



# Trinité

VOLUME 10 N 2

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN CATHEDRAL IN PARIS

SPRING 2015

OUR CATHEDRAL  
OUR JOY  
OUR COMMUNITY

# Trinité

The Magazine of The American Cathedral in Paris

**SPRING 2015 - VOLUME 10 N 2**

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**COVER PHOTO** BY PHILIP WORRÉ



# Community above all

BELOVED IN CHRIST,

**If anything is central, indeed essential,  
to Christian life, it is community.**

To begin with, consider this: When we say we believe in God the Holy Trinity, when we talk about the three-in-one and one-in-three, we're describing **God** as community, and as relationship. The word *perichoresis* describes the eternal dance of love among and between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It is a dance of joy and deep intimacy – community in its most perfect form.

That inter-connectedness is even part of our Cathedral logo.



Community and relationship are fundamental to who we are.

We not only worship a God of relationship, we see ourselves as members of the same body, the body of Christ. In Christ, we are not just family, we are the same body, members one of another.

How does this get lived out? When we start to examine Christian community, and specifically community at the Cathedral, we find layer after layer of meaning. It can start with people just turning up here to hear good music, to find other English-speaking people, or to see that their children are baptized and raised as Christians. Friendships are made. People get involved, and begin to feel part of the parish and its mission. It goes deeper when worshipping together deepens connections horizontally as well as vertically, and we learn that loving God and loving our neighbor are inseparable. When joys and sorrows are shared, and we weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice, the bonds grow ever stronger.



“God of life, we thank you for the mystery  
planted in us, the paradox of life from death  
and community from scattered disciples....”

FROM PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE FOR EASTER SUNDAY

*I come with Christians far and near to find as all are fed,  
The new community of love in Christ's communion bread.* (Hymn 304)

Communities change constantly over time – births, deaths, moves. I think change is particularly noticeable here at the Cathedral, with so many people here only for short periods. But then community extends. We know some of the ongoing connections through the Friends of the Cathedral, but in a deeper and more sacramental way I think we become aware of our ongoing relationship in Christ, no matter where we are.

*Together met, together bound, we'll go our different ways,  
And as his people in the world we'll live and speak his praise.* (Hymn 304)

Finally, we may come to know that even death does not end the connection. Think about the community that crosses space and time, life and death when next you hear, “Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven....”

*Let saints on earth in concert sing with those who work is done;  
For all the servants of our King in heaven and earth are one.* (Hymn 526)

The Christian life is always both/and, not either/or. It is about each person's journey into Christ, and that journey is always in and about community.

Our Cathedral. Our Joy. Our Responsibility. ☩

Lucinda +



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Community and imagination

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# One is the loneliest number – maybe even for God

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In the beginning – poetry.

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In his poem “The Creation,” James Weldon Johnson begins, “And God stepped out on space, And he looked around and said: I’m lonely – I’ll make me a world.” Then several verses later, after putting creation in motion, God sits down by the side of a hill and muses, “I’m lonely still. . . . I’ll make me a man!”

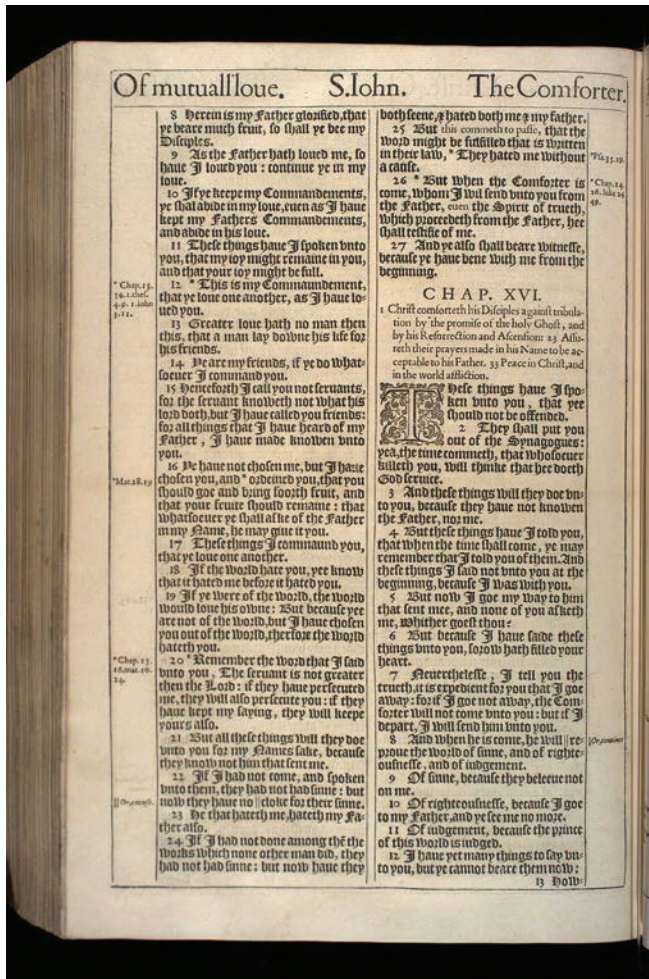
In the book of Genesis (1:26), the ancient poets put it this way: “God said, Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to our likeness.” It is curious that God would speak in the plural. Some Christian commentaries say that this foreshadows the doctrine of the Trinity, but it is highly doubtful that that’s what the Jews in exile in Babylon had in mind when they sat on the banks of the river with their heads in their hands, reflecting on their origins and crafting their creation stories.

