



5. Guide to the Church

Although generally known as St Mary's, the full title of the church is "Our Immaculate Lady of Victories". This was the title of the first Redemptorist foundation in England, at Falmouth in Cornwall, and it combines two traditional titles of Mary, namely, the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Victories.

Clapham has always kept the feast of the Holy Rosary, 7 October, as its patronal feast. A feast under the title of Our Lady of Victories was instituted in thanksgiving for the Christian victory over the Turks at the naval Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Two years later, the title was altered to Our Lady of the Rosary. Examples of churches dedicated to Our Lady of Victories include Sancta Maria delle Vittorie in Rome (where Bernini's famous statue of St Teresa of Avila is found), and Notre Dame des Victoires in Paris. It is probably the latter that has the closest link to Clapham. Both Fathers Lempfried and de Buggenoms, founders of the Falmouth mission, had celebrated Mass in it while visiting Paris.

External View

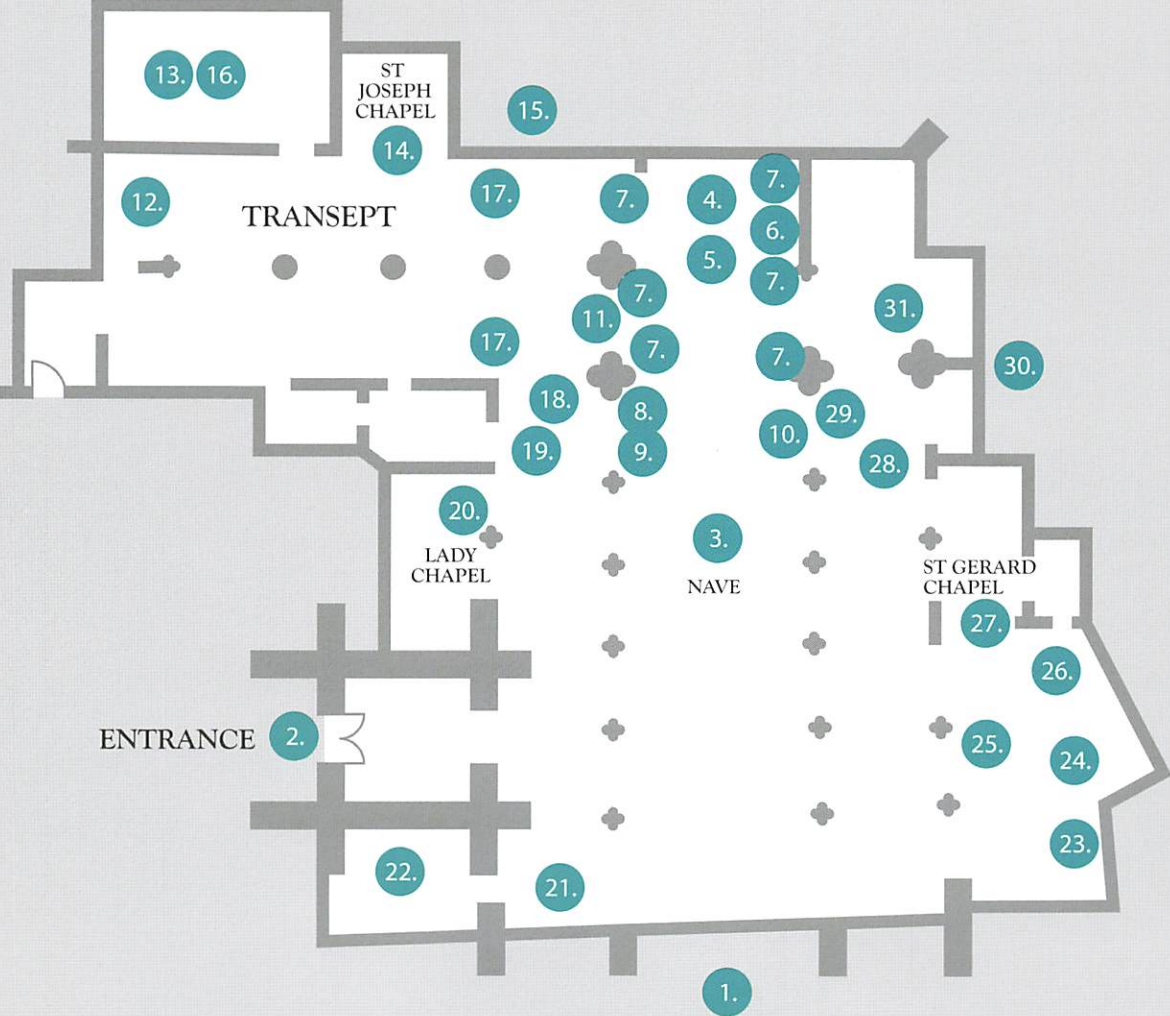
1. Front of the Church

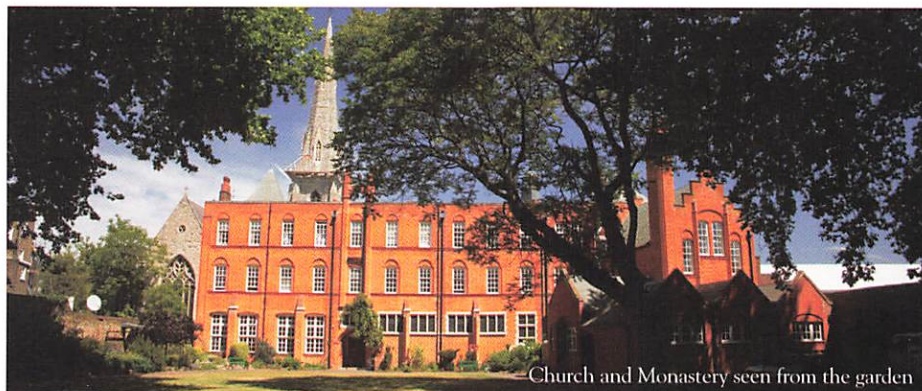
St Mary's is constructed from Kentish ragstone, with softer and paler Caen stone as surrounds for archways and windows. The front is best observed from the opposite side of Clapham Park Road. The first striking feature is the tower and spire which soar to

a combined height of 154 feet (47 metres). The tower is 69 feet (21 metres) high and the spire measures 85 feet (26 metres). The tower houses a peal of eight bells and this is the only Roman Catholic church in London with a complete peal.

On the front of the church there are two statues in niches. On the tower side is St Alphonsus Liguori, clothed as a bishop. The statue on the other side of the entrance door depicts St Gerard Majella as a young man, wearing the habit of the Order. By his side is a vase of lilies (symbol of chastity) and a skull (symbol of mortality). The main entrance to the church is no longer in use. The heavy oak door with black iron furniture is set within an archway. At the summit of the archway, is a small niche with an image of Christ in Majesty, while two smaller figures kneel beneath. That on the right, in bishop's mitre and carrying a crozier, is Alphonsus Liguori, the other wears the habit of the Redemptorist Order and may be intended to represent some of the members of the Order who had not yet been canonised.

