



Trinité

VOLUME 14 N 2

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN CATHEDRAL IN PARIS

AUTUMN 2019

THE LANGUAGE
OF FLOWERS
IN THE CHURCH

A RING TO FIND, A RING TO BIND



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The Magazine of The American Cathedral in Paris
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COVER: *BOUQUET OF FLOWERS IN A GLASS VASE* (1621),
BY AMBROSIUS BOSSCHAERT THE ELDER, WIKIMEDIA.





No Longer Strangers and Sojourners

A community gathers in prayer

Dear Friends,

Happy Rentrée! Paris is buzzing again, the tranquility (and heat) of August quite forgotten. The Cathedral is coming back to life, too, with the return of all the Sunday and weekday services, the choir, Sunday School, the youth program, young adults, adult study, and a myriad of other events and programs. And – a real treat – we are offering Evensong twice this month*.

We have also started daily Morning Prayer at 8:30 am Monday-Friday. It's a short, quiet service, and a perfect way to start the day. There's already a small group attending, and my intention is to train lay people to lead the service as well. We have put out a box for prayer requests for these services, too, for those who cannot attend. I envision a small community of prayer, and that prayer undergirding Cathedral life as a whole.

Lots of people are turning up, too – visitors, newcomers to Paris, people looking for a church or for Sunday School for their children, old friends. In these past couple of weeks someone turned up who had been married here 40 years ago, someone else told me he had grown up here, and another person talked about being here with Dean Leo. It's made me think about generations at the Cathedral. I served my last parish for 15 years, and one of the great joys was baptizing the child of a couple I had married, or marrying someone I had presented for Confirmation, or sending someone off to college whom I remembered from Sunday School. And there were often several generations of the same family in the church, and I would rejoice with them over weddings and births, and weep with them over a divorce, or as we buried a matriarch or patriarch. It was a constant reminder of the cycle of life and God's presence in the community and throughout our lives.



The Cathedral is a bit different. There are some people who are here for many years, of course, and we count on them and are grateful for them. But there are more who have cycled in and out – here for three years, or five years, or one year. Some come as students, some for work. (And there are others who are here for part of the year, and we look for them to return each year.) So the generations are much shorter; I'll meet people at Friends' reunions who never knew each other in Paris; one lets me know she was here from 1992-1995; someone else was here in the early 2000s; someone else in the 1980s. They all may have loved this Cathedral and been fully involved in the community, and may be of a similar age, but they are different Cathedral generations. (Although all of them may remember David McGovern or Harriet Rivière or Sophie Belouet!)

“Even in the six years I have been here, I am aware of a great cloud of witnesses who gave generously of themselves in those years and are now spread far and wide.”

People move on for many reasons. Some go back to the U.S. or Canada or elsewhere as they get older and want to be near children or grandchildren. I found it odd during my first few years that I was doing so few funerals; many beloved members died elsewhere. (So when someone as completely involved and beloved as Sigun Coyle dies, it comes as a much more immediate shock, and her funeral certainly involved the entire present community.)

I think of people spread around the world who were at one time vital members of the community – pillars of the congregation, if you will. You, our Friends, are some of them. I have heard

some of you tell me how important the Cathedral was to you as a stranger in a strange land, or at some turning point in your life, or as you went through a difficult time. And even in the six years I have been here, I am aware of a great cloud of witnesses who gave generously of themselves in those years and are now spread far and wide.

I do miss many people. I am also fascinated by those of you I meet who were here before me. But, finally, I realize that it gives me great joy to think of all these different “generations” of Cathedral folk, living around the world, involved in other churches and communities, bringing something of our Cathedral community to others. This is our unique vocation, to live out what is written on our outside wall, and to share it, generation to generation, wherever we go:

You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. (Ephesians 2:19)

Yours in Christ,

Lucinda+

*and more throughout the fall: October 12; November 1; and look for Advent Lessons & Carols and Christmas Lessons & Carols in December.



Mission and Outreach

Vocational Training to Change the Future for Palestinian Students

Parents the world over seek the best for their children's education and for their future. But what are you to do if you are a Palestinian family living in the occupied West Bank with a child who is not thriving in the limited academic options available? Knowing, too, that even with education, chances for employment in the West Bank, the only area you are allowed to live in, are slim (according to Haaretz newspaper 40% of those younger than 30 in the West Bank are unemployed; the rate in Gaza is much higher).

Since 2011, the Cathedral, through its Mission and Outreach Committee, has supported the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, an institution working creatively to give these families and their children a better chance at a productive future. Located in Ramallah, the largest Palestinian city and de facto capital of the Palestinian Authority, the school was founded in 2000 in a large multi-story building originally a home for boys who had been

orphaned or had difficult home lives. More than 350 secondary school students attend a weekly technology program, 100 fulltime vocational high school students study hospitality services and technology in a two-year program, and 40 adult students are seeking a one-year diploma program in culinary arts. Computer work can be done long-distance, so working from occupied Palestine for clients outside the area is in many cases a real option. And although tourism per se is not highly developed in the West Bank, there is an increasing demand for hotels and restaurants for pilgrims and aid workers.

The Cathedral's relationship with schools in Ramallah goes back to 2009, when we began supporting scholarships for girls at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School. As one of the institutions supported by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, it came to our attention through Neil Janin (full disclosure, my husband), who served at that time on the Friends of



TECHNOLOGICAL SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS RECEIVE CONGRATULATIONS FROM CATHEDRAL VISITORS

the Diocese board. The Evangelical school is one of the most sought-after institutions in the region, attracting a significant number of Muslim students who recognize both the quality of the education and its Christian ethos.

“The Evangelical school is one of the most sought-after institutions in the region, attracting a significant number of Muslim students who recognize both the quality of the education and its Christian ethos.”

Many pilgrims from the Cathedral, traveling on Holy Land trips organized by Neil and Joanne Blakemore, have visited this school many times. Early on they were made aware of the related Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, which was slowly finding its niche and raising funds to renovate the facility. Students who were not successful in the challenging program at the Evangelical School or who were not interested in continuing on to Birzeit University, the institution where the majority of Palestinian students

go, were allowed to transfer to the vocational school to see if that it suited them better. And for many, it certainly did.