The rabbis, famous for their wildly imaginative interpretations of their scriptures, offer that God is either referring to an angelic court, or is simply using the majestic “we.” Whatever the explanation, these ancient poets are thinking in the plural, along the lines of community and connection, even before the people in the story have been created, because, even for God, one is apparently the loneliest number.

The first creation story continues with “male and female they were created,” and then, without any explanation, the ancient poets imagine a second account of the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 2:4b) In this account, God plants a fabulous garden in Eden and puts the man in there alone, but not for long, because one is still the loneliest number. And like a good Jewish parent, the Lord God knows that man shouldn’t be alone, he



6 should have a helper already. It bears noting that the Creator's first choices for the man's helper are the animals of the fields and the birds of the air, which, as we know, didn't quite work out for the man. So God decided to try again, and faster than you can say Adam's rib, there is a woman. (Genesis 2:18-23) The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer* and



NOT SERVANTS, BUT FRIENDS: FROM THE FIRST KING JAMES EDITION (1611)

does not connote secondary importance or inferiority as the English “helper.” In fact, the implication is more like indispensable pillar and without her, as helper, the man would be lost.

So the creative process is a work in progress and any discussion on community cannot really begin without reflection on the complex mystery of

humanity created in the image of God. Created in God's image, we are like nothing else in creation. To us alone, God has given the ability to reason and to reflect, to make moral decisions and to create artistically and intellectually. We alone are the creatures who write creation stories and poetry. We have been created and crafted in the image of

the most unfathomable mystery and, in the imagination of writers and poets, this mystery – God – is lonely and social and wants to spend all of eternity with us. Why? Because, as has been keenly and amusingly observed, “Mystery loves company.”

The Garden of Eden turns out to be no paradise, because with the man and the woman all alone in the garden, there was no one else – no family, friends, no neighbors, no co-workers – to help them make good decisions. And the snake, as we know, was not much help. So the stories continue with human beings being made “a people” in communities, where they can be held accountable for the decisions they make. Much of scripture beyond the book of Genesis describes the lengths to which God will go to stay connected to us. “*I'm lonely still . . . I'll make me a man*” Like God, we're complex, we're lonely and we long for connection. It is not good for us to be alone.

Humanity has been created for community, so this is a human reality, not a Christian one. We have been created to care for one another and to help one another. Turning to the pages of the New Testament, the gospel writers tell stories that flesh out what Jesus, as the face of God, shows and teaches humanity about community. It was not good for him to be alone or to go it alone.

So the first thing that Jesus did was to call a disparate band of followers to accompany him on his itinerant teaching and preaching mission. The leader gathered followers; the rabbi, the teacher, needed students. But the relationship between the leader and the follower or the teacher and the student was not a power relationship. It was, rather, non-hierarchical; in the end, Jesus calls his disciples his friends. (John 15:15) Egalitarian



friendship was one of the defining characteristics of community.

Significantly, the Jesus quota for community was defined as two or three gathered together in His name. (Matthew 18:20) To be gathered in His name meant to participate in His central message, the kingdom of heaven, which had come near, was among them and within them. The kingdom of heaven was the power and presence of God or the consciousness of God to shape those who gathered in His name. So the character of community gathered in His name was one of transformation, liberation and reconciliation. This was and is the good news message.

## The right question is “What’s in it for us?”

Community, in this sense, is not two or three like-minded individuals sharing consensus in political or religious ideology or similar taste in food and wine or opera and sports, but participation in the mission to transform the heart from within from the insularity of the individual to the communal vision of the heart of God. Community began with the tribal and local context, by the Sea of Galilee, for example, but the movement was always toward the expansive cosmic and global vision of the human community that reached “to the ends of the earth.” Hence, we strive to gather in his name in Paris. His mother and his brother and his sisters were not his flesh-and-blood family but those who understood his message, like tax collectors and sinners, the gospel writers are clear to point out.

In our liturgical year, it is the Feast of Pentecost that concludes the Fifty Days of Easter. The early decades after the resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost provide an astonishing glimpse of the human condition at its best. In terms very accessible to the 21st century, Huston Smith, one of the foremost writers on world religions, describes a nascent community transformed by a power that took away fear, guilt and self-centeredness. The source of that

transformation has always been understood to be the power of love and its enduring character was one of joy.

The question for us today is not how we create community but rather, how we let community create us. How do we live into the fullness of our humanity, which is inherently social and communal? Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, “My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.” The Sub-Sahara Africans call this worldview *ubuntu*, theology that means, “I am a person because you are a person.” A common greeting among the tribes in northern Natal is an expression that means, “I see you.” The person responds by saying “I am here.” The exchange intends to say that until you see me I do not exist. When you see me, you bring me into existence.

Community is not something that can be organized but something that can be imagined when we abandon our culture of individualism for a web and flow of relationships in the community of God. Community does not exist to service my needs but creates us when the answer to the question “what’s in it for me?” becomes “you.” Community creates us when two or three gathered in his name are dedicated to a purpose beyond the two or three of us, a purpose dedicated and in sync with the one in whose name we are gathered.

Community organizing is necessary to make systemic changes to distorted power systems or even just to make the streetlights come on in less-privileged neighborhoods. Community imagining happens when we sit, like the poets, by the banks of the river with our heads in our hands and reflect on and return to our origins. We are ultimately connected to God and we need God, yes, but that isn’t enough. We need helpers, companions and friends. It isn’t good for us to be alone. We don’t create community; community creates us. And God saw that it was very good. 🍷

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*The Reverend Mary E. Haddad is the Cathedral’s  
Interim Priest Associate.*



By Kristen Ketron

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Community that lasts

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# Keeping the kids from slipping away

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The quest for a silver bullet of belief

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Most of you, I hope, already know that we use the excellent Journey to Adulthood curriculum for our youth program. And so this article is not about how that works or how well it works. But I want to connect with you about another aspect of youth and church and faith – this wonderful thing we call community.

