group of craftspeople hunched over workbenches is difficult to grasp. But the fact is that pipe organs must be hand made.”

Although Gene retired from an active role at Bedient in 2011, he remains chairman of the board and continues to help out in an advisory capacity, content in the knowledge that the two long-time employees who took over operations remain true to the vision of the company.

For the past six months, Gene has been lending his expertise to the American Cathedral, donating his time and skills to help keep the organ going despite significant problems that cry out for a complete overhaul. Since Cavallé-Coll built the instrument in 1887, it has gone through four rebuilds and modifications, but time has taken its toll. The organ isn’t easy to tune. Its placement, he notes, is “particularly bad,” which doesn’t just place it at an acoustical disadvantage, but also makes some of the really big pipes nearly inaccessible and their “tuning wires” difficult to reach. (The wires are used to adjust the vibrating length of the brass “tongue” and thus change the pitch.)

Worse, some of the reeds and the trumpets are dirty and in poor condition. The leather valves, which date from the 1930s, are deteriorating. Gene has spent hours replacing leather, which has allowed him to bring back into service pipes that have had to be disconnected because the valves didn’t work properly.

“A church like this,” says Gene, “deserves a good organ.” He recommends some serious study before making any decisions about a rebuild. The questions are daunting – as will be the price. Should the

Cathedral attempt to reconstitute the original Cavaillé-Coll organ? Rebuild the existing instrument? Or completely replace it? (That's an idea usually described as sacrilege.)

What are the costs? When the question of a rebuild was examined several years ago, the answer was upwards of a million euros. Gene's number was €1.2 million to €1.3 million.



“There are some really good people today to rebuild or re-use or to build a new organ,” Gene says. But whatever the decision, it's crucial to make sure there are adequate funds to pay for it.

In the meantime, Gene will continue to donate his time and skills to the efforts that help keep the music glorious and cipher-free at the American Cathedral. 🎵

Mark Carroll, the Cathedral's treasurer, is a member of the vestry and organizer of the LAGV fundraising musical events.

Reducing ciphers to almost nothing

By Nancy Janin

Thanks to Gene Bedient's work, those who play the Cathedral organ – our organist, Andrew Dewar, and others – can now relax and concentrate on making beautiful music, whether for a service, a concert, or just for practice.

According to Andy, the organ had become so temperamental he sometimes thought he might have to sprint to the piano to keep the music going during a service. While in some situations he could improvise to suit the organ's whims, he needed to know he could count on each note to sound for concerts or when accompanying the choir and congregation – and that was not always the case.

The primary problem was the aging of the small pouch-like bellows under each pipe that protect the many valves that in turn control the emission of sounds. When these leathers wear out and become brittle, air escapes and the complex mechanism goes haywire.

The biggest worry to organists is notes that sound on their own, disconcerting during worship to say the least, and hard to stop from the keyboard. The only sure way to stop these ciphers is to climb up into the organ loft and disconnect the pipe – Andy reports he once counted 21

pipes lying on the floor of the loft, a veritable pipe graveyard.

But now, and for less than €200 expended on materials (funds donated by Les Arts George V) Gene has replaced many of the leathers – and thus put the pipes back in place and restored the notes. His work has also virtually eliminated the panic-inducing cipher phenomenon.

Andy says the nearly full-functioning of the organ has allowed the resumption of organ concerts before Evensong on Sundays, in addition to giving him and the other organists confidence and serenity that what they play on the keyboard will be what is heard.

Gene's work is not done, however, and his continued attention to the instrument is expected to bring further improvements. But his work is only a stopgap. In the not-too-distant future it will be necessary to undertake more complicated, and costly, repairs. A major overhaul in 1992 addressed the problems that were urgent at that time; now, two decades later, other parts of the organ need attention. But with Gene's expert efforts we have bought some time, and some peace of mind for our talented organists and for the spirituality of each service.



"Mathew"

Oil on Canvas

JERRY WHITWORTH
PORTRAITS IN OIL

www.jerrywhitworthportraits.com
email: jerry.whitworth@gmail.com