Floor Plan of the Church





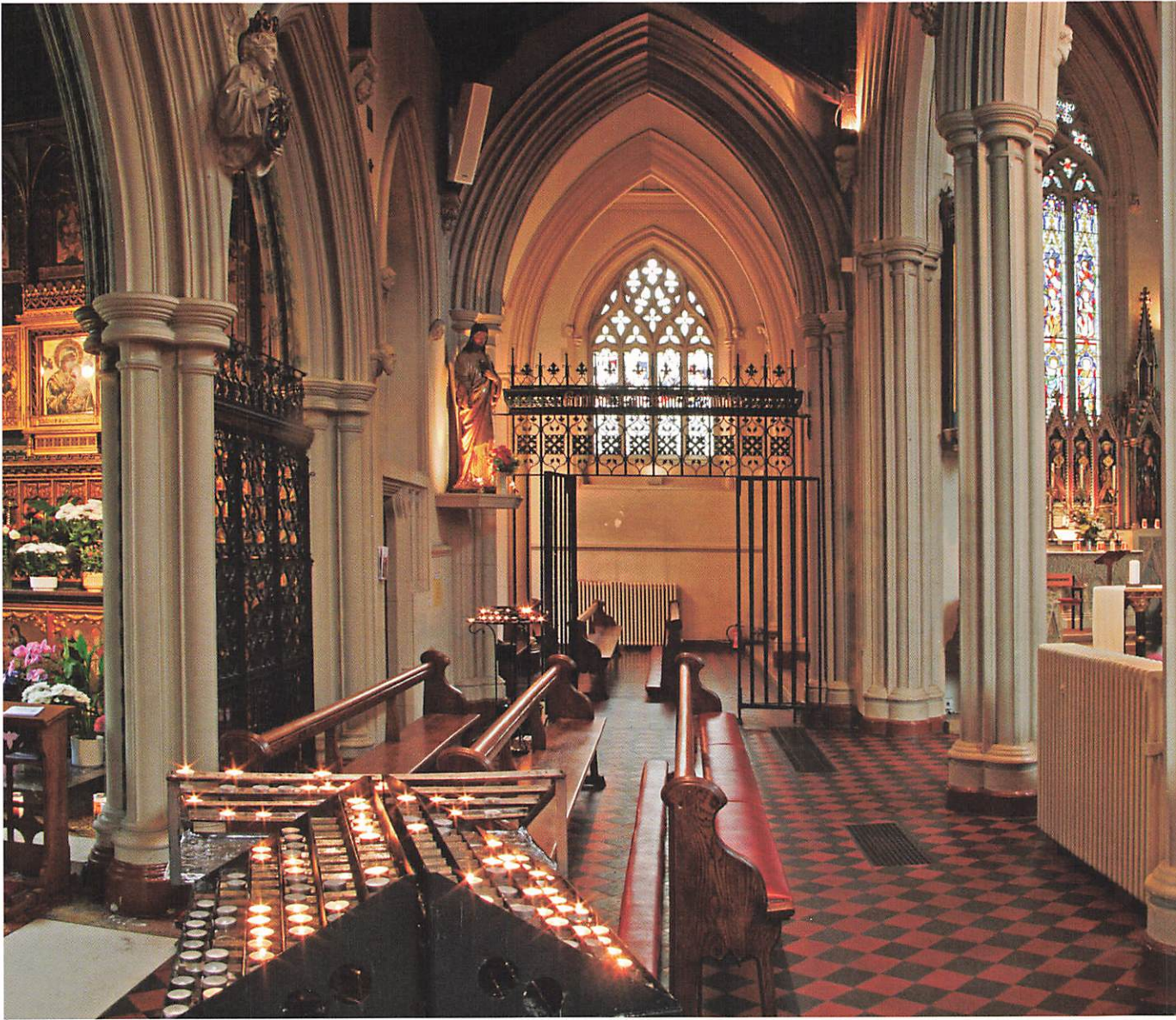
2. The Entrance

A gateway in Clapham Park Road leads to the entrance to the church and monastery. Opposite the entrance is the graceful War Memorial Cross, commemorating members of the Redemptorist Congregation and parishioners who had fallen in the First World War. It was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and dedicated in 1920.

Over the entrance door to the church is a carved medallion depicting the Annunciation, when Mary was told by the Archangel Gabriel that she was to be the mother of the Saviour. This is a favourite Marian scene and is depicted several times in the church. Under the main scene, two angels swing incense thuribles, a sign that this scene is viewed as a sacred mystery of faith. That on the right represents the coats of arms of the Redemptorist Congregation and the family arms of St Alphonsus Liguori. The porch is lit by two windows set up relatively high, each formed by two lancets. On the right side, stone tablets record the deceased of the Redemptorist community who had lived in

the house since its foundation. The earliest is Brother Andrew Ward who died in 1861. The ceiling vaults spring from four carved heads on the corners of the porch, representing the symbols of the writers of the four Gospels. Beginning from the left of the door in the church, these are Matthew (symbol, a winged ox), Mark (winged lion), Luke (a human being – behind the entrance door) and John (an eagle). There is a small holy water font in a recessed niche at the right hand side of the door to allow worshippers to bless themselves.

On the ceiling, there is a delightful little medallion that will likely go unnoticed, of the Blessed Virgin Mary clothed in blue: it depicts her wearing a golden crown and surrounded by angels. It is probably intended to represent the assumption. It also represents a value of medieval art which was appreciated by those who pioneered the Gothic Revival, namely, that beauty was intended to give glory to God. Sometimes, an exquisitely beautiful piece of work is out of human sight, and seen only by the angels!





Panoramic view of St Mary's



Fresco detail: Christ in Majesty with the Blessed Virgin and John the Baptist



High Altar and Sanctuary

Interior – View of the Sanctuary from the Nave

We will begin our tour of the interior of the church by going to the end of the nave and looking towards the sanctuary.

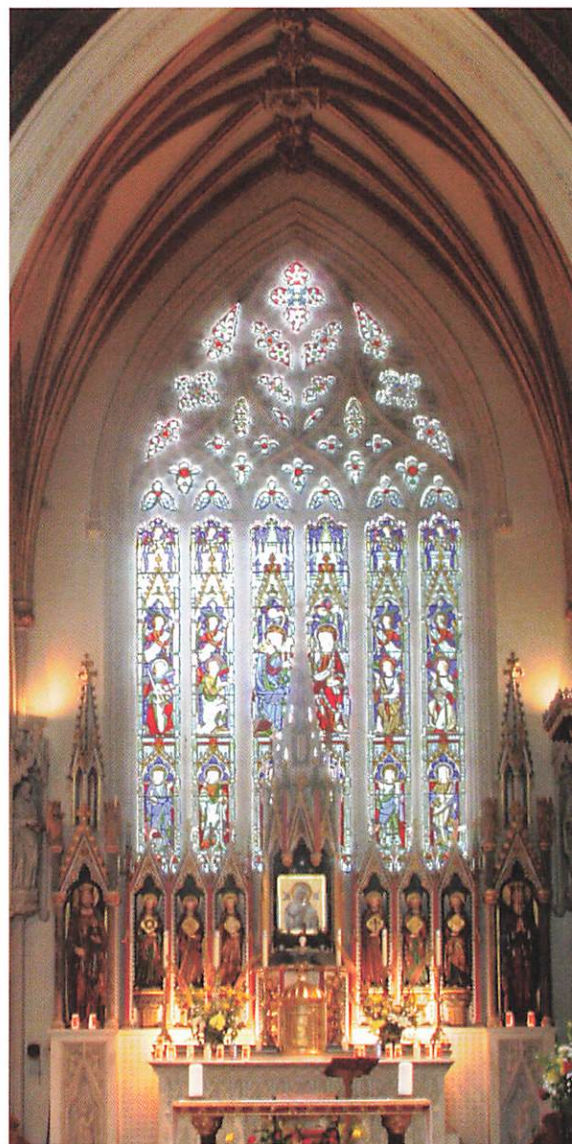
3. The Fresco on the Chancel Arch

The fresco on the arch above the sanctuary or chancel, depicts the Last Judgement. It is the work of the German artist Josef Anton Settegast (1813–1890). He belonged to the artistic movement known as the *Nazarener School*, which flourished in the mid-nineteenth century and had some associations with the Redemptorist Congregation. The original fresco, which was painted directly on to plaster, had begun to show signs of disintegration so it was restored in 1926 by the Belgian firm of Van Linthout. They chose the expedient of repainting the scene on to canvas and then fixing it to the existing mural. The Final Judgement or “Doom” (hence “Doom’s Day”) was a common theme in medieval church art. It was often depicted on the east wall of the church, directly above the altar, or as in this case, on the chancel arch, so that the thought of their own judgement might be always before the minds of the congregation. The best known example of a Last Judgement, but from a slightly earlier period, is the great Michelangelo fresco in the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

Settegast has depicted Christ in Majesty, surrounded by a rainbow, an allusion to the account of the one seated on the throne in the Book of Revelation “who looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald” (Revelation 4:3). Mary, crowned but with her hands crossed modestly on her breast, occupies a seat to his right. This is another allusion to a biblical text frequently used in the liturgy of the Blessed Virgin Mary: “at your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir” (Psalm 45:9). On either side are the apostles in fulfilment of the promise Jesus had made to them: “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28). There is a single standing figure who appears to stride confidently forward – John the Baptist, the messenger of the one who is to come. He holds a banner with the words (in Latin), “Behold the Lamb of God.” Where the fresco moves into the narrower space of the archway, there are figures of angels, blowing trumpets to rouse the dead to attend the judgment: “He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). The congregation, standing or kneeling in their places, would probably have found it relatively simple to imagine themselves as the people gathered for judgement.

4. The Great East Window

The sanctuary is composed of two bays and is dominated by the colourful stained-glass window in the same Gothic style as the rest of the church. The upper part is filled with coloured glass in abstract patterns. The colours, predominantly red and blue, the traditional colours of Christ and his mother, are remarkably vibrant, especially when the sun shines through the window. The main section of the window can be divided into three sections, each consisting of two lancet windows with two main parts (except for the central section). The lancets are again divided into two sections – a figure set within a



The Great East Window



Detail of Angels from East Window

stylised canopy and a lower register of figures. Although the central section is somewhat obscured by the central pinnacle of the altar reredos, its subject contains the theme of the whole window. On the right-hand panel, Christ, arrayed in royal red and wearing a crown, holds the orb in one hand, while his right is raised in blessing. On the left-hand panel, Mary arrayed in blue and crowned with gold, inclines towards her Son. The Catholic congregation would have recognised this as the “fifth glorious mystery” of the Rosary, the crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven. The main subjects on each side are the archangels, each identified by a symbol. Beginning on the far left and reading across, the angels are Michael (“Who is like God?”), with sword and shield representing the defender of Israel and the Church, Raphael (“God heals”), known from the Book of Tobit and who holds the fish, whose gall was used to cure the blindness of Tobias. Nearest to Christ is Gabriel (“God is my strength”), messenger of the annunciation, carrying the lily which is a Marian symbol of purity. The final angel, Uriel, does not often figure on Catholic lists of archangels. He is named in the apocryphal biblical book, 4 Esdras 4:1. The name Uriel means “God is my light”, so his symbol is the sun.