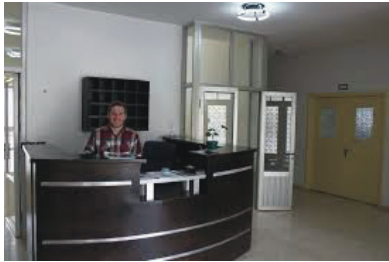
In 2011 Joanne arranged a visit to and lunch at the vocational school for that year’s pilgrims. As she recalls: “Lunch was at a long table. The students served us and were charming, if a bit tentative. After lunch, the students lined up and told about their lives. Some showed us the old keys to the homes from which their parents and grandparents were displaced in the tumult of 1947-48, to which, of course, they are now unable to return. It was heartbreaking to listen to stories from young men and women who have no passports, no real citizenship.”

The dining room in these early years was in a clean but shabby basement room with beat-up furniture. Fast forward to April 2018, the latest pilgrimage visit: “The lunch tables were set for six, the food was served in courses, and the waiters were well-dressed, polished and very confident. The food was wonderful.” No longer merely working as sous-chefs or wait staff, each student had prepared one of the dishes. They presented themselves to us and explained in serviceable English how they made their dish. The dining room is now on the ground floor, flooded with natural light and with simple but new and attractive furniture.



STUDENTS PRESENT THE TRAINING PROGRAM

A similar transformation has taken place upstairs. When we first visited there was an immense open area with a few very used couches and chairs, and small rooms off this space with minimal furnishings. There was a shared bathroom. While popular among the



ST. ANDREW'S GUEST HOUSE: RECEPTION, ROOM, BUFFET

youngest of travelers to Palestine, mostly because of the price, it could not attract more demanding clients and thus was not an environment where hospitality students could polish their professionalism. So a hotel was created within the hostel, with a few rooms with en suite bathrooms that would meet higher standards.

“Indeed, in April we saw clean, tastefully designed rooms with all the amenities. Breakfast, prepared by the hospitality students, got rave reviews.”

The Cathedral was one of the major donors to this effort, providing about €20,000 for the project over two years. Now the St. Andrew's Guest House, as the hotel rooms are known, is not only up and running but hotel booking sites show that it is highly rated – 8.7 out of 10 on booking.com, 5 stars on Trip Advisor, 4 out of 5 on Expedia and 93% of guests rate it “superb.” Indeed, in April we saw clean, tastefully designed rooms with all the amenities. Breakfast, prepared by the hospitality students, got rave reviews. Occupancy rates are high, and more importantly, nearly every graduate of the program has been able to find work in hotels and restaurants in the West Bank.

Much of the energy and vision and hard work behind this transformation comes from Giovanni Anbar, director of the vocational school, a Palestinian Christian born and raised in Jerusalem. He chose to

return to Palestine in 1996 after earning a mechanical engineering degree in Austria and has dedicated himself to vocational training for Palestinian youth ever since. “He is totally inspiring,” Joanne said. “The first time we heard him speak to our groups, he was so enthusiastic and knowledgeable that we knew we were listening to a man passionate about his work and his students. He is a true leader in every sense of the word.”

The success of the vocational school is even more remarkable in the context of the many political crises in the West Bank and their impact on the original institution, the Episcopal Boys Home. When the home opened in 1965, the West Bank was under the Jordanian government and life was manageable. Two years later, after the 1967 war, the situation became much more difficult. Pat Rantisi, who founded the school with her husband Audeh, remembers that there were “increasing restrictions and frustrating fearful influences.” They enlarged the program by renting new facilities (until then she and her husband, newlyweds, had been living with 12 boys in their three-bedroom home). Over the ensuing years the Rantis were confronted with periodic moments of grave danger, in addition to dealing with



the usual pranks and problems to be expected from a group of young boys. Pat recalls “boys being arrested just for being in the back yard during curfew, settlers kidnapping one boy, my car incinerated on purpose, and death threats on my husband.” Nevertheless, they



8 managed not merely to carry on, but to build the structure now housing the vocational school, a purpose-built building to house 40 boys and the Rantisi family, which grew to include three daughters.

In 2002, after Audeh's death, Pat found herself taken hostage at gunpoint with her neighbors while Israeli soldiers used the building for a sniper post. In her understated English manner, Pat says, "You could say that life was never dull!" Pat is retired in England and spends her time writing novels about life in Palestine and campaigning for peace and justice in the region through Friends of Sabeel and her local Anglican church.

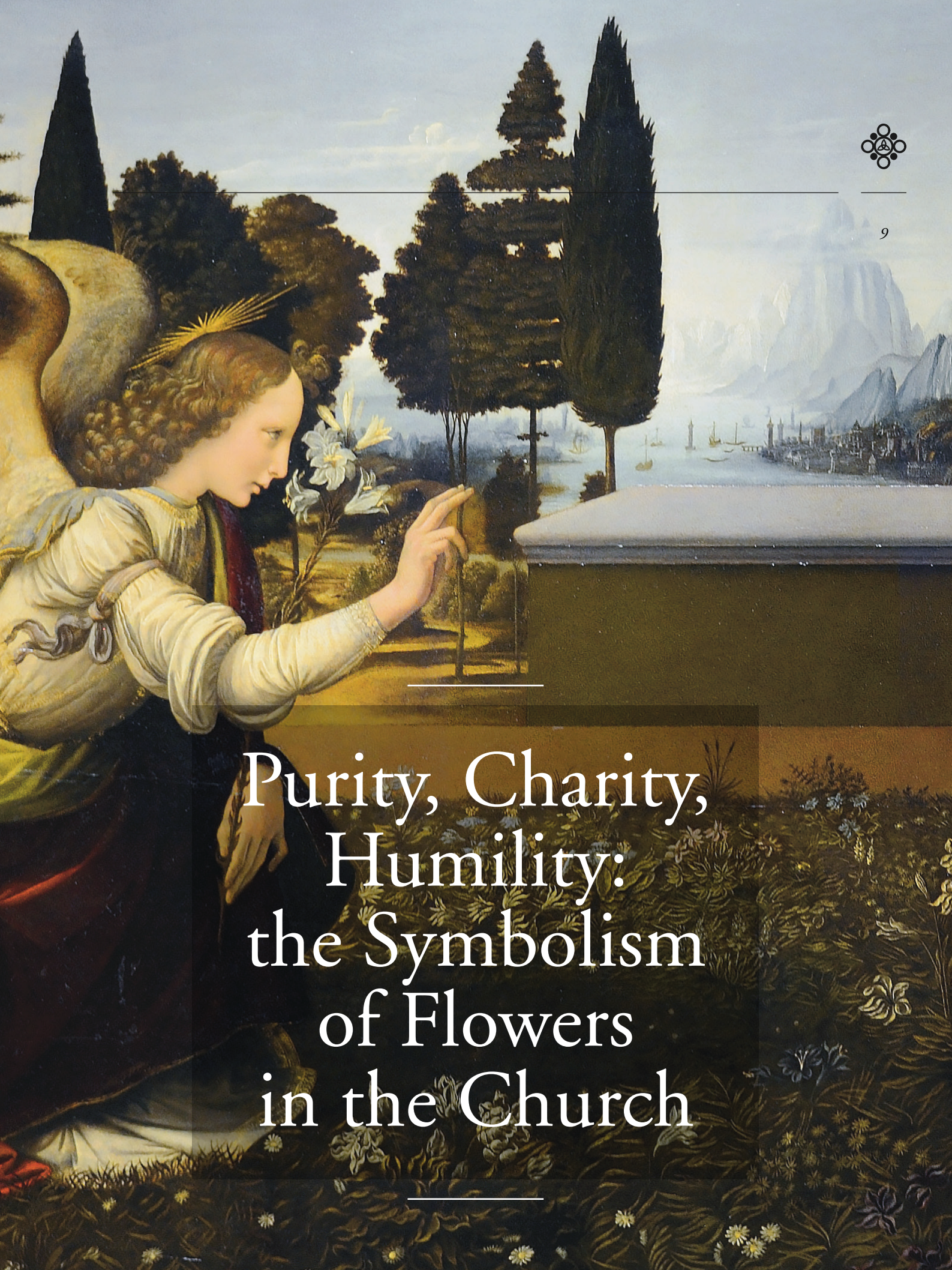
“The success of the vocational school is even more remarkable in the context of the many political crises in the West Bank...”