Our Cathedral offers numerous ways for us to be fellow citizens. The Junior Guild ties together our church community with others from outside the Cathedral by organizing luncheons with interesting speakers and hosting fundraisers. The Cathedral Kids and Families (formerly the Saint Anne's Guild) draws together parents and families of the Sunday School children by providing traditional festivities as well as events for the parents. The Sunday School itself provides the children with their own opportunities for spiritual learning and fellowship. With our Mission Lunches we attempt to make our community more inclusive. And through Mission and Outreach and Love in a Box we stretch farther out

into the world. And these are only a few of the expressions of community we share at our Cathedral.

Some believers think that the only thing that matters is a one-on-one relationship with God, alone and in private. But what does God think?

Christianity is about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; but it is not a private relationship. As it says in Ephesians (2:19), as soon as individual believers are joined to Christ, they are “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”

Students in middle school and high school offer a special challenge to their community. At a time of burgeoning independence, adolescents question the value of their prior experiences and learning.

Their growing assertiveness puts demands on parents and church leaders to develop effective ways of cultivating durable faith in the lives of





young people. If our strategy is to win their allegiance by offering better entertainment than the rest of the world, then we've picked a losing battle. Yes, we offer pizza and movie nights and ice skating and pilgrimages – all fun stuff. Entertainment might get kids to church in their teens, but it certainly won't keep them there through their twenties.

We should draw our youth into God's vision of the church through His Word and the Holy Spirit, along with our modeling of faith, life, and leadership. Every member of Christ's body – even our teenagers – helps to make up the people of God, the church, the dwelling for his glory; this community in Christ.

Wouldn't it be great to find the youth ministry silver bullet? You know, that "sure thing" that would attract teens into attending church and then keeping them there through their twenties and beyond?

The problem is, sure things in youth ministry are rare. Programs come and go, as do youth leaders and strategies for reaching kids on the margins. Who would have guessed the power of online social media a few years back or the number of college-age or middle schoolers in our group who use smart phones?

While sure things are rare, one phenomenon that is not as rare as we would hope is when young people leave the church and, worse, leave the faith after they graduate from our youth ministries. I've been looking at a lot of research regarding this exodus, and most conclusions are that 40 to 50

percent of kids who are connected to a youth group when they graduate from high school will fail to stick with their faith in college.

In an effort to understand this drop-off, the Fuller Youth Institute launched a major research project. Their team hoped to find one thing that youth leaders could do that would be the silver bullet for

sticky faith, the one thing that would develop long-term faith in young people. They hoped to find one element of youth ministry programming (like small groups, mentoring, community work) that would be significantly related to higher faith maturity for this group. This silver bullet would launch our high school graduates on a journey of faith that would help them not only survive but thrive across the transition to college and life beyond.

Unfortunately, they haven't found that silver bullet. While components such as small groups, mentoring, community work, leadership and a host of other youth ministry

programs are important, the reality is that kids, ministry programs and spiritual development are far more complex than that.

And from their research, it turns out that intergenerational relationships are a big key to building lasting faith in students. Silver bullet? No. But is it helpful if we want students to live their faith beyond high school? Absolutely.

Sadly, many high school students lack these significant relationships. In our effort to offer



STEP LIVELY: SELFIE AS GROUP PORTRAIT BY QUINN LAFONTAINE



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relevant, developmentally appropriate and schedule-friendly teaching and fellowship for our teenagers, we have segregated students from the rest of the church. They meet downstairs in our Garden classrooms or up in the Library – far away from the Sunday service. Most of the time we don't even see them coming or going.

That segregation can cause them to shelve their faith. The Fuller study of nearly 500 youth group graduates has revealed some important insights about the power of intergenerational relationships in building sticky faith. The two insights I found most interesting were these:

1. Involvement in all-church worship during high school is more consistently linked with mature faith in both high school and college students than any other form of church participation.

The closest their research has come to that definitive silver bullet is that high school and college students who experience more intergenerational worship tend to have higher faith maturity.

At the Cathedral we do have youth lectors; we do have youth acolytes; we have had kids give sermons. But do we have enough youth involved in all church worship? Probably not. The Welcome Committee recently approached me about including the youth as welcomers on Sundays – so it seems that we are trying. But I believe we can do more.

2. By far, the No. 1 way that churches in the survey made the teens feel welcome and valued was when adults in the congregation showed specific interest in them.

More than any single program or event, kids were far more likely to feel like a significant part of their church when adults made the effort to get to know them.

So how do we show interest? How do we nurture these intergenerational relationships? How do we strengthen our community? By volunteering as a youth program organizer or as a youth leader, by

being a substitute when a youth leader cannot attend, by offering to help out at one of the youth fundraisers, by being a chaperone on one of their monthly fun activities, by offering to be a guest speaker in one of their classes, by starting a prayer group for them – by being involved, even in some small way, in all they are doing. This shows them how important they are as individuals and how important they are to us as part of God's community.



SADIE SANDERS, ONE OF OUR YOUNG PARISHIONERS, ILLUSTRATED HER IDEA OF COMMUNITY

Building sticky faith into our young is a complex process. But as students are released into a web of these intergenerational relationships where they are shaped and changed by the lives of the people in our congregation, research shows encouraging signs that this helps faith stick. No silver bullet. No magic wand. Just living out Jesus' call to make disciples, to grow the community.