The lower register contains images of virgin martyrs, each carrying her symbol, either representing her name or the way in which she met her death. Beginning on the left – Agnes with a lamb (Latin, *agnus*), Catherine with the wheel and sword, Cecilia, patroness of musicians, with the harp, Lucy with the dish holding her eyes, as she was blinded during her martyrdom, Barbara, with the tower in which her father locked her as a protection on account of her beauty, and Agatha with pincers, used in tearing her body during her martyrdom.

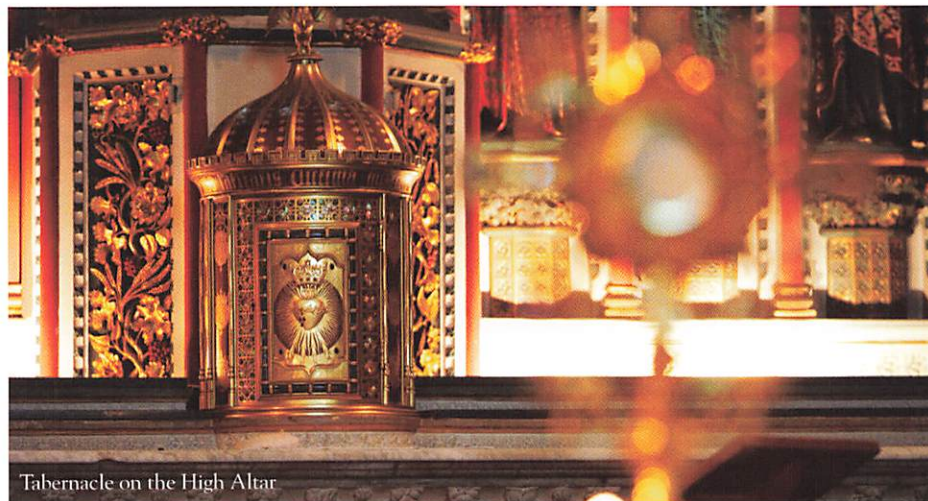
5. The High Altar



The high altar with the tabernacle would have been the original focus of the church. It is in a Gothic style. The central section, crowned with a pinnacle, marks the location of the tabernacle. The space, now occupied by an image of the Blessed Virgin, would originally have contained a crucifix and on certain occasions it was used for showing the Blessed Sacrament enclosed in a monstrance for eucharistic adoration. It is balanced by two smaller pinnacles on each side. The pinnacle on the left shows Christ the King and that on the right, Mary as Queen of Heaven. On each side, three angels bear medallions carrying symbols of the passion – (from left) the crown of thorns, the cross, ladder and lance, the seamless garment for which the soldiers cast lots, the pillar and scourge, the nails with the hammer and pliers, and the five wounds. Below the figures of Christ and his mother, the two lowest panels tell the story of the annunciation – on the left, the angel Gabriel and on the right Mary, with her symbol of the lily. The figures on the reredos are coloured. Judging from some of the older photographs that have survived, the figures may originally have been of a relatively neutral shade, but the additional colour and gilding give a more dramatic appearance to the sanctuary.

The front of the altar has seven panels. The smaller, outer panels reflect the motif of the angels with the medallions of the passion. The five larger ones depict the five sorrowful mysteries of the rosary, except that the fifth, the crucifixion, has been given pride of place at the centre. Beginning from the left, they represent the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42), the scourging at the pillar (John 19:1), the crowning with thorns (John 19:2) and Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary (John 19:17).

The Tabernacle [centre of the High Altar]



Tabernacle on the High Altar

When the church was built, the dominant eucharistic theology of the day, and one certainly shared by the Redemptorists, was that the Eucharist continued to make present the sacrifice of Calvary and that the consecrated host remained a living memorial of the Lord's passion and of his abiding presence. A more contemporary theology of the Eucharist will also lay stress on it as the banquet of eternal life to be shared in memory of the Crucified and Risen Lord. The root of this theology is in the scriptures. This first part of that traditional theology, with its emphasis on the passion of Christ, is clearly reflected in the decoration of the high altar.

The second aspect is represented by the tabernacle. The domed tabernacle on the altar today was the gift of Miss K. Mahony of the parish in memory of her parents. It is one of Bentley's late works and was completed

shortly before his death in 1902. It is made from beaten copper with decorations of lapis lazuli and mother of pearl. Around the dome of the tabernacle, a Latin inscription reads: *Cor Jesu sacratissimum miserere nobis* ("Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us"). There is also a symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the door. On the top of the tabernacle, is a figure of "the pelican in her piety". This was an image used in medieval art and heraldry that depicted a mother pelican piercing her breast to make her heart's blood flow as nourishment for her young. It was often used as an image of Christ's love in the Eucharist, giving himself as food to the believer. St Thomas Aquinas in his eucharistic hymn, *Adoro Te*, writes: "Lord Jesus, good pelican, wash me clean with your blood, one drop of which can free the entire world of all its sins."

6. Sedilia and Piscina

On the wall at the right of the altar, under four ornate canopies, are seats (*sedilia*) for the priests celebrating High Mass, along with a fourth niche; closest to the altar another that was intended as a basin (*piscina*). The pre-Vatican II rite for the celebration of Mass had two basic forms – “Low Mass” celebrated in a low tone of voice by one priest with the assistance of at least one server, and “High (or Solemn) Mass” which was sung with the assistance of a choir, many servers and a deacon and subdeacon. At certain points in the service, the priests sat on the *sedilia*. A small carving on the back of each seat gives the rank of the minister for whom it was intended. Nearest the nave, water and wine cruets indicated this as a seat for the subdeacon, who brought the cruets of wine and water at the preparation of the gifts during the liturgy. The central niche is for the celebrant, symbolised by the chalice and host. The third was for the deacon, whose symbol is the book of the Gospels, which he proclaimed at Mass.

The ornamentation of the fourth niche, the *piscina*, is somewhat subdued. The Latin word means “little fishpond”. In church architecture, it is applied to a shallow basin which, during the Middle Ages, was used for washing the vessels used at Mass, so that the water could drain into a clean place. Although the Tridentine Rite did not permit a *piscina* to be used for this purpose, the architects of the Gothic revival invariably placed one in the sanctuary of their churches but usually with a shelf, as here, so that it could serve as a small table for the wine and water needed for the celebration of Mass.

7. Saints

Each of the six pillars has a saint. The two central ones facing each other are, on the left, St Teresa of Avila and the prophet Isaiah. The remaining four on the corners represent the four evangelists. Teresa of Avila, the Spanish mystic, was one of the patrons of the Redemptorist Congregation. From its frequent citation in the New Testament, Isaiah is often called the “Fifth Gospel”. In this representation he holds a book and a saw, reflecting a common tradition that he suffered martyrdom by being sawn in two.

8. Statue of the Blessed Virgin



The Statue of Our Lady was a gift from the mother of Fr Douglas



The original pulpit has been adopted as a liturgical ambo

At the entrance to the sanctuary, there is a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was a gift from Mrs Douglas, mother of Fr Douglas. Douglas was an only child, and his unexpected conversion to Roman Catholicism caused a rift with his mother, who sent a clergyman friend to Rome to try to talk him out of his decision. His ordination and entry to the Redemptorists added a further strain to this tense relationship. Mrs Douglas never entered the Catholic Church, but her gift of the statue is a lovely gesture of reconciliation. The little shrine in which it stands was raised higher up the pillar to enable the baptismal font to be placed at the entrance to the sanctuary.

9. Baptismal Font

This is the baptismal font originally designed for the church by Wardell. It has stood in various places in the course of its history. Bentley was invited to design a new font but he refused on the grounds that all his children had been baptised in the old one.

The present location of the font enables the baptismal liturgy to be celebrated in the view of the congregation, heightening its place as a sacrament celebrated by the whole parish community.

10. Pulpit /Ambo

The pulpit originally had four panels bearing the symbols of the four evangelists. Over it is a soundboard which, in the days before amplification, enabled the preacher's voice to resound better. An image of a dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, hovers over the one who preaches. In the refurbishment of the church, the pulpit was preserved but transformed into the *ambo*, the place from which the readings from scripture are proclaimed in the course of the liturgy. This required some redesign. The pulpit now has two sets of steps – one from the sanctuary for the celebrant and the other from the nave for the reader. To facilitate the second flight of steps, one of the panels was removed and with it the symbol of one of the evangelists.



The Sanctuary Grille commemorates the architect, John Francis Bentley

11. The Sanctuary Grille

The black iron grille between the sanctuary and the transept was erected in the early twentieth century. The step on the transept side has two brass memorial plates. The first says: "Pray for the soul of John and Mary Dell in whose memory this screen has been erected by their children." The second commemorates John Francis Bentley, the architect of additions to the church in the late nineteenth century and designer of the Lady Chapel: "Of your charity pray for the soul of John Francis Bentley who died ii (2nd) day of March in the year of Our Lord MCMII (1902) in whose memory this grille is erected by his wife."