While in the West Bank despair can be deep and making a difference can be difficult, the Cathedral has found an opportunity to make a positive and immediate impact, supporting youth, families, and leaders as they innovatively build for tomorrow in a place where, as Joanne says, “hope for the future is all too rare.”

School director Giovanni Anbar invites all Cathedral members to visit the school. “Believing in our mission has made a big difference in the lives of many Palestinian students who are seeking a better future and job opportunities. The continuous support of the American Cathedral in Paris means a lot to us in raising the standards and quality of teaching in our school and helping us to become more sustainable. We appreciate the love and support of all members of the Cathedral in Paris and invite you all to come and SEE!!” 🌍

Nancy Janin was a parishioner from 1988 to 2013 and is currently co-chair of the Friends of the Cathedral, Treasurer of the American Cathedral in Paris Foundation, and a member of the Board of Foreign Parishes.





Purity, Charity,
Humility:
the Symbolism
of Flowers
in the Church



Lilies, roses, daisies and a single violet

Flowers decorate the altar and mark special occasions, in celebration and in memorium, at The American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity and in other churches and denominations. While the use of flowers sends a message, the flowers themselves can carry potent symbolism. There is no definitive lexicon of the symbolism of flowers, and flowers depicted in paintings and other works of art are open to multiple and varied interpretations. Since antiquity, flowers have been associated with the idea that both beauty and life are transitory, short-lived. In the church, flowers also take on liturgical significance and are linked to holy days.

Four flowers that appear in the Cathedral's triptych, created by Edwin Austin Abbey between 1896 and 1907, offer a good starting point for the exploration of the symbolism of flowers. The triptych, placed above the altar, reveals in the left panel the nativity and the adoration of the infant Christ by the Magi, the central panel represents the crucifixion, and the right panel depicts the appearance of the resurrected Jesus to Mary Magdalene. The flowers that are painted in the three

panels are lilies, roses, daisies and uniquely, one violet. Each of the flowers conveys meaning in messages that have evolved over the centuries.

First, the lily: in Christian iconography, the lily represents chastity and purity. It is associated with the Virgin Mary and frequently appears in depictions of the Annunciation, in the Angel Gabriel's hand, the lily being offered to Mary. In early legends, lilies and roses grew from the empty tomb of Mary at her Assumption. As a symbol of purity, lilies also have come to represent Christ himself. In the Cathedral's triptych, angels above the nativity scene are holding lilies, symbolic perhaps of the arrival of Christ.

The rose, next to the lily, is perhaps the flower most depicted in Christian iconography, also associated with Mary. In medieval iconography, the Virgin Mary and the Christ child, and angels, often were shown in an enclosed garden, the *hortus conclusus*, containing flowers that symbolize Mary: the rose for her inexhaustible charity, the lily for her purity, and the violet for her



THE ANNUNCIATION, BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, 1472-75
FROM WIKIMEDIA.



humility. The rose was a central part of several Roman cults, and this context filters through Christian iconography to link the thorns of roses to the torment of martyrs. The crown of thorns worn by Jesus also is depicted in paintings of saints and angels, indicating struggle and sacrifice. Mary, untouched by original sin, is also known as the “rose without thorns” and depictions of the Virgin with roses are often found in paintings and illuminated

manuscripts. In Catholic Marian devotion, Mary is sometimes referred to as the “Mystic Rose,” and ties between Mary and roses can be found in varied expressions, from Dante’s *Paradiso* to rose windows in Gothic architecture. However, in the right panel of the Cathedral triptych, it is Mary Magdalene who is surrounded by roses. The roses behind her appear to be pink, while the roses next to her and the risen Jesus are white. Perhaps this indicates a transformation of the life of Mary Magdalene through her meeting Jesus.

“In Christian iconography, the lily represents chastity and purity.”



Daisies have come to symbolize both purity and innocence and also represent the Virgin Mary. According to a Celtic legend, upon the death of a child, God covers the earth with daisies in an attempt to console the parents. Are the daisies beneath the crucifixion in the center panel intended to comfort the mourning mother, Mary? Daisies also have come to symbolize transformation. *Bellis*, the scientific name of the daisy, comes from a Roman myth. To escape the affections of Vertumus, god of seasons and gardens, the nymph Betides turns herself into a daisy, signifying both chastity and transformation.



DETAIL OF THE CATHEDRAL TRIPTYCH SHOWING MARY MAGDALENE SURROUNDED BY PINK ROSES

Lastly, the single violet that rests at the foot of the cross in the central panel of the triptych represents humility and modesty, attributes of the Virgin Mary. The violet at the foot of the cross could underscore the humility of Christ, and because the violet is at the bottom left, it may also be a reference to the humility of the Virgin Mary, who is standing to the left. As with the four flowers represented in the Cathedral’s triptych, many of the flowers in paintings, illuminated manuscripts, and other works of art and iconography are symbolically tied to Mary, underscoring the importance placed on her in the Catholic church.