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*Kristen Ketron, a Vestry member, is Coordinator of the Journey to Adulthood (J2A) youth program.*



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Redefining community

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# Is there room for Christ in an ocean of selfies and memes?

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Now, social media comprise our town squares

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Would Jesus use Facebook? Would He share the gospel via Twitter, or use Instagram to spread news of His miracles? Why not? Christ was a community builder and activist, and He used the tools that were available to Him. Today, social media plays a preponderant role in society. As increasing numbers use its services, what role can it play in building our community?

Last January, the Pew Research Center published the results of a survey conducted in September 2014 on social media usage in the United States. These results showed that over half of all online adults 65 and older used Facebook — representing 31% of all seniors — shattering the stereotype that portrayed the generic online social media user as an overconnected teenager.

The development of online social media has radically changed the way a community evolves

and transforms itself. Back in the early 1990s, few of us would have imagined that electronic mail, which allowed us to communicate freely from one side of the world to the other via an oft-unreliable dial-up service, would first morph into a primary source of news and information (the World Wide Web) and then, through the advent of online social media and related applications, further become a necessary and unavoidable extension of the physical world. Today, what we used to predict would be “virtual reality” has established itself within the “real world,” the only distinction being between physical and online existence, both frameworks within which communities can be created then flourish.

Facebook isn't the only popular online social medium, as an increasing percentage of online adults, albeit young adults, now also use Instagram, an online social network focusing on



photo and video sharing. YouTube, now belonging to Google, allows users to post videos and above all view and comment on them. LinkedIn targets specifically professionals. And Twitter allows users to express their opinions using 140 characters. The multiplicity of online social media illustrates the importance that these services have taken. According to Pew, between 81 and 87 percent of U.S. adults use the Internet or email – if even a small percentage uses a specific service, financial success is almost guaranteed. This multiplicity also ensures that the vast majority of the population has the means to post content online and engage in discussions, not only in the U.S., but globally.

Global access to the Web now allows everybody to publish content online, from the second-grade teacher writing about her first day of school to the cyber-jihadist posting a message of hate. Global access to the Web also means that everybody can take part in discussions, commenting on politics, global events or celebrities. The ease with which users can publish their thoughts, along with the anonymity provided by avatars or screen names, also means that abuse is rampant. Incidents of bullying at schools continue online, and such is the importance of online social media in the lives of teenagers and young adults, among the most vulnerable group psychologically, that these incidents can lead to ostracizing and, in dramatic cases, suicide. An additional worry is the presence of online predators seeking prey, most often the young and vulnerable.

The dark side of online social media is not limited to bullying and abuse: the over-commercialization of the Internet, with omnipresent advertising pushing us to consume and spend, is just as problematic. Trackers follow our online practices, anonymously analysing our email in order to specify which type of advertising is best-suited for each individual. Rules of privacy are sometimes violated for profit purposes, and a user's personal information, sometimes even pictures, can be published and distributed without the user's knowledge.

This brings us back to our question. Is there any room for a spiritual presence in this social media?

Can a community founded on the teachings of Christ find a place for itself in this cacophony?

The answer is still a resounding yes. Online social media offer an amazing potential for spiritual closeness and development, particularly within the framework of a community.

A community is created and defined by the specific characteristic or value that its members share. In the physical world, certain barriers inhibit the development of a community; some are more obvious and unavoidable, such as physical location, others more subjective, such as social pressure and acceptance. Online social media remove many of these barriers, allowing anyone anywhere to take part in discussions or post content. Although this can lead to abuse, it can also lead to healthy social interaction, just as abuse and interaction can be found in the physical world. Within an inclusive spiritual framework, the ties between members of an online community can be just as strong, possibly even stronger than in the physical world: barriers such as geographical location disappear, and simply belonging to an online community eliminates the challenge of having to seek and identify other like-minded users. The creation of a community is hence facilitated.

A February 2015 article in *Christianity Today* proclaimed social media to be the new town square: "The Apostle Paul preached in open squares where the people gathered. In Acts 13 it was to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia. In Acts 17, it was to the literal town square of conversation – Mars Hill. People today aren't sitting around in debate clubs. They aren't going to the town squares in the middle of cities. Instead, they're having discussions on social media. It's where people are gathering, debating, discussing ideas and connecting with others. Why wouldn't you want to be there?"

For this reason, an online presence is now almost mandatory for most communities, including spiritual communities such as churches. Social media first allow a church to post information about itself. A visitor to a foreign city will first



turn to the Web to find a place to worship and to check service times, addresses and contact information. The visitor will also most probably want to obtain information about the history of the church – disabled visitors will want information about access. Regular parishioners will also find the Web useful, possibly through the publication of volunteer rosters and schedules or of recordings of sermons and music.

Yet the role of the Web for a church community does not end there. For the full potential of online social media to be utilized, the Web can also be used to go further than merely inform visitors or parishioners. Online social media provide tools for the Web to become an extension of the community, drawing users into debates and discussions, commenting on beautiful artwork and music, but also sharing thoughts and prayers, fears and worries. This echoes how Paul describes community in I Corinthians 12:25-27: “That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” Social media are indeed Paul’s town squares.