The grille itself bears two inscriptions in gilt lettering. Closest to the altar: *Ego exaltatus a terra omnia traham ad me ipsum* ("And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself", John 12:32). The other reads: *O res mirabilis manducat dominum pauper servus et humilis* ("Oh, something wonderful ! The body of God will nourish the poor, the slave, and the lowly"). The words are taken from the office hymn of *Corpus Christi*, which is better known from its shortened form as *Panis Angelicus*.



The Marriage of Joseph and Mary

The South Transept

The south transept of the church was completed in 1894 to cope with the increasing numbers of the parish. The architect, John F. Bentley, scrupulously respected the existing style of Wardell's original church. The transept has a row of pillars in the middle that forms two arcades over the single seating area. Entry to the transept is possible through an additional entrance near the monastery, with a small porch.

12. The Baptistry

Bentley had designed a small baptistry at the rear of the transept which was closed by a simple iron screen. It housed Wardell's original baptismal font. Baptismal fonts were commonly placed near the entrance to a church to emphasise the place of the sacrament as a moment of entry into the church. The liturgical reform of Vatican II, while continuing to regard it as a rite of initiation, emphasised the role of the community. The reordering of the church

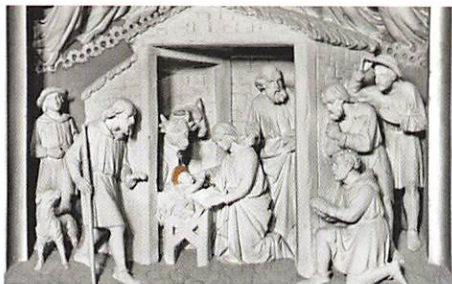
subsequent to the Council, placed the font closer to the sanctuary to facilitate the communal celebration of the sacrament. The original font is now situated in the sanctuary.

13. The Sacristy

An oak door under an archway leads to the sacristy. The archway over the door springs from two delicately carved heads of children. While it is impossible to identify them or any of the other carved heads at the base of the arches, it is tempting to surmise that they may have been based on the children of the architect who were baptised in this church.

14. The Chapel of St Joseph

A chapel of St Joseph, which originally stood in the south aisle, was relocated to its present position when the transept was added. The chapel is enclosed by a small altar rail. The original altar was restored by Bentley. The reredos contains a coloured statue of St Joseph and it is flanked by two scenes carved in relief.



Nativity – Detail from the reredos in St Joseph's Chapel

The panel on the left depicts the marriage of Mary and Joseph. This scene is not described in the New Testament, but it appears in several apocryphal Gospels, notably the *Protoevangelium of James*, a popular text possibly written as early as the mid-second century. According to its narrative, Mary had been presented in the Temple at the age of three. When the time came for her to be married, the priests summoned the men of Israel who wished to marry her. Their staffs were taken and laid on the altar in the hope that God might indicate who was to marry her. When the high priest went to examine them later, the wood of Joseph's staff was found to have blossomed. A staff sprouting lilies (symbol of chastity) is now usually associated with St Joseph. The high priest conducts the marriage celebration against a background of fruiting vines. Just in front of Joseph, a rival breaks his staff over his knee, while behind him, another snaps his in frustration with his hands.

The panel on the right depicts a nativity scene. Above the stable, two groups of angels represent the heavenly choir praising God (Luke 2:13). Four of the angels carry musical



Death of St Joseph: Central Panel on the altar

instruments – the other two are presumably the singers. The instruments are (from left): harp, portative organ, pipe and lute. Below them is a thatched stable in which Mary and Joseph have laid the child in the manger. Joseph looks outside to see the shepherds arriving in two groups, on either side.

On the base of the altar, the main panel depicts the death of Joseph, with Jesus and Mary with him. Catholic tradition invokes Joseph as the patron of a happy death. The scene is witnessed by two angels who may also have come to bear his soul into paradise (Luke 16:22). At each side of the central scene, in two side panels, two angels carry scrolls that say *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius* (Psalm 116:15) – “precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

Over the altar are two groups of stained-glass windows. The first set depicts the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and the flight into Egypt. The second set depicts the finding of Jesus in the Temple by Mary and Joseph, and the family of Nazareth as an example for family industry and harmony. The windows bear the names of the donors or of those in whose

memory they were given – Laurence O'Mahony (died 1890), and his sister Anna (1893), and Osmond and Mary Josephine Lambert, a husband and wife who died within a few months of each other.

The fine coloured ceiling is supported by six crowned angels carrying scrolls that spell out the message *Vir fidelis multum laudabitur qui custos Domini judicabitur* ("The faithful man is greatly to be praised who was found fit to be the guardian of the Lord"). The words are based on Proverbs 28:20 and used as an antiphon in the old Latin office of St Joseph.

15. The Window in honour of St Clement

This window was designed by Bentley, but his daughter does not regard it as one of his most successful windows. The cartoons for it are in the monastery archives. Clement Hofbauer, a man from a farming background in Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic), by a variety of circumstances became the second founder of the Redemptorists. He is also one of the patrons of the city of Vienna. The window has four scenes. Working left to right, they depict: Clement's profession as a Redemptorist; Clement celebrating Mass; Clement the confessor, and Clement the preacher. The window is dedicated "In honour of Blessed Clement, Patron and Model of Redemptorists, to the memory of the fathers who have laboured in this church". It was erected by a subscription of the congregation attending St Mary's church to celebrate the beatification (last stage on the road to canonisation) of Clement in 1888, and it was dedicated on the feast of St Alphonsus 1896.

16. The Community Chapel

High on the wall are two windows. They were designed by Wardell, and were originally in the wall of the sanctuary that was removed to build the transept. Behind them is the community chapel where the Redemptorist community celebrates the daily office and other prayers. It, with the small gallery at the end of the transept for the use of the community, is only accessible from the monastery.

The community chapel was originally designed by Bentley as part of his transept but it is part of the monastery building. It was refurbished in 1948 in celebration of the Clapham centenary. The work was carried out under the direction of Sir Ninian Comper, and his son, Sebastian. Comper re-ordered Bentley's reredos, imposing on it three Redemptorist saints (Alphonsus, Clement and Gerard), with St Joseph occupying the fourth space. The brass tabernacle door has an image of the pelican. Bentley's ceiling was left unchanged, with its barrel vaulting and bands of darker and lighter green, on which the monogram of Jesus (IHS) and Mary (a Gothic

M) alternate in gold. The wall at the altar end and the doors were also painted in red, black and gold with stencilled symbols. The adjoining sacristy contains an enthroned Madonna with saints – Francis, Edward, Clare and Joseph. It is the work of Alexander Maximilian Seitz (1811–1888), a member of the *Nazarener School*, and was painted for Fr Edward Douglas, who gave it to Clapham.

17. The Statues of Ss John Fisher and Thomas More

On the side walls of the transept, are two small statues set on brackets. They represent John Fisher, bishop of Rochester (1469–1555), and Thomas More (1478–1555), chancellor of England. Both were executed under Henry VIII for opposing his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. They were beatified along with other English martyrs in 1886. More and Fisher were canonised in 1935. Their feast day is 22 June. A member of St Mary's community, Fr Thomas Bridgett, wrote early studies of both of them at the time of their beatification.

The South Aisle

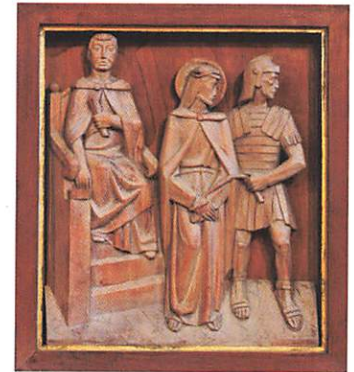
This aisle can be closed off from the rest of the church as a security measure by locking the iron grille. The grille bears the inscription *Copiosa apud eum Redemptio* ("With him there is plentiful redemption" Psalm 130:7), the official motto of the Redemptorist Congregation.

18. The Way of the Cross

The Way of the Cross is a traditional devotion involving fourteen stations, or pauses for prayer, as one walks around the church, meditating on the passion and death of Jesus. St Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists, did much to popularise the devotion, and the prayers he composed for it are still commonly used. The stations that had been in Clapham since its foundation were, by the 1960s, beginning to show the need for restoration but they proved to be beyond repair. The present set was offered to the church through the apostolic delegate or papal ambassador. They had been made for ex-King Umberto of Italy by a wood carver from Bologna, called Giovanni Pella.

19. The Angel Window

Above the confessional whose entrance is recessed into the wall, there is a very pretty window depicting three angels. The two outer angels carry blue shields with the words, *Ave Maria* ("Hail Mary"). The middle angel's shield has a lily, a symbol of Mary's purity. The inscription at the bottom reads *Sub pennis eius sperabis* ("In his wings you will trust", Psalm 91:4). The window was designed by Bentley and given to the church as a gift.