Moving from the triptych to the altar, the selection of flowers by the Cathedral’s Flower Guild is strongly guided by the colors of the liturgical calendar, rather than the symbolism of the flowers selected. For example, at Pentecost, the color is red. The Flower Guild’s choice also is subject to which flowers are in



A FLOWER GUILD ARRANGEMENT

season. For palms at Palm Sunday, flowers at Easter and sometimes weddings and funerals, we go to the Rungis market, not only to find good prices, but also unusual flowers. This year at Pentecost, Flower Guild member Sue Grieg wanted to use red gladiolas for the altar arrangement, but they were not available. She chose red carnations, surrounded by dark burgundy alstroemeria (Peruvian lilies) with orange and yellow snapdragon accents. In keeping with widespread tradition in the Christian church, we select white lilies for the altar at Easter. Flower dedications may be made by parishioners or families in memory or honor of someone or for a special occasion. The minimum donation for a dedication is 25 euros and can be arranged through the Parish Coordinator. The Flower Guild will try to accommodate requests for a specific flower or color. (*Nota bene:* Any parishioner can join the Flower Guild and volunteer an hour or two per month to purchase and arrange flowers for the altar. See Timothy Thompson for more information.)

As in the church, flowers represented in art also carry meanings that may not always be evident to

the modern eye. The symbolic importance of flowers in paintings experienced a strong boost after the Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands, when the Dutch Reformed Protestant Church forbade religious iconography, emphasizing instead the word of God rather than images of saints and biblical scenes. To decorate their homes, the new Dutch merchant class became art patrons, creating a demand for still-life floral paintings that spoke to the beauty of God's creation. Flowers offered a way to present Protestant Christian values through allegory.

“Ties between Mary and roses can be found in varied expressions, from Danté’s *Paradiso* to rose windows in Gothic architecture.”

The floral still-life paintings of the period, while the fanciful creation of the artist, focused on the messages of the flowers, fruits, or other objects. Common features in the paintings were petals that have fallen or cut flowers that have begun to wilt, communicating to a knowing audience that life is transitory. In her 2004 book, *Nature and its Symbols* (Getty Museum), Lucia Impelluso writes that these paintings offer a complex language where every flower and object is “charged with rich language, where every single fruit, flower, or animal is charged with specific, characteristic significance.” Sadly, much of that language is lost today. But when you have the opportunity to take a closer look at the triptych, look to see which messages you might find in the lilies, roses, daisies and the violet. 🌹

Timothy S. Thompson, a member of the Cathedral since 2016, is the Chair of the Flower Guild. A member of and frequent visitor to many Paris museums, his interest in art and art history also takes him to the Ecole du Louvre, where he is in his third year of art history in the school’s program for auditors.

A primary of color

White, green, red, and purple are the four predominant colors of the liturgical calendar, changing throughout the year in altar hangings and clergy vestments. Let's look more closely at these four colors and consider black and blue as well.



White: Symbolizing purity and Christ's light to the world, white is the liturgical color from Christmas through Epiphany until Lent. It is the highest ranked color in the liturgical palette, reserved for high holy days such as Easter and Christmas. In medieval times, white, black and red stood as the primary colors, often defining its wearer's identity: black for Benedictines, white for Cistercians, red for the Pope.



Green: Considered a symbol of instability and risk in the Middle Ages, green is now associated with rebirth, growth and renewal. It is used during the season of Epiphany, and through Pentecost (Ordinary Time), from the Sunday after Trinity Sunday to the first Sunday in Advent.



Red: In contrast to black and white, red has also gone the farthest distance in meaning. Angel or devil, love or hate, charity, passion or war? Red can represent all of them. In the Anglican church, red symbolizes zeal, martyrdom, commitment, and faith. Closely associated with the Holy Spirit, red is used for Pentecost, Palm Sunday and Saints' Days, as well as confirmations and ordinations.



Black: As dark is before the dawn, black is the oldest of colors. Like red, it has carried a wide share of meaning, from simple mourning to complex politics, from authority to rebellion. Black is the color of Good Friday, in contrast to the white of Easter Sunday.



Purple: In antiquity the color of mourning, purple joined the liturgy of the Catholic Church with the Council of Trent in the 16th century, associated with penitence and humility. Thus it is the color of priests' vestments during Lent and Advent. It was not until the 19th century that purple became a symbol of authority and dignity, worn by bishops.



Blue: Blue became associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary, and is depicted as the color of her robe. It is sometimes worn during Advent. The Capetians chose blue as the background of their armorial in the 12th century, bringing the color into the realm of royalty – with the lily (*fleur de lis*) taking its place as the sign of the French kingdom. With red for the pope and blue for the king, the separation of church and state began with color. In the 15th and 16th centuries, blue gained ground as an "honest" color, accepted for clothing by the somber early Protestants. Blue then shifted into emotional romanticism with Goethe, who dressed young Werther in blue for his sorrows. ☹

For more on the significance and symbolism of colors, see Michel Pastoureau, *Le petit livre des couleurs* (2014) or any of his series on individual colors, several of which have been translated into English.



By Betsy Blackwell

14



A Ring to Find, a Ring to Bind

“We Sons of today, we salute you. You Sons of an earlier day; We follow, close order, behind you, where you have pointed the way; The long gray line of us stretches, thro’ the years of a century told – And the last man feels to his marrow, the grip of your far off hold.”



BISHOP HERBERT S. SHIPMAN
THE CORPS

A chaplain’s wartime service followed a century later by the appointment of a new bishop for the European convocation: a ring has closed the circle in a fascinating story of unexpected connections, friendship, family and deep faith. How appropriate that it should be a ring – symbol of commitment, family ties, friendship or success – that binds past and future service to the Episcopal Church in Europe and the United States.

This particular ring, a large oval amethyst set in gold, belonged to Herbert S. Shipman, suffragan bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Shipman served as chaplain from 1896 to 1905 at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, appointed and reappointed by Presidents Cleveland, McKinley, and Roosevelt. Class poet while an undergraduate at Columbia University, he also wrote the lyrics for one of West Point’s beloved songs, “The Corps,” which contains the memorable

phrase “long gray line,” calling up generations of cadets and the cost of their service.