Outside the physical walls of the church, social media can play an important role in outreach. Members of the clergy can use online social media to address certain pastoral issues, for example providing important messages of comfort in case of major tragedies. In December 2012, the Pope opened a Twitter account, @pontifex, to reach out to the online community. Dialogue can be established, providing users with a voice to express themselves, linking Roman Catholic communities throughout the world. For the Anglican Communion, @lambethpalace has existed since 2009. Online social media can break down the walls of solitude, allowing vulnerable or isolated people to join a community and develop friendships. For such is the role played by online social media, with connections and friendships created online extending into the physical world.

Beyond the community of a church, online social media are also playing a key role in changing society. The events of the Arab Spring, when waves

of popular uprisings broke out against oppressive rule throughout the Arab world in the early 2010s, were coordinated and publicized using social media such as Twitter. Attempts by the authorities to prevent access to the Internet were thwarted by communities of young students, aware of the most recent technological developments and in touch with other supportive groups throughout the world, thereby creating a global online community of activists and giving voice to the oppressed.

And beyond communities of individuals, many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, are engaged in digital revolutions, whereby online social media can create bridges between remote villages and towns. The ease of installation of wireless networks and the availability of cheap laptops developed specifically for this purpose have helped many villages and towns to respond to crises, identifying common needs and coordinating trade. Within the framework of these regional networks of villages and towns, community takes on a different meaning, one of hope, sharing and mutual help – illustrating the power of online social media in today’s world.

Historians will one day look back at the launching of the digital era and recognize the role played by online social media in shaping future generations. The Gutenberg printing press of the late 1430s deeply impacted the Western world thanks to the vernacularizing thrust of print-capitalism; online social networks have had a similar impact but on a global scale. The opportunities provided are just as large in scope and depth. There is much demand for spirituality online – a Google search for “God” returns more than 1.6 billion hits – and providing information is easy. Finding a meaningful role for Christ’s community online is the key: the challenge resides in setting up a community that will reach out via the Internet and echo Christ’s teachings, ensuring His presence, even on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. 📌

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*Philip Worré, Managing Editor of Trinité, is Documentation and Research Officer for the European Union Institute for Security Studies.*



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As the Cathedral's  
online presence evolves,  
our community widens  
and strengthens





### **What is the role of social media within the Cathedral community?**



Social media is something that we dabble in, but there has been no concerted effort to coordinate a social media program. The Cathedral itself has a few pages that we need to focus on consolidating; and some of the various groups, like Music and YPAC, use social media on their own. While all of this lacks coordination — in a way — that is not itself a bad thing. Social media gains its power from its spontaneity and free form, so what we really want to do is promote and encourage free dialogue - not orchestrated communications. It's all about getting people talking. We also have to make sure that once we start talking we remain continually engaged in the conversation(s). Once you neglect social media, it can be hard to get people interested again in what you have to say.

### **How do the members of the Cathedral respond to social media?**

Like all dialogue, members respond according to the content of the conversation. When the Music page makes posts, for example, people respond well because of what the music means to them. It comes down to making sure we post the sorts of things people find interesting and engaging.

### **Are there any plans to further develop the Cathedral's use of social media?**

Social media will play into a wider communications plan that we are working on now that will focus on our Web presence and promoting our existing publication tools through it. As mentioned before, it's about getting people talking. For example, rather than simply putting a PDF of Trinité online, the magazine actually becomes part of the Web site in its own slot. Each article then is something we can use to promote conversation through posts. The best way to do this is to harness the diversity of interests within the parish, developing discussion "share teams" in the various ministries; not so much to "push" messaging out, but get people to pull the information they want, share experiences, and engage each other in community around it. That is how social media comes into its own.



**Tony Holmes was recently named the Cathedral's Communications and Community Manager.**

**Trinité spoke with him about the aspects of his role that involve social media.**

**“So what we really want to do is promote and encourage free dialogue - not orchestrated communications”**





By Anne Swardson

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# OUR MISSION

AT HOME AND  
IN THE WORLD



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A community of care

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## Reaching out beyond our stone walls

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Partnerships in Paris and the world

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The guest at the Cathedral's Friday Mission Lunch, the student in the suburbs who learns computer skills from Cathedral volunteers, the abused wife getting career counseling and wardrobe donations at the Cathedral, the gay homeless youth who comes to the Lambda Group's annual party, the scholarship student at an Episcopal school in the West Bank - all may look like beneficiaries of our generous mission programs. And indeed, 10 percent of pledge and plate revenues goes to help those in need.

But in reality, those people, and others like them, are much more than that.

**They are part of our community.**

In aiding those who need assistance, Cathedral volunteers don't just extend a helping hand. They expand and nourish the community that is around us. By extending assistance, we too are blessed.





That community grows in two ways, explains Thomas Girty, chair of the Mission & Outreach Committee and member of the Vestry. Those who are helped are folded into a warm and caring community. And every time a new person from the Cathedral volunteers for any of our many mission projects, they become part of this community of care.

“What we want to do with our local projects is to see how we can provide parishioners with experience of living out Christ’s work,” says Girty.

The notion of mission as community-creation goes back to 2008, when Zachary Fleetwood, then the Dean, led about 10 members of the M&O Committee on a retreat just north of Paris. Sitting in a meeting room at L’Arche, a religiously based organization that runs centers for handicapped people around France, attendees debated the committee’s priorities, writing each on a large whiteboard.