The Stations of the Cross were a gift of ex-King Umberto of Italy



Lady Chapel Grille

20. The Lady Chapel

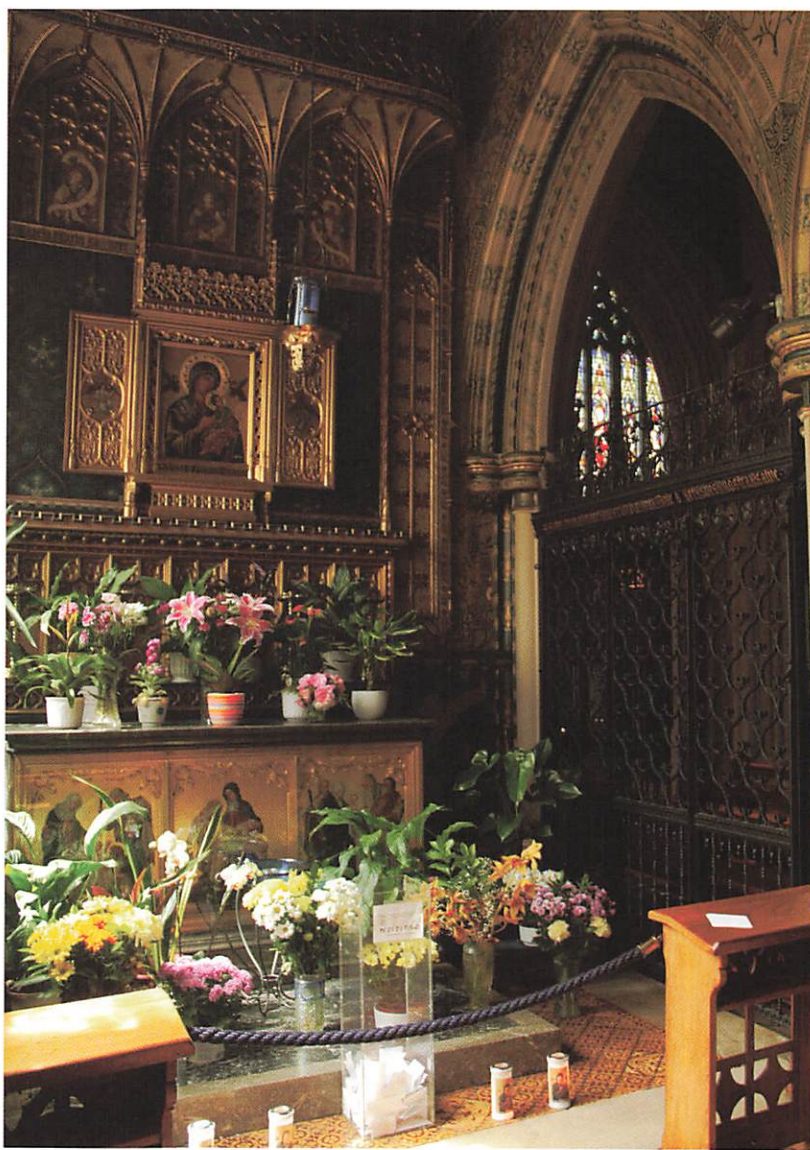
The Lady Chapel is the jewel of St Mary's and is regarded as one of the masterworks of John Francis Bentley. It is also a veritable theology of Mary in paint, stone, wood and metal. The architect has used traditional material and images, but several features, particularly the selection from the vast repertoire of liturgical texts and hymns in honour of the Virgin Mary, are a witness to the personal nature of his own faith.

Although the dedication of the church to St Mary made a separate Lady Chapel unnecessary, the gift of a Byzantine-style icon to the Redemptorist church in Rome by Pope Pius IX in 1866 put this image firmly at the heart of the devotional life of the Congregation. Although venerated in Rome, the icon was probably painted on the island of Crete in the late fifteenth century, and belongs to an icon type known as "The Theotokos (Mother of God) of the Passion". The earliest example of this type appeared as a fresco in a church in Cyprus and dates from about 1192. According to a legend associated with the Roman copy, it was stolen from a church on the island of Crete by an Italian merchant. In remorse for his theft, the icon was given to the small church of San Matteo, between the Roman basilicas of St Mary Major and St John Lateran. Here it acquired the title of *Madonna de Perpetuo Succurso* (Mother of Perpetual Help). In the middle of the seventeenth century, San Matteo came into the possession of the Irish Augustinian friars, who had been forced to leave their homeland by anti-Catholic laws. They remained in possession of it until the army of Napoleon arrived in Rome in 1798. Both the monastery and church were demolished in 1810. The friars had gone to live in another part of Rome, at the church of Santa Maria in Posterula. They had brought the icon with them, but as there was already a popular Marian image there, the one they brought was relegated to an inner chapel of the monastery.

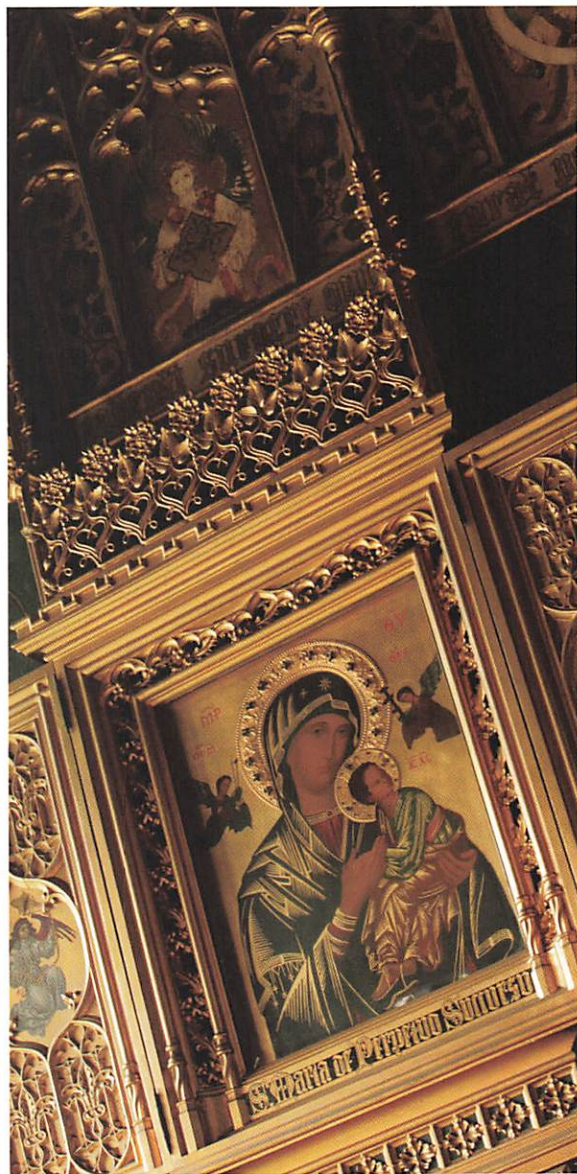
A mention in the course of a sermon that its whereabouts were currently unknown jogged the memory of a young Redemptorist priest. As a boy, he had served Mass in Santa Maria in Posterula, where an elderly brother had told him the story of the icon. The icon was indeed where he had said it was, but it was in very poor condition and scarcely recognisable. The Redemptorists petitioned Pope Pius IX to have it transferred to their church on the Via Merulana, close to where San Matteo had once stood. After restoration, it was solemnly installed in the Redemptorist church of San Alfonso, whose construction costs, incidentally, had been borne by Fr Douglas, who had also defrayed the cost of St Mary's. Copies were sent to every Redemptorist community. Clapham's copy was solemnly exposed for public veneration on 11 December 1867. It was placed at the old St Joseph's altar at the head of the south aisle until a special place could be found for it. In 1883, John

Francis Bentley was asked to design a Lady Chapel off the south aisle of the church and it was completed the following year. It was built at the expense of Mrs Jane Louis, in memory of her husband, William John Louis, who had a particular devotion to the icon, and whose personal copy is now enshrined on the altar of the chapel.

Two arches open from the aisle into the chapel. The one nearest the sanctuary has an iron grille, designed by the architect. Picked out in gilt letters on the aisle side is the Latin inscription: *Sancta Maria, succurre miseris, iuva pusillanimes, refove flebiles* ("Holy Mary, succour the miserable, help the faint-hearted, cheer those that weep"). Taken from a sermon by Fulbert, bishop of Chartres (951–1029), the words were adopted as an antiphon for offices of the Blessed Virgin, including, with a small addition at the end, the office of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. On the inner side of the grille, the inscription reads, *Salve regina, mater misericordiae, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra salve* ("Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, hail our life, our sweetness and our hope"): these words would have been especially familiar, as this, both in Latin and in English, is one of the most familiar Marian prayers.