In 1916, at the age of 47, feeling a deep call to minister to soldiers in the First World War, he rejoined the army as chaplain, serving on the battlefields of France, where he survived at least one gas attack and lost sight in one eye. He was promoted in France to senior chaplain of the First Army Corps. Shortly after Shipman’s postwar return to America, William Manning, the newly appointed Bishop of New York, proposed adding two assistant bishops to help with the growing workload. Shipman was elected suffragan bishop at the diocesan convention on September 20, 1921. Bishop Manning said: “You have elected one who, I feel from my heart, is a true friend and brother and for whom I have a true affection.” It seems fitting that this ring is tied to someone who inspired warm feelings of fellowship,

because the telling of the story led to a new friendship for us.

Shipman died suddenly in 1930 and was buried at West Point, the place he held dearest. He was survived by his widow, Julie Bradley Shipman, and three sisters. Here comes the connection: in 2016 my husband John Watson and I left Paris for Chapel Hill, N.C., and joined the parish of Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church. As we were preparing to fly to Paris last spring to attend Mark Edington's consecration, our rector at Chapel of the Cross suggested that we reach out to Richard "Pete" Andrews, a retired professor of environmental policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and also a member of Chapel of the Cross. Pete came for coffee, which quickly turned into the beginning of what is now a great friendship. He told us about finding a bishop's ring among the effects of his father, an Episcopal priest who retired as a parish priest. On reflection, Pete realized that the ring must have belonged to his great-uncle, Herbert Shipman, his father's godfather and uncle. Shipman had had no children, but his nephew had become a priest, following a family tradition begun by Shipman's own father, another sort of long gray line of service. Its provenance was confirmed by a portrait of Bishop Shipman, hanging today outside the bishop's office in the Synod House of Saint John the Divine Cathedral, that shows him wearing the ring.



BISHOP HERBERT SHIPMAN (1869-1930), THE RING ON HIS LEFT HAND
(PHOTO BY BISHOP ANDREW ML DIETSCH)



BISHOP MARK EDINGTON AT HIS 2019 CONSECRATION,
THE RING ON HIS RIGHT HAND

The Andrews family felt that the ring should be returned to service for an Episcopal bishop and gave it to Michael Curry, who was Bishop of North Carolina before his election as Presiding Bishop in 2015. Bishop Curry considered Europe, where Shipman had served, as an appropriate venue, and offered it to Bishop-to-be Edington.

It was a particularly special moment for us during the consecration service, watching this ring pass to a new bearer given with love, by friends we know, and connected in faith across generations and continents. Personally, learning about the ring has given us new friends and deepened our fellowship in a new community. The ring's history also recalls the Memorial Wall beside our Cathedral garden, in honor of American soldiers who fought in France during World War I. Walking along these walls has always been an occasion for me to remember the service of these young people who traveled so far from the world they knew to serve in Europe. We should also remember people like Bishop Shipman, who ministered to them. 🙏

Betsy Blackwell is president of the Friends of the American Cathedral of Paris and encourages people who are frequently in the U.S. to contact the Friends to find out about activities and programs. Her husband, John Watson, is president of the American Cathedral Foundation. They are retired in Chapel Hill, NC.



By Sigun Coyle

16



The Heart of the Cathedral Is Its People

Editor's note. Sigun Coyle prepared this profile of Sylvette Oberting this spring, before leaving for the U.S., where she passed away in June.

Sylvette Oberting arrived at The American Cathedral during its glittering postwar period, when Americans were extravagantly beloved by the French and stars like Elizabeth Taylor* and royals like the Duke and Duchess of Windsor graced Junior Guild balls. Sylvette's Cathedral career, from 1959 to 1989, was longer than that of any of its deans except Dean Frederick Beekman, who beat her by only a year.

Sylvette started working at the Cathedral at the age of 21, under the aegis of Dean Sturgis Riddle, of whom she maintains fond memories. In her eyes, Dean Riddle was really the second-ranking representative of the United States in Paris (the first being, of course, the Ambassador), so well-known and influential was he. And, as Sylvette says, all the important Americans in Paris passed by her desk when they came to see Riddle (including the head of The American Hospital, who also was a parishioner). Riddle himself dubbed his more than 25 years at the Cathedral "the second *Belle Epoque*." Reminiscing about that era, Sylvette remarked that the Riddles had their own cook. Asked whether the cook was American, she said no, she was from Belgium and was well known for her exquisite dishes; she not only cooked for the Riddles, but also for their dogs Moustache and Gigi, to whom Betty Riddle was devoted.

Former Dean Ernie Hunt and his wife, Elsie, now in Florida, said Sylvette made their stay in Paris so much easier than it might have been without her. Ernie named Sylvette an "asset to the Cathedral who was smart and aware of the inner struggles of all who attended," helping people as she could. He said that she would have been "able to run the place on her own if necessary." Long-time parishioner Susan McCabe mentioned how helpful Sylvette was to her and to Bob when they got married at the Cathedral. Susan remembers that she was so grateful for all of Sylvette's help that she gave her a silk scarf as a token of her appreciation. And Vestry member Sophie



SYLVETTE OBERTING WITH DEAN JAMES LEO

Belouet remarked that Sylvette was one of the kindest people she ever met. “She was very beloved. She knew everybody, and everybody knew her,” Sophie said.

How did this young woman come to find her job at the Cathedral? She actually was aiming for a job at the office of Air France but was told she was too young. So she went to a business school instead, and once she had her diploma, she found a job with Col. Karl Cate, junior warden of the Cathedral. Col. Cate imported American wines, so Sylvette got to be a wine connoisseur, who, once she was hired by the Cathedral (on, of course, the junior warden’s recommendation) advised the Dean on which wines to order for the numerous social occasions. As she said: “All occasions were good occasions to lift a glass together.” She proudly said that for the next 10 years Col. Cate sent her a case of wine as her Christmas present – and not just a 6-bottle case, but a dozen.

Kate Thweatt, a long-time friend, reminisced how Sylvette liked to host dinner parties, attended besides herself, by choir master Ned Tipton, long-time parishioner Joan Richardson and other Cathedral folk. Not only did she feed them, but she always took photos of the evening and sent them to her guests. Kate also recalled that Sylvette was given a splendid retirement send-off at the Cercle Interallié and that she showed herself to be a very good speaker. As a gift, she was given a trip to the Holy Land led by the Rev. Nicholas Porter in April 1998.

After her retirement, Sylvette first kept in touch with the Cathedral through the Junior Guild, attending most of the monthly lunches, until illness intervened. While she lives at home in her Paris apartment, she has been in and out of hospitals recently. Cathedral friends Kate Thweatt and Sophie Belouet keep in contact with her.