COMMUNITY THROUGH EMAIL AT MAISON DES TILLEULS

The question was, how can the M&O Committee, and by extension the entire Cathedral, develop “companion relationships,” in which both we and those at the other side of the project can grow and flourish? By the end of the day, members agreed that our mission work should:

- Engage many groups at the Cathedral
- Involve personal relationship and friendship

- Be long-term
- Engender ownership, responsibility and passion
- Be communicated and advocated to others



LEARNING COMPUTER SKILLS FROM CATHEDRAL VOLUNTEERS

## Priorities are education, social justice and humanitarian engagement

Out of that meeting flowed a number of new and ongoing projects, including scholarship support for girls at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah, the computer training program at Maison des Tilleuls and, as always, the Friday lunch, which week in and week out feeds 65 people in need. In later years would come our association with Le Refuge, which shelters gay youths who have been expelled from their homes because of their sexual orientation, Association HOME, which shelters female victims of domestic violence and their children in the eastern outskirts of Paris, and others.

New projects are coming onstream as well. The committee’s priorities are threefold: education, social justice and humanitarian engagement. Projects under discussion include working with a local association that helps the homeless and beginning a program of regular visits to elderly people and shut-ins. Another Career Day for the women of HOME is planned.



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For all of these and more the congregation will be asked to help. Say yes.

You'll be rewarded by seeing the computer students, mostly immigrants, high-fiving each other as they learn to send each other email. The women of HOME trying on business suits and scarves at Career Day (all six of the first group of women at the sessions found employment). The students in Ramallah, where Neil Janin takes a group of pilgrims regularly, showing off their business-class projects, in English.

**When you're asked to help strengthen our community, just say yes**



IMMIGRANTS CAN TAKE A STEP INTO THE VIRTUAL WORLD

Even more gratifying, these new members of our community are starting to help each other. Young men and women from Le Refuge helped wrap boxes for our Christmas Love in a Box project, for instance, and more of that is to come. There is no limit to how large our community can grow when we do the work Christ has called us to do. ☺

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



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Community that stays in touch

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# Commitment though miles apart

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Friends in deed maintain their ties to the Cathedral, as we do to them

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They are natives of virtually every state and several foreign countries. They lived in Paris for months, years, decades – or maybe never. They now live in Minnesota, Tennessee, New York, Texas, England, Hong Kong, or maybe somewhere else. Wherever that is, they are probably parishioners at a church there and often very active leaders in their congregations. Their last visit to the Cathedral may have been last week, or maybe it was 20 years ago.



ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE FRIENDS BROCHURE: THE CHILDRENS CHOIR

Yet year after year they commit themselves to the Cathedral and its mission by joining the Friends of the American Cathedral. Why do they do it and what does it mean for the congregation?

When asked, most Friends cite the special sense of community that prevails at the Cathedral as the reason they want to remain involved. They also express the wish that visitors and new arrivals might experience the same sense of homecoming they felt. They recall that at the Cathedral, away from family and strangers in a strange land, they found themselves moved to get to know each other and work together more quickly and to support each other in deeper ways than might be expected back home. Thus they developed strong ties to fellow parishioners but also to the institution that facilitated that true communion. If they stayed for some time they most likely experienced some of life's highs – love, marriage, births – but quite possibly lows as well – loneliness, illness, the death of loved ones. They never forget that the clergy and the small town



that is the Cathedral congregation were with them through it all and that now the Cathedral community remains a source of strength even though they may be far away in distance and time.

As Andrea Rose Rousseaux, a former parishioner now living in New York City, puts it: “In 1988 I was drawn to the Cathedral by its beautiful music and was hired as a choir soloist. It did not take long for me to be moved by the spiritual message of Dean Leo; nevertheless, when my daughter, then 2 years old, appeared as a little lamb in the Christmas pageant, that cinched the deal, and I became an enthusiastic member of the church. For 19 years I was nourished spiritually, made deep and lasting friendships, and grew tremendously through leadership roles in LAGV, St. Anne’s, and the Vestry. Thanksgiving dinners, Easter egg hunts, wonderful pastoral assistants helping us raise upstanding children, Love in a Box, St. Anne’s teas at the U.S. Ambassador’s residence, a beer with Dean Leo, a discussion with Dean Hunt, singing carols with Dean Fleetwood.... Family. The Cathedral is simply family to me, and that is why I stay involved as a Friend. There’s no other place like it!”

Friends who never lived in Paris but have worshipped at the Cathedral when passing through speak more often of the importance of having an Episcopal church in Paris with its special liturgy and music and, above all, its openness to all. Despite their commitment to a home church, they feel that our mission is also worthy of their support. And they appreciate the

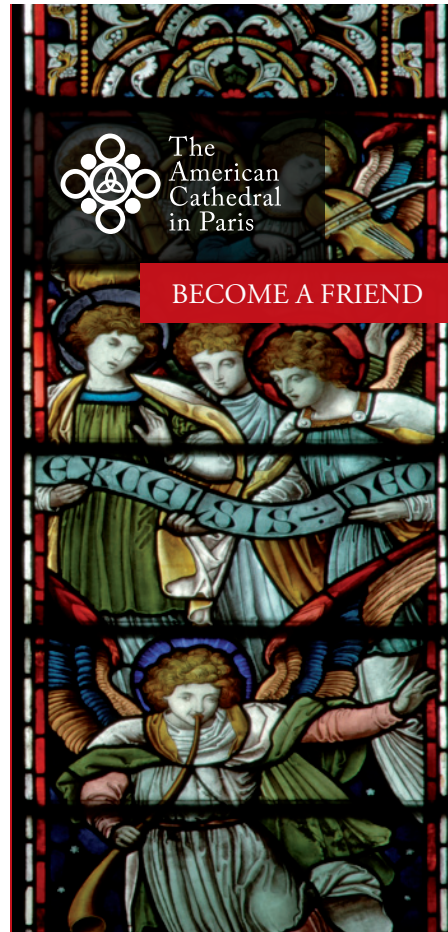
warm welcome that reminds them of churches back home.