The Altar of Our Lady is always well supplied with flowers



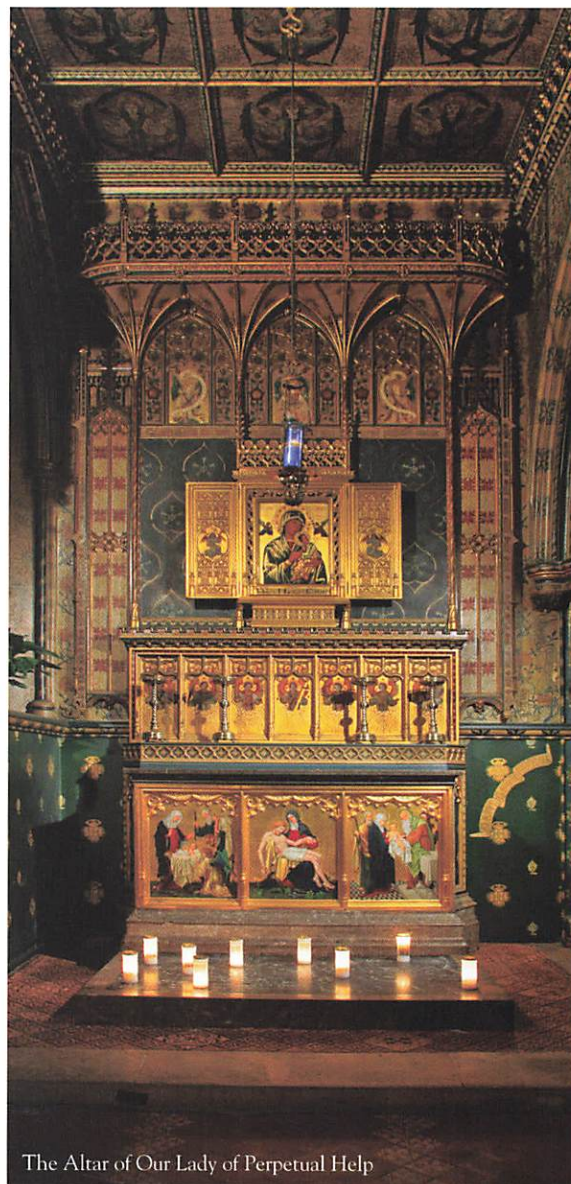
On entering the chapel, one is struck by the deep blue colour of the walls. Bentley's daughter, probably drawing on his notes, has stressed how this deep colour is symbolic of the deep waters of pain through which Mary learned to understand and sympathise with human suffering, and which is the key to the title of "Perpetual Help". The somewhat sombre tone is relieved by the use of gold in the alternating symbols of the gothic "M" with a crown (initial of Mary) and the pomegranate, a symbol of new life and resurrection, associated with Mary. Just as Eve is associated with the fruit that led to the Fall, so Mary is associated with Christ who brings the fruit of new life.

What holds our attention, however, is the gleaming golden colour of the reredos that almost reaches the ceiling at the end of the chapel. It is over fifteen feet high and may be divided into four major sections.

Beginning at the top, a shallow canopy, supported on a fan vaulting, covers the whole. The vaulting forms three niches, each containing the figure of an angel. The angel in the centre holds a jar with a lily, traditional symbol of the Blessed Virgin Mary's purity. The angel in the left hand niche carries a scroll, the text of which reads *Tu honorificentia populi nostri* ("You are the honour of our people"). The scroll of the angel on the right reads *Tu advocato peccatorum* ("You are the advocate of sinners"). Both texts are taken from a medieval Marian hymn, *Tota Pulchra es Maria* ("You are all fair, Mary"). This hymn is essentially a chain or catena of biblical verses applied to Mary. The title, for example, is taken from the Song of Songs, in which the Lover says to the Bride "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (Song of Songs 4:7). The first text is taken from the conclusion of the Book of Judith, in which Judith, who has just saved Israel by killing Holofernes, the Assyrian general, is praised as a heroine: the liturgy applies it to Mary as the personification of the New Jerusalem. Across the bottom of this section, there runs a band with yet another text: *Sancta Maria, succurre cadenti, surgere qui curat populo* ("Holy

Mother, help the fallen, lift up the people, you who cure"). These words are taken from another Marian liturgical text, the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, an antiphon especially associated with the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

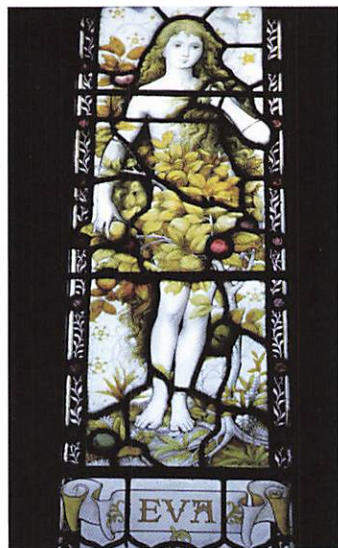
In the central section, pride of place is given to the icon. In contrast to the predominant golden colour of the rest of the reredos, the background of this section is a deep Persian blue with patterns incised in a lighter blue and gold that give the impression of tapestry. The picture is set within a three-part frame (triptych). In the triptych, the large central panel holds the icon, while the two side panels, usually of the same length, but only half the width, can be closed as doors to conceal the icon. When open, the inner surface of these side panels reveals two angels swinging thuribles in the direction of the icon, a sign of veneration and respect. When the panels are closed, the image they form on the outside is the annunciation to Mary. Triptychs were closed either to protect the image or to mark penitential seasons when it was not deemed appropriate to display rich and beautiful things, for example the veiling of images during Passiontide. The older title of this icon-type was *Our Lady of the Passion*. A traditional story associated with it tells how the Christ Child had a dream of his Passion and ran in fear to his mother for comfort. He clings to Mary's hand, while looking over his shoulder towards one of the angels carrying the instruments of the Passion. Mary's gaze is turned, not towards her child, but to the one who prays before the icon. The gaze of Mary, both sorrowful and maternal, is an illustration of the familiar words of the *Salve Regina*: "turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us." The sandal falling from the foot of the child may be a homely symbol of a child losing his footwear in his terrified flight from a frightening vision, but in the Bible, taking off a shoe or a sandal was a sign of laying aside a claim to property (Ruth 4:7-8). It recalls Paul's hymn to Christ who "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave" (Philippians 2:7-11). On the frame, immediately under the icon, is inscribed its Latin title, *Mater de Perpetuo Succurso*.



The Altar of Our Lady of Perpetual Help



Closed Triptych with Annunciation Scene



Eve from the stained glass in the Lady Chapel

Immediately under the picture, seven angels, each in its own frame, carry one of the instruments of the Passion, the central one carrying the cross. The same motif has already been noted in the high altar of the church. It is repeated here to highlight the motif of the Passion, which would have been prominent in Redemptorist spirituality and preaching at this time.

The altar would have been regarded as the most important element in the chapel. Mass would have been celebrated in it most days, since Clapham was the home of a religious community of priests, who would each have celebrated a private Mass (concelebration, or several priests celebrating at the same altar, was only introduced in the liturgical reforms of the 1960s) and all the altars in the church would have been required. The table of the altar (*mensa*) is Derbyshire marble: stone was required by the liturgical law of the time. It has a slate frontal, designed originally to be removed on occasions when the triptych was closed. The predominant colour of the frontal picks up the golden colour of the reredos. It contains three scenes whose mode of depiction and the costuming of the main characters recalls the style of medieval Flemish art. The first depicts the birth of Christ. Mary and Joseph stand near the manger, hands raised in ecstasy, while an angel in a blue dalmatic, the vestment of a deacon, kneels in adoration. The central image is a *pieta*, or to give it its medieval English name, *Our Lady of Pity*. Mary holds the bleeding body of her Son, while on the ground are instruments of the Passion – the crown of thorns and the nails. The central place given to this image seems to see it as the fulfilment of the scene prophesied by the icon, when Mary held the child in the comfort of her arms as he looked with terror on the cross and crown of thorns, which still lay in the future. The third scene depicts the presentation in the temple, when Simeon took the child in his arms and predicted that a sword would pierce the heart of Mary (Luke 2:35). The old woman, the prophetess Anna, looks on from the side.

The chapel is lit by three decorated windows, each consisting of three panels. The glass is tinted in such a way that it admits a silvery-golden light into the chapel. The subjects of all nine window panels are women of the Old Testament, many of whom Catholic tradition has identified as prototypes of Mary. In order (from left), they are: Eve (mother of the living, just as Mary is mother of the redeemed); Sarah (mother of the people of Israel, just as Mary is mother of the new Israel); Rebecca (the first mother of Israel after Sarah); Rachel (who endured years of barrenness before giving birth); Deborah (judge and prophet); Ruth (ancestor of David and named in St Matthew's genealogy of Jesus); Abigail (wife of David); Esther (who saved Israel by her prayers), and Judith (who risked her life to slay Holofernes, the enemy of Israel). An inscription records that the windows are dedicated to the memory of Anne Camilla MacDonald who departed this life on 29 July, in the year 1884.