With a far-away look in her eyes, Sylvette said at the end of my visit: “My time at the Cathedral was the loveliest time of my life.” 🍷

**See the From the Archives page for more on Elizabeth Taylor and the Cathedral.*

Kate Thweatt contributed to this article.



Sigun Bedia Coyle (1941-2019)

Beloved parishioner Sigun Coyle, whose Cathedral commitments were deep and wide, died suddenly on June 15, 2019, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Born in Berlin, she moved to New York in 1966, where she met and married Joseph Coyle in 1968. She earned a master’s degree in comparative literature from New York University in the 1970s and then worked as a French professor. After moving to Paris in 1999, she soon became a key organizer of many Cathedral programs, volunteering as a lector, usher and welcomer. She served as president of the Junior Guild from 2002-2005 and from 2008-2011, leading fundraising efforts for its charities; she founded Les Tricoteuses knitting group and organized other committees to support immigrants, refugees and orphans.

If someone needed help, Sigun would find a way to get it. At the same time, she became chief cook and menu planner for Cathedral functions and fundraisers, always willing to whip up a delicious batch of several hundred servings when needed. Cathedral members poured out memories of Sigun’s kindness, generosity and vivacity in a book assembled for her family. In it, Dean Lucinda Laird wrote: “Sigun will always be a part of the spirit of this Cathedral. May we all learn from her how to walk in love.” She was predeceased by her son, Alexander Coyle, in 2007. She is survived by her husband, four nieces – Nancy Coyle Downes, Laura Coyle, Robin Miller and Kristen Miller – and a congregation spread across two continents who miss her dearly.



By Ellen Hampton

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Archaeology as healing

Waterloo Uncovered Brings Veterans Together over Battles of the Past

Battles past and present are coming together in a significant and exciting archaeological program at Waterloo, Belgium, with the help of a British charity and All Saints' Episcopal Church. Waterloo Uncovered began operations in 2015 with All Saints' as its headquarters. The church, part of the Episcopal Convocation of Europe, stands less than a kilometer from the site of the historic battlefield where Napoleon met his final defeat. This July, 100 veterans, volunteers and program coordinators concentrated excavation efforts at Mont Saint Jean, Fichermont and Hougomont farms, where digging yielded a howitzer shell, musket balls, coins and buttons as well as some human remains.

Photographing the finds is the job of Felicity Handford, a member of the All Saints' parish. Felicity, who has worked with Waterloo Uncovered from its debut, spent long hours every day in the "Finds Shed" labeling and photographing objects before they were



FELICITY HANDFORD PHOTOGRAPHING FINDS FROM THE DIG



CLOSING THE GATES AT HOUGOUMONT BY ROBERT GIBB (1903)
NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM, SCOTLAND

catalogued – and this year there were more than 800. Coldstream Guard Oliver Horncastle was thrilled to find a Coldstream Guard button from the 1815 battle, a connection that reached across two centuries to rest meaningfully in his hand. And connections, between veterans suffering deeply from PTSD, or just having trouble adjusting to civilian life, are what Waterloo Uncovered is all about.

Lt. Col. Rod Eldridge, retired as nurse-consultant in the British Army, began volunteering three years ago to help oversee the therapeutic interactions in the program. “It’s about wellbeing and having the camaraderie,” he said. “This program is magical in that it brings together a diverse group and helps them rise above their specific problems. The project takes them away from their own issues.”

Veterans apply for a spot on the team and are interviewed by Waterloo Uncovered founders Mark Evans and Charlie Foinette, who served together in Afghanistan as part of the British Army’s Coldstream Guards. Upon their return to Britain, Evans fell into

psychological trouble and Charlie helped pull him out. They had studied archaeology together at university before serving and decided it would be a good way to get other veterans back on their feet.

“We started the project because, as Coldstreamers, this is hallowed ground,” Foinette said. “We know that archaeology can be of great benefit to the people who take part in it. That includes our fellow soldiers and people who have perhaps not had the opportunity to engage with their history and landscape in the same way, but also to cure people who are sick, wounded, injured – it’s healing. It’s all about the progress of their recovery, and challenging people to do new things in a safe environment with people who understand them, that’s the essence of what we’re about.”

A contingent of Coldstream Guards was among the 1,100 defenders of Hougomont Farm, holding out against nearly 9,000 attacking French troops. At one point, a squadron of French forced their way in via the north gate. A handful of Guardsmen managed to close the gate and block any further encroachment, an



VIEW OF THE BATTLEFIELD FROM LION'S MOUND MONUMENT

“The inclusion of soldiers with PTSD and other disabilities makes this the work of the church – to care for people who are suffering emotionally and spiritually. Part of our mission is ‘to strive to experience God’s love and share it through service.’ This is one of our forms of service that comes to us especially because of our location.”

THE REV. SUNNY HALLANAN
RECTOR OF ALL SAINTS’

act that became the legendary turning of the course of battle. A 1903 painting by Robert Gibb, which hangs in the National War Museum in Edinburgh, depicts the critical moment. Hougoumont Farm is the most significant remaining feature of the battlefield. It was a working farm until it was sold to The Landmark Trust in 2003, and restoration work began.

At the start of the project, All Saints’ parishioner Alasdair White, historian and author of *The Road to Waterloo: A Concise History of the 1815 Campaign* (2014), advised on where and how to dig. A specialist on the battle at Hougoumont Farm, White said the work allowed him to develop a new theory of defensive tactics of the battle, asserting that dense and thick hedges lining one side of the farm helped explain why so few defenders could hold off so many attackers.

“Theories that were put together based on historical research were able to be confirmed based on ground exploration and discovery,” White said. “They have made a very, very strong contribution to the understanding of the battlefield.”

This year, the team moved on to Mont St. Jean, which served as the Duke of Wellington’s field hospital. For the first time in this project’s history, some human remains were found, thigh bones archaeologists believe were buried after amputation. An estimated 20,000 men died in the one-day battle (June 18, 1815), but the site was famously looted, even by Victor Hugo’s fictional Monsieur Thénardier in *Les Misérables*. The subsequent lack of human remains found there has led archaeologists to believe the bones in mass graves were dug up and ground for fertilizer in the 19th century. Waterloo ranked as the third-bloodiest battle of Napoleon’s campaigns, but it was his last, and its name has gone into history as a nickname for debacle.