Another New Yorker, Virginia St. George Smith, said: “In New York City I am a member of St.

Bartholomew’s Church in midtown, and being at the American Cathedral in Paris is an easy move. The Cathedral gives a similar sense of grandeur with the warmth of parishioners and the importance of the sermon. As an academic – I am a college teacher of art history in New York – I often travel to France during the summer months, but also at special times of the year. I remember my first New Year’s Eve in Paris, when we looked out the window after dinner with Dean Fleetwood and saw the lights on the Eiffel Tower and heard the noises of celebration. The Trinity Weekends have offered unforgettable experiences – sitting at the Prime Minister’s conference table at Matignon, cocktails at the American Embassy, etc. When I go to the Cathedral I meet friends from previous visits and have happy experiences with new acquaintances. Last summer the coffee hour proved to be

essential; I met a technical expert who fixed my malfunctioning camera just before I was going over to the Opera to photograph sculpture on its façade. Happy accidents happen there!”

The parish is touched quite directly by the commitment of our Friends. First of all, through their annual contributions they help support our annual budget of more than €1 million. While the minimum annual donation to be a Friend is \$50, a great number of Friends give much more, some





up to \$10,000 in many years. Secondly, Friends bring in visitors and new parishioners. Very often newcomers at the Cathedral will relate that they came because a friend of theirs (and a Friend of ours) told them they couldn't visit (or live in) Paris without coming to the Cathedral. Thirdly, many Friends serve in volunteer roles in other bodies related to the Cathedral, such as the Board of Foreign Parishes, which is the legal owner of our building; the American Cathedral in Paris Foundation, which holds our endowment and provides various services related to the finances of the church; and the Investment Committee,



ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE FRIENDS BROCHURE:  
PICTURES FROM A FAMILY ALBUM

which recommends investment strategies for the endowment funds. Some have contributed articles to this magazine and hosted receptions for the Dean in the United States. And finally and importantly, it is a tremendous boost to the morale of the clergy and the parish to know that we have champions who recognize and value what we are all about. That is what Friends are for!

## “The Cathedral is simply family to me”

What do Friends get from this? They receive a copy of *Trinité* twice a year helping them to keep up with the life of the Cathedral; they are recognized personally when worshipping at the Cathedral, not only by those who remember them but from the special Friends badge they are asked

to wear at coffee hour; they are invited to participate in the Trinity Weekend celebrations in Paris and to receptions in New York and Washington, D.C., approximately every 18 months; and they are prayed for individually once a year through inclusion on the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. That they also receive our heartfelt gratitude goes without saying.

The Friends organization began to take form in the 1980s when Dean Leo built on the connections that his predecessor, Dean Sturgis Riddle, had begun to nourish with Cathedral



parishioners who had left Paris. In 2015, thirty-five years later, there are approximately 300 Friends on our rolls, about the same as the number of parishioners. Although we may be far from each other and don't get to see each other as much as we like, we share our common history and commitment to each other and to the place that ties us all together, the Cathedral. We are family, and Friends. 🎁

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*Nancy Janin, is now a London resident, but maintains her ties to the parish through the Friends of the American Cathedral.*

**The Friends of the American Cathedral organization is overseen by Nancy Treuhold in New York, Elizabeth Procuronoff in Paris, and Nancy Janin in London. Administrative duties are managed by Julia Seder in New York.**



By Kate Thweatt

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22



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Community through the ages

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# Stories told in bronze and marble

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Time past and time present

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What does the notion of time travel have in common with the communion of saints? And what can such divergent concepts have to do with the plaques on the Cathedral's walls and pews?

The doctrine notes the spiritual union of Christians, living and dead. It is the mystical body of Christ, in which each member contributes to the good of all and shares in the welfare of all.

The fantasy of time travel - if fantasy it be - attributes to humans the ability to move freely between different points in time, just as we really can move in space. Rip Van Winkle dozed off to accomplish a 20-year voyage. In Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol," we travel with Scrooge through his miserly cruelty in time past and time present to redemption in time future.

So now, what can such divergent concepts have to do with the plaques on our walls?

Since the life of our parish spans a century and a half, almost 130 of those years in our same

building, a tour of the marble, bronze and brass plaques scattered throughout reveals many names and dates of past members of our own communion of saints and a few present ones. They do not appear in any particular order, nor is there any context except the Cathedral. But if you put your mind into time travel mode along with what you know of the historical context and a touch of imagination, the plaques reveal some of the stories of our own time past and time present.

Arguably the most important plaque of all has just been reinstalled in the entrance. Now mounted on the wall to the left as you step into the Narthex, the plaque honors John Brainerd Morgan, the rector who spearheaded the efforts to build our Gothic Revival edifice. In the eloquence of a century ago, he is memorialized as "a man of singular devotion to high ideals [who] poured the treasures of a rich life into the creation of this place: he found his greatest joy in its perpetual ministry to God and man: the Church itself is his memorial."

THROUGH THE GATE, THE MEMORIAL TO THOSE  
WHO FOUGHT IN TWO WORLD WARS





The plaque's new prominence is one of the smaller benefits of the recent construction project. Before the Cathedral's expansion, the plaque, encrusted in a century's sediment, was largely overlooked in an alcove where the new elevator opens now. A parishioner with a regard for our history contributed the funds to restore the plaque and reinstall it just to the left of the entrance to the Fleetwood Room. The Morgan plaque is one of the oldest in the Cathedral, and the sign noting the room named to honor Dean Zachary Fleetwood is the newest.