Ceiling decoration: Lady Chapel

Invocation from Litany of Loreto:
Queen of the Most Holy Rosary

The decoration of the ceiling is detailed and systematic. Three beams divide the ceiling and each section is further divided into two rows of three panels, making eighteen in all. The panels immediately above the altar area depict the six seraphim, each with six wings (Isaiah 6:2–7), wearing stoles crossed in front and highlighting the sacredness of the altar area. In the remaining twelve panels, the predominant symbols are roses with other plants and leaves, set against a light-coloured background, and each panel contains one of the titles of Mary from the *Litany of Loreto*. This Litany in honour of the Blessed Virgin emerged at the Italian Marian shrine of Loreto sometime in the late Middle Ages. From there it spread throughout Europe and became a popular devotion to Mary. It invokes Mary by a list of titles to invite the faithful to pray (the standard response is “Pray for us”). The titles are arranged in a number of sets: Mary as mother (twelve invocations), Mary as virgin (six invocations), biblical symbols of Mary (thirteen, for example, Tower of David, from the Song of Songs), Mary as helper of the faithful (four titles, for example, Health of the sick) and Mary as queen (thirteen titles, for example, Queen of angels).

The Litany of Loreto provides further inspiration for the decoration of the walls of the chapel, particularly in the upper arcades formed by the arches. The colour here is lighter, relieving the sombre blue that predominates in the lower part of the walls.

The Lady Chapel was intended to provide a place for personal prayer and meditation. It is seldom without flowers and candles left by devotees of Mary. The predominant note to which Bentley returns is that Mary is mother and advocate. The use of verses from familiar hymns, such as the *Salve Regina*, in the

decoration underlines that teaching. The *Salve* had a special place in the spirituality of Redemptorists. Their founder devoted more than half of his classic book of Mariology, *The Glories of Mary*, to a commentary on it. Most of the day's religious observances concluded with its recitation, just as the profession of vows ended with a solemn singing of it. Bentley has chosen relatively few incidents from the life of Mary for illustration but what is striking in his chapel is the way in which the dominant note of redemption and Mary's part in it as mother and intercessor is stated through the symbols of the Passion and the icon of Perpetual Help.

21. The Window of the Holy Family

Continuing to the end of this aisle, we will see a fine stained-glass window in honour of the Holy Family. The Redemptorists cultivated devotion to the Holy Family, especially through the Confraternity of the Holy Family, founded in Belgium in 1844 by a layman called Henri Belletable, an army engineer, to promote strong family values among the emerging working classes, and confided to the pastoral care of the Redemptorists. Fr Thomas Bridgett, a member of the Clapham community, during an earlier period as rector in Limerick, founded in 1868 a branch of the confraternity which went on to become the largest confraternity in the world. The Clapham branch of the confraternity drew the bulk of its membership from women and it flourished until the middle of the twentieth century.

The window is the work of Margaret Agnes Rope (1882-1953), a stained-glass artist who continued to design and create glass even after

she had entered a contemplative Carmelite monastery under the name of Sr Margaret of the Mother of God. It is composed of three lancets, each with two subjects and two inscriptions. In the central pane, Jesus the child stands with his hands outstretched. In the side panels, the corresponding images are of Mary and St Joseph. The inscription at the top reads, *Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est* ("Where there is love, God is there", the opening words of the chant for the *Mandatum* or liturgy of the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday). In the lower half of each window, there are small representations of scenes in which all three members of the Holy Family appear together – the presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:22–39), the Family at Nazareth and the finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 41–51). The inscription at the bottom of the window reads *Illumina nos Domine exemplis familiae tuae et dirige pedes nostros in viam pacis* ("Enlighten us, O Lord, by the example of your family and guide our feet in the way of peace").

22. The Chapel of St Alphonsus

This chapel is usually locked, as it now serves as a small repository or religious goods shop. The door bears a very fine wood carving of Mary Magdalene. Originally intended for a confessional, it was the gift of Bernard Cox, architect of the 1930 extension to the church.

The centrepiece of the chapel is the reredos depicting the life of St Alphonsus. It was designed for the original altar of St Alphonsus (where the organ is today). The altar table was removed to the sanctuary, where it now serves as the altar "facing the people" for the daily Eucharist. Alphonsus's life is depicted

in three scenes that cover representative moments of that life. In the first, as a young lawyer who has reached a moment of crisis in his profession, Alphonsus was forced to decide whether to return to the courts or to begin studies for the priesthood. As a sign of the latter, he chose to lay his nobleman's dress-sword at the feet of the statue of Our Lady of Ransom in a church near his home. The central section depicts Alphonsus the preacher. He was once preaching in a church in Foggia where there was a venerated picture of the Madonna. He experienced a time of ecstasy during his sermon. The third scene commemorates an unusual incident in the life of Alphonsus. On 21 September 1774, he fell unconscious after celebrating Mass, and remained in that state until the following morning, when he roused himself and asked to celebrate Mass for the repose of the soul of the pope at whose death he had assisted in spirit. It was several days before the news of the pope's death reached the remote part of Southern Italy where Alphonsus lived.

The three stained-glass windows (two on side walls and one over the altar) are also the work of Margaret Rope. They commemorate three devotions that are traditionally associated with Alphonsus. One of Alphonsus's best known books is *The Glories of Mary*, so the first window honours the Blessed Virgin. The main image is mother and child with the dove representing the Holy Spirit at the top of the window. Beneath the larger image, there is a smaller one of Adam and Eve beside the tree in the Garden of Eden. The bands above and below the smaller image read (above) *O gloriosa virginum*, and (at the bottom), *sublimis inter sidera* ("O glorious virgin, splendid

among the stars"). The scene in the garden is accompanied by an inscription in smaller letters: *Quod tristis Eva abstulit, tu redis almo germine* ("What we had lost in hapless Eve, your sacred womb again restores"). Both are quotations from the Latin hymn, *O gloriosa Domina*, once used in the divine office on Marian feasts.

The second window represents the Passion of Christ. Alphonsus was himself a skilled painter and several crucifixions he painted survive. The main representation is the crucifixion with Jesus accompanied by his mother and the beloved disciple. At the top of the picture is an image of the Lamb of God standing on the book with seven seals (Revelation 5:1, 6:1). The lower part represents Jesus in agony, comforted by the angel (Luke 22:39–43). The inscription on this window is *Copiosa apud eum redemptio* ("With him there is plentiful redemption", Psalm 130:7), the official motto of the Redemptorist Congregation.

The window above the altar represents the third great devotion of Alphonsus, to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. Our view of this window is impeded by the altar. At the top, there is a representation of the traditional eucharistic symbol of "the pelican in her piety". Beneath it, Jesus stands, dressed in red and white and wearing a crown of thorns. Over the chalice, he holds the host, the symbols of eucharistic communion.

Coats of Arms of
Archbishops of
Westminster in the
Windows



The North Aisle

We pass across the central aisle to the north aisle.

The north aisle was extended in 1929–30. It was impossible to match the south transept due to lack of ground, so the only workable solution was to extend St Gerard's chapel that had been erected in 1910 towards Clapham Park Road.

23. The Cardinals' Arms in the Windows

Most of the windows in the north aisle are in plain glass. Five of them contain a small inset panel containing the arms of the Archbishops of Westminster who at that time had been created cardinals. Only the initials of each are given on the window, so working from the end: FB (Francis Alphonsus Bourne), HV (Herbert Vaughan), HM (Henry Manning),

NW (Nicholas Wiseman). Several of them had particularly warm relationships with the community of St Mary's. Wiseman had encouraged them to build in Clapham and had always remained a faithful friend: Herbert Vaughan's uncle was a Redemptorist (Fr Edmund Vaughan), and Bourne had been baptised and ordained in the church and made frequent retreats in the monastery.

24. The Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima

This is the most recent addition to the shrines and statues in the church. It is particularly dear to the Portuguese community who celebrate Mass in the church each week. The statues of the two children represent Francisco and Jacinta Marto, who together with their cousin Lucia, were the visionaries at Fatima in Portugal in 1917. They died at the age of eleven and ten respectively and were beatified in 2000.

25. The Ceiling

The ceiling of the new extension was markedly different from the rest of the church. It is flat and is made of carved oak. The only colour comes from the angels bearing the heraldic coats of arms. These are not easy to identify. First is that of the Redemptorist congregation, then Pope Pius XI, then in order the bishops of the diocese of Southwark from the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy to the time of the building of this extension. In reverse order, these are: Peter Amigo, Francis Bourne (later translated to Westminster), John Butt, Robert Aston Coffin (former Redemptorist provincial and rector of St Mary's), James Danell and Thomas Grant.

26. The Saint Gerard Window

Gerard Majella was a Redemptorist Brother who was born in the Kingdom of Naples in 1726 and died in 1755. Ill-health and poverty had prevented him from entering a religious community in his youth. He literally ran away from home and forced himself on a group of Redemptorist missionaries who had come to his native Muro to preach a mission. Fearing that Gerard might make an attempt to join them, his mother had pleaded her dependence on his



St Gerard Majella Window detail: St Gerard cures a sick boy

small income as a tailor. On the advice of the leader of the mission band, she locked Gerard in his room, but he managed to escape, using his bed-clothes as a rope and leaving a note assuring his mother that he had run away to become a saint! He died at the age of twenty-nine, and despite advancing tuberculosis, the scourge of the time, he managed to become a most active member of the community, frequently travelling throughout the region to raise funds for the building of new monasteries. Even before his death, Gerard had acquired a reputation for working miracles. His life story – of a simple joyful young man with a generous heart – inspired many people who heard his story from the Redemptorists. He is particularly known as the patron saint of expectant mothers and fathers and his shrine is seldom without clients for his prayers.