For Waterloo Uncovered, professional archaeologists from Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands are supervising the work. The first summer of Waterloo





Uncovered brought 20 British veterans to the fields; last July there were nearly 100 veterans from Britain, the Netherlands, and even one American.

Justin Li, a U.S. Army cavalry scout in Iraq in 2010-2011, said he was fascinated after reading a biography of Napoleon, and when he learned of Waterloo Uncovered’s program, he applied. He said the connection between past and present soldiering put some of the difficulties of his own service in perspective. “These men did that and more. To reconnect with the spirit of being a warrior, especially on this great field, is something that’s very special to me,” Li said.



ABOVE: TEAM MEMBERS LIFT A HOWITZER SHELL FROM THE GROUND BELOW & RIGHT: SEARCHING FOR AND CATALOGUING ARTIFACTS (PHOTOS BY CHRIS VAN HOUTS, DEBORAH BERNSTEIN AND FELICITY HANDFORD)

With the program’s expansion, it has moved headquarters to a conference center at nearby Nivelles, but All Saints’ volunteers continue to provide a daily lunch and snacks to the excavation teams. The Rev. Sunny Hallanan, All Saints’ rector, said the parish found the program to be not only spiritually enriching, but historically exciting.

“The Battle of Waterloo changed the history of Europe. An incredible amount of blood was spilled in just one day here,” Rev. Hallanan said. “At the same time, the inclusion of soldiers with PTSD and other disabilities makes this the work of the church – to care for people who are suffering emotionally and spiritually. Part of our mission is ‘to strive to experience God’s love and share it through service.’ This is one of our forms of service that comes to us especially because of our location.”

Felicity Handford, together with Viewfinders photographic club based in Brussels, has organized an exhibit of photographs from this summer’s Waterloo Uncovered dig to be presented at All Saints’ Church from November 3-24. Many of the photos were taken by veterans participating in the program. All members of the Episcopal Convocation are invited to attend. ☺

Historian and author Ellen Hampton has been a parishioner since 1992. She is editor of Trinité magazine and serves on the archives committee.



Community Life

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American Cathedral Choir

Ralph Allwood MBE directed the renowned Choir of Queens' College, Cambridge, with the American Cathedral Choir for a combined Evensong on September 14 and a combined Sunday Eucharist on September 15. Voices were raised in heavenly praise.



The Rev. Zachary Fleetwood and Dean Lucinda Laird begin the Palm Sunday procession up the Avenue George V, followed by the choir.



In July, a week-long Meditation/Yoga retreat to Nisyros, Greece. The 12 participants ranged in age over six decades, from their thirties to their eighties! For information on the 2020 retreat, contact Mary Haddad, maryehaddad@gmail.com.





Welcome-Back Barbecue

A hungry crowd gathered round the grill on September 8th for the annual Welcome-Back Barbecue. Timothy Thompson (right) was at the helm cooking burgers and sausages, while Linette Quintana and her team of wonder-workers put together salads, sides and desserts. Zoë Davis (below top) helped her parents Rob and Amy enjoy the event. It was great fun to catch up with everyone after the summer break!



Blessing of the Animals at the Cathedral

Thomas Girty brought his beagle Basel forward at the annual Blessing of the Animals, a much-attended event enjoyed by pets and owners alike.



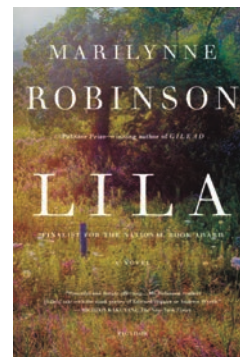
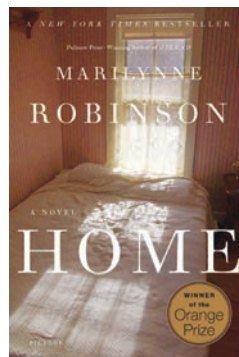
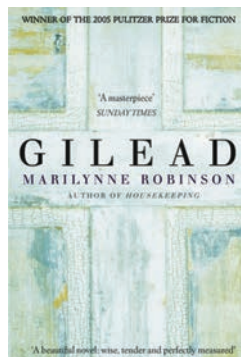


By Anne Marie Reijnen

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Faith and Fiction: Priests and Preachers in Marilynne Robinson



According to some critics, we have entered an era of faithless fiction. “Christian belief figures into literary fiction in our place and time as something between a dead language and a hang-over,” cultural analyst Paul Elie wrote recently. In this article I will attempt to show how such a jaded judgment does not apply to the work of Marilynne Robinson, one of the greatest novelists writing today. Often the priest, the preacher and the pope (the three kinds of clergy in the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism and the Orthodox world) are ac-

cessories to the action, portrayed as almost holy or very hypocritical; not so in Robinson’s *Gilead* trilogy.

Has Robinson always written about religion?

The answer is no. I would say that religion in the work of Marilynne Robinson (born in 1943) comes out of nowhere! And nowhere is where it often is kept – as a secondary aspect of life, or one liable to cause violence and harm, hence the “hangover” mentioned by Paul Elie. In her first novel, *Housekeeping* (1980), Robinson

portrayed the religion of Fingerbone, a fictional small town in the Far West, in these conventional ways. “What with the lake and the railroads, and what with blizzards and floods and barn fires and forest fires and the general availability of shotguns and bear traps and homemade liquor and dynamite, what with the prevalence of loneliness and religion and the rages and ecstasies they induce, and the closeness of families, violence was inevitable.” (p.177)

“The trilogy shimmers with its subtle portraits of preachers. They are not stereotypes but complex human beings...”

When it does not breed exotic behavior or violence, religion is quaint, as in a grandmother’s naïve assumption that the afterlife follows the patterns of this life. “And though she never spoke of it, and no doubt seldom thought of it, she was a religious woman. That is to say that she conceived of life as a road down which one traveled, an easy enough road through a broad country, and that one’s destination was there from the very beginning, a measured distance away, standing in the ordinary light like some plain house where one went in and was greeted by respectable people and was shown to a room where everything one had ever lost or put aside was gathered together, waiting.” (p.10)

My point is that there is no inkling, in Robinson’s first novel, of the theme she unfolds so deeply in the triptych *Gilead* (2004), *Home* (2008) and *Lila* (2014). The trilogy shimmers with its subtle portraits of preachers. They are not stereotypes but complex human beings, each one truly a singular character. The novelist and essay writer allows ample room for the seriousness of theological thought, of grace and perdition, sin and hope. Robinson’s treatment of it seems also to come from nowhere, if we consider the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In 1945, author Graham Greene wrote of the disaster that overtook the English novel after Henry James: “With the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the reli-

gious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act. It was as if the world of fiction had lost a dimension.” (“François Mauriac,” *Collected Essays*.) What was lost was the possibility of depicting characters as they existed in “God’s eye.” Their “unimportance in the world of the senses is only matched by [their] importance in another world.” All the more remarkable, then, to observe how religion in the trilogy becomes the very fabric of life and thought. I will offer two examples of the writer’s depiction of things seen, as it were, through God’s eyes.