Morgan was in his early 30s when he began his 40-year ministry at Holy Trinity. The church was on Rue Bayard in the Eighth Arrondissement, where the Scots Kirk stands now. The building had become too small for the growing number of worshippers, and two years after his installation in 1873 discussions began about the need for larger accommodations - and what may have been the original capital campaign.

More than 10 years later, on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, 1886, the American Church of the Holy Trinity was consecrated. It had taken more than 10 years from conception to completion, and John B. Morgan had seen it through. Financially, it did help that he was a Morgan and was married to another, the sister of J.P. Morgan, the storied financier of the Gilded Age and a distant cousin.

As the English-language newspaper *Galignani's Messenger* noted when the church opened, "The Rev. Dr. Morgan, who had watched the building operations day by day and hour by hour from the commencement, and who has often worked far into the night, may be congratulated on the completion of an undertaking to which he has

devoted so much earnest study and anxious care."

Funds did not come from the Morgan family alone. In the same issue of *Galignani's Messenger*, among the larger subscribers were names of several members of the Vanderbilt family: Cornelius Vanderbilt, his son, W.H. Vanderbilt, and his son-in-law R.J. Niven, the husband of Marie Louise Vanderbilt.



CLEANED OF ITS DUST AND REINSTALLED

Niven gave the money for the space we call the Crypt, but it was built as a mortuary chapel, and his descendants provided a large bronze plaque, now blackened with age. The inscription informs us: "In loving memory of our uncle Robert Johnston Niven of New York who departed this life 24 November 1885. By reason of his great sympathy with his countrymen who might be bereaved far from home in a foreign land he erected this chapel for the use of Americans."

Another Vanderbilt, William K., is remembered with identical plaques on pew 28 in the center aisle and on pew 72 in the left side aisle. He was the grandson of Cornelius and the

father of Consuelo Vanderbilt, whose mother engineered her marriage to the 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Marlborough against Consuelo's wishes. The marriage ended in divorce. Consuelo then married a Frenchman, Jacques Balsan, and lived happily ever after in France.

There are 30 plaques on pews, mostly in memoriam, and all but one dating back more than half a century. In fact most of the 30 other plaques in the Cathedral pay homage to past deans, wardens, vestrymen, organists, donors, organizations and parishioners. Or should we say members of our own communion of saints. Three memorials draw particular attention.



In an alcove on the left as you walk from the Nave toward the Parish Hall, a sculpted medallion and a fountain honor Margaret Benedict, who had distinguished herself as an ambulance driver during World War I. She enjoyed her reputation as a hostess, cook and benefactor. By giving cooking classes she raised money for Junior Guild charities and (in one of several different accounts) is credited as the creator of Eggs Benedict. The memorial was created at the instigation of Sturgis Riddle, the influential postwar Dean.

To the left of the altar in Saint Paul's Chapel, a marble plaque honors Lawrence Whipp, who was organist from 1923 to 1945. Whipp remained in Paris through World War II, managing Cathedral affairs and holding services for the remaining Americans. He was imprisoned for a time by the Germans, and after the war, was found dead in the Seine. How he died remains a mystery.

It's not only plaques that serve as memorials. In the middle of the Dean's Garden is a cross lifted high on a column supported by a large base on which parishioners often sit. Like the marble plaque in the Narthex, it was erected in memory of Dr. Morgan after the Deanery was built.

On the base of the cross is a small plaque referring to another memorial, a fountain in the garden "given to the Glory of God and in gratitude for the life of Lauren Pickard," who died in Paris in 1998 just short of her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and "whose love of Paris equaled her joie de vivre."

Coming back to the Narthex, one notices the marble plaque facing the Morgan memorial. Called the Benefactors' Plaque, it was conceived in 1995 upon the death of Margaret Dodge Garrett, known by many as Margie Garrett. She and her husband, Johnson Garrett, were faithful parishioners for more than 25 years, slightly longer than Dean Riddle served.

Johnson, a career diplomat, was a warden of the Cathedral for many years. Margie served as President of the Junior Guild and the Altar Guild and in the wider community as President of the American Aid Society and of the Board of

Trustees of the American Library and was for many years the gracious hostess of Friends' events in Washington.

When she died, Sturgis Riddle was the first to contribute toward erecting a marble plaque in gratitude for the couple's service. Dean Hunt and Sophie Belouet, Chair of the Friends of the American Cathedral at the time (and now the Cathedral's Treasurer and a member of the Vestry), had the present plaque designed to honor the ministry of Dean Riddle and the Garretts. It has become known as the Benefactors Plaque, as

through the years names of other major contributors have been added.



DETAIL FROM THE  
MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

The memorials almost always represent outstanding contributions to the life of the Cathedral, and in at least one case it was the supreme sacrifice to Western democratic values that is remembered.

The plaque on pew 15, one of the few placed in the past 50 years, honors "Private Flem Stapleton, killed in action at St. Mihiel, France, September 12, 1918." Private Stapleton was a relative of Ambassador Craig Stapleton, who with his wife, Debbie, was a devoted member of the Cathedral during the Ambassador's appointment in Paris from 2005 until 2009. The placement was chosen because just outside is the cloister with its stirring war memorial. Erected in the 1920s, the cloister was built after the "war to end all wars," and at a time when a more devastating conflict could not be imagined. 🇺🇸

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*Kate Thweatt, Associate Treasurer and a former Junior Warden, is a member and founder of the Archives Committee.*





At the Maundy Thursday service the Cathedral offered the washing of hands and well as feet.



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