The window was designed by Bentley to commemorate Gerard's beatification. It recounts eight incidents from his life. The upper row has four scenes. The first represents Gerard in ecstasy among the people: Gerard was a mystic, and incidents of ecstasy or total absorption in the things of God was a fairly common occurrence for him. The second scene is another ecstasy of Gerard's, this time in the presence of an image of the Passion. Gerard had a vivid sense of the reality of the Passion: as a teenager, he had persuaded the directors of the local passion play to allow him to play the part of Christ. So life-like was his performance that his mother fainted at the thought of what he might be suffering. In the third scene, Gerard saves a barrel of wine from going sour. For Italian country people, the loss of a year's wine could mean serious financial loss. Many of the stories of Gerard that entered the local folklore told

how he had averted some serious damage or loss and highlighted the miraculous or unexpected. In the fourth scene, Gerard and Alphonsus meet. The darkest moment of Gerard's life came when he was charged with sexually abusing a young woman. Gerard remained silent. When the young woman was eventually forced to tell the truth, Gerard was asked by Alphonsus, his superior, to explain himself. It was probably the first time the two men met. Gerard said he had kept silent because the Rule, composed by Alphonsus, forbade the brethren to excuse themselves even when wrongly accused, imitating Christ who kept silent before Pilate. The silence the Rule asked for was in relatively minor things, not matters as serious as the charge made against Gerard.

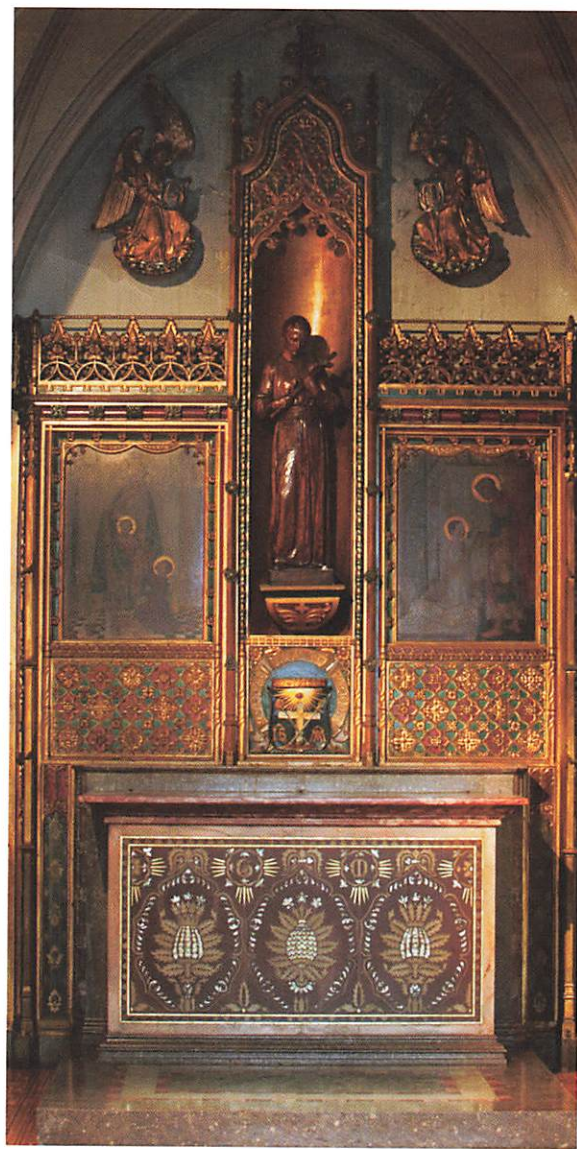
The lower series of images relates to further scenes from the life of Gerard. Firstly, during a very severe local famine, Gerard fed countless poor people at the monastery door: even when it seemed the resources had more or less run out, Gerard always found something. The second shows how Gerard restored to health a boy who had fallen and seemed to have had a serious case of concussion. The third scene is Gerard rescuing the crew of a small boat in the Bay of Naples by walking boldly into the raging sea and dragging it to safety. The last scene depicts Gerard's final illness. A young boy is shown playing the harp. In the actual account, the boy could not play music but was fascinated by the harpsichord that had been brought into Gerard's room to lift his spirits as he could play a little. The legend that grew around the incident was that Gerard encouraged the boy to tinkle with the keys and he was soon able to produce a melody. The inscription on the top of the window

reads *Potens apud Deum Gerardum advocatum cum fiducia* ("Gerard is a powerful advocate with God that you can trust").

27. The St Gerard Chapel

The St Gerard Chapel was designed by Osmond Bentley and was intended to balance his father's Lady Chapel on the opposite side of the church. Like it, it spans two arches and is enclosed by an iron grille. The heads from which the arches spring are St Alphonsus wearing a bishop's mitre (altar side) and St Clement in his Redemptorist habit. The middle arch rises from a shield bearing the initials "GM" (Gerard Majella). Our attention will be drawn first to the altar and the reredos. In the reredos, the wooden statue of Gerard depicts him clothed in his Redemptorist habit and holding a crucifix. Beneath the statue is a panel bearing the arms of the Redemptorist Congregation. Two pictures show scenes from the childhood of Gerard. That on the left recounts the story of Gerard and the lady. Close to Gerard's home village, there was a sanctuary of the Madonna where Gerard often went to play. When he returned in the evening, he usually had a little loaf of good quality white bread. To his mother's queries about where it came from, he replied he was given it by a lady whose little boy he had played with. That might have been a tale of everyday events, but later versions of the story suggest that the lady was in fact the Madonna and the little boy was the child Jesus. The second picture tells another story. In Gerard's time, children did not receive first communion until they were twelve or thirteen. Gerard once joined the people at the altar rails but the priest refused him. Next day, Gerard saw the priest and told him that St Michael the Archangel himself had brought him communion during the night! A child's dream or imagination at work? Perhaps, but there is no mistaking the devotion of the adult Gerard to the Eucharist.

The table of the altar is in red marble. The front is richly decorated with mother of pearl. The floor of the chapel also reflects its purpose. Some of the floor tiles have "GM"



Altar of St Gerard Majella

for Gerard Majella. On the step, a verse from the Beatitudes is intended to refer to Gerard: *Beati mundo corde: quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt* ("Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God", Matthew 5:8).

On the side wall of the chapel there is a picture of another Redemptorist, St John Neumann (1811–1860). Born in Bohemia, John went as a young deacon on the American mission where he met the Redemptorists and joined the Congregation in 1840. He would have been a contemporary of the founders of Clapham: indeed, his novice master, the Austrian Joseph Prost, served some time in the Irish and English houses. Neumann was nominated as bishop of Philadelphia in 1852, at a time when emigrants were pouring into the United States. He was a simple man, but one with a strong pastoral sense and he began to build up in his diocese a structure to develop Catholic education. He was canonised in 1977.

28. The Apocalypse Window

A brightly coloured window is based on three scenes from the Book of Revelation. Working from the right hand side, in the first panel John the Seer of Revelation receives his commission from an angel to write in a book the things he is about to see (Revelation 1:10–11). In the second panel is depicted the complex vision of "one like a Son of Man". "Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lamp-stands, and in the midst of the lamp-stands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. His head and his

hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force"(Revelation 1:12–16). Although the details of this account almost defy being visualised, our artist has made a serious attempt to transform the book's symbolic language into visual terms, so we can identify for example the seven stars in his hand, the sword coming from the mouth, the seven candlesticks. The third panel depicts the vision of the woman and the great red dragon (Revelation 12). Catholic tradition has usually identified the woman clothed with the sun (Revelation 12:1) as the Virgin Mary and the red dragon as Satan who will eventually be defeated by the Archangel Michael (Revelation 12:7).

We have no means of identifying the designer of this interesting, if somewhat unusual, window but it is dedicated to Elizabeth Sowberry.

29. The Statue of St Thérèse of Lisieux

Thérèse Martin was born in Alençon in France in 1873. She entered the Carmelite convent at Lisieux in 1888 at the age of fifteen. She died there in 1897. The publication of her journal, *The Story of a Soul*, after her death, made her very popular. She was canonised in 1925 and declared patron of the missions in 1927.



30. The Statue of St Alphonsus

Alphonsus Liguori was the founder of the Redemptorists. His chapel formerly stood where the organ is now. It was removed to the rear of the church and has already been visited in this guide (see south aisle).

St Alphonsus Liguori, Founder of the Redemptorists

31. The Window of the Saints

This window was part of an original chapel of St Alphonsus. Along with the great East Window, it was part of Wardell's design for the church. It is not easy to view it because of the organ. It depicts Saints Stanislaus Kostka and Aloysius (both regarded as patrons of young people), Patrick, Teresa of Avila, Francis Jerome (1642–1719, who had known Alphonsus as a child and they were canonised on the same day), John Nepomuk (1345–1393 of Bohemia, martyred because he refused to break the seal of the confessional), Philip Neri (1515–1595 founder of the Oratorian Congregation) and Francis Xavier (1506–1552, Jesuit missionary to the Far East and patron of the foreign missions).