MARILYNNE ROBINSON

The preacher as a character

Marilynne Robinson has explained that the origin of the *Gilead* trilogy lies in a Christmastide she spent alone, staying in an empty hotel in New England; the wintry light that came in through the windows was as spare as a poem by Emily Dickinson. She began to hear the companionable voice of the old preacher who became her protagonist in *Gilead*, the Rev. John Ames, a retired preacher of the “New England Way” (Congregationalist), and started recording the preacher’s thoughts in a spiral notebook. That was the genesis of *Gilead*. This is an improbable book because it is just one long letter, and the form of the epistolary novel is very challenging nowadays. It is Robinson’s talent which succeeds in pulling the reader into the mind of the old man by compelling us to read the letter he is writing to his young son Robbie. Now there have been priests



and ministers in literature; but they represented an idea, they served to illustrate a point. We remember the whiskey priest in Graham Greene's classic *The Power and the Glory* (1940); the Episcopal priest and the rabbi in E.L. Doctorow's *City of God* (2000); the corrupt and the righteous popes in Nikos Kazantzakis' *Christ Recrucified* (1954). They are auxiliaries in the unfolding of the plot.

“Their father said that if they could see as God can, in geological time, they would see it leap out of the ground and turn in the sun and spread its arms and bask in the joys of being an oak tree in Iowa.”

GLORY BOUGHTON,
NARRATOR OF *HOME*

By contrast, in *Gilead*, John Ames is not subservient to a larger narrative. His story *is* the story, and we want to listen to it. One book was not enough; Ames' close friend and fellow (Presbyterian) preacher also wanted to have his say. Thus, in the second book, readers are invited into the *Home* of the Rev. Robert Boughton. His home is not the mirror image of the Ames home, because the viewpoint this time is that of a daughter, Glory. It is through her ambivalent feelings about coming home, as a single professional woman poised at the threshold of middle age, that we learn about the drama of Jack, the wayward son of the Boughton family. The godson of the Rev. Ames, he rebelled and changed his name from John to Jack. Despite many poor choices and behavior, his father loves him even more than his seven other daughters and sons. Jack is the chosen one. Election is a notoriously difficult calling, and Jack chafes against his father's unconditional tenderness. *Home* does not have a simple happy ending, for Jack may not be able to truly come home.

Seen through God's eyes

To break open the closeness of the two intertwined preachers' families (three, in fact, for Jack Boughton's father-in-law is the minister of a large AME church in Memphis), Robinson gives us a third view in *Lila*, and with it a breath of fresh air. While there is no continuity of a religious theme between *Housekeeping* and the *Gilead* trilogy, there is one character who, it seems to me, did drift from one to the other. The earlier transient Sylvia shares many traits with Lila, a weary woman who is resting her feet for a while, who marries the old preacher and has to learn how to become seemly. Reverend Ames, she thinks, must be blinded by his love; her entire life is written on her face, and he seems to be the only one not to notice. The reader understands that the old preacher sees her, as it were, with God's eyes, and he calls to her: “Child, where have you been?” In *Home*, narrator Glory Boughton contemplates the oak tree in front of her home and remembers: “Their father said that if they could see as God can, in geological time, they would see it leap out of the ground and turn in the sun and spread its arms and bask in the joys of being an oak tree in Iowa.”

Less is more

Robinson's art is to leave many things unsaid; she does not name racism, the Civil War, the Underground Railroad, the Great Depression nor the autism that may be the key to Jack's loneliness. She does provide a key to her trilogy in these words: “Things happen for reasons that are hidden from us, utterly hidden for as long as we think they must proceed from what has come before, our guilt or our deserving, rather than coming to us from a future that God in his freedom offers to us.” (*Lila*, p. 222.) In a few simple words the novelist gives her readers a memorable new way to understand the difficult theme of divine providence.

What else is there to say but *Amen*? 🙏

Dr. Anne Marie Reijnen, a Protestant minister, has been a parishioner of the Cathedral for many years and teaches theology at the Catholic University of Paris.

From the Archives



While Dean Sturgis Riddle presided over the postwar years at The American Cathedral, the Junior Guild added sparkle and glamor with annual gala balls staged at posh Paris hotels. The galas aimed to raise money for the Guild's many charitable projects and succeeded greatly with guest stars such as Audrey Hepburn and Mel Ferrer (1956), Princess Grace of Monaco (1968) and Leslie Caron (1969). On the left, French actor Fernandel poses with Elizabeth Taylor. On the right, Dean Riddle looks happy to greet Miss Taylor (and Mrs. John McCarthy) at the Junior Guild's 1957 Valentine's Ball, held at the Hotel des Deux Mondes.



Sustaining the Cathedral that sustains us

Our Christian faith sustains us, the miraculous mystery of faith. And faith attaches to places and things – like the Cross, most obviously. But also like our magnificent Cathedral, which needs your help to ensure that it can continue to shine its special light for generations to come. Three pillars of stewardship sustain our missions in the world and our environment for worship – the Annual Call to Membership, or ACTM; the Friends of the Cathedral, and the Trinity Society.

Annual Call to Membership

Every fall the ACTM asks parishioners to signify their membership in our community by pledging their financial support for the year.

But it's an opportunity that doesn't end with the season.

If you're a newcomer, or haven't pledged your support yet in 2019, it's not too late.

Friends of the Cathedral

Through Friends, members who have moved away, and all who wish to support the mission of the Cathedral, demonstrate their active commitment. We stay in touch through regular communications – like Trinité magazine – and occasional gatherings in the U.S. And our prayers.

The Trinity Society

The legacy society seeks to strengthen our endowment and achieve long-term sustainability by encouraging bequests and planned gifts. Based on scriptural and spiritual foundations, the Trinity Society can help educate all who support us on end of life issues and estate planning.

Information about all three avenues
is available through the Cathedral's web site
www.amcathparis.com/trinity-society-2

